

*Steve P. Holcombe.*

# STEVE P. HOLCOMBE,

THE

CONVERTED GAMBLER:

---

HIS LIFE AND WORK.

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BY REV. GROSS ALEXANDER.

INTRODUCTION BY

*REV. SAM P. JONES.*



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TO

**Mrs. S. P. Holcombe,**

THE PATIENT WIFE,

THE FAITHFUL MOTHER,

THE FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS,

THIS ACCOUNT OF

THE LIFE AND WORK OF HER HUSBAND

IS DEDICATED.

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## PREFACE.

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It has been thought and suggested by some of those having knowledge of Mr. Holcombe's history, that an account of his life and work in book-form would multiply his usefulness and do good. And since the narration of his experiences by himself has been of such great benefit to those who have been privileged to hear him, why may not others also be benefited by reading some account of his uncommon career?

It is hoped that it will be of interest to the general reader as a revelation and record of the workings and struggles of some human hearts and the wretchedness and blessedness of some human lives. It is a sort of luxury to read about and sympathize with wretchedness, as it is a joy to see that wretchedness turned to blessedness. It will show to those who are unwillingly the slaves of sin what God has done for such as they. It will possibly interest and encourage those who are engaged in Christian work. It may furnish suggestions as to practical methods to be pursued in working among poor and needy classes, whether in towns or cities. Even ministers of the Gospel may find encouragement and instruction in the experience of Mr. Holcombe's life and the methods and successes of his work.

What few letters of Mr. Holcombe's could be found are put in as showing phases of this interesting character that could be shown as well no other way, and some letters written *to* him are selected out of



several hundred of like character to show how he touches all classes of people.

The "Testimonies" are from men who have been rescued under Mr. Holcombe's ministry, and will give some idea of the work that is being done. These are only a few of the men who have been brought to a better and happier life through Mr. Holcombe's efforts. If any should feel that there is a sameness in these testimonies, which it is believed very few will do, perhaps others will feel the cumulative effect of line upon line, example upon example.

The sermons or addresses are inserted because they have been the means of awakening and guiding many to salvation, and they may be of interest and possibly of benefit to some who have not heard Mr. Holcombe. They contain much of the history of his inner life in statements of experience introduced by way of illustration. They are given in outline only, as will be seen.

The book lays no claim to literary excellence. The position and work of the man make his life worth writing and reading apart from the style of the book.

The accounts here given of Mr. Holcombe's character and work are not written for the purpose of glorifying him. Many of these pages are profoundly painful and humiliating to him. But they are written that those who read them may know from what depths he has been brought, and to what blessedness he has been raised, through Jesus Christ, to whose name the glory is given and to whose blessing the book is commended.

AUGUST, 1888.

## INTRODUCTION.

BY REV. SAM P. JONES.

The author of this volume, the Rev. Gross Alexander, Professor of Theology in Vanderbilt University, was surely the man to give to the world the Life of Steve Holcombe. The warm heart and clear head of the author, and the consecrated, self-denying life of the subject of the volume, assure the reader ample compensation for the time given to the book.

Mr. Alexander has known Brother Holcombe from the beginning of his Christian life, and tells the story of his fidelity to Christ and loyalty to duty as no other could.

I first met Brother Holcombe at Louisville, in the year 1882, when I was preaching in the church of his pastor, Rev. J. C. Morris. It was from Brother Morris that I learned of this consecrated layman. He often told me with joy of many incidents connected with the conversion and work of Brother Holcombe. My acquaintance with him soon grew into a warm friendship. It has always been an inspiration to me to talk with him, and a source of gratitude to me to know that I have his affection and prayers.

The work he is doing now in the city of Louisville, Kentucky, is very much like Jerry Macauley's work in New York City years ago. No man has experienced more vividly the power of Christ to save, and no man has a stronger faith in Christ's ability to save. Brother Holcombe's humility and fidelity have made him a power in the work of rescuing the perish-

ing and saving the fallen. I have been charmed by the purity of soul manifested by him on all occasions, and his continual efforts to bring back those who have been overtaken in a fault. Hundreds of men who have felt his sympathizing arms about them and listened to his brotherly words have grown strong, because they had a friend and brother in Steve Holcombe, who, in spite of their failures and faults, has clung to them with a love like that which Christ Himself manifested toward those who were as bruised reeds and smoking flax.

Brother Holcombe, rescued himself by the loving hand of Christ, has extended the hand from a heart full of love for Christ and men, and has done his best to save all who have come under his influence.

This volume will be especially instructive to those who are interested in the salvation of the non-churchgoers of the great cities. For surely Brother Holcombe's Mission is a place where the worst sinners hear of Christ's power to save, and where they see, in Brother Holcombe himself, with his rich experience, one of the greatest triumphs of the Gospel.

I heartily commend this volume to all Christian people, because it tells of the life of a saved man. It tells also what a saved man can do for others, and it will inspire many hearts with sympathy for such work and prepare many hands to help in it. I heartily commend this book because it is the biography of one whom I love and whom all men would love, if they knew him in his devotion to God and duty. Brother Holcombe has frequently been with me in my meetings and in my private room; I have frequently been with

him in his Mission, in his family circle, on the streets of the great cities, and he is one man of whom it may be said: "His conversation is in heaven." I frequently feel that my own life would have been more successful with such a fervent consecration to my work as Brother Steve Holcombe exemplifies.

The sermons contained in this volume will be read with interest. They are his sermons. They come from his heart, and they have reached the hearts of hundreds and thousands who have heard him gladly.

I bespeak for the book a circulation which will put it into the library of all pastors and into thousands of homes.

SAM P. JONES.

CARTERSVILLE, GA., October 18, 1888.

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LETTER FROM DR. JOHN A. BROADUS.

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I have read with very great interest the "Life of Steve Holcombe," and have carefully looked through the letters, testimonies and sermons to be included in the proposed volume, and I rejoice that it is to be published. Professor Alexander, who was Mr. Holcombe's first pastor, has written the life with the best use of his fine literary gifts, and with sound judgment and good taste. It is a wonderful story. I have long felt interest in Mr. Holcombe and his work, for after beginning his Mission he attended my seminary lessons in the New Testament through a session and more; but this record of his life warms my heart still more toward him and his remarkable labors of love. I think the book will be very widely read. It will stir Christians to more hopeful efforts to save the most wicked. It will encourage many a desperate wanderer to seek the grace of God in the Gospel. Such a book makes a real addition to the "evidences of Christianity." No one can read it without feeling that Christian piety is something real and powerful and delightful. Much may be learned from Mr. Holcombe's recorded methods and discourses, and from the testimonies of his converts, as to the best means of carrying on religious work of many kinds. The book will, doubtless, lead to the establishment of like Missions in other cities, and put new heart and hope into the pastors, missionaries and every class of Christian workers. It will show that zeal and love and faith must be supported by ample common sense and

force of character, as in Mr. Holcombe's case, if great results are to hoped for. Many persons can be induced to read his brief outline sermons who would never look at more elaborate discourses. As to two or three slight touches of doctrinal statement, some of us might not agree with the speaker, but all must see that his sermons are very practical, pervaded by good sense and true feeling, and adapted to do much good.

JOHN A. BROADUS.

LOUISVILLE, KY., September 25, 1888.

# **LIFE AND WORK.**



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## CHAPTER I.

**S**TEVE P. HOLCOMBE, known in former years as a gambler and doer of all evil, no less known in these latter days as a preacher of the Gospel and doer of all good, was born at Shippingsport, Kentucky, in 1835. The place, as well as the man, has an interesting history. An odd, straggling, tired, little old town, it looks as if it had been left behind and had long ago given up all hope of ever catching up. It is in this and other respects in striking contrast with its surroundings. The triangular island, upon which it is situated, lies lazily between the Ohio river, which flows like a torrent around two sides of it, and the Louisville canal, which stretches straight as an arrow along the third. On its north-east side it commands a view of the most picturesque part of La Belle Riviere. This part embraces the rapids, or "Falls," opposite the city of Louisville, which gets its surname of "Falls City" from this circumstance. In the midst of the rapids a lone, little island of bare rocks rises sheer out of the dashing waters to the height of several feet, and across the wide expanse, on the other side of the river, loom up the wooded banks of the Indiana side, indented with many a romantic cove, and sweeping around with a graceful curve, while the chimneys and towers and spires of Jeffersonville and New

Albany rise in the distance, with the blue Indiana "Knobs" in the deep background beyond. From this same point on the island, and forming part of the same extensive view, one may see the two majestic bridges, each a mile in length, one of which spans the river directly over the Falls and connects the city of Louisville with Jeffersonville, Indiana, while the other joins the western portion of Louisville with the thriving city of New Albany. Across the canal from the island, on the south, lies the city of Louisville with its near 200,000 population, its broad avenues, its palatial buildings.

In the very midst of all this profusion of beauty and all this hum and buzz and rush of commercial and social life, lies the dingy, sleepy old town of Shippingsport with its three hundred or four hundred people, all unheeded and unheeding, uncared for and uncaring. There are five or six fairly good houses, and all the rest are poor. There is a good brick school-house, built and kept up by the city of Louisville, of which, since 1842, Shippingsport is an incorporated part. There is one dilapidated, sad looking, little old brick church, which seldom suffers any sort of disturbance. On the north-east shore of the island directly over the rushing waters stands the picturesque old mill built by Tarascon in the early part of the century. It utilizes the fine water-power of the "Falls" in making the famous Louisville cement. Part of the inhabitants are employed as laborers in this mill, and part of them derive their support from fishing in the river, for which there are exceptional opportunities all the year around in the shallows, where

the rushing waters dash, with eddying whirl, against the rocky shores of their island.

There are, at this time, some excellent people in Shippingsport, who faithfully maintain spiritual life and good moral character amid surrounding apathy and immorality. "For except the Lord had left unto them a very small remnant, they should have been as Sodom, and they should have been like unto Gomorrah."

And yet, Shippingsport was not always what it is now. Time was when it boasted the aristocracy of the Falls. "The house is still standing," says a recent writer in Harper's Monthly Magazine, "where in the early part of the century the Frenchman, Tarascon, offered border hospitality to many distinguished guests, among whom were Aaron Burr and Blennerhasset, and General Wilkinson, then in command of the armies of the United States." He might have added that Shippingsport was once honored with a visit from LaFayette, and later also from President Jackson. But in other respects also Shippingsport was, in former years, far different from what it is to-day. In business importance it rivaled the city of Louisville itself. In that early day, before the building of the canal, steamboats could not, on account of the Falls, pass up the river except during high water, so that for about nine months in the year Shippingsport was the head of navigation. Naturally, it became a place of considerable commercial importance, as the shrewd Frenchman who first settled there saw it was bound to be. Very soon it attracted a population of some hundreds, and grew into a very busy little mart.

“Every day,” says one of the old citizens still living, “steamboats were landing with products and passengers from the South, or leaving with products and passengers from Kentucky and the upper country.” The freight which was landed at Shippingsport was carried by wagons and drays to Louisville, Lexington and other places in Kentucky and Indiana. This same old citizen, Mr. Alex. Folwell, declares that he has seen as many as five hundred wagons in one day in and around the place. There were three large warehouses and several stores, and what seems hard to believe, land sold in some instances for \$100 per foot.

The canal was begun in 1824, the first spadeful of dirt being taken out by DeWitt Clinton, of New York. During the next six years from five hundred to a thousand men were employed on it. They were, as a general thing, a rough set. Sometimes, while steamboats were lying at the place, the unemployed hands would annoy the workmen on the canal so that gradually there grew up a feeling of enmity between the two classes which broke out occasionally in regular battles.

In 1830, when the canal was finished, the days of Shippingsport's prosperity were numbered. Thenceforth steamboats, independent of obstructions in the river, passed on up through the canal, and Shippingsport found her occupation was gone. The better classes lost no time in removing to other places, and only the poorer and rougher classes remained. Many of the workmen who had been engaged in building the canal settled down there to live; unemployed and

broken-down steamboatmen gravitated to the place where they always had such good times; shiftless and thriftless poor people from other places came flocking in as to a poor man's paradise. Within easy reach of Louisville, the place became a resort for the immoral young men, the gamblers and all the rough characters of that growing city.

Such was the place to which Steve Holcombe's parents removed from Central Kentucky in 1835, the year of his birth; and, though coming into the midst of surroundings so full of moral perils, they did not bring that strength of moral character, that fixedness of moral habit and that steadfastness of moral purpose which were necessary to guard against the temptations of every sort which were awaiting them.

The father, though an honest and well disposed sort of man and very kind to his family, was already a drunkard. His son says of him: "My poor father had gotten to be a confirmed drunkard before I was born, and after he had settled at Shippingsport, my mother would not let him stay about the house, so that most of his time was spent in lying around bar-rooms or out on the commons, where he usually slept all times of the year." It is not surprising that as a consequence of such dissipation and such exposure he died at the early age of thirty-three, when his son Steve was eleven years old. Dead, he sleeps in an unmarked grave on the commons where formerly he slept when drunk and shut out by his wife from his home.

Mrs. Holcombe, the mother of Steve, a woman five feet ten inches in height and one hundred and ninety pounds in weight, was as strong in passion as in phys-

ical power. "When aroused," says her son, "she was as fierce as a tigress and fearless of God, man or devil, although she was a woman of quick sympathy and impulsive kindheartedness toward those who were in distress, and would go further to help such than almost any one I have ever known." She was a woman of more than ordinary mind, though entirely without education. In the government of her children she was extremely severe. "Though my father," says Mr. Holcombe, "never whipped me but once in my life, and that slightly, my mother has whipped me hundreds of times, I suppose, and with as great severity as frequency. She has, at times, almost beaten me to death. She would use a switch, a cane, a broom-stick or a club, whichever happened to be at hand when she became provoked. She whipped me oftener for going swimming than for anything else, I believe. If I told her a lie about it she would whip me, and if I told her the truth, she would whip me."

From neglect and other causes little Steve was very sickly and puny in his babyhood, so that he did not walk till he was four years old; but from the beginning his temper was as violent as his body was weak, and from his earliest recollection, he says, he loved to fight. At the same time he had his mother's tenderheartedness for those who were in distress. Once a stranger stopped for a few days at the tavern in Shippingsport, and the roughs of the place caught him out on one occasion and beat him so severely that he was left for dead; but he crawled afterward into an old shed where little Holcombe, between five and six years old, found him and took him food every day for about two weeks.

The boys with whom he associated in childhood were addicted to petty stealing, and he learned from them to practice the same. When about seven years old his mother, on account of their poverty, provided him with a supply of cakes, pies and fruits to peddle out on the steamers while they were detained in passing the locks of the canal. Instead of returning the money to his mother, however, he would often lose it in gambling with the bad boys of the place, and sometimes even with his half-brothers, so that he seldom got home with his money, but always got his beating.

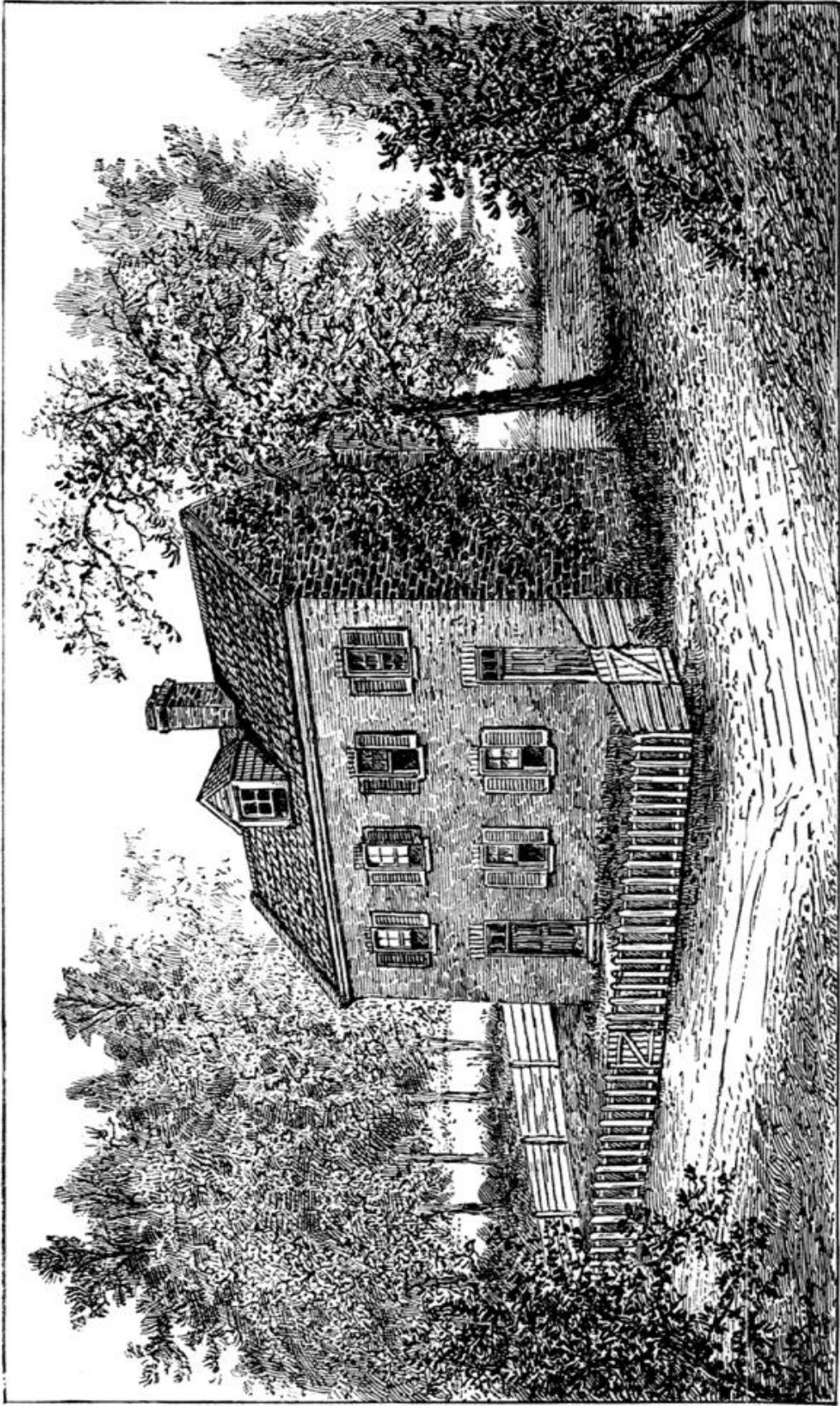
At eight years of age he played cards for money in bar-rooms with grown men. At ten he began to explore those parts of the river about the falls, in a skiff alone looking for articles of various kinds lost in wrecks, that he might get means for gambling. This, together with the fact that his hair was very light in color, gained for him the distinction of the "Little White-headed Pirate."

In 1842 Shippingsport was taken into the city of Louisville, and a school was established, which he attended about three months during this period of his life, and he never attended school afterward. The brown-haired, black-eyed little girl who afterward became his wife, attended this school at the same time. Her parents had lately removed to Shippingsport from Jeffersonville, Indiana. They were people of excellent character and were so careful of their children that they would not allow them to associate with the children of Shippingsport any farther than was necessary and unavoidable. But, notwithstanding these restrictions, their little Mary saw just enough of Steve Holcombe in school to form a



strange liking for him, as he did also for her—an attachment which has lasted through many and varying experiences up to the present. At that time he had grown to be “a heavy set little boy,” as Mrs. Holcombe describes him, and was “very good looking,” indeed, “very handsome,” as she goes on to say, “with his deep blue eyes and his golden hair.” She did not know that she was in love with a boy who was to become one of the worst of men in all forms of wickedness, and as little did she know that she was in love with a boy who was to become one of the best of men in all forms of goodness and usefulness. Nor did he foresee that he was forming an attachment then and there for one who was to love him devotedly and serve him patiently through all phases of infidelity and wickedness, and through years of almost unexampled trials and sufferings, who was to cling to him amid numberless perils and scandals, who was to train and restrain his children so as to lead them in ways of purity and goodness in spite of the father’s bad example, who was to endure for his sake forms of ill treatment that have killed many a woman, and who was in long distant years to be his most patient encourager and helper in a singularly blessed and successful work for God and the most abandoned and hopeless class of sinful men, and to develop, amid all and in spite of all and by means of all, one of the truest and strongest and most devoted of female characters. A singular thing it seems, indeed, that an attachment begun so early and tested so severely should have lasted so late. And yet it is perhaps at this moment stronger than ever it was before.

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BIRTHPLACE OF MR. HOLCOMBE. SHIPPINGSPORT.

Notwithstanding young Holcombe's lack of religious instruction and his extraordinary maturity in wickedness, he declares that at times he had, even before his tenth year, very serious thoughts. He says :

"I always believed there was a God and that the Bible was from God, but for the most part my belief was very vague and took hold of nothing definite. Hence, nearly all my thoughts were evil, only evil and evil continually. I am sure, however, that I believed there was a hell. When a child, I used to dream, it seems to me, almost every night, that the devil had me, and sometimes my dreams were so real that I would say to myself while dreaming, 'Now this is no dream; he has got me this time, sure enough.' I remember that one text which I heard a preacher read troubled me more than anything else, when I thought about dying and going to judgment. It was this: 'And they hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.' I always had a fear of death and a dread of the future. The rattling of clods on a coffin filled me with awe and dread. When I thought about my soul, I would always say to myself, 'I am going to get good before I go into the presence of God; but now I want to keep these thoughts out of mind so I can do as I please and not have to suffer and struggle and fight against sin—till I get consumption. When I get consumption I will have plenty of warning as to death's approach and plenty of time to prepare for it.' But I had gotten such an admiration for gamblers and such a passion for gambling that I had a consuming ambition

to become a regular blackleg, as gamblers were called in those days. I made up my mind that this was to be my business, and I began to look about for some way to get loose from everything else, so I could do nothing but gamble, with nobody to molest or make me afraid."

It is hard enough for a boy to keep from doing wrong and to do right always, even when he has inherited a good disposition, enjoyed good advantages and had the best of training. But our little friend, Steve Holcombe, poor fellow, inherited from his father an appetite for drink and from his mother a savage temper. To balance these, he had none of the safeguards of a careful, moral or religious education, and none of those sweet and helpful home associations which follow a man through life and hold him back from wrong doing.

Thus unprepared, unshielded, unguarded, at the tender age of eleven years he left home to work his own way in the world. No mother's prayers had hitherto helped him, and no mother's prayers from henceforth followed him. No hallowed home influences had blessed and sweetened his miserable childhood and no tender recollections of sanctified home life were to follow him into the great wicked world. On the contrary, he was fleeing from his home to find some refuge, he knew not what, he knew not where. He was going out, boy as he was, loaded down with the vices and hungry with the passions of a man. He did not seek employment among people that were good or in circumstances encouraging to goodness, but just where of all places he would find most vice and learn most wickedness—on a steamboat. One knowing his antecedents and looking out into his

future could easily have foreseen his career in vice and crime, but would hardly have predicted for him that life of goodness and usefulness which now for eleven wonderful years he has been leading.

He was employed on a steamboat which ran on the Tennessee river, and his first trip was to Florence, Alabama. His mother did not know what had become of him. He was employed in some service about the kitchen. He slept on deck with the hands and ate with the servants. Hungry as he was for some word or look of sympathy which, given him and followed up, might have made him a different character, nobody showed him any kindness. The steward of the boat on the contrary showed him some unkindness, and was in the act of kicking him on one occasion for something, when young Holcombe jumped at him like an enraged animal and frightened him so badly that he was glad to drop the matter for the present and to respect the boy for the future. On this trip he found five dollars in money on the boat, and was honest enough to take it to the steward for the owner.

When he returned home from this trip, strange to say, his mother so far from giving him a severer beating than usual, as might have been expected, did not punish him at all. She was probably too glad to get him back and too afraid of driving him away again. But nothing could restrain him now that he had once seen the world and made the successful experiment of getting on in the world without anybody's help. So that he soon went on another trip and so continued, going on four or five long steamboat runs before he was fourteen

years of age, and spending his unoccupied time in gambling with either white men or negroes, as he found opportunity.

After he was fourteen years old he went on the upper Mississippi river and traveled to and from St. Louis. On the Mississippi steamers of those days gambling was common, not only among the servants and deckhands, it was the pastime or the business of some of the first-class passengers also. Sometimes when a rich planter had lost all his ready money in gambling, he would put up a slave, male or female, that he might happen to have with him, and after losing, would borrow money to win or buy again the slave. Professional gamblers, luxuriously dressed and living like princes, frequented the steamers of those days for the purpose of entrapping and fleecing the passengers. All this only increased the fascination of gambling for young Holcombe, and he studied and practiced it with increasing zeal.

About this time, when he was in the neighborhood of fourteen years of age, his mother, awaking all too late to his peril and to her duty, got him a situation as office-boy in the office of Dr. Mandeville Thum, of Louisville, hoping to keep him at home and rescue him from the perilous life he had entered upon. Dr. Thum was much pleased with him, took great interest in him, and treated him with unusual kindness. He even began himself to teach him algebra, with the intention of making a civil engineer of the boy. And he was making encouraging progress in his studies and would, doubtless, have done well, had he continued.

During the time he spent in the service of Dr. Thum, he attended a revival meeting held by the Rev. Mr. Crenshaw, at Shippingsport, and was much impressed by what he heard. He became so awakened and interested that he responded to the appeals that were made by this devoted and zealous preacher and sought interviews with him. He tried his level best, as he expresses it, to work himself up to a point where he could feel that he was converted, a not rare, but very wrong, view of this solemn matter. But he could not *feel* it. While, however, he could not get the feeling, he *determined* to be a Christian, anyhow, a rarer and better, but not altogether correct, view of the subject either. For a week or ten days he succeeded in overcoming evil impulses, and in living right, but he was led away by evil companions. Soon after this he tried it again, and this time he succeeded for a longer time than before in resisting temptations and following his sense of right, but was one day persuaded to go on a Sunday steamboat-excursion to New Albany, with some young folks from Shippingsport, which proved the occasion of his fall. On returning home he and two other boys went part of the way on foot. They heard a man, not far away, crying for water, and Holcombe's quick impulse of sympathy led him to propose to go to the relief of the sufferer. When they found he was not so bad off as they thought, the two other boys began to abuse and mistreat the stranger. He was an unequal match for the two, however, and as he was about to get the best of them, young Holcombe knocked the poor man down, and they all kicked him so severely over the head and face that



when they left him he was nearly dead. Holcombe went back the next day, and half a mile away he found the coroner holding an inquest over the man. He was preparing to flee to Indiana when he heard that the verdict of the jury was: "Death from exposure to the sun."

This cowardly and wicked deed wrought in him such shame, such self-loathing and such discouragement that he abandoned all hope and purpose of living a better life. With a sort of feeling of desperation and of revenge against his better nature for allowing him to yield and stoop to such meanness, he left his position in Louisville and shipped on a steamboat again for St. Louis. While the boat was lying at the wharf at St. Louis he got into a difficulty with one of the deck-hands who applied to him a very disgraceful name. Instantly young Holcombe seized a heavy meat-cleaver and would have split the man's head in two if the cook had not caught his arm as he swung it back for the stroke. From St. Louis he went up the Missouri river to Omaha, engaging, as usual, in gambling and other nameless vices.

On his second trip from Omaha to St. Louis he innocently provoked the anger of the steward of the boat, who abused him in such a way that Holcombe ran at him with an ice-pick, when the terrified man rushed into the office and took refuge behind the captain. It was decided that Holcombe should be discharged and put ashore. When the clerk called him up to pay him off, he volunteered some reproof and abuse of the seventeen-year-old boy. But, upon

finding he was dealing with one who, when aroused, knew neither fear nor self-control, he was glad to quiet down and pay him his dues, as Holcombe remarked: "You may discharge me and put me ashore, but you shall not abuse me." And they put him ashore at Kansas City, then a small village. While waiting at Kansas City for the next boat to St. Louis (all traveling being done in those days and regions by water), he spent his time around bar-rooms and gambling-houses. There he saw a different and more extensive kind of gaming than he had ever seen before. Great quantities of money were on the tables before the players, greater than he had ever seen, and he saw it change hands and pass from one to another. Such a sight increased his desire to follow such a life. So he put up his money, the wages of his labor on the boat, and lost it—all. He spent the remainder of his stay in Kansas City wandering around, destitute, hungry, lonely, with various reflections on the fortunes and misfortunes of a gambler's life, till at last he got deck-passage on a boat to St. Louis, and paid his fare by sawing wood. During this trip his violent and revengeful temper led him to commit an act that nearly resulted in murder. One of the deck-hands threw down some wood which he had piled up, and Holcombe protested, whereupon the deck-hand cursed him and said: "You little rat, I will throw you overboard!" Mr. Holcombe replied: "I guess you won't," and said nothing more at the time. After the man had lain down and gone to sleep, Mr. Holcombe got a cord-stick, slipped upon him, and hit him on the skull with all his might, completely stunning the man.

"Now," says Mr. Holcombe, speaking of this incident, "I can not understand how a man could do so cruel a thing, but *then* I felt I must have revenge some way, and *I could not keep from it.*"

At St. Louis he got a position on a boat for New Orleans, and soon after arriving in that city he shipped on board a steamship for Galveston, Texas, but returned immediately to New Orleans. Here, however, he soon lost, in gambling, all the money he had made on the trip, and was so entirely without friends or acquaintances that he could find no place to sleep, and wandered about on the levee until one or two o'clock in the morning. To add to the loneliness and dismalness of his situation, it was during an epidemic of yellow fever in the city, and people were dying so fast they could not bury them, but had to plow trenches and throw the corpses in, as they bury soldiers on a battle-field. About one or two o'clock, a colored man, on a steamboat seeing him walking around alone, called him, and finding out his condition, took him on board the steamer and gave him a bed. But Holcombe was so afraid the negro had some design upon him, as there were no others on board, that he stole away from the boat and wandered around, alone, all the rest of the night.

On that awful night the great deep of his heart was broken up and he felt a sense of loneliness that he had never felt before in his life. He was in a strange city among a strange people. He had no friends, he had no means. He had not where to lay his head. The darkness of the night shut off the sight of those objects which in the day would have diverted his mind

and relieved his painful reflections; and the awful stillness, broken only by the rattling of wheels that bore away the dead, made it seem to him as if his thoughts were spoken to him by some audible voice. His past life came up before him, but there was in it nothing pleasant for him to remember. It had been from his earliest recollection one constant experience of pain and sin. He was uneasy about himself. He was frightened at the past, and the recollection of his hard, but vain, struggle to get his evil nature changed and bettered, cast a dark cloud over his future. What could he do? Where could he go? Who was there could help him? Who was there that loved him? At his own home, if home it could be called, there was nothing but strife and cruelty and sin. Father, he had none. He that was his father had lived a drunkard's life, had died a drunkard's death and was buried in a drunkard's grave. And his mother—she had no power to help him or even love him as most mothers love their children, and as on that lone dismal night he would have given the world to be loved. Of God's mercy and love he did not know, he thought only of his wrath, nor had he learned how to approach him in prayer. Alone, alone, he felt himself to be shut up between a past that was full of sin and crime and a future that promised nothing better. But he did think of one who had loved him and who had said she would always love him and he felt there was truth in her soul and in her words. It was the brown-haired, sweet-faced, strong-hearted little girl he had left in Shippingsport. He would go back to her. She alone of all people in the world seemed able to help him and this

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seemed his last, his only hope. If she had remained true to him, and if she would love him, the world would not seem so dreary and the future would not seem so dark, and maybe she could help him to be a better man. "On the next day," says Mr. Holcombe, "an acquaintance of mine from Louisville ran across me as I was strolling about the streets, took me aboard a steamer and made me go home with him."

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*Louis. Journal. Photo. Eng.*

THE OLD MILL AT SHIPPINGSPORT.

## CHAPTER II.

AS has already been said, Mr. and Mrs. Evans, the parents of Mrs. Holcombe, were people of excellent moral character and were so careful of their children that as long as they could prevent it, they did not allow them to associate freely with the Shippingsport children. But of Steve Holcombe, the worst of them all, they had a special dread. Mr. Evans could not endure to see him or to hear his name called. And yet, this same Steve Holcombe was in love with their own precious child, and had now come home to ask her to marry him. Of course, he did not visit her at her own home but he managed to see her elsewhere. He found that she had not wavered during his absence, but that the bond of their childhood had grown with her womanhood. And yet she knew full well his past career and his present character. She went into it "with her eyes open," to quote her own words. Against the will of her parents and against the advice of her friends she adhered to her purpose to marry Steve Holcombe when the time should come. Even his own mother, moved with pity at the thought of the sufferings and wretchedness which this marriage would bring the poor girl, tried to dissuade her from it and warned her that she was going to marry "the very devil." She replied that she knew all about it, and when asked why she then did it, her simple answer was "because I love him."



He promised her that he would try to be a better man and *she*, as well as *he*, believed it, though not because she expected he would some time become a Christian and not because she had the Christian's faith and hope. Her simple belief was that the outcome of her love would be his reformation and return to a better life. It was not thus definitely stated to herself by herself. It was an unconscious process of reasoning or rather it was the deep instinct of her strong and deeply-rooted love.

Mrs. Holcombe was recently asked if, during all the years of her husband's recklessness and disgraceful dissipation, his sins and crimes, his cruel neglect and heartless mistreatment of herself, her love ever faltered? She answered: "No; never. There never was a time, even when Mr. Holcombe was at his worst, that I did not love him. It pained me, of course, that some things should come *through* him, but I never loved *him* any less." A rare and wonderful love it surely was. When she was asked if during those dark and bitter years she ever gave up her belief that her husband would change his life and become a good man, she answered, "No; I never gave it up." A woman of deep insight, of large reading and wide observation, on hearing these replies of Mrs. Holcombe, said: "It is the most wonderful case of love and patience and faith I have ever known."

He had come home then to marry Mary Evans. He met her at the house of a mutual friend and proposed an elopement. She was frightened and refused. But he pleaded and besought her, and, wounded and vexed at what seemed a disregard of his feelings and

rights, he ended by saying, "It must be to-night or never." Whereupon she consented, though with great reluctance, and they went together to the house of his mother, in the city of Louisville. But his own mother would not consent to their marriage under such circumstances until she could first go and see if she could get the consent of the girl's parents. Accordingly, she went at once to Shippingsport, night as it was, and laid the case before them. They did not consent, but saw it would do no good to undertake to put a stop to it. So that, at the house of his mother in Louisville, they were married, Steve Holcombe and Mary Evans, the hardened gambler and the timid girl.

After his marriage he quit running on the river, settled down at Shippingsport and went to fishing for a living. And it did seem for a time that his hope was to be realized and that through the helpful influences of his young wife he was to become a better man. He grew steadily toward better purposes and toward a higher standard of character, and within two or three months after their marriage they joined the church together. Mrs. Holcombe says, however, that she does not now believe that she was a Christian at the time. They thought in a general way that it was right to join the church, and that it would do them good and somehow help them to be good. If they had had some one, wise and patient and faithful, to teach them and advise them and sympathize with them at this time of awakening and of honest endeavor after a spiritual life, they would probably have gone on happily and helpfully together in it. But alas! as is true in so many, many cases to-day, nobody understood or seemed to under-

stand them, nobody tried or cared to understand them; nobody cared for their souls. It was taken for granted, then as now, that when people are gotten into the church, nothing special is to be done for them any further, though, in fact, the most difficult and delicate part of training a soul and developing Christian character comes after conversion and after joining the church. Mr. Holcombe attributes his present success in the helping and guidance of inquiring and struggling souls to his lack on the one hand of careful and sympathetic training in his earlier efforts to be a Christian and on the other hand to the great benefit of such training in his later efforts. In such a nature as his, especially, no mere form of religion and no external bond of union with the church was sufficient. The strength of his will, the tenacity of his old habits, the intensity of his nature and the violence of his passions were such that only an extraordinary power would suffice to bring him under control. It was not long, therefore, before he was overcome by his evil nature, and he soon gave over the ineffectual struggle and fell back into his old ways. His poor wife soon found to her sorrow that reforming a bad man was a greater undertaking than she had dreamed of, and was often reminded of her mother-in-law's remark that she had married "the very devil." And Mr. Holcombe found out, too, that his wife, good as she was, could not make him good. Some men there are so hungry-hearted and so dependent, that they can not endure life without the supreme and faithful and submissive affection of a wife, but who know not how to appreciate or treat a wife and soon lose that consideration and love for her which are

her due. Then marriage becomes tyranny on the one side and slavery on the other.

Perhaps the reader will conclude later that this description applies all too well to the married life of Steve Holcombe and his faithful and brave-hearted young wife; for it was not long before he returned, in spite of all his solemn vows and his earnest resolutions, to his old habit of gambling and to all his evil ways. On a certain occasion not long after he married, in company with a friend, who is at this moment lying in the jail in Louisville for the violation of the law against gambling, he went on a fishing excursion to Mound City, Illinois. Having returned to the landing one night about midnight they found a fierce-looking man sitting on the wharf-boat who said to them on entering, "I understand there are some gamblers here and I have come to play them, and I can whip any two men on the Ohio river," at the same time exposing a large knife which he carried in his boot. He was evidently a bully who thought he could intimidate these strangers and in some underhanded way get from them their money. Mr. Holcombe did not reply but waited till the next morning when he "sized up the man" and determined to play against him. After they had been playing some time Mr. Holcombe discovered that the man was "holding cards out of the pack" on him. He said nothing, however, till the man had gotten out all the cards he wanted, when Mr. Holcombe made a bet. The other man "raised him," that is, offered to increase the amount. Mr. Holcombe raised him back and so on till each one had put up all the money he had. Then the man "showed down his hand" as the saying is, and he

had the four aces. Mr. Holcombe replied "That is a good hand, but here is a better one;" and with that struck him a quick heavy blow that sent the man to the floor. Mr. Holcombe took all the money and the other man began to cry like a child and beg for it. Mr. Holcombe was instantly touched with pity and wanted to give him back his money but his partner objected. He did, however, give the man enough for his immediate wants and left him some the wiser for his loss of the rest.

At the same place the owner of the storeboat left a young man in charge, who, during the absence of his proprietor, offered to play against Mr. Holcombe and lost all the money he had. Then he insisted on Mr. Holcombe's playing for the clothing which he had in the store and Mr. Holcombe won all that from him, leaving him a sadder, but it is to be hoped a wiser, man.

Having thus once again felt the fascination of gambling and the intoxication of success, Mr. Holcombe was impelled by these and by his naturally restless disposition to give up altogether his legitimate business and to return to the old life. So without returning to visit his wife and child or even informing them of his whereabouts, he shipped on a steamer for Memphis and thence to New Orleans.

On his return trip from New Orleans he played poker and won several hundred dollars. On landing in Louisville, his half-brother, Mr. Wm. Sowders, the largest fish and oyster dealer in Louisville, gave him a partnership in his business. but they soon fell out and he quit the firm.

He removed to Nashville, Tennessee, and opened a business of the same kind there in connection with his brother's house in Louisville, Mr. Holcombe shipping his vegetables and produce in return for fish and oysters. This was early in 1860. It was a great trial for his young wife to be taken from among her relatives and friends and put down among people who were entire strangers, especially that she had found out in four or five years of married life that her husband had grown away from her, that his heart and life were in other people than his family, in other places than his home and in others pleasures than his duty. She knew that she could not now count on having his companionship day or night, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth. And to make the outlook all the more gloomy for her, she had just passed through one of the severest trials that had come into her life.

When an intense woman finds that she is deceived and disappointed in her husband, and the hopes of married bliss are brought to naught, she finds some compensation and relief in the love of her children. So it was with Mrs. Holcombe. But just before the time came for them to remove to Nashville, death came and took from her arms her second-born child. This made it all the harder to leave her home to go among strangers. But already, as a wife, she had learned that charity which suffereth long and is kind, which seeketh not her own and which endureth all things.

Mr. Holcombe's business in Nashville was very profitable and he made sometimes as much as fifty dollars a day, so that in a short time he had accumulated a considerable amount of money. But his passion

for gambling remained. His wife had hoped that the sufferings and death of their little child might soften his heart and lead him to a better life. But it seemed to have no effect on him whatever. Though he did not follow gambling as a profession, he engaged in it at night and in a private way with business men.

When the active hostilities of the war came on, his communication with Louisville was cut off and so his business was at an end. Leaving his wife and only remaining child alone in Nashville he went to Clarksville and engaged in the ice business. While he was there, the Kentucky troops, who were encamped near that place, moved up to Bowling Green, Kentucky. The sound of fife and drum and the sight of moving columns of soldiers stirred either his patriotism or his enthusiasm so that he got rid of his business and followed them on up to Green river in Kentucky, and went into camp with them where he spent some time, without, however, being sworn into service. But this short time sufficed for him and he became satisfied that "lugging knap-sack, box and gun was harder work than" gambling.

He quit the camp, settled down at Bowling Green, and opened a grocery and restaurant, doing a very prosperous business. While there, he had a severe spell of sickness and came near dying, but did not send for his wife and child, who were still alone in Nashville. Just before the Federal troops took possession of Bowling Green, he sold his grocery for a large claim on the Confederate Government which a party held for some guns sold to the Confederacy. He then rode horseback from Bowling Green to Nashville, where he

rejoined his wife and child. After another severe spell of sickness through which his wife nursed him, he left his family again in those trying and fearful times and went South to collect his claim on the Confederate Government. Having succeeded in getting it he returned to Nashville with a large sum of money.

As he had no legitimate business to occupy his time and his mind, he returned to gambling and this is his own account of it: "Then I began playing poker with business men in private rooms; and one of those business men being familiar with faro banks, roped us around to a faro room to play poker; and while we were playing, the faro dealer, who had cappers around, opened up a brace game, and the game of poker broke up, and I drifted over to the faro table, and did not look on long until I began to bet, and soon lost two or three hundred dollars which I had in my pockets, and lost a little on credit, which I paid the next morning. I lost what I had the next day, and kept up that same racket until I was broke. During this time I had been very liberal with the gamblers, treated them to oyster stews and other good things; and when I got broke I got to sitting around the gambling-house, and heard them say to each other, 'We will have to make Steve one of the boys,' and thus it was I became familiar with faro."



### CHAPTER III.

THE initiation of Mr. Holcombe into the game of faro was an epoch in his life. He was so fascinated with it, and saw so much money in it, that he now finally and deliberately gave up all attempts at any other business or occupation, and, removing again to Louisville, in partnership with a gambling friend he "opened up a game" or established a house of his own for playing faro in that city. He sent for his family thinking he was settled for life. Alas! how little he knew of that heart of his that knew so little of God. He found out later what St. Augustine has so beautifully said for all humanity: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts find no repose till they repose in Thee." It was not long before he had lost all his money and was "dead broke" again. It was about this time and during this residence at Louisville, that, uncontrolled by the grace and power of God, and untouched by the love that can forgive as it hopes to be forgiven, he committed the greatest crime of his life.

A young man was visiting and courting a half-sister of his at Shippingsport, and, under promise of marriage, had deceived her. When Mr. Holcombe found it out, he felt enraged, and thought it his duty to compel him to marry her. But knowing himself so well, and being afraid to trust himself to speak to

the young man about it, he asked his two older half-brothers to see him and get the affair settled. They refused to do so. Mr. Holcombe then got a pistol and looked the man up with the deliberate intention of having the affair settled according to his notion of what was right, or killing him. He met him at Ship-pingsport, near the bank of the canal, and told him who he was—for they scarcely knew each other. Then he reminded him of what had occurred, and said that the only thing to be done was to marry the girl. This the man declined to do, saying: "We are as good as married now." He had scarcely uttered the words when Mr. Holcombe drew his derringer and shot him. When he fell, Mr. Holcombe put his hand under the poor man's neck, raised him up and held him until a doctor could be called. He was touched with a great feeling of pity for his victim, and would have done anything in his power for him. But all his pity and repentance could not bring back the dying man. He went into a neighboring house and washed the blood from his hands, but he could not wash the blood from his conscience. In after years the cry of another murderer, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O, God!" was to burst from his lips, and faith in the blood of a murdered Christ was to bring the answer of peace to his long troubled soul. But alas! alas! he was to add crime to crime and multiply guilt manifold before that time should come.

He was soon arrested and taken to jail, where, after some hours, he was informed that the man was dead. Some time afterward he was tried by a jury and acquitted, though the Commonwealth's Attorney,

assisted by paid counsel, did all he could to procure his conviction. But no human sentence or approval of public opinion can quiet a guilty human conscience when awakened by the God whose sole prerogative of executing justice is guarded by His own solemn and awful words, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," saith the Lord. When the conscience is pressed with a great sense of guilt, it seeks relief by the way of contrition and repentance, or it seeks relief by a deeper plunge into sin and guilt, as if the antidote to a poison were a larger dose of poison. There is no middle ground unless it be insanity. Nor did Mr. Holcombe find any middle ground, though he declares that he never allowed himself to think about the killing of Martin Mohler, and could not bear to hear his name. He had to *keep very busy* in a career of sin, however, to *keep from* thinking about it, and that is exactly the second alternative of the two described above.

"After this," says Mr. Holcombe, "I continued gambling, traveling around from place to place, and at last I settled down at Nashville and dealt faro there. I took my family with me to Nashville. I gambled there for awhile, and then came back to Louisville, where I opened a game for working men. But when I looked at their hard hands and thought of their suffering families, I could not bear to take their money. Then I turned my steps toward the South and landed in Augusta, Georgia. I went to Augusta in 1869 in connection with a man named Dennis McCarty. We opened there a big game of faro, where I did some of the biggest gambling I

ever did in my life. On one occasion I played seven-up with a man and beat him out of five thousand dollars, which broke him up entirely."

Let us now take a peep into his home-life: Mrs. Holcombe says that in Augusta he was in the habit of staying out for several days and nights at a time, a thing which he had never done before. They lived in Augusta something over two years, and during all that time she had not one day of peace. He was more reckless than he had ever been before. She suffered most from his drunkenness and his ungovernable temper. Sometimes he would come into the house in a bad humor and proceed to vent his wrath on her and the furniture; for he was never harsh to his children, but on the contrary, excessively indulgent, especially to his sons. During his outbursts of anger, Mrs. Holcombe always sat perfectly still, not in fear, but in grief; for she knew as little of fear as he. Many a time he has come into the house in a bad humor and proceeded to upset the dining-table, emptying all the food onto the floor and breaking all the dishes. On one occasion he came home angry and found his wife sitting on a sofa in the parlor. He began to complain of her and to find fault with her, and as her silence seemed to provoke him, he began to curse her; and as she sat and wept in silence, he grew worse and worse, using the most dreadful oaths she ever heard. When he had fully vented his passion, he walked out and stood awhile at the front gate as if in a study. Then he walked back into the house where she sat, still weeping, and said, in a mild and gentle tone: "Well, Mary, I was pretty mad

awhile ago, wasn't I?" Then he began to apologize and to tell her how sorry he was for having talked to her so harshly, and wound up by petting her. He was at times almost insanely jealous of his wife, and if he saw her even talking with a man, no matter whom, it put him in a rage which ended only when he had vented it in the most abusive language to her.

On another occasion, while they were living in Augusta, an incident occurred which illustrates at once her unexampled devotion and his unexampled depravity. On the night in question she had gone to bed, but not to sleep. About midnight he came staggering in and fell full length on the floor at the foot of the stairway. She tried to help him up, but he was so dead drunk she could not lift him. She left him lying at the foot of the stairway and went back to bed. But, though she was very tired, she could not endure the thought of lying in a comfortable bed while her husband was on the floor. She got up, therefore, and went down stairs again and sat on the floor beside him in her night-dress till morning. Then she left him and went up stairs to dress, that she might be prepared for the duties of the day. When, some time afterward, she came back to where he was lying, he abused and cursed her for leaving him alone, and, before his tirade was ended he was sorry, and tried to smooth it over by saying: "I did not think *you* would leave me."

Mrs. Holcombe says concerning her life at this period: "I usually walked the floor, after the children were in bed, till past midnight waiting for him to come

home. One night in particular, between eleven and twelve o'clock, I heard a shot fired and I heard a man cry out not far from the house. I thought it was Mr. Holcombe, and my agony was almost more than I could bear while waiting for day to come, for I was sure somebody had shot him. But between three and four o'clock in the morning he came in, and his coming brought me great relief." "Then another time," she goes on to say, "I was sitting by the window when an express wagon drove up with a coffin in it. The driver said to me, 'Does this coffin belong here?' I understood him to say, 'Does Mr. Holcombe live here?' I thought it was Mr. Holcombe and that he had been killed and sent home to me in his coffin. The driver repeated his question twice, but I was so paralyzed I could not answer him a word."

From Augusta Mr. Holcombe removed with his family to Atlanta, where he made a good deal of money. Mrs. Holcombe says concerning their stay in Atlanta, "My life at Atlanta was no better than it had been at Augusta. Much of my time was spent in walking the floor and grieving. Often in my loneliness and sorrow my lips would cry out, 'How can I endure this life any longer?' I had not then become a Christian and did not know what I do now about taking troubles and burdens to God. And yet I believe that it was God who comforted my heart more than once when my sorrow was more than I could bear. I cried to Him without knowing Him. All these years I tried to raise my children right, and I taught them to respect their father. I hid his sins from them when I could, and when I could not, I always excused him to them the best I could." But

Mr. Holcombe instead of aiding his wife's efforts to bring up their children in the right path, often perversely put obstacles in her way and increased her difficulties, though he did try to conceal his drinking from them, and would never allow his boys to have or handle cards. So in many things he was a combination of contradictions. He could not endure, however, for his wife to punish the children, and especially the boys. On one occasion he came home and the younger son was still crying from the punishment inflicted by his mother for wading in a pond of water with his shoes on. Mr. Holcombe asked him what was the matter, and when he found out, he was so angry he made the boy go and wade in the pond again with his shoes on. And yet Mrs. Holcombe's love for her husband "never wavered," and she loved him "when he was at his worst."

While Mr. Holcombe was living in Atlanta he attended the races in Nashville, and while there, two men came along that had a new thing on cards, and they beat him out of five or six thousand dollars—broke him, in fact. After he was broke, he went to one of the men by the name of Buchanan and said, "I see that you have got a new trick on cards, and as I am well acquainted through the South, if you will give it away to me, we can go together and make money." The man, after some hesitation, agreed to do so. They went in partnership and traveled through the South as far as Key West, Florida, stopping at the principal cities and making money everywhere. At Key West he and his partner had a split and separated. From Key West Mr. Holcombe crossed over to Cuba, and spent some

time in Havana. In seeking adventures in that strange city he made some very narrow escapes, and was glad to get away. On landing at New Orleans, though he had a good deal of money, the accumulations of his winnings on his late tour through the South, he got to playing against faro bank and lost all he had. But he fell in with a young man about twenty years of age, from Georgia, on his way to Texas, and became very intimate with him. Finding that this young man had a draft for \$1,050, by the most adroit piece of maneuvering he got another man, a third party, to win it from him for himself, and gave this third party \$50 for doing it. Then he took charge of the young man in his destitution and distress, paid his bill for a day or two at a hotel in New Orleans, and gave him enough to pay his way on to Texas. The young man departed thinking Mr. Holcombe was one of the kindest men he had ever met. The gentle reader, if he be a young man who thinks himself wise enough to be intimate with strangers, might learn a useful little lesson from this young Georgian's experience as herein detailed.

From New Orleans, Mr. Holcombe went by river to Shreveport, Louisiana, where he met again with his former partner, Buchanan. They made up their differences and went into partnership again, and were successful in winning a good deal of money together. But afterward their fortunes changed and they both lost all they had. This soured Buchanan, who had never cordially liked Holcombe since their quarrel and separation at Key West. Mr. Holcombe himself shall narrate what took place afterward: "During this time we had been sleeping in a room together. Buchanan knew that



I had two derringer pistols. He got Phil Spangler to borrow one, and I feel satisfied he had snaked the other. A friend of mine, John Norton, asked me to deal faro bank, and I got broke, and the night that I did, I put the box in the drawer pretty roughly, and made some pretty rough remarks. Buchanan was present, but took no exception to what I said that night. The next morning, however, in the bar-room he began to abuse me, and we abused each other backward and forward until I had backed clear across the street. During this time I had my derringer pistol out in my hand. He had a big stick in his hand and a knife in his bosom. When we got across the street I made this remark, 'Mr. Buchanan, I do not want to kill you.' He was then about ten feet from me, and made a step toward me. I took deliberate aim at his heart and pulled the trigger, but the pistol snapped. He walked away from me then. I ran up to the hotel where Aleck Doran was, knowing that his six-shooter was always in good condition. I borrowed it and started to hunt Buchanan up, and when I found him, he came up to me with his hand out. We made up and have been good friends ever since. After we left there, these parties with whom we had been playing, got to quarreling among themselves about the different games, and the result was that John Norton killed Phil Spangler and another one of the men. And such is the life of the gambler." And such is too often, alas! the death of the gambler.

From Shreveport he went back to Atlanta where his family, consisting now of his wife, two sons and two daughters, had remained. But he could not be contented at any one place. It seemed impossible for him

to be quiet, no matter how much money he was making. Indeed, the more he got the more disquieted he seemed, and yet it was his passion to win money. Sometimes he would go to his home with his pockets full of it and would pour it out on the floor and tell the children to take what they wanted. He was so restless when he had won largely that he could not sleep; and his wife says she has known him to get up after having retired late and walk back to the city to his gambling house to find somebody to play with. He seemed to want to lose his money again. In fact, he seemed happier when he was entirely without money than when he had a great deal.

Not contented, then, at Atlanta, he went from there to Beaufort, South Carolina, to gamble with the officers of the navy. He got into a game of poker with some of them and won all the money. Then he was ready to quit and leave the place, but he got into a difficulty with a man there whose diamond pin he had in pawn for money lent him, and though it be at the risk of taxing the reader's patience with these details, yet, in order to show vividly what a gambler's life is, we shall let Mr. Holcombe give his own account of the affair:

"This man was the bully of the place. I had his diamond pin in pawn for seventy-five dollars, and another little fellow owed me eighteen dollars, or something like that, and I wanted him to pay me. Instead of paying me, however, he began to curse and abuse me; and I hit him on the nose, knocked him over and bloodied it, and he was bleeding like everything. He got over into the crowd; and under the excitement of the moment, I drew my pistol and started toward him.

This big bully caught me gently by the vest, and asked me quietly to put up my pistol. I did so. Then he said, 'You can't shoot anybody here.' I said 'I do not want to shoot anybody.' I then asked him to turn me loose. He again said 'You can't shoot anybody here.' I then said, 'What is the matter with you? Are we not friends?' And he said 'No,' and made the remark, 'I will take your pistol away from you and beat your brains out.' I struck him and knocked him over on a lounge, but he rose up and came at me, and we had quite a tussle around the room. The others all ran and left the house, and the barkeeper hid.

"When we separated, the big fellow had quite a head on him; was all beaten up. He then went into the other room and sat down, and the barkeeper came in where I was. I was willing to do or say anything to reconcile this man, and I said to the barkeeper that I was sorry of the difficulty, as I liked the man, which was a lie, and a square one, for I hated him from the moment I saw him. When he heard what I said, he came sauntering into the room, and I said to him, 'I am sorry this occurred, but you called me such a name that I was compelled to do as I did. You know that you are a brave man; and if any man had called you such a name, you would have done just as I did.' He called me a liar, and at it we went again. We separated ourselves every time. I got the best of the round. After that he stepped up to the sideboard and got a tumbler; but I looked him in the eye so closely that he could not throw it at me, and he put it down. After a little more conversation, he started to lift up a heavy spittoon of iron. I

stepped back a foot or two, drew my pistol, and told him if he did not put that down, I would kill him. He put it down. I then told the barkeeper he must come in there and witness this thing, because I expected to have to kill him. After the barkeeper came in, the man went out, saying, 'You had a gun on me to-night, and I will have one on you to-morrow.' Feeling satisfied if I remained, one of us would have to be killed; and feeling that I did not want to kill him, neither did I want to get killed on a cold collar, I concluded to walk out of the place. I got the barkeeper to promise to ship my trunk to Atlanta, and walked through the swamps to a station fourteen miles away, arriving there some time next day." Other such experiences Mr. Holcombe had enough to fill a volume perhaps, but these are sufficient to give an impression of what a gambler's life is and to show what *was* the life of that same Steve Holcombe who now for eleven years has been a pattern of Christian usefulness and zeal.

After spending a short time at Atlanta, he went to Hot Springs, Arkansas, and then again to Louisville, where he opened a faro bank and once more settled down for life, as he thought. *At any rate for the first time in his life he thought of saving a little money*, and he did so, investing it in some houses in the West End. Poor man! he had wandered *nearly* enough. He had almost found that rest can not be found, at least in the way he was seeking it, and the time was approaching when he would be *prepared* to hear of another sort and source of rest. Until he should be prepared, it would be vain to send him the message. To give the truth to some people to-day would be to cast pearls before

swine, to give it to them to-morrow may be re-clothing banished princes with due tokens of welcome and of royalty. To have told Steve Holcombe of Christ yet awhile would probably have excited his wonder and disgust; to tell him a little later will be to welcome a long-lost, long-enslaved and perishing child to his Father's house and to all the liberty of the sons of God.

So *he thought* of saving a little money and of investing in some cottages in the west end of Louisville. And God was thinking, too, and He was thinking thoughts of kindness and of love for the poor wicked outcast. He was *more* than thinking, He was getting things ready. But the time was not yet. A few more wanderings and the sinning one, foot-sore, heart-sore and weary will be willing to come to the Father's house and rest. Truth and God are always ready, but man is not always ready. "I have many things to say to you, but you can not bear them now."

His income at Louisville at this time was between five and seven thousand dollars a year. He had a large interest in the bank and some nights he would take in hundreds of dollars. But he could not be contented. The roving passion seized him again, and in company with a young man of fine family in Louisville, who had just inherited five thousand dollars, he set out on a circuit of the races. But in Lexington, the very first place they visited, they lost all they had, including the young man's jewelry, watch and diamond pin. They got more money and other partners and started again on the circuit and they made money. At Kalamazoo, Michigan, Mr. Holcombe withdrew from the party,

just for the sake of change, just because he was tired of them; and in playing against the faro banks at Kalamazoo he lost all he had again. Then he traveled around to different places playing against faro banks and "catching on" when he could. He visited Fort Wayne, Cleveland, Utica, Saratoga and New York. At New York he was broke and he had become so disgusted with traveling around and so weary of the world that he determined he *would* go back to Louisville and settle down for life. He did return to Louisville and got an interest in two gambling houses, making for him an income again of five thousand dollars a year.

During all these years his faithful wife, though not professing to be a Christian herself, endeavored in all possible ways to lead her children to become Christians. She taught them to pray the best she could, and sent them to Sunday-school. After her first child was born she gave up those worldly amusements which before she had, to please her husband, participated in with him—a good example for Christian mothers. She was in continual dread lest the children should grow up to follow the father's example. She always tried to conceal from them the fact of his being a gambler. The two daughters, Mamie and Irene, did not, when good-sized girls and going to school, know their father's business. They were asked at school what his occupation was, and could not tell. More than once they asked their mother, but she evaded the question by saying, "He isn't engaged in any work just now," or in some such way. Mrs. Holcombe begged her husband again and again not to continue gambling. She says, "I told him I was willing to live on bread and water, if he would

quit it." And she would not lay up any of the money he would give her, nor use any more of it than was necessary for herself and the children, for she felt that it was not rightly gotten. And because she would neither lay it up nor use it lavishly, she had nothing to do but let the children take it to play with and to give away. Under the training of such a mother with such patience, love and faith, it is no great marvel, and yet perhaps it is a great marvel, that Willie, the eldest child, notwithstanding the father's example, grew up to discern good, to desire good and to be good. While he was still a child, when his father came home drunk, the wounded and wondering child would beg him not to drink any more. Mrs. Holcombe says of him further, "When Willie would see his father on the street drinking, I have seen him, when twelve years old, jump off the car, go to his father and beg him with tears to go home with him. And I never saw Mr. Holcombe refuse to go."

In this way the boy grew up with a disgust and horror of drunkenness and drinking, and when in the year 1877 the great temperance movement was rolling over the country and meetings were held everywhere, and in Louisville also, though the boy had never drunk any intoxicating liquor in his life, he signed the pledge. He took his card home with his name signed to it, and when his father saw it, he was very angry about it. And yet, strange to say, on that very evening the father himself attended the meeting; and on the next evening he went again, in company with his wife. During the progress of the meeting he turned to his wife and said, "Mary, shall I go up and sign the

pledge?" Concealing her emotions as best she could, lest the show of it might disgust and repel him, she replied, "Yes, Steve, Willie and I would be very glad if you would," and he did so.

Some time after that, Willie asked his father and mother if they would accompany him to the Broadway Baptist church in the city to see him baptized. While witnessing the baptism of his son, Mr. Holcombe made up his mind that he would quit gambling, and as he went out of the church, he said to his wife, "*I will never play another card.*"

Some friend of his who overhead the remark said to him, "Steve, you had better study about that." He answered, "No, I have made up my mind. I wish you would tell the boys for me that they may count me out. They may stop my interest in the banks. I am done."

His wife, who was hanging on his arm, could no longer now conceal her emotions, nor did she try. She laughed and cried for joy. God was saying to her, "Mary, thy toils and tears, thy sufferings and patience have come up for a memorial before me, and I will send a man who will tell thee what thou oughtest to do, and speak to thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."

Mr. Holcombe was as good as his word. He did give up gambling from that time. But he had had so little experience in business that he was at a great loss what to do. Finally, however, he decided to go into the produce and commission business as he had had some experience in that line years before in Nashville, and as that required no great outlay of



money for a beginning. All the money he had was tied up in the houses which he had bought in Portland, the western suburb of Louisville. He was living in one of these himself, but he now determined to rent it out and to remove to the city that he might be nearer his business.

One day in October, 1877, a stranger entered his place of business, on Main street, and, calling for Mr. Holcombe, said: "I see you have a house for rent in Portland."

"Yes," said he, "I have."

"Well," said the stranger, "I like your house; but as my income is not large, I should be glad to get it at as low a rent as you can allow."

Mr. Holcombe replied: "I am rather pressed for money now myself, but maybe we can make a trade. What is your business?"

"I am a Methodist minister, and am just sent to the church in Portland, and you know it can not pay very much of a salary."

"That settles it then, sir," said Mr. Holcombe, with that abruptness and positiveness which are so characteristic of him, "I am a notorious gambler, and, of course, you would not want to live in a house of mine."

He expected that would be the end of the matter, and he looked to see the minister shrink from him and leave at once his presence and his house. On the contrary, the minister, though knowing nothing of Mr. Holcombe's recent reformation, yet seeing his sensitiveness, admiring his candor and hoping to be able to do him some good, laid his hand kindly on his shoulder and said:

“Oh no, my brother; I do not object to living in your house; and who knows but that this interview will result in good to us both, in more ways than one?”

Mr. Holcombe's impression was that ministers of the Gospel were, in their own estimation, and in fact, too good for gamblers to touch the hem of their garments, and that ministers had, for this reason, as little use and as great contempt for gamblers as the average gambler has, on the very same account, for ministers. But he found, to his amazement, that he was mistaken, and when the minister invited him to come to his church he said, not to the minister, yet he said:

“Yes, I will go, I never had a good man to call me ‘brother’ before. And he knows what I am, for I told him. I am so tired; I am so spent. Maybe he can tell me what to do and how to go. If Sunday ever comes, I will go to that man's church,”

And when Sunday came the minister and the gambler faced each other again. With a great sense of his responsibility and insufficiency the preacher declared the message of his Lord, not as he wished, but as he could. To the usual invitation to join the church nobody responded. After the benediction, however, Mr. Holcombe walked down the aisle to the pulpit and said to the minister: “How does a man join the church?” He had not attended church for twenty-three years, and had been engaged in such a life that he had forgotten what little he knew. The minister informed him.

“Then,” said he, “may I join your church?”

“You are welcome, and more than welcome,” replied the minister, and the people wondered.

“From the day I joined his church,” says Mr. Holcombe, “that minister seemed to understand me better than I understood myself. He seemed to know and did tell me my own secrets. He led me into an understanding of myself and my situation. I saw now what had been the cause of my restlessness, my wanderings, my weariness and my woe. I saw what it was I needed, and I prayed as earnestly as I knew how from that time. I attended all the services—preaching, Sunday-school, prayer-meeting, class-meeting in any and all kinds of weather, walking frequently all the way from Second street to Portland, a distance of three miles, because I was making too little to allow me to ride on the street-cars. But with all this, I felt something was yet wanting. I began to see that I could not make any advance in goodness and happiness so long as I was burdened with the unforgiven guilt of forty years of sin and crime. It grew worse and heavier until I felt I must have relief, if relief could be had. One day I went in the back office of my business house, after the others had all gone home, and shut myself up and determined to stay there and pray until I should find relief. The room was dark, and I had prayed, I know not how long, when such a great sense of relief and gladness and joy came to me that it seemed to me as if a light had flooded the room, and the only words I could utter or think of were these three: ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ It seemed to me they were the sweetest words I had ever heard. Never, till then, did the feeling of blood-guiltiness leave me. It was only the blood of Christ that could wash from my conscience the blood of my fellowman.”

As in his case, so always, in proportion as a man is in earnest about forsaking sin, will he desire the assurance of the forgiveness of past sins, and *vice versa*. But Mr. Holcombe did not find this an end of difficulty and trial and conflict—far from it. Indeed, it was the preparation for conflict, and the entrance upon it. Hitherto, in his old life, he had made no resistance to his evil nature, and there was no conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil. But such a nature as his was not to be conquered and subjected to entire and easy control in a day. His passions would revive, his old habits would re-assert themselves, poverty pinched him, people misunderstood him, failure after failure in business discouraged him. Hence, he needed constant and careful guidance and an unflinching sympathy. And he thus refers to the help he received from his pastor in those trying days:

“Seeing the great necessity of giving me much attention and making me feel at home in his presence and in the presence of his wife, he spent much time in my company, and with loving patience bore with my ignorance, dullness and slowness. In this way I became so much attached to him that I had no need or desire for my old associations. He led me along till I was entirely weaned from all desire for my old sinful life and habits. I think he gave me this close attention for about two years, when he felt that it was best for me to lean more upon God and less upon him.”

Mr. Holcombe received continual kindness and encouragement from the minister's wife also, who not only had for him always a cordial greeting and a kindly

word of cheer, but who took great pleasure in entertaining him frequently in their home. It was a perpetual benediction to him to know her, to see the daily beauty of her faithful life, to feel the influence of her heavenly spirit. With quick intuition she recognized the sincerity and intensity of Mr. Holcombe's desires and efforts to be a Christian man; with ready insight she comprehended the situation and saw his difficulties and needs, and with a very Christ-like self-forgetfulness and joy she ministered to this struggling soul. Not only Mr. Holcombe, but all who ever knew her, whether in adversity or prosperity, whether in sickness or in health, admired the beauty and felt the quiet unconscious power of her character. As for Mr. Holcombe himself, his mingled feeling of reverence for her saintliness and of gratitude for her sisterliness led him always to speak of her in terms that he did not apply to any other person whom he knew. He could never cease to marvel that one of her education, position and tender womanliness should take such pains and have such pleasure in helping, entertaining and serving such as he. A few years only was he blessed with the helpfulness of her friendship. In 1885, when she was just past the age of thirty-one, her tender feet grew so tired that she could go no further in this rough world, and Christ took her away. Few were more deeply bereaved than the poor converted gambler, and when he was asked if he would serve as one of the pallbearers on the occasion of her funeral, he burst into tears and replied, "I am not worthy, I am not worthy." If those who knew her—little children of tender years, young men and women, perplexed on life's threshold

and desiring to enter in at the strait gate, people of rank and wealth, people in poverty and ignorance, worldly-minded people whom she had unconsciously attracted, experienced Christians whom she unconsciously helped, and, most of all, her husband and children who knew her best—if all these should be asked, all these would agree that St. Paul has written her fitting epitaph:

“ Well reported of for good works ;  
If she have brought up children,  
If she have lodged strangers,  
If she have washed the saints' feet,  
If she have relieved the afflicted,  
If she have diligently followed every good work.”

It was not long after Mr. Holcombe's conversion before his entire family became members of the church. Though this was to him cause of unspeakable joy and gratitude, it did not mark the limit of his love and zeal. From the time of his conversion he had a deep and brotherly sympathy for all who were without the knowledge and joy he had come into the possession of, but he felt a special interest in the salvation of the wretched and the outcast, and of the men of his own class and former occupation who were as ignorant as he was of these higher things and as shut out from opportunities of knowing them. So that from the very beginning of his Christian life he undertook to help others, and when they were in need, not stopping to think of any other way, he took them to his own house. This, with the support of his own family, increased the cost of his living to such an extent that he was soon surprised and pained to find that he could not carry on his busi-

ness. He had taken to his home, also, the father of his wife, whom he cared for till his death. And in a short time he was so pressed for means that he had to mortgage his property for money to go into another kind of business.

When it was first reported that Steve Holcombe, one of the most successful, daring and famous gamblers in the South, had been converted and had joined the church, the usual predictions were made that in less than three months, etc., he would see his mistake or yield to discouragements and return to his old life of self-indulgence and ease. But when men passed and repassed the corner where this man had a little fruit store and was trying to make an honest living for his family, their thoughts became more serious and their questions deeper. Steve had got something or something had got him. He was not the man of former times. And most of his friends, the gamblers included, when they saw this, were glad, and while they wondered wished him well. But there was one man engaged in business just across the street from the little fruit store, who with a patronizing air bought little fruits from Mr. Holcombe, and then spent his leisure in discussions and arguments to prove not only that he had made a big blunder in becoming a Christian, but that religion was all a sham, the Bible a not very cunningly devised fable and that Mr. Ingersoll was the greatest man of the day, because he had shattered these delusions. Mr. Holcombe patiently heard it all, and perhaps did not frame as cogent or logical an answer to this man's sophistries as he could do now, but he felt in his own heart and he saw in his own life that he was a new man. He felt a

profound pity for his friend who knew not nor cared for any of these things, and he lived on his humble, patient, uncomplaining Christian life. It may not be out of place to add as the sequel of this little episode that the testimony of this man across the way, who was such an unbeliever and scoffer, is given elsewhere in this volume, and doubtless will be recognized by the reader. Mr. Holcombe's life was too much for his logic.

When Mr. Holcombe had failed in every kind of business that he undertook, his property was forced on the market and nothing was left him from the sale of it. Christian men of means might have helped him and ought to have helped him, but for reasons known to themselves they did not. Perhaps they were afraid to take hold of so tough a case as Steve Holcombe was known to have been, perhaps they saw he was not an experienced business man, perhaps they felt indisposed to help a man who was so incapable of economy and so generous in entertaining his friends and helping the needy. Greatly pressed, he went at last to his half-brother with whom in former years he had been associated as partner in business, and putting his case and condition before him asked for employment. But his half-brother declined on the spot, giving as his short and sole reason that he believed Mr. Holcombe was a hypocrite and was making believe that he was a Christian for some sinister purpose.

This was "the most unkindest cut" of all and for days the poor wounded man felt the iron in his soul. During his former life he would have cared nothing for such treatment. A ruined character is benumbed like a paralyzed limb, but a revived and repentant soul is full



of sensitive nerves and feels the slightest slight or the smallest wound. He found out months afterward, however, that his half-brother was already losing his mind and was not responsible for this extraordinary behavior. He tried and his friends tried everywhere and every way to find employment for him, but he could get nothing to do. His money was all gone, his property was all gone, he sold his piano, he sold his Brussels carpets, he removed from place to place, following cheaper rent till at last he took his family to a garret. It was now two years since his conversion. During these two years he had done nothing to bring reproach on his profession or to give ground for a doubt of his sincerity. He had not only lived a consistent life himself, he had striven earnestly to help others to do so. He assisted in holding meetings in Shippingsport, and the people marveled and magnified the grace of God in him. But he was with his family on the point of starvation. When at last everything had been tried and no relief was found, in his desperation he thought of the improbable possibility of finding something, at least something to do, in the West, and he decided to go to Colorado.

In Louisville, where he was suffering and where his family was suffering, he could have returned to gambling and have been independent in a month. He could have been living in a comfortable house; he could have had, as he was wont, the best the market afforded for his table, he could have decked himself with jewelry and diamonds, he could soon have been once more in position to spend, as he had regularly done, from two to ten dollars a day for the mere luxuries of life. He could have done all this and he could do all this even

yet; for even yet he is in the prime of life and power. But he did not, and he does not. He did not turn Christian because he had played out as a gambler. He did not turn to Christianity because fortune had turned away from him. But he turned away himself from fortune when he was fortune's pet, in order to turn to a better and worthier life.

When he had decided to go to Colorado, he went to his pastor and told him. The pastor was astonished, alarmed. After two years and more of faithful and self-denying service was his friend and brother about to give away? Was this a plan to get away into a "far country" where he might turn again to sin? He reasoned with him, he appealed to him, he besought him. He tried to picture the perils of the journey and the perils of the place. He reminded Mr. Holcombe of the condition, as far as he knew it, of his family. But all to no purpose. He committed his friend trustfully to God and gave it up.

"But," said the pastor, "how are you going to get there?"

"I am going to walk from place to place and work my way out. I can not stay here, I can get nothing to do and I must try elsewhere. I am desperate."

"Then," said the pastor, "if your mind is made up and you are going, I can let you have some money. I have about sixty-one dollars in bank which I laid aside when a single man, to use for Christ, and if that will pay your way out, you can have it. Christ has called for his own."

He accepted it with tears, left a few dollars of it with his wife and, with the rest, started for Leadville.

When he first landed at Denver, he met an old friend, John Chisholm, with whom he had gambled in Atlanta. This man had left Atlanta on account of having killed somebody there, and had made a considerable amount of money in California. He had now come to Denver and opened a game of faro. When he saw Mr. Holcombe on the street, he said: "You are just the man I want. I have opened a game of faro here, and I am afraid I can not protect myself. I will give you a good interest if you will go in with me."

Mr. Holcombe replied: "Yes, John; but I am a Christian now, and can not deal faro."

"I know," said the man, "you were a Christian in Louisville, but you are a long ways from there."

"Yes," Mr. Holcombe said, "but a true Christian is a Christian everywhere."

Notwithstanding, he insisted on Mr. Holcombe's going to his room to see another old Atlanta friend. He did so, but felt so much out of place there that he did not remain ten minutes.

From Denver he concluded to go to Silver Cliff instead of Leadville. When he arrived in that strange village, his money was all gone and he lacked fifteen cents of having enough to pay the stage-driver. "It was about sundown," says he, "when I got there. I did not know a living soul. I had not a cent of money. My courage failed me. I broke down and wept like a child."

Having a good trunk he knew he would not be asked to pay in advance, and he went to a hotel and spent the night. In the morning he walked out after

breakfast to see what sort of a place he had gotten into. As he stood at the post-office, he saw across the street what he recognized as a gambling-house, "everything wide open," no attempt at concealment or privacy. He asked some one out of curiosity who was the proprietor, and found that two of his old acquaintances were running the house. He could easily, and at once, have gotten a situation with them, and could soon have had money to relieve his own wants and the wants of his family. But he had already stood severe tests, and had now arrived at a point where he had no inclination whatever to gamble and felt no temptation to procure money in that way or from that source. He did not even look for the proprietors of the establishment or let them know he was in the village. But while he was standing there, thinking of his condition and wondering what he should do, he overheard a man say that a dining-room waiter was wanted at the Carbonate hotel, the one at which he had spent the night. He went at once to the hotel, made application for the place, and was accepted at a salary of twenty-five dollars a month and board.

He was filled with thankfulness and joy, and he has declared since, that though, on one night during his gambling life, he had won three thousand dollars in money, the satisfaction which he felt then could not be compared with that which he felt now when the hotel-proprietor gave him this position of dining-room waiter *at a salary of twenty-five dollars a month*. He entered at once upon his duties. To his great surprise he found several Louisville gentlemen stop-

ping at the hotel, some of whom had known him in other days and circumstances, and whom he had boarded with at hotels where he paid five dollars a day, with two to four dollars a day, extra, for wine and cigars. But, notwithstanding that, he was not ashamed of his present position. On the contrary, he was very thankful for it and happy in it. He did such faithful service there that the proprietor became interested in him and showed him much kindness.

During his stay at Silver Cliff he did not neglect any opportunity of doing good to others.

One day, when he was standing in the door of the post-office, a man, whose name he afterward found to be James Lewis, came in, got a letter and sat down on the step right under Mr. Holcombe to read it. As he read it, he was much affected and tears were running down his hardened face. Mr. Holcombe became so interested that he read the man's letter over his shoulder. It was from his wife, who, with her three children, had left her husband on account of his drunkenness. Mr. Holcombe made up his mind he would see if he could do something for the poor man to better his condition, and, if possible, bring about the re-union of the family. He did not like to approach him then and there. He watched him till he got up and moved away and started down through an alley. As he emerged from the alley, at the farther end, Mr. Holcombe, who had gone around another way, met him. Little did the man suspect that the stranger who accosted him knew his trouble and his family secrets. Mr. Holcombe, with that tact which his knowledge of men had given him, spoke to

him kindly, but in a way that would not arouse his suspicions. He told him, after a little while, his own condition in that far-off land away from his family and friends. He found out from the man where he stayed. He went to see him, found that he slept in a stable, provided him with some things he needed, and then got down on his knees there in the stable and prayed for him.

Finally, when the proper time had come, Mr. Holcombe showed him a Murphy pledge and asked him if he would not sign it. He told him what he himself had been before, and what he had become, since signing that pledge. The man gave Mr. Holcombe his confidence, unbosomed himself to him and eagerly sought counsel. He signed the pledge also and said he would, by God's help, give up his sins that had separated him from a loving wife, and would try to live a better life. Mr. Holcombe wrote to the man's wife informing her of the change in her husband and the effort he was making to do right. She came at once to Silver Cliff and Mr. Holcombe had the pleasure of seeing them reunited and ate with them in their humble cabin.

When he had been some time at the Carbonate hotel, he found a position where he could make more money and worked there till he had saved enough to buy an outfit for "prospecting" in the mountains. This outfit consisted of a little donkey, several "agricultural implements for subverting *terra firma*," such as spade, pick, etc., and provisions for two or three weeks. Having procured these and packed his burro, as the donkey is called out West, he and his partner started

for the mountains. Mr. Holcombe kept a sort of diary of this part of his Western trip, and we give it here, including the time from his leaving Silver Cliff to his return to Denver.

DIARY.

Tuesday, May 27, 1879.—I entered into partnership with a man by the name of J. E. White from Wisconsin for prospecting in the mountains. He had some blankets at Oak Creek, a distance of thirty miles from Silver Cliff. We walked out there one day and returned the next. The road was very full of dust and gravel. My shoes would get full of it. Every little mountain stream we came to I would stop and wash my feet, which was very refreshing. This made me think of the blessed Son of God and why, when he was a guest at different places, they brought him water for his feet,

“Those blessed feet  
Which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed  
For our advantage on the bitter cross.”

Wednesday, May 28.—After having bought a burro and a two weeks' grub-stake, J. E. White and myself started for the Sangre de Christo mountain, a wild, high range of the Rockies. We paid for our burro twenty-one dollars, and for our grub seven dollars. It consisted of flour, coffee, sugar, bacon, salt, pepper, potatoes and baking powder. We had a coffee-pot, frying-pan, tin cups. We used our pocket-knives instead of table-knives. We had a butcher-knife and some teaspoons. With these and some other things we packed our burro and started. It was a funny sight. It all looked like a house on top of the poor little

animal which was not much larger than a good sized Newfoundland dog. But it was strong, faithful and sure-footed and could go anywhere in the mountains that a man could. We traveled this first day about ten miles and camped in a gulch at night. Had a hard storm. Our only shelter was a hut made of boughs of trees, Indian fashion.

Thursday, May 29.—We moved up the gulch as far as we could for the snow. Did some little prospecting of which neither of us knew very much, and, of course, we found nothing. Every once in awhile, White would pick up a rock, look at it wisely and say "This is good float. I think there is a paying lode up on this mountain somewhere." Up the mountain we go about 9,000 feet above the sea level. We turned over all the stones and dug up the earth every now and then and toward night we went to work to make our hut which we got about half finished. During the night snow fell about three inches. We were on the side of the mountain. Could hardly keep the fire from rolling down the side of the mountain. Could hardly keep our victuals from upsetting. This and the snow made me weaken considerably, and I did say in my heart I wished I was back home.

Friday, May 30.—We prospected the second ridge, south of Horn's Peak, going up about 300 feet above timber line, or about 12,000 feet above the sea-level. There were no indications of minerals. About five miles off we could see a beautiful lake. I was very anxious to go to it, but White objected. Said it would be dangerous, might be caught in a snow-storm. The sun was shining brightly. Weather was very



pleasant. I could not conceive of a snow-storm on the 30th of May. So I persuaded him to go. After we had gone some distance, all of a sudden it began to blow up cold and in a little while to snow. We turned our faces toward camp. Just then we saw one of those beautiful Rocky mountain spotted grouse. We were so hungry for something fresh to eat, we took several shots at it with White's pistol. But the blinding snow made it impossible for us to hit it. We had no grouse for supper.

It grew cold very rapidly and in a very short time it seemed to me as cold as I ever felt it in my life. My moustache froze stiff. At last the storm got so heavy, and, the evening coming on, we could hardly see our way. The side of the mountain was full of dead timber, which was slick like glass and, as everything was covered with snow, we could not always see where to put our feet down, and to have slipped would have been almost certain death. Once White did slip and but for having the pick and sticking it in a soft place, he would have been killed. We got lost and wandered about over the mountain side till late in the evening when we providentially struck on our camp. We were hungry, tired and wet. Our bedding was covered with snow. Before going to bed I read the first chapter of Romans.

Saturday, May 31.—Cloudy morning. Four inches of snow. No wind. Felt very well. We moved our camp. Stopped at a deserted cabin. Found a grindstone and ground our hatchet. We pitched camp about three miles South-east. Built a hut of boughs. We got wet. I had but one pair of pants and one pair

of socks. My feet were soaking wet. At bedtime I read Romans, second chapter.

Sunday, June 1, 1879.—Snowed Saturday night. When I awoke our blankets were wet. I had symptoms of rheumatism in knees and wrists. I read Romans, third chapter, and we had prayer together. White sang "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" and "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." It made me think of my family so far away, of my dear pastor, Brother ———, and the dear old Portland church, and the tears streamed down my face. Spent the day in camp.

Monday, June 2.—Woke up very cold. Our hut of pine boughs was not sufficient to keep us warm. So much snow on the mountains that we prospected the foot-hills and found what we thought were indications of mineral. At night read Romans, fourth chapter. Much encouraged by Abraham's faith. So cold I had to get my hat in the night and put it on my head to keep warm. Dreamed that I was at home with my precious wife. Tried to wake her up, but she was dead. What awful feelings!

Tuesday, June 3.—A beautiful bright morning. Read Romans v. Partner wanted to go deer hunting with a pistol. Seemed to me so foolish I would not go. I stayed at camp and was very lonesome.

Wednesday, June 4.—Bright, clear morning. Read Romans vi. Had our breakfast, bread, bacon, coffee and potatoes, early, so as to prospect on third mountain south of Horn's Peak. Started for the mountains. Went up above timber line. Ate lunch up there. Too much snow to go any higher. Found what we thought were indications of mineral. Saw a

gray eagle sailing around. It looked very grand away up above that lonely mountain. Suppose its nest was near. In evening returned to camp very tired. Read Romans vii., and it did me a great deal of good.

Thursday, June 5.—Clear morning. Prospected some around the foot-hills. Found nothing. Began to get disgusted with prospecting. Struck camp about ten or eleven o'clock A. M. Packed our burro and crossed valley about fifteen miles. Very hot crossing. Pack slipped out of place several times. Very troublesome. White got out of humor. Was inclined to quarrel, but I would not quarrel with him. After getting across the valley we had trouble finding a place to camp convenient to water, but found it at last. While we were unpacking a big rabbit jumped up. White fired three or four shots at him with his revolver. Followed him up the side of the mountain. At last he killed him. He came down the mountain swinging old Brer Rabbit, and I think he was as happy looking a man as I ever saw. No doubt a smile of satisfaction might have been seen on your Uncle Remus' face, too, when I saw that rabbit. That was the first thing in shape of fresh meat we had had for about ten days.

SUPPER—BILL OF FARE.

*Fried Rabbit,* *Potatoes,* *Coffee.* *Fried Bread,*

After supper we raised a few poles and threw our blankets over them for shelter. Read Romans viii., and went to sleep, feeling satisfied that if I died before morning, I would wake up in heaven.

Friday, June 6.—Bright morning. Fine appetite. Good breakfast. Read Romans ix. We moved from

the foot-hills and went up into the mountain. White went prospecting while I built us a hut for the night. When he came back he said he had found some very good float. Very cold night. Our burro got loose in the night and made considerable noise moving around. We were sure it was a mountain lion, but, of course, we were not afraid. I had my hatchet under my head and he had his pistols. Of course, we were not afraid.

Saturday, June 7.—Very cold morning. Prospected. Found a lode of black rock. Felt sure we had struck it rich. Dug a whole in the ground and staked a claim. Read Romans x, at night. Slept cold. Got to thinking. Thought it was easier to find a needle in a haystack than a paying mine in the Rocky mountains.

Sunday, June 8.—Morning clear and bright. Owing to the disagreeable place in which we were camped, we thought our health justified us in moving even on the Lord's day. Found an old cabin. It was worse than any horse stable, but we cleaned it out. Made a bed of poles, which we cut and carried some distance. This was on the Pueblo and Rosita road.

Monday, June 9.—Bright, cold morning. Ice on the spring branch. After breakfast we started prospecting. Found nothing, except another old deserted cabin of the Arkansaw Traveler's style. Returned to camp in the evening. Read Romans xii. and xiii. and slept like a prince.

Tuesday, June 10.—Another bright, clear, cold morning. We prospected some. Staked off a claim, more in fun than anything else, for we knew it was worth nothing. The locality is called Hardscrabble. And it was the right name. Our provisions had about

given out, and it was a hard scrabble for us to get along. Concluded to return to Silver Cliff, go to work, get another grub stake, and take another fresh start. In the afternoon we rested. Read Romans xiv., xv. and xvi.

Wednesday, June 11.—Another beautiful Colorado morning. Read 1 Cor., i. Started for Silver Cliff about 7:00 A. M. I carried White's pistol. On the way I killed two doves. Had them for dinner about 3:00 P. M. How sweet they did taste! Arrived at Silver Cliff about dark.

Thursday, June 12.—Concluded the best thing I could do was to get home as soon as possible. We sold our burro for \$15.00, and with my part (\$7.50) I started with a friend by the name of Hall for home. We got a cheap ride in a freight wagon from Silver Cliff to Pueblo. The country through which we passed is the wildest and grandest I ever saw anywhere in my life. Hardscrabble canon is one of the most picturesque in the world, and then the beautiful mountain stream all the way, winding like a serpent down the valley. We crossed and re-crossed it several times. That night we slept in the wagon. I never neglected praying any day while I was on the prospecting tour.

Friday, June 13.—Arrived at Pueblo about 2:00 P. M. Had a little money. Got a bite to eat. At that time there was a railroad war. Men were killing each other for three dollars a day for corporations. The excitement about this, and the moving bodies of men all anxious for news, kept me from thinking of my condition till night. At night I went out to the

commons, on the edge of the city, and, with other tramps, went to sleep on the cold ground.

Saturday, June 14.—Had a little money. Some others of the tramps had a little. We pooled it, bought a little grub, and at 12:00 o'clock started on a tramp to Denver, a distance of about one hundred and twenty-five miles. I felt fresh and strong. We walked about six miles and slept on the ground at night.

Sunday, June 15.—Got up early. Had a little breakfast. Started about 6:00 A. M. Walked about three miles when, two of our party having such sore feet, we stopped. I had a voracious appetite. Went to cooking. We had some canned tomatoes and canned syrup. I cooked some tomatoes and ate them. Then I went to a ranch, bought a nickel's worth of milk, fried some cakes, ate them with the syrup, drank the milk and was—sick. Did not feel strong again all the time. I had had no experience in tramping and tried to carry too much luggage. My feet got sore. Every day's tramp after that was a drag. One of the party left us and went on ahead by himself. We never saw him again. Another was so broken down we had to leave him. Hall and I went on sick and tired. About dark we went up to the house of a ranchman, and I told him my story. He took us in. I found out he was a professing Christian. I read Romans vii., and prayed with the family. His name is John Irvine, El Paso, Colorado.

Monday, June 16.—Left John Irvine's soon after breakfast. Walked five miles to a water-tank where the train had to stop for water. We waited till the

train came along, and boarded her. The conductor did not see us till we had passed Colorado Springs some distance. When he did see us, I made the appeal of my life on account of myself and my friend, whose feet were so sore he could, with difficulty, hobble along. I told the conductor my own condition, and of my anxiety to get home to a suffering family. When I saw he would not believe what I said, I offered him my pocket-knife, a very fine and costly one, to let us ride a short distance further, but he was like a stone. At the next stop he put us off without a cent of money or a bite to eat. We walked about six miles, lay down on the ground, with the sky for a covering, and slept like logs.

Tuesday, June 17.—We started about daybreak, without anything to eat. Walked about eight miles to a little place called Sedalia. Saw a German boarding house. Sent Hall in to see if we could get anything to eat. Had no money, but told him to tell her I would give her a butcher-knife and a silver teaspoon, which I had brought from home, for something to eat.

She said to him so I could hear her: "Breakfast is over, but I will give you what I have." That was enough for me. In I went. Sat down to a real German lunch, and never did a breakfast taste sweeter to me than that. God bless that good old German woman, not only for her good breakfast, but for her kind, motherly words to two strangers in want. It taught me a lesson which I have not forgotten yet, and I pray God I never may.

I left Sedalia feeling comfortable. Walked about four miles. Hall was about done. He could go no

further. While we were sitting there, a Christian man by the name of Jennings came along, took pity on us, took us in his wagon, gave us something to eat and brought us to Denver. We arrived there about 6:00 P. M., without one cent, nothing to eat, no place to go. Slept that night in a stable-yard under Jennings's wagon.

Wednesday, June 18.—Got up next morning about daybreak. Had a little cold breakfast with Jennings. Knocked about town a little. Had a baker's blackberry pie and a cup of water for dinner.

Here the diary of the prospecting tour and the tramp to Denver ends.

Mr. Holcombe continued the next day to knock about town, not knowing what to do, when his old friend, Frank Jones, by nature one of the kindest-hearted men in the world, chanced to meet him and insisted on sharing his room with him. As his friend Jones, however, was himself broke, he could render Mr. Holcombe no further assistance and it was necessary for Mr. Holcombe to look about for something to do. He spent a week in this occupation, or want of occupation, and at the end of that time found employment in a brick-yard. But the work was so hard, at the end of three weeks, he had to give it up. After some time what little money he had was expended and again he was destitute. And at one time he was so pressed that he went into a grocery store and offered his fine pocket-knife again for something to eat, but it was refused. Several times he passed the Young Men's Christian Association rooms. Each time he stopped, looked wistfully in and debated with himself whether they would probably believe him and help



him if he ventured to go in and make his condition known. But he had never been used to asking favors, and he did not know how to approach Christian people, and so his heart failed him.

At that time and in that condition he was assailed by a sore temptation. The devil, he says, suggested these thoughts to him: "This is a fine condition for Steve Holcombe to be in. Before you heard of God and this religion, you could stop at first-class hotels, wear fine clothes, live like a gentleman, have a good home and all that money could buy for your family. Now, you say you are serving God. You say He is your father and that He owns everything in the world. Yet here you are without food and clothing and your family is at home in want. You have not enough to buy a meal for them or for yourself. Can you afford to trust and serve such a master as that?"

But he had not been serving God two years and more for naught. He had learned some things in that time. One of them was that trials and privations are a part of the Christian's heritage, and that if any man will live godly in this present world, he must expect to suffer. So his reply was ready and he met the temptation with decision. "Yea, and though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And the sequel will show whether he made a mistake in trusting Him.

When he saw it was useless for him to remain longer away from home, he informed his friend, Mr. Jones, of his purpose to leave at once for Louisville. Mr. Jones got him money enough to buy a ticket to Kansas City, and there the great temperance lecturer, Francis Murphy, having found out his character and condition, gave him enough to get home.

Whether God can or not, at any rate He does not pour wisdom into a man as we pour water into a bottle. He does not so favor even His own children, if favor it could be called. But He gives a man opportunities of self-discipline, and if, aided by His divine help and grace, the man is willing to go through the process, he comes out with larger knowledge and better equipment for life and service and usefulness.

Without the experiences and lessons of this Colorado trip, Mr. Holcombe could not have been the efficient man he is to-day. That season of loneliness and self-searching and severe testing and humiliation was to him, though a painful, yet a helpful, and perhaps necessary, stage in his Christian life.

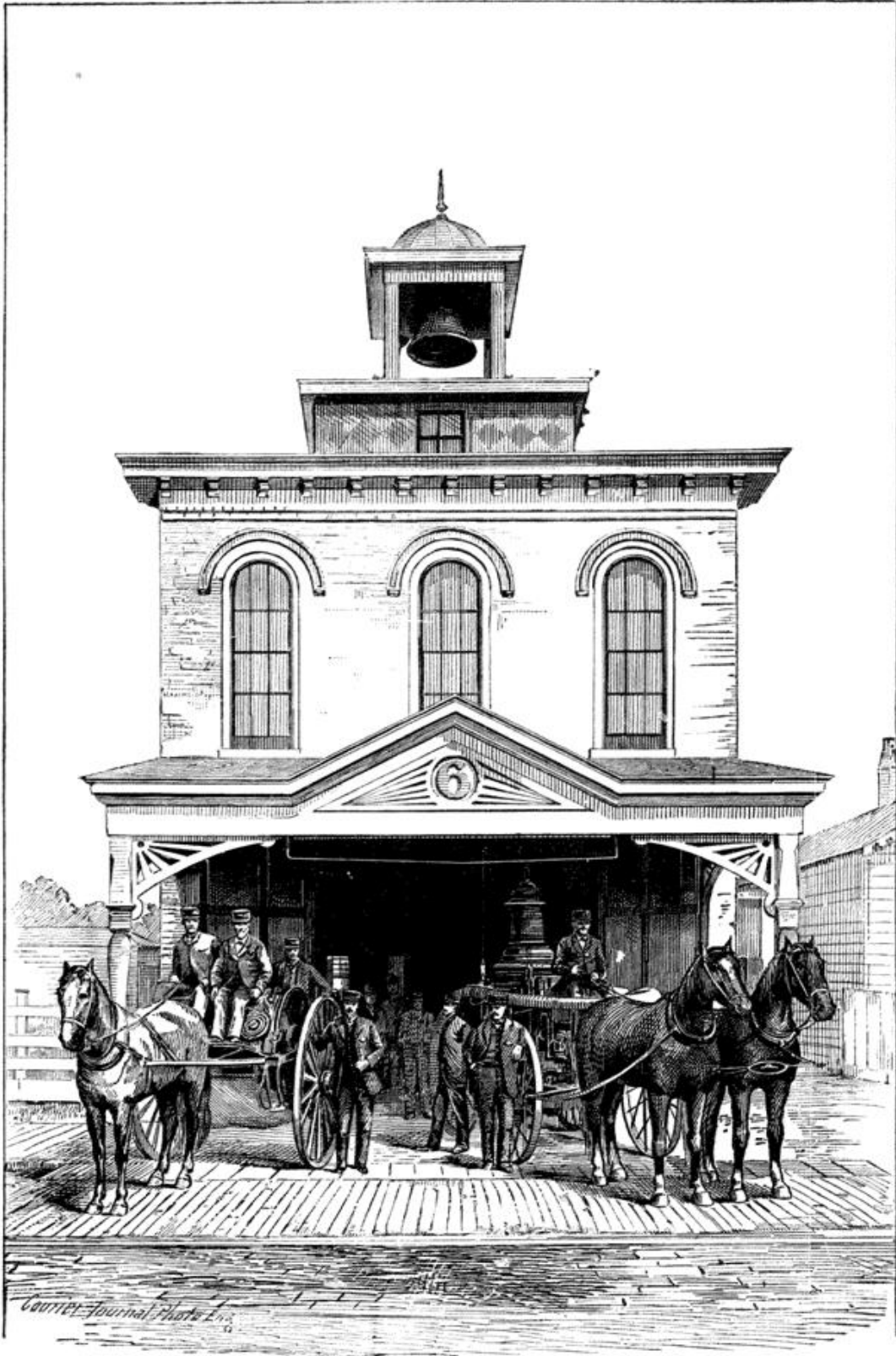
Indeed, all the trying experiences that had come to him since his conversion were helpful to him in one way or another. He needed to learn patience, he needed to learn economy, he needed to learn self-control. The disposition to practice all these was given him at the time of his conversion, he needed now to be put to the test and to "learn obedience, practically, by the things which he suffered." Moreover, if he was to serve efficiently the poor and the tempted, he needed to become acquainted with their condition, their sorrows, their conflicts, by passing through them himself.

The endurance of the evils which give occasion for the exercise of self-denial and for the acquisition of self-control is a far less evil than the want of self-denial and of self-control. So Mr. Holcombe was willing to suffer all these things rather than to decline them and be without the blessing which comes through them. This reflection justified his past sufferings and prepared him

for any that might come in the future. He knew what he had been and he had learned that he was to be purified by fire. So he felt that if God would be patient with him, he would be patient with God's dealings. When he arrived at home he found his family in a very needy condition. Shortly after his departure for Colorado, his wife had to remove from the house she was occupying, because she could not pay the rent. She had never taken care of herself before or done any sort of work, for he always provided well for his family; but now she saw it was necessary for her to support the family. Accordingly, she took in sewing, and in that way did support them till Mr. Holcombe's return. For six weeks after his return he could find nothing to do, and Mrs. Holcombe, brave, noble woman, continued to support the family with her needle. The time of her full deliverance was coming, but it was not yet. Nor did she know when it would come, or that it would ever come. But all the same she waited, and while she waited, she served, and with a glad heart, too, for had not her husband turned his face heavenward? And poverty seemed now a small thing.

Some time after Mr. Holcombe's return, his friend, Major Ed Hughes, was elected Chief of the Fire Department in Louisville, and he made application to him at once for a position. Major Hughes gave it to him unhesitatingly; but, as Mr. Holcombe was entirely without experience, it had to be a subordinate one, in which the salary was not large, being only a dollar and a half per day. It was impossible for him to support his family on so little, and though Mrs. Holcombe undertook to help him out by keeping boarders and

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ENGINE HOUSE.

doing all the work herself, they got behind all the time he was in the fire department. Finding that keeping boarders after Mrs. Holcombe's liberal fashion was entirely unprofitable, she gave that up and commenced taking in sewing again. She even learned to make coats for clothing stores in Louisville, and continued that for some time.

Meanwhile, he was having a hard time in his subordinate position in the fire department. In the first place he was required to be at the engine-house night and day and Sundays, with the bare exception of a half hour or such a matter at meal time. For a man of his nature and habits this confinement was almost intolerable, and would have been quite so, if he had not been radically changed. In the second place he was subject to the orders of his superiors, though he had never been obliged to obey anybody, and as a matter of fact never had obeyed anybody since he was a mere infant. In the third place, notwithstanding his experience, his knowledge of the world and his capacity for higher work, he was required to do work which a well-trained idiot might have done just as well. One of his duties was to rub the engine and keep it polished. In order to clean some parts of it, he would have to lie down on the floor under it flat on his back; and in order to clean other more delicate parts of the machinery, he had to work in such places that he was always bruising and skinning his hands.

If repeated failure in business in Louisville was hard, if starving in Colorado was harder. the confinement and drudgery of his position at the engine-house were hardest. It would require some effort to

think of a position more thoroughly disagreeable and trying than this one which Mr. Holcombe filled to the satisfaction of his superiors for two mortal years. But he was learning some things he needed to know. He was passing through a necessary apprenticeship, though he did not know it, for something vastly higher. It perhaps should be added that Mr. Holcombe was practically isolated and alone at the engine-house, for none of the men there employed were congenial companions. However, to their credit, be it said, they showed great respect for him and for his Christian profession; they quit gambling, they refrained from using obscene or profane language in his presence, and, in general, were very kind to him.

Nothing could lessen Mr. Holcombe's sympathy for the outcast and the lost, and nothing destroy his zeal for their salvation. Though he was not allowed to leave his post even on Sunday, without hiring, at his own expense, a substitute, yet he frequently went to Shippingsport and other places to hold services among the poor "with the hope," as he says, "of helping and blessing them." He incurred the expense of a substitute that he might, once in awhile, go out bearing light and blessing to others, and he even took to his own home men who were trying to reform and live better lives. In view of the condition of his family, this was doubtless more than he ought to have done, and in after years he saw it was a mistake, but such was his insatiable longing to help and bless others, he let his zeal, perhaps, go beyond his prudence in that single particular. Most of us err very far on the other side. He did not hesitate to take to his home in some

instances men who had gone in their dissipation to the extent of delirium tremens. One such case was that of a fine young fellow who belonged to an excellent family in Louisville, but who through drink had gone down, down, down, until he had struck bottom. During his drinking sprees he was the most forlorn and wretched looking man in Louisville. He was at this time, by Mr. Holcombe's invitation, staying at his house. He ate there, he slept there; it was his home. But on one occasion, some time after midnight, he was attacked with a frightful spell of delirium tremens, or, as he said, the devils got after him. They told him, he said, that if he did not kill Mr. and Mrs. Holcombe and their baby, they would kill him. He heard them. They told him to go and get his razor, and he did it. Then they advanced on him and he backed from them, his razor in hand. As they advanced he retreated. He opened Mr. Holcombe's door (for he had hired a substitute and remained at home on the night in question in order to help his man through his spell). He backed to the bed in which Mr. and Mrs. Holcombe were sleeping. He struck the bed as he retreated from the devils, and Mrs. Holcombe awoke to find a demonized man standing over them with a drawn razor. She woke her husband. He jumped out of bed, caught the man's arm and took the razor from him. After that Mr. Holcombe sat up with him the remainder of the night, and during most of the time the man was talking to imaginary devils. About daylight he snatched up a brickbat out of the hearth and rushed toward the door saying there were three big men out there who had come to kill him. Mr.



Holcombe kept him with himself all next day. The next night while they were walking together in the open air, the man imagined that a woman whom he knew to be dead was choking him to death, and he was on the point of dying with suffocation when Mr. Holcombe called a physician to his aid.

Such was the kind of men Mr. Holcombe, even in those days of poverty and discouragement, was trying to help and rescue, and such were his efforts and trials and perils in rescuing them.

When Mr. Holcombe's pastor saw the grace of God that abounded in him, it was plain to him that he might, in future, when a suitable opening should come, make a very useful helper in the work of the church. In order, therefore, that Mr. Holcombe might be prepared for an enlarged sphere, if it should ever come, the pastor proposed to teach him in certain lines and did so, visiting him regularly at the engine house for that purpose. Mr. Holcombe studied very industriously, but it was with extreme difficulty that he could apply himself to books at that time. Later, however, he overcame to a great extent this difficulty and has gotten now to be quite a student. He has attended also, for two years, with great profit, the lectures of Dr. Broadus in the Baptist Seminary in Louisville.

As has been said elsewhere, Mr. Holcombe remained in the fire department for two years, enduring the confinement, performing the drudgery and trying, as best he could, to help and bless others. Four years and more had now elapsed since his conversion. It was a long stretch and at times a heavy strain. But he endured it, and grew strong.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE time had now come for such an extraordinary career and such an extraordinary man to be recognized, and he was. He had made an impression and his work, humble as it was, had made an impression. Moreover, Mr. Holcombe himself was now growing impatient to get into a position more favorable to his usefulness. It was not the selfish impatience that could not longer endure the humiliation and manifold disagreeablenesses of his position at the engine house. He had overcome all that. It was the noble impatience of love and zeal. Oh, how he did long to get into a place where he could help somebody and serve somebody and love somebody.

He had been very kindly treated by his old friends, the gamblers, during all this time; and though he was loath to allow it and at first declined it, yet fearing lest his refusal might alienate them, he had, more than once, accepted substantial help from one or two particular friends among them. Encouraged by assurances from some of these and by the promise of all the help his pastor could possibly give him, financially and otherwise, he had made up his mind to rent a room in the central part of the city and to open a meeting for the outcast classes. But on the very day when he was engaged in making these arrangements, his remarkable conversion and character and career were the subject of

discussion at the Methodist Ministers' meeting. The result was that before the week had passed, the Rev. Jas. C. Morris, pastor of the Walnut-street Methodist church, visited him at the engine-house and informed him that the Official Board of his church had authorized him to take measures for the establishment of a mission in the central part of the city and to employ Mr. Holcombe to take charge of it at an assured salary sufficient to meet the wants of his family. He at once accepted it as a call from God and gave up his position in the fire department, with no great degree of reluctance.

A vacant store in the Tyler Block, on Jefferson street between Third and Fourth, was offered free of rent. Regular noon-day meetings were held there in charge of Rev. Mr. Morris and Mr. Holcombe. It was a phenomenon. Within two blocks of the two faro banks which Steve Holcombe used to own and run, he was now every day at high noon declaring the Gospel of the grace of God. The people came to see and hear. They found it was no mushroom fanatic, but a man who for forty years was a leader in wickedness and for four years had been almost a pattern of righteousness. He spoke no hot words of excitement, but narrated facts with truth and soberness. Many of his old time friends, the gamblers, their timidity overcome by their curiosity, joined the crowd and heard the man. Poor drunkards, too far gone for timidity or curiosity, dragged themselves to the place where the famous gambler was telling about his conversion and his new life. And the power of God was present to heal, and great grace was upon them all. Among those who

were saved at that time and place were Mr. Ben Harney, son of the distinguished editor of the old *Louisville Democrat*, who lives again in happiness and prosperity with his beloved family, and Mr. D. C. Chaudoin, at one time a Main-street merchant, who remained faithful until death.

When the supporters of the movement saw that it promised so much, they took steps at once to make larger provision for it and to secure its permanence. They sought a suitable house in a convenient place, and finally decided to take the room at No. 436 Jefferson street, between Fourth and Fifth streets, which had formerly been used as a gambling-house. Mr. Holcombe took possession of it, and found some of the gambling implements still there. A Board of Managers was elected, consisting of John L. Wheat, James G. Carter, P. H. Tapp, C. P. Atmore and George W. Wicks. Some friends from the Walnut-street church and others volunteered as singers; the room was supplied with hymn-books, an organ was secured, and the meetings commenced under the most promising circumstances. At first, meetings were held three nights in the week, and the attendance was large. Soon after, meetings were held every night and on Sundays. People of all classes came. The services consisted of singing, prayers, reading of Scripture, a short, earnest address from Mr. Holcombe, and sometimes testimonies from the men who had been helped and saved—among whom were drunkards, gamblers, pick-pockets, thieves, burglars, tramps, men who had fallen from high positions in business and social circles, and in short, men of all classes and kinds. Many of these

gave unquestionable proofs of conversion, "of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep," faithful unto death. Among those who were converted during that period were Robert Denny, Fred Ropke, Captain B. F. Davidson and Charles Wilson, whose testimonies will be found elsewhere in this book—besides others, some of whom are residents of Louisville and some of other places.

By request, the Rev. James C. Morris, D. D., now of Kansas City, Mo., has written a brief account of Mr. Holcombe's work from the beginning to the point which we have now reached in this narrative. And, as no part of it can well be omitted or changed for the better, it is here introduced entire, with a part of the genial letter which accompanied it:

"KANSAS CITY, Mo., August 14, 1888.

*"My Dear Brother:*

"I inclose the notes for which you ask. You see they are in a crude state. But do not judge from that that I have no interest in the work you have in hand. My Father in heaven knows I keep it very near my heart. I felt it would be sufficient for me to furnish you the matter in a crude state, and let you work it into your plan rather than give it any literary shape myself. Besides, I am pressed, pressed to my utmost, and I therefore send you this imperfect sketch with an apology. I am glad you are doing the work. It will surely do good. Brother Holcombe's work ought to be known. I wish in my heart of hearts that every city and town had such a man in it to

work for God and souls. Praying God to bless you and your work, I am,

“Yours affectionately,

“JAMES C. MORRIS.”

“In the year 1881, while I was pastor of the Walnut-street Methodist church, in Louisville, Ky., I heard of Steve Holcombe, the converted gambler; of his remarkable career; of his remarkable conversion, and of his unusual devotion and zeal in the cause of religion. I heard also of his efforts in the line of Christian work and of his desire for better opportunities. I mentioned his case to the Official Board of the Walnut-street church, and suggested that he might be usefully employed by our churches in the city in doing missionary work. The matter was kindly received, but the suggestion took no practical shape. As I walked home from the meeting one of the stewards said to me: ‘Why could not we, of the Walnut-street church, employ Brother Holcombe ourselves?’ This question put me upon a course of thought about the work we might be able to do, and at the next meeting of the Board I made the suggestion that we organize some work of the kind and employ Brother Holcombe to take charge of it. They unanimously accepted the suggestion and directed me to investigate the case. If anything could be done, they were ready to enter upon the work and support it. I lost no time in seeing Brother Holcombe. He was then employed at the engine-house, on Portland avenue. I found him rubbing the engine. It took but a moment to introduce myself, and in a short time we

were up-stairs, alone, talking about religion and work for Christ. He told me how his heart was drawn out in solicitude for the classes who never attended church—the gamblers, drunkards and the like. It was easy to see that the movement contemplated was of God. We talked and rejoiced together; we knelt down and prayed together for God's guidance in all our plans and undertakings. I then told him how I came to call on him, and laid before him our plan. His eyes filled with tears—tears of joy—at the thought of having an opportunity to do the work that was on his heart.

“At once I reported to the Board, and recommended that Brother Holcombe be at once employed and the work set on foot without delay. God breathed on them the same spirit that he had breathed on us together at the engine-house. With unanimity and enthusiasm they entered into the plan and pledged their support. They fixed his salary at nine hundred dollars a year and authorized me to do all that was necessary to carry the plan into effect.

“Early the next morning Brother Holcombe gave up his place at the engine-house, and we went out to look for a house in which to domicile our work. I can never forget that day. What joy there was in that heart that had waited so long and prayed so fervently for an open door of opportunity. Now the door was opened wide, and a song was put in his heart and in his mouth. We walked miles to find a suitable place, while we talked much by the way as our hearts burned within us.

“At length we found a vacant storeroom on Jefferson street, between Third and Fourth, and as we



JAMES WILLIAMS

AS HE WAS.



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looked in the window, we said: 'This would make a grand place to begin in.' We went to see Mr. Isaac Tyler, the owner, and he gave us a favorable answer and the key. The next day we began a meeting which continued through three months. And who can write the history of that work? Only the All-seeing God; and He has the record of it in His book. We had a noon-day service every day, except Sunday, and a Saturday evening service every week.

"The services were advertised and men stationed at the door invited the passer-by to come in. At the meetings all classes of men were represented. There were strong, wise, honorable business-men and there were tramps and drunkards with all the classes that lie between these two. No man was slighted. Many a man was brought in who was too drunk to sit alone in his seat. Many were there who had not slept in a bed for months. There were gamblers and drunkards and outcast men from every quarter of the city. The gathering looked more like that in the police courts of a great city on Monday morning than like a religious meeting. The workers did literally go out into the highways and into the lowways and compel them to come in. And marvelous things took place there.

"Steve Holcombe was known all over the city, and such a work done by such a man who had lately been a noted gambler in the community drew men who, for years, had had no thought of attending church. The old companions of his worldly life came, the worst elements of the city came, good men from all the churches came. Brother Holcombe was in his element. His soul was as free to the work as that of an

Apostle. Daily he trod the streets inviting people to come, and daily, as they came, he spoke words of deep feeling to them, urging them to be saved. No man ever had a more respectful hearing than he had. No man ever devoted himself more fully in the spirit of the Master to doing men good than did he. His devotion to the poor outcast who showed any willingness to listen or any wish to be saved was as marvelous as his own conversion. I never saw such in any other worker for Christ.

“In the progress of the work we often spoke of keeping a record of those who professed conversion there. I am sorry it was not done. Hardly a day passed without some case of exceptional interest. Men were saved who had been for years in the very lowest stages of dissipation and vagrancy. Not a few of those who were thus saved were men who had belonged to the very best social, and business circles of the city. Many of them are bright and blessed lights in Christian circles to-day. Many homes were built up out of wrecks where only ashes and tears remained. Many scattered families were brought together after long separation. God only knows the results of that three months' work. I remember some conversions that were as marvelous as that of Saul of Tarsus. I could tell of some of them but perhaps this is not the place.

“This meeting in the Tyler block was a feature of a meeting which was in progress at the Walnut-street church and to this it was tributary. In the evening those who had been reached by the services at the mission were invited to the church. They were largely of a class not often seen in the church but they came, and when they came the church welcomed them.

“Then there was rejoicing in the presence of the angels, for many sinners were repenting and returning. I saw the Gospel net dragged to the shore enclosing fish that no one would have been willing to take out of the net except Steve Holcombe. But it is far different with them to-day. Changed by the power of God, these repulsive creatures are honored members of the various churches, heads of happy families and respected and useful citizens of the community.

“At the end of three months the meetings in the store-room were discontinued. Mr. Holcombe had won thousands of friends, hundreds had been put in the way of a new life and the whole city was in sympathy with the work.

“We were now to select and secure a suitable place for the permanent home of the mission. Another search brought us to the room on the south side of Jefferson between Fourth and Fifth streets, No. 436. It had been occupied as a gambling room, and the gambling apparatus was still there when we took possession of it. In a few days the house was fitted up and the ‘Gospel-Mission’ was opened.

“The work was now thoroughly organized. There was, in addition to the regular services, a Sunday-school for the children whose parents never went to church. Colonel C. P. Atmore was superintendent. The ‘Industrial School’ also was organized, where Christian women taught the girls to sew, furnishing them the materials and giving them the finished garments. It is especially worthy of remark that the old associates of Mr. Holcombe, the gamblers, contributed more than \$500 toward the expenses of this work.

“This house became an open home for any weary, foot-sore wanderer who was willing to come in, and through the years many were the hearts made happy in a new life.

“The year following the organization of the work, Rev. Sam P. Jones conducted a meeting at the Walnut-street church, and his heart was strangely drawn to that mission. He himself conducted many services there and he was more impressed with the character of the work and of the man who was in charge of it than with any Christian work he had ever seen. During this meeting of Mr. Jones a programme of street-preaching was carried out by Mr. Holcombe and his fellow-workers. Mr. Holcombe himself preached several times on the courthouse steps, and, even in the midst of the tumult, souls were converted to God.”

This is the end of Dr. Morris' account of the beginnings of Mr. Holcombe's work, though the reader will probably wish it were longer, and even more circumstantial.

Mr. Holcombe's family lived in the same building, over the mission room, and whenever men in need or distress applied, he gave them board and lodging. Mrs. Holcombe says that for three months they had never less than twenty men eating two meals a day. Of course, among so many there were, doubtless, some imposters, but it took a pretty keen man to play imposter without being spotted by the keen man who was in charge of the enterprise. Mr. Holcombe had mixed with men long enough to know them. He had spent most of his life among bad men. He had studied their ways and he knew their

tricks. And it is not necessary to say to the reader who has perused the foregoing pages, that Mr. Holcombe was not afraid of any man. His former experience in sin and his former association with sinners of every sort led him to see that it was necessary for him rigidly to protect the work he was now engaged in and he determined to do so. Men would come into the meetings, sometimes, in a state of intoxication; sometimes lewd fellows of the baser sort would come in for the purpose of interrupting the service and still others for other purposes; but when Mr. Holcombe had put a few of them out, they saw that this man in getting religion had lost neither common sense nor courage, and that Steve Holcombe, the converted gambler, was not a man to be fooled with any more than Steve Holcombe, the unconverted gambler; so that all such interruptions soon ceased. But nobody should get the impression that Mr. Holcombe was harsh or unsympathetic. On the contrary, he is one of the most tenderhearted of men, and few men living would go farther, do more or make greater sacrifices to save a drunkard or a gambler or an outcast of any sort, than Steve Holcombe. For days he has gone without meat for himself and his family that he might have something to help a poor drunkard who was trying to reform. Indeed, his pitying love for wretched men and women of every class and degree, manifested in his efforts to look them up and to do them good in any possible way, is the chief secret of his wonderful success in dealing with hardened and apparently inaccessible cases. The following account of his last and perhaps most desperate

case is taken from one of the Louisville daily papers and will illustrate what has been said:

DRUNK TWENTY-THREE YEARS.

REMARKABLE STORY OF "WHISKY JIM'S" WASTED LIFE AND FINAL CONVERSION. HOW THE WORK WAS EFFECTED.

The work that Steve Holcombe is doing is well known, in a general way, but the public understand but little of the wonderful good that man is doing. The reformations he has brought about may be numbered by the hundred, and the drunkards he has reclaimed would make a regiment.

But of all the wonderful and truly startling examples of what Mr. Holcombe is doing, the case of James Williams is the climax. Williams has been known for years as "Whisky Jim" and "Old Hoss," and there is not a more familiar character in the city. Until the last two or three weeks no man in Louisville ever remembers to have seen Jim free from the influence of liquor. He was always drunk, and was looked upon as an absolutely hopeless case, that would be able to stand the terrible life he was leading but a year or two longer.

The story of his life and reformation as related to a *Times* reporter is very interesting. He had asked Mr. Holcombe when his protégé could be seen, and was told at nine o'clock at the mission. Williams was seen coming up the steps, his face clean shaven, his eyes bright and his gait steady. Mr. Holcombe said: "There he is now, God bless him; I could just kiss him. I knew he'd be here. One thing I've learned about Jim is, that he is an honest man, and another is

that he will not tell a lie. I feel that I can trust him. He has had the hardest struggle to overcome the drinking habit I ever saw, and I feel sure that he has gained the victory. I began on him quietly about one month ago and got him to attend our meetings. But here he is." The reporter was introduced, and Mr. Williams readily consented to tell anything concerning himself that would be of interest to the public and calculated to do good in the cause of temperance. He said: "I was born in Paducah, Ky., and am forty-eight years old. My father's name was Rufus A. Williams. While a boy I was sent to school, and picked up a little education. I was put at work in a tobacco manufactory, and am a tobacco-twister by trade. My father died when I was nine years old, after which our family consisted of my mother, now seventy-five years of age, my sister and myself. We now live on the east side of Floyd street, near Market. Shortly after I grew up I found work on the river and have been employed on nearly every boat between Louisville and New Orleans. That is what downed me. I began to drink little by little, and the appetite and habit began to grow on me until I gave up all idea of resistance. Up to yesterday a week ago, I can truthfully say that I have been drunk twenty-three years, day and night.

"In 1862 I got a job on the 'Science,' Number 2, a little Government boat running the Ohio and Cumberland rivers. Coming down the Cumberland on one trip I was too sick to work, and the boat put me ashore about twenty miles above Clarksville. The woods where I was dumped out were full of guerrillas, but I managed to secure a little canoe in which I paddled



down to Clarksville. There I sold it for three dollars and with the small sum I had already I came to this city, where we were then living. I then drank up every cent I could rake and scrape. I could get all sorts of work, but could keep no job because I couldn't keep sober. I finally depended on getting odd jobs along the river front, such as loading and unloading freight, etc. But the work was so hard I could scarcely do it, and finally I had to give that up, especially after falling and breaking my leg while at work on the old "United States" several years ago. That accident laid me up in the Marine Hospital for several months, and just as I felt able to get out I broke the same leg again at the same place. After recovering I yielded entirely to the appetite for strong drink and cared for nothing else. As I say, for twenty-three years I have not known what it is to be sober until a few days ago.

"For the past six years I have earned my drinks and some free lunch by picking up old boxes and barrel staves which I would dispose of to the saloon-keepers along the river front who knew me. I did not often ask any one for money with which to buy whisky, for I could always earn it in this manner. I usually slept at my mother's house. As to eating I did not eat much and was getting so I could scarcely eat at all. I am getting over that now, and have a good appetite, as Mr. Holcombe can testify.

"Well, about one month ago Mr. Holcombe came to me and gave me a little talk. He did not say much, but he set me to thinking as far as I was capable of thinking. He saw me the second time, and then several times. Of course, I was always drunk but I

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**JAMES WILLIAMS,**  
AS HE IS.

understood him. Finally he said to me 'Jim, if you're bound to have whisky, come around to the Mission and let me give it to you.' I promised him I'd come around, and I did so, for I wanted some o' the liquor. After I had gone around several times and he had given me a few drinks, not to make me drunk, of course, but to help me get sober, if possible; he invited me to go in and attend the religious services. I did so and he invited me to come again, which I did. At last he insisted that I should take my meals at the mission, and I have been doing so for some days. Finally I made up my mind to quit drinking altogether, and I intend to stick to the pledge I have taken. I was full last Sunday week for the last time. I was trying to taper off then, but a saloon-keeper on Market, just below Jackson, knowing my condition and knowing that I was trying to quit, gave me a bucket of bock beer. I knew he meant no good to me, but I couldn't help drinking it. Other saloon-keepers have been trying to get me to drink again, and I think they are trying to get me to do a great wrong.

"I went to church yesterday for the first time since I was a boy. Heard Dr. Eaton preach.

"My poor old mother is greatly rejoiced at the change in me, for I have given her a great deal of torment and misery. As soon as the Murphy meetings are over Mr. Holcombe and I will spend a couple of weeks at French Lick Springs."

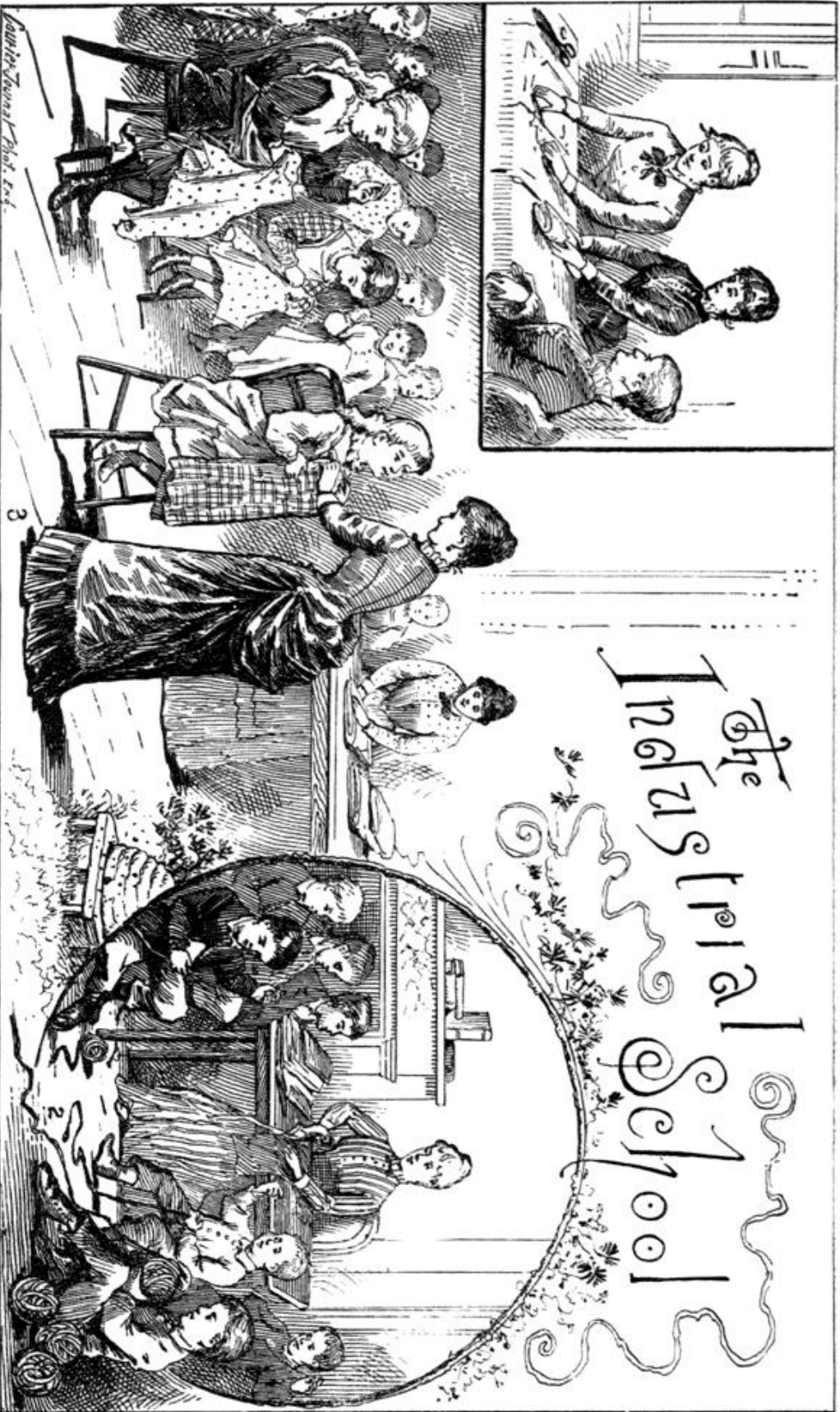
During this period, when the mission occupied rooms at No. 436 Jefferson street, the meetings were not confined to that single place, but services were held in other parts of the city, on the streets and even

on the courthouse steps. Many strangers, as well as citizens of Louisville, attended these, and some were so powerfully impressed that after going away to their distant homes they wrote back to Mr. Holcombe acknowledging the good they had received, and in some instances giving an account of their conviction, repentance and conversion. The Holcombe Mission became one of the "sights" of the city, so that strangers visiting the city would look it up and attend services there.

In 1884 a new feature was added which, in turn, added much to the efficiency and usefulness of the mission. It was suggested by the sight of the poorly clad children who attended the mission with their parents, and who seemed willing and anxious themselves to do better and be better. This new feature was the Industrial School, an account of the origin, history and methods of which is furnished by Mrs. Clark, the Superintendent. A Sunday-school was organized also, with C. P. Atmore, Esq., as Superintendent, and some of the most earnest Christian people of the city as teachers and helpers. A little later the Kindergarten was also organized and is now in successful operation.

#### THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AND THE KINDERGARTEN.

In order to enlarge the mission work and better reach the homes of the needy, both spiritually and temporally, the Union Gospel Industrial School was opened in April, 1884, with six little girls and three teachers in attendance. In May following it was formally organized as The Union Gospel Mission Industrial School with



1. CUTTING GARMENTS.

THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

2. BOYS MAKING CARPETS.

3. GIRLS SEWING.

*Author Edward Hook Esq.*

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Mrs. J. R. Clark, Superintendent;  
Mrs. L. G. Herndon, Assistant Superintendent;  
Miss Ella Downing, Secretary;  
Miss Ella Harding, Treasurer.

In June, 1884, it closed for the summer with twenty-two pupils and five teachers. In September following it opened for the fall and winter term with the same teachers and a small increase in the number of pupils, all from the neglected classes. The school was organized in the old mission room, at No. 436 Jefferson street, between Fourth and Fifth, and continued there for three winters. The children came, however, from all parts of the city, some of them from garrets and cellars. Their ages ranged from five to eighteen years.

In May, 1886, the school was removed to its present spacious rooms in the Union Gospel Mission building on Jefferson street, above First. The work has steadily increased, each year bringing in a larger number of the neglected children. Those who come are so interested and benefited, they become missionaries, so to speak, to other poor and neglected children. There is one class of girls, however, who are not charity-scholars, but come for the purpose of learning to sew. Their work is done, not for themselves, but for the younger children of the poorer class who are not yet old enough to sew. For this reason, the class just mentioned is called The Missionary Class, and it is one of which the school is justly proud. They not only do their work for others, they do good in other ways and in general exert a good influence over the other children who are less fortunate.



The children are first taught all the different stitches that are used in sewing. Then work is cut out for them by a committee of ladies who attend for that purpose, and the children are taught to make all kinds of garments. When the garment is completed and passes examination, it is given to the child who made it.

There is a class of boys, sixty in number, ranging from five to twelve years of age. These are first taught to sew on buttons and to mend rents in their own clothes and then other things follow. They are at present engaged in making a carpet for Mr. Holcombe's office. The teachers in charge of them endeavor to train them to habits of industry, self-reliance, cleanliness, truthfulness, etc. Some of the boys are very bright and promising and some of them seem hopelessly cowed and broken. Their histories would, doubtless, be full of pathos and of pain, if they were known.

The school meets every Saturday morning at 9:15. The opening services consist of—

1. Singing (Gospel Hymns).
2. Responsive recitation of a Psalm, or the Beatitudes or the Ten Commandments.
3. Prayer.
4. Distribution of work-baskets.

The sewing continues for one hour and a half, then, at the tap of the bell, the work is folded nicely, replaced in the basket and taken to another room. The children then return to the large room and join in the closing exercises, which consist of—

5. Singing.

6. Repeating of Scripture texts, each teacher and child repeating a verse; or this is sometimes replaced with a chalk-talk, sometimes with a short address on the Sunday-school lesson for the following Sunday, sometimes with a short earnest appeal to the children by some visitor who is known to be an effective speaker for such occasions.

7. The Lord's Prayer is recited in concert.

8. Dismissal.

The teachers, besides instructing the children in the art of sewing, converse with them on pleasant and profitable topics and upon the subject of religion in seasonable times and ways.

Quite a number of families have been brought under Christian influence through the pupils of the Industrial School. Several parents as well as children have been converted. Mr. Robert Denny, the account of whose conversion is given by himself in another part of this volume, was induced to attend the meetings of the Holcombe Mission by what his children told him of the things they learned at the Industrial School. One of the members of the first class of six and her mother are now acceptable members of the First Presbyterian church. The daughter has become an artist and is employed in retouching pictures in one of the city photograph galleries. Three or four of the girls connected with the school have died. Two of them, one aged twelve and the other fourteen, gave every evidence of being Christians. One of these when asked when she learned to love God and to pray, answered, "At the sewing school; Jesus is always there."

Many when they began to attend did not even know the little prayer beginning:

“Now I lay me down to sleep.”

The ignorance of these poor children led the superintendent to open a “Mothers’ Meeting,” for the mothers of these children and any others who might wish to attend. The results have been wonderful. So many homes have become changed, and are now neat, clean, orderly and happy. In the rounds of the superintendent’s visits she found a very sick woman who said to her:

“Oh, I’m so glad you have come, Mrs. Clark. I want you to pray with me.”

Mrs. Clark said, “Can’t you pray yourself?”

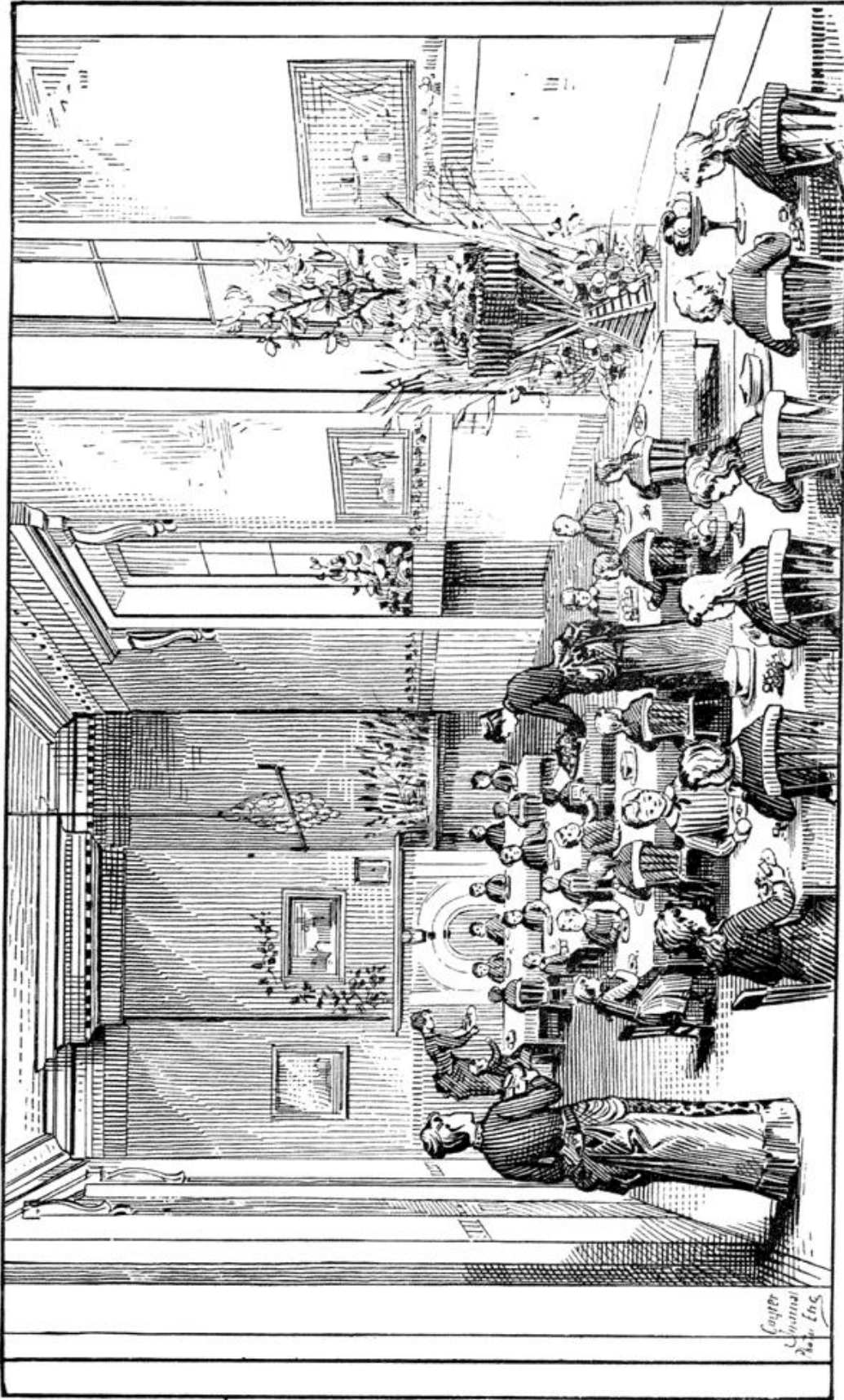
She replied, “I don’t know what to say. I did not know ‘Now I lay me down to sleep,’ till my little Jennie learned it at the sewing school, and I learned it from her.”

“But can’t you say ‘Our Father who art in heaven?’” asked Mrs. Clark.

“No; not all of it. I know only a little of it.”

Mrs. Clark was much moved at the ignorance, helplessness and need of the poor woman, and was praying with her when the husband came in. She talked with him and he was deeply impressed, and before she left promised he would try to live a better life. A position as street car driver was gotten for him, and for a while he did well, but after a time he fell into his old ways and was dismissed. But, through the intervention of the friends who had helped him before, he was restored to his place, and to-day he is a sober industrious man and a member of the First Christian church in the city.

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KINDERGARTEN,  
THANKSGIVING DAY

Perhaps a score of similar instances could be cited.

The sewing school closed May 12, 1888, with the annual picnic. The following is the report for the year just past :

Average weekly attendance of girls, 162; average weekly attendance of boys, 21; total average attendance of pupils, 183; average attendance of officers and teachers, 32; average attendance of visitors, 4; total average attendance, 219; total number of garments made by, and given to, the children, 848.

The officers for the past year were as follows: Mrs. J. R. Clark, superintendent; Miss Mary L. Graham, assistant superintendent; Mrs. L. G. Herndon, superintendent of work; Miss Lithgow, treasurer; Miss Ella Gardiner, secretary.

#### THE KINDERGARTEN.

In January, 1885, there were so many little boys and girls between the ages of three and five years that the teachers did not know what to do with them. The superintendent, who had some knowledge of the kindergarten system, believed that its introduction here was what was needed. She could not see her way clear, however, to incur any more expense. But in answer to prayer the way was opened. Money was given for the appliances and Miss Graham, an excellent teacher, offered her services freely. The class at first averaged twenty-four pupils, met each Saturday morning in connection with the sewing school, and was called the Kindergarten class.

The interest increased till February, 1886, when the board of directors of the Holcombe Mission con-

sented that the superintendent should open a regular kindergarten for every day in the week except Saturday. More money was raised and a trained kindergarten teacher from Cincinnati was employed. In June, 1886, the school closed with sixty little children in attendance and four young ladies training for kindergarten teachers. Arrangements were made for the following year and several hundred dollars pledged. In September, 1887, the kindergarten was re-opened with Miss Bryan, of Chicago, as teacher of training class and superintendent of the school. In the following October a large and enthusiastic meeting was held in the Warren Memorial church and the Free Kindergarten Association was formally organized. In February, 1888, a second free kindergarten was opened in another part of the city. The year's work closed in June, 1888, five young ladies graduating as kindergarten teachers. The number of children enrolled for the year was one hundred. The kindergarten, it will be noticed, is thus distinct from the industrial school.

In 1885, another department still was added to meet a want which had been developed in the progress of the work. The great number of broken-down men and tramps that came to Mr. Holcombe for food and help of one sort or another made it impossible for him to give them lodging in the mission rooms or board in his own family. And it encouraged indolence in unworthy men to feed and lodge them as a mere charity. And yet, if anything was to be done for their souls, they had for a time to be cared for. Mr. Holcombe conceived the idea, therefore, of establishing some sort of a place in connection with his

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MRS. J. M. CLARK.

work, where these men might earn their food and lodging by the sweat of their brows and at the same time be brought under the powerful religious influences of the Mission.

The result was the establishment of the "Wayfarers' Rest." Mayor Reed and Chief of Police Whallen gave Mr. Holcombe a police station building free of rent and Mr. J. T. Burghard gave the money to furnish it with bunks, stove, cooking utensils, facilities for bathing, etc., and it became at once an established feature, and a very admirable one, of the Union Gospel Mission.

When Mayor Jacob came into office he gladly continued the use of the building free of rent, and the institution has continued in successful operation up to the present time—a space of three years.

The rooms are arranged for the accommodation of sixty men. All who come are required to do some sort of work for whatever they receive, whether it be food or lodging. The men do various kinds of work, according to their several ability, but the chief employment is sawing kindling wood out of material provided by the superintendent. Each man is required to work an hour for one night's lodging or for a meal. The kindling wood is sold all over the city, and under the excellent management of Mr. W. H. Black, the present superintendent, the enterprise has become more than self-supporting, bringing in enough to pay the salary of the superintendent and the book-keeper, and leaving a surplus. It should, perhaps, in justice be added, that donations of food are made daily and have been from the beginning, by the Alexander Hotel Company.

During the winter of 1887 Mr. Black fed and lodged an average of fifty men a day. He has never turned one away. The average income per day from the sale of kindling wood is, in winter, ten dollars. The rules for the government of the inmates requiring registration, cleanliness, bathing, etc., are wisely conceived and strictly carried out.

This institution has proved in Louisville the solution of the vexed question as to the proper treatment of tramps and beggars. The citizens, instead of encouraging indolence and pauperism by feeding tramps at their houses, some of whom are burglars in disguise, can now send them to the Wayfarers' Rest, where they are always sure of finding food and lodging, and, what is better, the opportunity of earning what they get by honest work. And Mr. Holcombe's experience as a tramp in Colorado leads him to take a brotherly interest in all these unfortunate men.

In 1886, the work had expanded beyond its quarters and beyond all expectations. It was predicted that Steve Holcombe would hold out three months. He had now held out three times three years, and that through unprecedented trials and discouragements. During these nine years he had helped many and many a man, almost as bad as he, into the blessed life that he was living. He had established a unique institution in the city of Louisville which had been the means of helping and uplifting and blessing men and women and whole families. But the end was not yet. The man and his work had so won the confidence of the people of the city that in 1886, a formal request was made by the Evangelical churches

of the city that they be allowed to share with the Walnut-street Methodist church in the expense and the care and the usefulness of the Mission. It was changed then into a Union Mission, and representatives from the Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, Christian and Lutheran churches were added to the board of directors.

In the same year, when Mr. Holcombe was feeling the need of more spacious quarters for his expanding work, the large and elegant house on Jefferson street above First, known as the "Smith Property," was advertised for sale. Mr. Holcombe saw it and liked it. It was the very sort of a building he needed for his work and all its various departments.

He procured the keys and went through the building alone, from cellar to garret, stopping in every room to pray that, in some way, God would put it into his hands, with a firm persuasion, moreover, that his prayer would be answered. An interesting letter written by Mr. Holcombe in February, 1886, contains a reference to the project of purchasing the new house. It is addressed to one of the converts of the Mission, Mr. S. P. Dalton, of Cleveland, Ohio, and, as it shows also Mr. Holcombe's interest in his spiritual children, it is given entire :

"LOUISVILLE, KY., February 3, 1886.

"*Dear Brother Dalton :*

"Your welcome and encouraging letter is just received. I acknowledge your claim, so gently urged, to something better than a hasty postal in reply.

When I write you briefly, it is because my work compels it. My soul delights to commune with spirits like yours, consecrated to God, and with brothers who live in my memory as associates in our humble work here. Our mission is being abundantly blessed of God, although meeting, from time to time, with those drawbacks which remind us of our dependence and the need of constant prayer. We are having good meetings and conversions are numerous, and, as a rule, of such a character as to make us believe they are genuine and permanent. As I write, our friends are canvassing the city for the collection of means to purchase the old Smith mansion on Jefferson street, for our use, and believing all our work to be of God I have no doubt that it will be ours within a week. Then shall we do a great work for Louisville and for souls. Our sewing-school and our Sunday-school, having outgrown our present quarters, will be greatly enlarged, and every department of our work also.

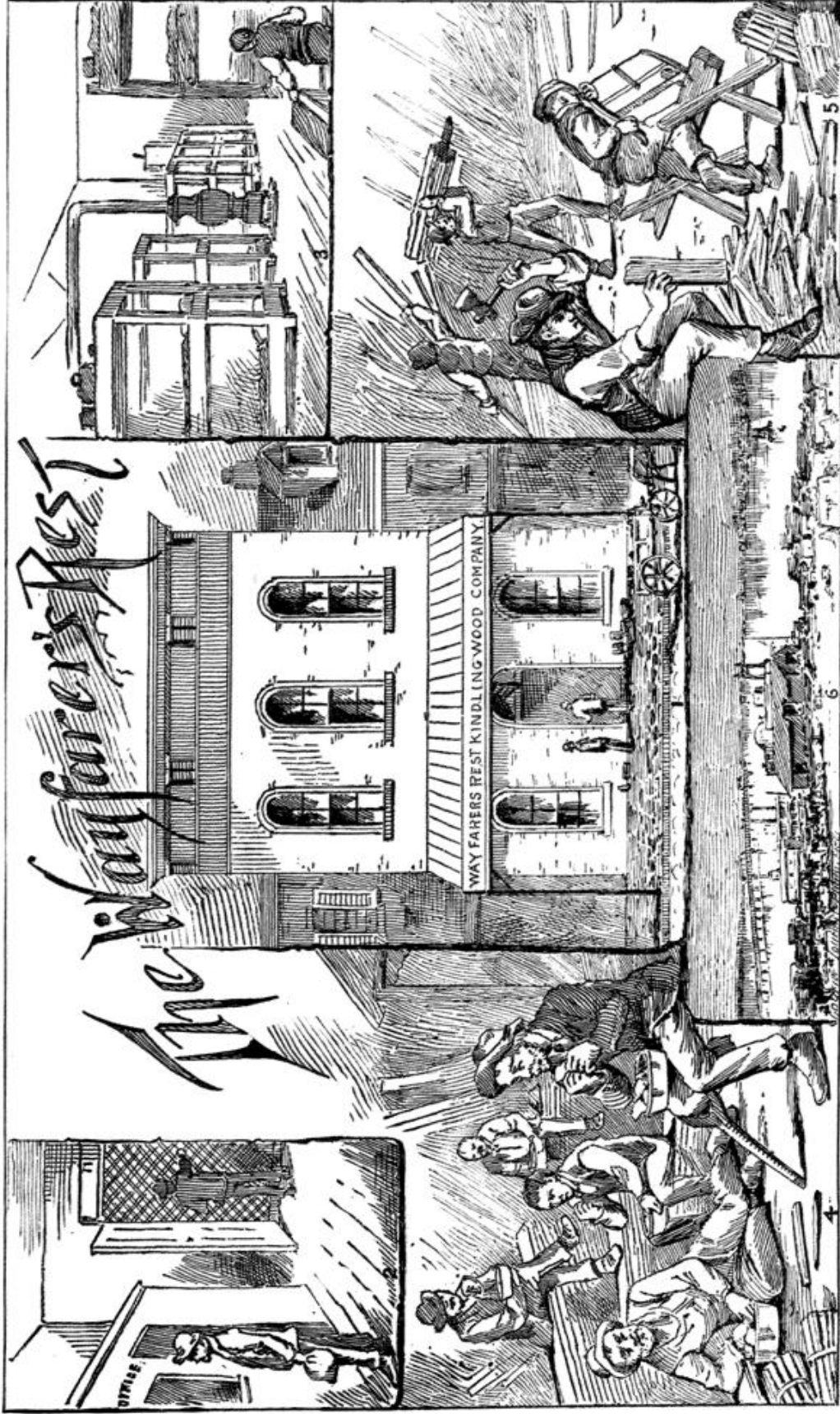
“I am truly glad you are having such opportunities of doing good in Cleveland. May God bless you and your dear wife, my dear brother, and in His own time bring you back to us and to the work which always needs such help, is the prayer of

“Your brother,

“S. P. HOLCOMBE.”

An incident that occurred in connection with the purchase of this elegant property will show how Mr. Holcombe and his work were looked upon in Louisville even by those who were not Christians.

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THE WAYFARER'S REST.

- 1. EXTERIOR.
- 2. OFFICE.
- 3. SLEEPING APARTMENT.
- 4. TAKING MEALS.
- 5. AT WORK.
- 6. ON THE LEVEL.

A German singing society was negotiating for the building at the same time, and had offered a higher price than the friends of the Mission thought they could give. Mr. Holcombe went to the leader of the society and told him he desired the building for the Mission, and, though the man was an unbeliever, he said: "Mr. Holcombe, though I am not a Christian and do not believe in Christianity, I do believe in the work you are doing. I will not be in the way of your getting that building." He withdrew his bid at once, and the Directors of the Holcombe Mission purchased it for \$12,500.

Mr. Holcombe at once took possession. He fitted up the rooms of the lower floor for the various departments of the mission work. The large and elegant double-parlors were thrown into one and arranged for the audience-room. This has a seating capacity of two hundred or more. The other rooms of the lower floor are used, one for Mr. Holcombe's office, two others for the Kindergarten, another for a cloak-room, and so on. The second floor, with its seven large, bright, airy rooms, is occupied by Mr. Holcombe's family, and, for the first time since his conversion, they are in comfortable quarters.



## CHAPTER V.

**A**T last after years of love and faith and faithfulness Mrs. Holcombe has her full reward and joy. The long twenty-five years of sorrow and suspense passed by and her husband is what she unconsciously believed her love had the power of waiting for him to become—a good man. And more than a good man. He is consumed with the desire and somehow clothed with the power of making other men good, of making bad men good, of making the worst of bad men good. This he has now been doing, by God's grace, for seven faithful years and more—and continues to do. Her husband is honored and beloved for his character, his work and his usefulness—no man, no minister in Louisville more so.

All her children are members of the church even down to little Pearl, the latest-born. Her oldest son, her Willie, is happily married, occupies the position of book-keeper with the Sievers Hardware Company on Main street, and is an efficient officer of the church of God. Her second daughter is happily married to a Christian man, "one of the best of husbands," who is book-keeper in the old Kentucky Woolen Mills, of Louisville. Her oldest daughter is a devoted Christian and serves with equal efficiency as organist of the Mission and teacher in the Kindergarten. Her baby-boy now eighteen years old and the rise of six feet in



MRS. S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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height is a member of the church and a good boy. He also is in business with the Sievers Hardware Company on Main street. And Pearl, the blue-eyed, golden-haired, eight-year-old girl baby is, nobody dare question, the flower of the flock. Her dead children are in heaven all, for they died before they knew sin, and her living children are on the way to heaven, all, for they trust in and serve Him who was manifested to take away sin.

Mrs. Holcombe helps her husband in his noble work and the "converts" look on her as their spiritual mother as they regard him as their spiritual father. She *might* say with Simeon, the *Nunc dimittis*, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" but instead of that she says with St. Paul, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful" for my husband, my children and the work of Christ.

Mrs. Holcombe still has trials, but they are few and small, while her blessings are many and great. She still has faults, perhaps, as most of mortals have; but they are few and small, while her virtues are very many and very great. Many daughters have done virtuously but few have excelled this one in those qualities which constitute a noble womanly character.

The following letter, written to her by her husband during a short visit in the country, will show how that after so long a time of waiting, the hope of her earliest love is realized at last.

“LOUISVILLE, KY., May 29, 1888.

“*My Dear Wife:*

“Your letter to hand. I am so happy to know that you are having a good time. Isn't God good to us? When we look back over our past lives and see how good God has been to us, how thankful we should be. Very little sickness in our immediate family and no death in thirty years. The two babes that we lost thirty years ago are safe in the arms of Jesus, and all the living ones are sweetly trusting in Him. Let us from this hour be more earnest and untiring in our efforts to save the children of others. Kiss Mamie for me and then look in the glass and kiss yourself a thousand times for him who loves you with a true, deep love.

Yours in life, yours in death,

“STEVE P. HOLCOMBE.”

Those who are familiar with Mr. Holcombe's career as a Christian worker would regard any sketch of his life incomplete which did not contain some account of the assault made upon him by three strange men in the winter of 1887. A few months after his removal to the new quarters that had been purchased by the Mission, he was attacked by three men in his own house and severely injured. On a Sunday afternoon in January, 1887, he heard some one walking in the hall on the second floor of the building, and went out to see who it was. He found a man there whom he had never seen before, and asked him who he was and what he wanted. The man replied in an insolent, manner that he had come to visit a servant girl who was at the time working in Mr. Holcombe's family. When Mr. Hol-

combe asked him why he came into his private family apartments, the man became more impudent and defiant, and gave utterance to some abusive language. Already provoked at the man's audacity and alarmed at the thought of what such a ruffian might have done to some one of his family if he had been absent, Mr. Holcombe's quick nature now became so exasperated that he forgot himself for a moment and thrust the man violently down the stairway and out of the house. The man left the place and Mr. Holcombe thought that was the end of it. But an hour or two later some one knocked at his room door on the same floor, and as he opened it, he saw himself confronted by three men, one of whom he recognized as the man he had put out of the house. The two others professed to be policemen who had come to arrest Mr. Holcombe, but when he asked to see their badges of authority they seized him. One against three, he resisted them with all his might, uttering no cry of distress or call for help. In the struggle Mr. Holcombe's leg was broken, both bones of it, and as he fell, with all his weight, the men thought he was badly hurt and fled, leaving him lying helpless on the floor. He was taken up by those whom he called and laid on his bed. Physicians were sent for. The news spread in a few minutes all over the neighborhood, and before night, all over the city. The Chief of Police, Colonel Whallen, set his detectives to work looking for the men, and many citizens, self-constituted detectives, inquired concerning the appearance of the men and kept a sharp lookout for them. But they succeeded in escaping, and it was, perhaps, well for them they did. Before night Mr. Holcombe's

room was crowded with friends filled with sympathy and indignation. Drs. Kelly and Alexander set the broken limb and gave Mr. Holcombe the unwelcome bit of information that he would have to lie in his bed for some five or six weeks, a sore trial to his restless spirit; but by the help of God he accepted it and settled down to endure it, not knowing, however, what good he was to get out of it. It was an opportunity for the people of Louisville to show their estimation and appreciation of him, and it is safe to say that no man in Louisville would have received the attentions and favors which this poor converted gambler, Steve Holcombe, did receive. It reminds one of a passage in Dr. Prime's account of the funeral of Jerry McAuley in the Broadway Tabernacle in New York. Dr. Prime himself was to conduct the funeral service, and this is what he says:

“We are going to-day to the tabernacle to talk of what Jerry McAuley was and what he has done, to the little congregation that will gather there. If it were Dr. Taylor, the beloved and honored pastor, the house would be crowded and the streets full of mourners, but poor Jerry, he is dead and who will be there to weep with us over his remains? Ah, how little did I know the place poor Jerry held in the hearts of the people of this vast city! I was to conduct the funeral and went early to complete all arrangements. As I turned down from Fifth avenue through Thirty-fourth street, I saw a vast multitude standing in the sunshine, filling the streets and the square in front of the tabernacle. Astonished at the spectacle and wondering why they did not go and

take seats in the church, I soon found that the house was packed with people so that it was impossible for me to get within the door. Proclamation was made that the clergy who were to officiate were on the outside, and a passage was made for us to enter. What could be more impressive and what more expressive of the estimate set upon the man and his work? There is no other Christian worker in the city who would have called out these uncounted thousands in a last tribute of love and in honor of his memory."

The tribute which the people of Louisville paid to the work and worth of Steve Holcombe *before* his death was hardly less.

On Monday, the day following his misfortune, Mr. Holcombe's room was, nearly all the day long, full of people of every grade, from the mayor and the richest and finest people on Broadway and Fourth avenue, down to the poor drunkard and outcast, who forgot his shabby dress and pressed in among those fine people in order to see "Brother Holcombe," and find out how he was. The ministers of the leading churches of every Protestant denomination came with words of sympathy and prayer. Fine ladies came in their carriages, bringing baskets of fruit and all sorts of delicacies. Those who could not go sent letters and messages. And Mr. Holcombe lay in his bed and wept—not for pain, but for gratitude and humble joy. "Why," said he, "I would be willing to have half a dozen legs broken to know that these people think so much of me and of my poor efforts to be useful."

This, then, was the first compensation and blessing.



He learned also that it would be absolutely necessary for him to watch more closely his impulsive and fiery temper, and get a better control of it. For he does not deny that he was inexcusably hasty and severe in his treatment of the impudent intruder.

And then he was temporarily relieved from the incessant demands and the constant strain of his daily activity and his nightly anxiety. He had time and opportunity, as far as the importunity and kindness of his friends would allow, to get calmed, to look down into his own heart, to analyze his motives, to study his own nature, to see his own faults, to find out his own needs and to pray. He had been told by one of his friends, that while he did not work too much, he did not pray *enough*, and that he was, therefore, liable to be overtaken by some sudden temptation and be betrayed into sin.

That same friend, in conducting service in one of the churches of the city on that very Sunday morning, had offered special public prayer for Mr. Holcombe and his work. He prayed specifically that if Brother Holcombe needed a thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble, God would send it. It was thought to be a special and speedy answer, that before sundown of that very day, Mr. Holcombe did receive almost literally a thorn in the flesh; a messenger of Satan it was withal to buffet him. And Mr. Holcombe was the first to acknowledge that he needed this trial and the threefold blessing which came with it.

The perpetrators of the cowardly deed were, some time afterward, caught and imprisoned—every one of them. One of them has been pardoned and released,

and through Mr. Holcombe's kindly intervention the other two probably will be, while through his friendly counsels one of them has been brought to realize his own sinfulness, and has promised to live a better life.

It would be out of the question to reproduce here all the written messages of sympathy which Mr. Holcombe received during his confinement from the injury he received. But one of them is too touching and beautiful to be left out. It was written by Miss Jennie Casseday, a lady of culture and refinement, who has, for eighteen years, been confined to her "sick bed." She is well known as the originator of the "Flower Missions," which, all over this country, have been the bearers of blessing to many unblessed and unloved ones:

"SICK BED, January 18, 1887.

*"Dear Christian Friend:*

"I send you some lines which have been a great blessing to me:

"I can not say,  
Beneath the pressure of life's cares to-day,  
I joy in these ;  
But I *can* say  
That I *had rather* walk this rugged way  
If Him it please.

"I can not feel  
That all is well, when darkening clouds conceal  
The shining sun ;  
But then I know  
God lives and loves, and say, since that is so,  
"Thy will be done."

“I can not speak  
In happy tones; the tear-drops on my cheek  
Show I am sad;  
But I *can* speak  
*Of grace to suffer* with submission meek,  
Until made glad.

“I do not see  
Why God should e'en permit *some things* to be;  
When He is Love;  
But I *can* see,  
Though often dimly, through the mystery,  
His hand above.

“I do not know  
Where falls the seed that I have tried to sow  
With greatest care;  
But I shall know  
The meaning of each waiting hour below  
Sometime, somewhere.’

“Selected with tender sympathy.

“Your friend,

“JENNIE CASSEDAY.”

## CHAPTER VI.

**I**N conclusion it will not be out of place to glance for a moment backward and to call attention definitely to some plain facts.

Mr. Holcombe inherited from his parents a diversely perverse and bad nature. Already in his childhood he was cross, irritable, spiteful. In his boyhood his temper was savage and revengful. In his manhood he took the life of a fellowman. He inherited the love of drink from his father, who was a confirmed drunkard before the child was born; and the child himself was drunk before he was twelve years old. He was given to sensuality from his boyhood.

His education was not good—as far as the educating power of daily example goes, it was bad, positively bad, continually bad. His associations outside of home were, for the most part, of the worst sort. His boyish companions were given to gambling, pilfering, fighting, and in all these things they called him chief. But the companionship of boys did not long satisfy him and already before he was fifteen, he drank and gambled with grown men in the bar-rooms of the village.

He had an impulsive sympathy for helpless suffering when it was before his eyes. He had a vague, faint fear of the Power that makes for righteousness, so that in his youth he made three or four ineffectual efforts to

get the mastery of his evil nature and to become better. He provided well for his family in meat and drink and the like. He was generous to his friends. When this is said, about all is said on that side. Apart from these things he gave himself up for forty years to the indulgence of all his passions without let or hinderance from parental authority, domestic bonds, fear of God or regard for man. So that the adverse power of evil habit, strengthened by forty years of indulgence, was superimposed upon the moral helplessness of an inherited bad nature made worse by bad education and bad associations.

Such he *was*. The preceding pages have described in part what he *is*. And only in part. The uttermost details of the purity of his life since October, 1877, could not be stated without violating delicacy any more than the uttermost details of his sinful life could be uncurtained without injuring the innocent and offending the public. The candid reader will bridge for himself the past and present of Mr. Holcombe's life. These are the facts. And these facts are freely and fully recognized by all classes of the community in which he lives his daily life. Thousands of eyes have watched him for years and no one has detected any immoral practice or act or found any fault of a serious nature in him.

Candor requires us to say that he is sometimes over-sensitive, that he has his own views as to the best methods of conducting his work and is sometimes a little domineering in carrying them out; that he sometimes uses unnecessary harshness in his public addresses in dealing with the sins and shortcomings of people,

especially of the converts of the Mission, a thing which is probably due to his over-anxiety for them ; that he has not yet learned economy and the best way of conducting his financial affairs, and that owing to his own former wicked life he would be a trifle too severe in the control of his family but for the good sense and prudent firmness of his wife. But these are minor matters and when they are said, about all is said on *that* side.

And Mr. Holcombe has come to occupy a unique and commanding position in the city of Louisville. All classes respect him, all classes look up to him and people from all classes seek his counsel and aid in certain emergencies.

Mothers in distress over the sins of their sons, sisters in sorrow over the dissipation of their brothers, wives in despair over the wickedness of their husbands, all these go to Steve Holcombe for advice, comfort, encouragement and help; and when they can not go, they write; sometimes from distant places, as far away as Canada. The ministers of Louisville refer to him those extreme cases which they meet with in their ministry, and which they feel his experience and his knowledge of the ways and temptations of dissipated men enable him to handle, as a letter from Dr. Broadus and one from Dr. Willits, elsewhere reproduced, will show. And the dissipated men themselves, the drunkards, the gamblers, the outcast, the lost—all these feel that Steve Holcombe is their friend, a friend who has the willingness and the power to help them up, and they go to him when they are in distress or when they awake to a sense of their wretched condition

and desire to rise again. And through his instrumentality many a one *has* risen again, and to many a mother, wife, sister, family, has come through him a resurrection of buried hope and joy.

And those gamblers who have never yet come to distress or to religion regard him with admiration and affection. The following letter from Mr. A. M. Waddill, one of the leading sporting men of the South, was written in answer to an inquiry as to how Mr. Holcombe is looked upon by the gamblers:

“LOUISVILLE, KY., August 13, 1888.

“*Rev. Gross Alexander:*

“DEAR SIR: In writing of my friend, Steve P. Holcombe, I will say that his adoption of the pulpit has not lowered him in the esteem of his former associates—the gamblers. Far from it. They are his admirers and his friends, and, when they have the funds, are as willing supporters of his work as any. They can not show him too much respect and can not exhibit a more profound love than is shown him every day by some one of his old companions. He has wielded a wonderful influence over them for good, both here and elsewhere, and has made many converts from their ranks, who could not have been influenced probably by any other minister of the Gospel. I myself have been, I am happy to say, wonderfully benefited by the influence of his benevolent character.

“Very respectfully yours,

“A. M. WADDILL.”

The esteem in which he is held by the leading business men of the city is shown by the fact that the Board of Directors of the Mission is composed of such men as John A. Carter, J. P. Torbitt, L. Richardson, J. B. McFerran, R. J. Menefee, J. T. Burghard, H. V. Loving, Arthur Peter, John T. Moore, J. K. Goodloe, P. Meguiar, C. McClarty, W. T. Rolph, John Finzer, with P. H. Tapp as Treasurer.

He has the confidence and esteem of the officers both of the city and State, and he has a large influence with them.

The Mayor, the Chief of Police, and the Judges of the Courts recognize his usefulness, his ability and his efficiency by co-operating with him, as far as may be, and by adopting his views and suggestions as to the treatment of criminals charged with lesser crimes and misdemeanors.

The Governor, J. Proctor Knott, readily granted pardon to the only man for whom Mr. Holcombe ever asked it, and the testimony of this now happy man is given in this volume.

Not only is Mr. Holcombe thus in honor and demand at home; he is in demand all over the country. Until it came to be known that he would not leave his own work in Louisville, he was constantly receiving requests to attend or conduct meetings of one sort or another in all parts of Kentucky and in several other States.

Year before last, in the summer of 1886, he was, by appointment of the Governor of the State, a Commissioner from Kentucky in the National Convention of Corrections and Charities at Washington.



In the fall of 1887 he attended, by request, the Convention of Christian Workers of the United States and Canada, in the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City, and made two addresses, both of which are printed among his sermons in this book. He was appointed a member of the Executive Committee of that body, in which capacity he now serves.

But not only in direct results has the power of God been manifested through this instrument. Mr. Holcombe's conversion and work have had the effect of quickening the faith and zeal of all the churches of the city. It has not only drawn them nearer together in fostering and furthering a common enterprise into which they entered of their own motion, and without solicitation, but it has revived the languishing faith of all classes. Not only has the Gospel saved Steve Holcombe and others, he (let it be said reverently and understood rightly) has, in one sense, saved the Gospel. Many had lost faith in it. They thought it was an old, worn-out story. It had lost its novelty and vitality, and it had not the power it claimed to have. Its achievements were not equal to its pretensions. Some of the men who have been brought to a better life through Mr. Holcombe's instrumentality have said that, though they did not, out of respect for other people, publish the fact, they had lost all faith and were, at heart, utter infidels. Some of them continued to attend church and to give to the church of their means, and to give respectful attention to the preaching, but it was out of deference to relatives or respect for custom, or for mere Sunday pastime. But the conversion of Steve Holcombe, and the life he was living, arrested

their thought, awakened inquiry and revived their faith, and many of these have been saved.

The conversion of these has in turn resulted in the conviction of others and so the stream has broadened and deepened. As Mr. Holcombe says in one of his addresses, "There is naturally in the minds of men a doubt as to the truth and divinity of the religion which fails to do what it proposes to do, and so in times of religious deadness men lose faith and unbelief gets stronger and more stubborn while they see no examples of the power of the Gospel to save bad men. But when bad men have been reached and quickened and made better through the Gospel, and this continues year after year, then the tide turns, and faith becomes natural and easy not to say contagious and inevitable."

These effects have demonstrated the reality of conversion in opposition to the view that it is an effect of the excitement of the imagination. "One hears," it is said, "the narration of the experience of others who claim to be converted, and he works at himself till he works himself up to the persuasion that he also has got it." But, as one of the converts in narrating his experience said, "Imagination could not take the whisky habit out of a man. It never did take it out of me. But the power of this Gospel which Steve Holcombe preaches has taken it out root and branch."

Another thing is shown also by the history of this work. A distinguished minister said once, "We must get the top of society converted and then we may expect to reach the lower classes." Mr. Holcombe, on the contrary, in accordance with the example and words of Jesus and of Paul, of Luther and of Wesley, has given

his time and labor primarily and largely to the lower classes and the lost classes, and through these he has reached also the higher classes, exemplifying again what was said by the most apostolic man since the Apostles, that the Gospel "works not from the top down but from the bottom up."

If you should ask what is the explanation of Mr. Holcombe's success, it may be answered that it is due to three things. The extraordinary change which has taken place in his character and in his life arrests attention and produces conviction.

In the second place is his intense and pitying love for those who are not saved, and especially for those who, besides being most utterly lost, are, either by their own suspicions and fears or by the customs and coldheartedness of society, or both, shut out from all sympathy and opportunity. He has a very mother's love for poor, sinful, struggling souls, and he shows this not in words only or chiefly, but in service. Some account has already been given from one of the Louisville papers concerning his rescue of a man who had been drunk continuously for twenty-three years. To have preached temperance and morality and duty to this wild and degraded man would have been useless, to have *told* him of the love of God would, perhaps, have been no better. But when this far off love of God took concrete form in the person of Steve Holcombe and was brought nigh and made real in his brotherliness and gentleness and patience and service, it proved stronger than a twenty-three years' whisky habit and to-day this man, who lately dwelt apart from men like the man among the tombs and who was possessed by the demon of

drink so that no man could bind him with bonds of morality or duty—this man is to-day clothed and in his right mind. And though he has not fully apprehended the way of salvation, he says, yet a transfiguration has taken place in him which is little short of miraculous. He says also that he has got some light on the question of personal religion. He is thoroughly honest and will not claim or profess what he has not. He says a man who has always gone slow in everything else can't go fast in getting religion.\*

In the third place, Mr Holcombe's success is due to the character of his preaching. It is the simple Gospel, wherein two points are continually made and emphasized, the reality and tenderness of God's love for sinful men, even the worst, and the absolute necessity of regeneration and a holy life. Both these great truths he illustrates with fitness and force from his own life and that of the men who have been converted under his ministry. His sermons are so striking in their directness and simplicity, and so helpful withal, that some of them have been reproduced in outline in the present volume, and the reader who has never heard him may get some idea of his preaching from these, and, it is hoped, some profit as well.

Whatever men may say, the fact remains that when the Gospel is preached on apostolic conditions, it has still apostolic success.

In 1886, when Rev. Sam P. Jones was holding a meeting in Cincinnati, he said of Mr. Holcombe :

“Mr. Holcombe's work is finer than anything done since the death of Jerry McAuley. He is fully consecrated to the work of rescuing the perishing and

\* This man has, since the above was written, been brought into a clear experience of conversion, and is now a clean and happy Christian man.

saving the fallen. Hundreds of men, dug by him from the deepest depths of dissipation and degradation, are to-day clothed in their right minds. Some of the most efficient Christian men have passed through his Mission, at No. 436 Jefferson street, in Louisville. I feel that in helping Steve Holcombe, I shall be able to say, at least: 'Lord, if I did not do much when I was on earth, I did what I could to help Steve Holcombe, the converted gambler, in his mission work among men who never hear preaching, and to whom a helping hand is never extended.'

"There are mighty few men like Steve Holcombe to take hold of poor fellows and bring them back to a purer and better life."

In 1888, during a great temperance meeting in Louisville, Mr. Francis Murphy said of Mr. Holcombe:

"Of all the noble men I know, he is one of the noblest, and Louisville may well be proud of the grand, big-hearted Christian man, who, in his quiet, unassuming manner is doing such a world of good here."

Mr. D. L. Moody, during his great meeting in Louisville, in the months of January and February, 1888, said of Mr. Holcombe:

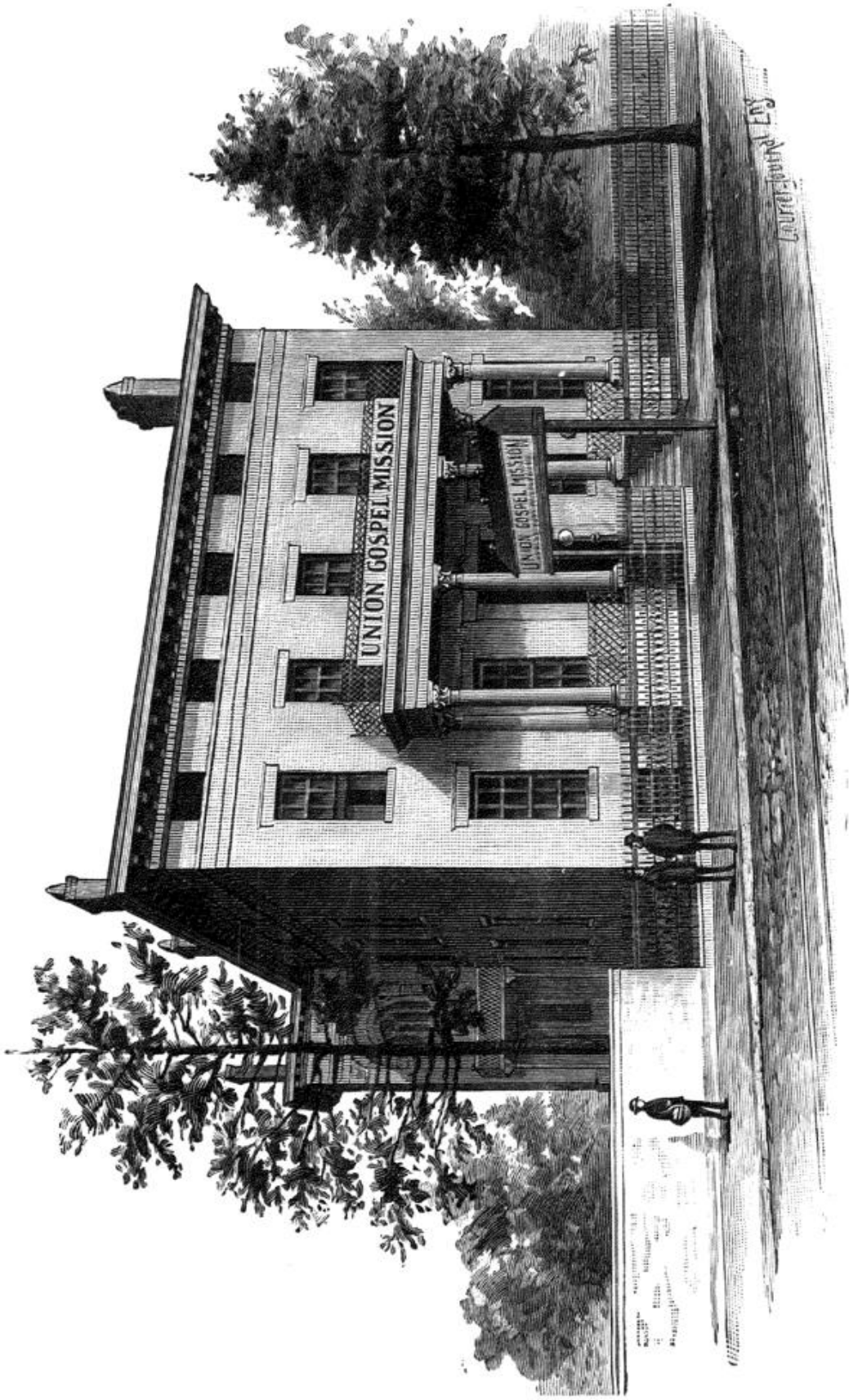
"I have got very much interested in a work in your city conducted by a man you call Steve Holcombe. I don't know when I met a man who so struck my heart. I went up and saw his headquarters and how he works. He is doing the noblest work I know of. I want you to help him with money and words of cheer. Remember, here in Louisville you make so many drunkards that you must have a place

to take care of the wrecks. Steve Holcombe rescues them. Let us help him all we can."

And Mr. Holcombe's work is not done. He is in the vigor of life, with fifteen or twenty years of life and service, God willing, before him. He is only beginning to reap the results of these ten years of study and these ten years of Christian living and working. He knows the Gospel better than he ever did before, and he preaches it better. He knows himself and God better than he ever did before, and he lives nearer the Source of Power. He knows men good and bad, better than he ever did before, and he deals with them in all states and stages more wisely and successfully.

He is of that nervous and intense temperament which can not rest without getting something done, and he is always doing something to advance his work. And though so intensely in earnest, he is singularly, it is not at all too strong to say, entirely free from fanaticism. He is in high esteem, with large influence at home and abroad, and this he does not prostitute to selfishness, but uses for usefulness.

And, best of all, he has tokens, not a few, in the form of discipline on the one hand, and success on the other, that God is guarding and guiding his Life and Work.



THE UNION GOSPEL MISSION.

**LETTERS.**



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TO HIS FIRST PASTOR.

LOUISVILLE, KY., November 6, 1883.

*My Dear Brother:*

Our meetings continue in interest. Last night the Holy Ghost was with us in great power. At the close of the talk, we invited backsliders to come forward and kneel. Six responded. Then we invited all others who wanted to become Christians to come forward and nine others responded, most of them the most hardened sinners in the city. I am sure nothing but the power of God could have lifted them from their seats. Men who have fought each other actually embraced last night. Continue to pray for us.

Yours,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., November 19, 1883.

*Dear Brother:*

Last night about two hundred persons were present, most of them non-churchgoers. About forty stood up for prayers. And oh, such good testimonies, no harangues but living testimonies as to what God can and will do for those who will let him.

Yours truly,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., November 21, 1883.

*Dear Brother:*

How grateful I am to you for all your kindness God alone knows. I may and do lack education and refinement, but I will not allow myself under any circumstances to lack gratitude. The results of our meetings prove to me that it is the work of the Holy Ghost. Of course, I could hardly believe you would come to Louisville even for a little while and not come to see me, one who has cost you so much of time and care. There was a time when I could not have stood it. But thanks to God I am now above letting small things or great things upset me. Give my love to your dear family.

Yours truly,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., February 3, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

How I do wish you could have been where you could have looked in on us last night. The room was full. They had to be turned away from the door. And they were so anxious to hear the glad tidings. No carpet, nothing to deaden the sound and yet you could have heard a pin drop. All the churches are feeling the results of our work. Yesterday G. H. joined the Christian church. He seems to be a thoroughly converted man, if I know one. P. D., whom

you know, came in here about a week ago under the influence of liquor. Said "I am an infidel and a drunkard. Pray for me." We did pray for him. He has been coming ever since. He is now perfectly sober and says he was never so moved before. These are two out of many cases.

Yours truly,  
S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., February 7, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

Your kind favor received. P. D. comes every night and sometimes speaks. He is not drinking. He says he can not believe. He does so pitifully and pleadingly ask for the prayers of Christian people. He is in earnest. Pray for him.

C. T. testified last night. He was a schoolmate of yours. He said: "For the last five years, when I would meet Brother Holcombe, I would say to myself: 'I wish he would say good day, and pass on.' But he would not. He generally had something to say about the way I was living. Of late, every time he has met me he has invited me to the Mission. I would promise to go, but went, instead, to some bar-room, until I wound up by losing my position, being sent to the workhouse, and being left by a loving wife. Two weeks ago he met me again, and this time I kept my promise. I have been coming every night since, and have not touched liquor since, and by God's help I do not expect to do so any more. I enjoy the meetings

so much. The two hours I spend here seem so short."

G. H. never misses a night. He is in the room with me now singing, "Happy Day, When Jesus Washed My Sins Away." And he is happy. Although in the last four years he has spent thirty thousand dollars in riotous living, and although his wife has left him, he said to me: "Brother Holcombe, I believe I am as happy as I ever was in my life." I asked him, why? He said: "Because I have something which I never had when I had wife, child and money. I have the forgiveness of sins and the friendship of God."

I said: "You will have to watch the devil or he will get you in his power again."

"Yes," he replied, "the devil told me when I first began to come to this Mission that I was too mean, and my heart was too dead ever to get religion; but I fought him on my knees and I got the victory. I know how hard it was to get, and by the help of God I am going to keep it, whether I ever have wife or child or money again."

Pray for me, that I may make no mistake in my difficult work. Yours, as ever,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., February 13, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

I did just what you suggested; though I was disappointed I did not show it. God is helping me

to give up my preferences. I am trusting in the Lord, and sweetly singing

“Oh, to be nothing, nothing,  
Only as led by His hand;  
A messenger at His gateway,  
Only waiting for His command.”

I am willing to preach on the streets, at the Mission, at Walnut-street church, or I am willing to be door-keeper—anything for Christ.

So you heard that I am improving in preaching. Well, I do believe that I shall yet learn how to preach.

I had a letter requesting me to go to Nicholasville to preach. But I can not go. I feel I have a little, humble work to do in Louisville, and I am going to do it. The mission men are all doing well. Though to you I may seem very weak, I am to them what you are to me. Yours, etc.,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., May 1, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

Yours to hand. I do not think you negligent. I know you love me, and I know you love the cause of Christ for which I am laboring, and I know you will do all you can to help me to help it. I am surprised, not at what you don't do, but at what you do do.

I suppose you saw in the paper what a handsome thing they did for us in the way of giving us a fifty-dollar parlor set, a fine Brussels carpet, a large walnut book-case and many other articles, including a fine portrait of dear Brother Morris.

Even for this donation and for all the love shown me by these good people I am indebted to you. "Jesus must needs go through Samaria" to save the woman at the well. You must needs be sent to Portland church to save and instruct and guide Steve Holcombe. This morning I prayed nearly an hour before breakfast, and it was lucky for me I did. Something came up at noon that would have completely upset me, but I was fortified and withstood the temptation successfully.

I am improving every way. My health is better, my memory is better. I can read my Bible more profitably than ever and I can pray better.

"God grant you may have good health, length of days and all of this world's goods that may be good for you.

S. P. H.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., May 23, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

Yours of the 16th to hand. God is so good to me. Certain temptations have come to me lately and I could not have borne them but for His help. I talked at the church last Sunday night in the absence of Dr. Messick. I felt so humble, it seemed a privilege to be treated

shamefully that I might have an opportunity of showing that a Christian can give up his own rights for the good of others. I have grown in grace since you showed me the necessity of secret prayer and of getting so well acquainted with God that he would become more real to me than my own father ever was.

You have seen in the papers poor D. T.'s attempt at suicide. But God has spared him yet another season. He will recover. Pray for him. May God bless you and strengthen you and keep you is the prayer of

Your friend and brother,  
S. P. HOLCOMBE.

---

TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 23, 1884.

*My Dear Brother:*

Yours received this A. M. I am so pressed for means I can not now buy the book you speak of, but will do so as soon as I can. I am *taking time* to study. I am getting much better acquainted with God and the better I know him the more I love him.

Yours in love,  
S. P. H.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 25, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

The men are all doing tolerably well. The attendance at the meetings is increasing. Sunday-school



holds up well. My great desire now is to be able to study the Bible better. The more I think of what you have been to me, the more grateful I feel. I wish I could in some substantial way show you how I appreciate your care. But God will reward you.

Yours, etc., S. P. H.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 30, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

The Bible is becoming very sweet to me. I can study it all day long and not get tired. I am sure the Holy Ghost is helping me. I have read the book you gave me. It is very helpful.

Brother Davidson has gone to housekeeping. He has his son and daughter with him. Oh, the love and power of God. Praise His name!

S. P. H.

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TO THE SAME.

CHICAGO, ILL., September 5, 1884.

*Dear Brother:*

Yours of the 2d to hand. Think of you? The sun may forget to shine, but poor Steve Holcombe can never forget the man who has done so much for his soul. Never has a day passed since my conversion that I have not prayed God's blessing on you, your family and your work.

Well, Chicago is a great city, a grand field for Christian work. I find many earnest Christian men and women laboring for the Master. I am not idle either. I talked four times last Sunday—three times on the street and once at a Mission.

I am having a royal time, sailing on the lake, riding on street-cars, taking in the town. I wish you were here.

God bless you always.

STEVE.

---

TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 1, 1885.

*Dear Brother:*

Yours of June 25th received. I do hope you will get Brother C.\* those books to sell. These men must have employment. They can not live, as some Christian people seem to think, on promises. It is all right to say, "Oh, let go and trust in the Lord," to a man who knows the way, but it is all not right when it is said to a poor struggling gambler, who, in faith, is as weak as a baby. I know of Brother L.'s troubles. My heart goes out to him. All well.

Yours, S. P. H.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., May 15, 1885.

*Dear Brother:*

Since writing my card this morning I have learned that D. McC., the boss Nashville gambler, and an old partner of mine, is attending Sam Jones' meetings.

\*A converted gambler.

I want you to go to see him. Don't be afraid to go right up to him and introduce yourself. Tell him you and I are old friends, and that I love him, and requested you to see him. But you know better how to approach him than I can tell you. But you must see him. Take Sam Jones to see him. Visit him at his home, with Sam Jones. He is worthy of concentration. If you can get him converted, he will be a power for good. Most of your members know him, I guess. If you don't like to call on him, alone, get some of them to go along and introduce you. May God help us save poor D. McC. Yours,

STEVE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., December 20, 1887.

*Dear Brother:*

Your favor to hand. I have had a terrible battle with self, but by the grace of God I have come out conquerer. I praise God now that I had the struggle, because it has enabled me to realize the emptiness of all that is earthly. It has convinced me that to depend on men is "like a foot out of joint." I make more miles toward my haven of rest during a night of storm than in days of calm weather. Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, I am as ever,

Your friend and brother in Christ,

STEVE P. HOLCOMBE.

TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., December 29, 1887.

*Dear Brother:*

Yours was received a few days ago. Yes, I thank God I am almost rid of my love of praise. I am willing to do the dirty and disagreeable work and let others have the picnics and the praise. "Who am I that I should be a leader of the Lord's people?" But I confess I did not get to this point without a struggle. How I did have to wrestle with God. He showed me the envy that was in my heart, that is my jealousy of any one who did more work or had more attention paid them than I had. But glory to God I hope I am rid of it at last.

Yours,

S. P. H.

—  
TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., January 26, 1888.

*Dear Brother:*

Yours just received. I hardly think it would be worth while to ask Mr. Moody to visit our Mission, as his time is so completely occupied. I think our work is as much thought of as ever. It is quiet but I think deep. I have kept it out of the papers, because too much newspaper notoriety is calculated to cause a poor little-brained fellow to exaggerate his own importance. And then there is such sweetness in the work when you are sure it is not for praise but for Christ. I am afraid that many of us on analyzing our hearts will find

first, self; second, self; and almost all for self in one way or another. May God deliver me from self.

Yours as ever,

STEVE P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 10, 1888.

*Dear Brother:*

Your letter to hand. There is nothing so comforting as true friendship. Alas! how little of it there is in this world. Happy the man who can claim *one true friend*. I know a man that has a true friend. I am that man and you are that friend. How do I know it? You are so faithful in telling me the truth about myself and showing me my faults and mistakes. Who but a true friend that had your best interest at heart would have written such a letter as this last one from you? I want you to know that while I loved you much before, I love you more now. I have been going through the fire lately, but I think I shall come out all right. Doesn't God sift a fellow? I believe I can say I rejoice in tribulation. I find I can not expect to be understood in this world or always have sympathy, but I do expect, if "I meekly wait and murmur not," to find it is all right in my Father's house.

Your friend and brother in Christ,

STEVE P. HOLCOMBE.

TO S. P. DALTON (one of the converts).

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 17, 1883.

*My Dear Brother Dalton:*

Your good letter to hand. It is, as you say, so sweet to be bound together by the ties of Christian love, and there is no tie which binds men more closely than the religion of Christ. It breaks down every barrier, and all are alike to the true Christian man; rich, poor, halt, lame, blind, there is no difference. And the Christian is happiest when he is denying himself to help others.

In order to convince the world of the truth and power of our religion, our own standard must be very high. We must deny ourselves of things which in themselves would be innocent, but which, if practiced by us, would lessen our influence for good. And how comforting to think that if we *suffer* with Him, we shall also reign with Him. The suffering comes first, the humiliation first, the toil and weariness first. Yes, we may *expect* troubles and crosses here, but we leave it all behind when we enter within the gates into the city. I thank God that your heart has been changed and that you have tasted of the powers of the world to come. I am glad you find more pleasure in my poor company and lame words than in the follies and friendships of the world. Hoping for you all good things, I am with much love,

Your brother in Christ,

STEVE HOLCOMBE.

TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 23, 1885.

*Dear Brother Dalton:*

Your letter from the great Falls is to hand. It is very gratifying to me to know that in the midst of so much excitement you could and did think of one so humble and obscure as myself. I have been at the Falls and have seen many wonderful and grand things, but the most beautiful thing I have ever seen is an old hardened sinner picking up his grip-sack and bidding the devil farewell forever. And, praise the Lord, that is my privilege almost daily in the dear old mission. Though the weather is very hot, we have glorious meetings; new converts testifying almost nightly. Two professional gamblers have just been converted. One of them was one of the sweetest conversions I ever saw. The old converts are nearly all doing well. Don't grow cold, but be in some work for the Master every day, and you will not miss the time or regret the service. God bless you.

Your friend and brother in Christ,  
S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., April 17, 1886.

*Dear Brother Dalton:*

Yours of the 6th to hand. We have purchased the property for our new home, and we shall move in in about a month. Our work is moving like a thing

of life. It was never so prosperous before. I wish you could be here to work with us. Sister Clark is in her glory. She is one of the grandest Christian women I have ever seen. Nearly all the converts are doing well.

Yours,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., November 15, 1886.

*Dear Brother Dalton:*

I receive no letters that touch my heart more deeply than those I receive from you. Our work is more quiet now. The papers do not notice it so much, but we are doing a good work. It is now more among the unfortunate business men of the city some of whom were fallen very low. Some who have recently been reclaimed are now first-class business men. The old converts are all right and doing well, but they don't stand by me in the work as I wish they would. Oh, for "consecration and concentration." That is my motto.

My married daughter has got one of the best of husbands and I think they are the happiest couple I know. The rest are all well. I hope you will be blown back this way by some favoring breeze, so we can have your help in our work. Yours,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.



TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., January 6, 1887.

*Dear Brother Dalton:*

Our work is going on grandly again. You can see from the papers I am kept as busy as a bee. You must know from the number that come that my time is all taken up in nursing them. Hence, I can not write long letters, however much I would like to.

Hope to see you soon. Yours,

S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., October 28, 1887.

*S. P. Dalton, Cleveland, Ohio:*

DEAR BROTHER DALTON: Yours of the 17th is received. I am glad you are an active worker in the church, and that they have shown their appreciation of you by making you a steward in the church.

I believe you will render a good account of your stewardship. The main thing for you to guard against is *care*. Remember, always when you think you are too busy to pray in secret, read the Bible, go to the meetings, etc., what Jesus said to Martha: "Thou art careful and troubled about many things."

I am trying to be a faithful servant. God is blessing my humble efforts. The converts are sticking and the work is growing. Most of the converts are prospering in business. Some that were in the gutter

are now making from fifty to two hundred dollars a month. Your friend and brother in Christ,  
S. P. HOLCOMBE.

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TO THE SAME.

LOUISVILLE, KY., May 11, 1888.

*Dear Brother Dalton :*

Yours of the 9th to hand. Glad to hear of your continued success in business. You are a great man, but a man who is so prosperous in business must keep his eyes open.

Remember to give to the Lord all that belongs to Him of every dollar you earn. John Wesley's motto is hard to improve on: "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." And oh! what sweetness there is in giving. Never get too busy to do some Christian work. We have just had Murphy at Louisville, for a month. Good-bye,  
STEVE P. HOLCOMBE.

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\*LETTERS TO MR. HOLCOMBE.

*Mr. Holcombe :*

I have heard and read so much of your influence and prayers for men leading dissolute lives, that I am going to ask you if you won't find my husband and stay and pray with him until he is saved. The other

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\*A few of the letters to Mr. Holcombe have been selected out of several hundreds.

night, when he was drinking very hard, he appealed to me to send for you to pray for him. He has much confidence in your prayers, and believes in your life; I have often heard him say so. He has a noble, loving disposition, and forgiving; so you need not be afraid of offending him. His whole heart would forever offer thanksgivings for his delivery from drink; for it is that that he prays for. I have thought that, perhaps, God intended salvation to come to him through you; and how earnestly I pray that it may. So much has been done, and so many prayers offered for him, won't you please, at your next opportunity, find him and talk and pray with him? You would make a miserable, lonely woman's life happy again. We have been so happy together, so congenial, so well mated; and if God will answer all our united prayers, happiness will return to our hearts tenfold. Oh, Mr. Holcombe, pray the prayer of faith, and my heart will ever turn in grateful acknowledgment to God for making you the humble instrument of my much-loved husband's salvation. Won't you go now immediately and wrestle for and with him in prayer?

Believe me, most earnestly, your co-worker in  
prayer for his salvation. MRS. H.

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BIRMINGHAM, ALA., May 12, 1888.

*Dear Brother Holcombe:*

I hope you will not think hard of me for asking you to write once more to my husband. I feel so confident it will stir up a remembrance of his conversion. Oh,

brother, don't give up helping me. Try to save my husband. It nearly kills me to see him come home full of the destroying thing called whisky; and it seems to have such a strong hold on him. All the imploring I can do will not change him at all. I have grieved until my life is almost grieved away. But oh, God will surely hear my cry after a while. If I could give my life to save my husband's soul, I would willingly, yes, gladly, do it. Brother Holcombe, what do you think about this plan? If you can get one of the converts whom my husband knows, and one who has been a great drunkard, to write a friendly, brotherly letter to him, don't you think that might do some good? Oh, I have thought of so many plans and ways to try and get him back to the Lord. I am sorry to say that the city of Birmingham is the most wicked place I have ever seen; so few Christians, and they are not working. I do fervently hope God will send some one here who is like yourself, not ashamed to work for the lost. I hope you will write, Brother Holcombe. Pray for me; and oh, do ask all the friends there to pray for my husband.

Mrs. P.

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LOUISVILLE, KY., December 3d.

*Brother Holcombe:*

Will you ask the prayers of your people in behalf of my skeptical son-in-law. He is a talented man, but he is using his influence against his best friend. My poor child is suffering the penalty for marrying an infidel. If I dared tell you how desperate the case, I

am sure your heart would be troubled to its depths. Do pray that this man may be led into the light of the Gospel, and become a better husband, father and citizen.

A SUFFERING MOTHER.

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BOWLING GREEN, November 10, 1884.

*Mr. Holcombe:*

Will you please go and see my son L., and try to persuade him to live a better life? He has great faith in what you say. When you wrote to him last spring he seemed very much affected, and said to me. "That is one of the best men in the world." Oh, for heaven's sake, pray for him. If you can go and talk to him, advise him to leave Kentucky and go away off and reform his life. If he comes back here, *danger awaits him*. I feel sure you can influence him, for he believes you are sincere. He is not mean and sinful at heart, but oh, the accursed demon Drink causes him all his trouble. If he could get some respectable work and some one to encourage him and lift him above his darkened life, I believe he would be all right. He has relatives there, but they are the last to apply to for assistance. He is in jail in your city now. God only knows the pang it causes me to say he is in jail. He was such a good Sunday-school boy and a good Templar. Is it possible that he is to be lost? I can't yet give up all hope. While my Father in heaven has so sorely afflicted me, I can't help believing that after awhile the change will come. Oh, how I wish Brother

Morris could go to him to-day. He took more interest in him than any one else ever did. Please do what you can. I know God *will hear your prayer* and help you to save him. Yours with a mother's aching heart for her boy,

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CHICAGO, May 24th.

*Rev. Steve Holcombe:*

MY DEAR FRIEND: I have just received a letter from my son, who has almost ruined himself and broken my heart by his intemperance. I have been always praying for his reformation, but felt almost hopeless, as he would not go to church and seemed hardened, and I know very well he could not rely on his own strength and would not look to a stronger arm for help. Do you know when I received a letter from him to-day making a full confession of all his past course, and saying he had been to hear you and asked for your prayers, I could not realize it? How we are surprised when God hears us. I write this to thank you for anything you may have said to help him, and to beg you to follow him with your prayers and advice. Oh, won't you try to help him all you can? It will be a hard battle with him, poor fellow, as he has been for some time indulging freely. Will you look after him as much as you can and if he should fall, help him up? I am praying for you and your work, and have been doing so for a long time. Your friend,

MRS. P. W. M.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT.

*Dear Mr. Holcombe:*

Will you please come out to my home on Third street in the morning as early as you can? I dislike to trouble you in this way; but I am in great trouble with Mr. L. He has been drinking, and I feel that you can be the means of bringing him back to God. I have prayed with him, and done all I could for him. I feel crushed to the earth with this deep sorrow and mortification. Don't let him know that I sent for you. He is quite sick to-night. Pray that God may sustain us and lift us out of this deep dark sorrow, and cast out the demon that seems to possess my poor dear husband. God bless you, our dear good friend, and keep us all this night.

Sincerely your friend,

MRS. L.

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LOUISVILLE, KY., April 12, 1888.*Rev. S. P. Holcombe:*

DEAR BROTHER: It is with grief in my heart I must write you again. Mr. L. went on a business trip three weeks since, but fell into bad company, and has been on a protracted spree. He came home last night utterly discouraged—will not even try to pray again. I am almost discouraged myself; can only wait and trust. I think if you could make it convenient to call to see him to-day, perhaps God will put words into your mouth that will help him. I leave it with you; and would not ask you to leave your duties, except I know your willingness to work for the Master.

He will not know that I have sent for you. Oh, help me to pray that God will help my husband.

Your friend,

MRS. L.

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OCTOBER 28TH.

*Friend Holcombe:*

I am locked up, and go to the work-house this morning. Oh, can anything be done to help me; I want to become a different man. Try and save me.

Truly, — —

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CITY WORK-HOUSE, November 1, 1882.

*Rev. Stephen P. Holcombe:*

DEAR SIR: You kindly requested me to write you in event I reached the conclusion that under a change of condition I might become a different man. My knowledge of your own career inspires me with more confidence than anything that has ever fallen under my notice. Coupled with the impression made upon me by the sermon on Sunday afternoon, I firmly believe if you will come and see me, and allow me to state to you fully my convictions as to your ability to make a sober man of me, you will do one of the greatest and noblest acts of your life; and, in keeping me from the slavery of drink, rescue one who has suffered, and who has caused, and now is causing, much suffering to others. I stand ready to unite with you in any manner you may suggest, and pray God Almighty to bless you.

Truly, — —.



CITY WORK-HOUSE, November 2, 1882.

*Friend Holcombe:*

When I penned the few lines to you yesterday, I had to do it in so short a space of time, that in all probability I omitted to state specifically why I desired to see you. Heretofore, I have never entertained any settled plan of operations to restrain my appetite for liquor other than the mere will power I deemed in my own possession and control, and, as a result, would invariably find myself in the very midst of violating every previously conceived resolution. Your kindness in pointing out a course of discipline and conduct, and extending to me a welcome among those who have made, and who are making, successful battle against the great destroyer of happiness, awakened within me an entirely different current of thought; and when I stated I would unite with you in any manner you would suggest, to effect the object in view, I meant it with all my heart and mind; and I appeal to an all-wise and merciful Creator to attest the sincerity of my declaration in this matter. Again, my resolve is to attend strictly to any suggestions you may make. The accursed appetite has beggared me. I do not ask charity from any mortal toward me. I am not deserving of either sympathy or pity; and while the embracing of the cause of religion and temperance can not of itself work reformation, it places a man in a position where he can climb upward and go forward, instead of forever traveling the broad way that leads to destruction. Holcombe. I want to redeem myself. I only crave this one last opportunity, and if God will help me no

man shall ever know of me using either intoxicating drink or profane language as long as breath is in my body. When released, I do not want to be idle a day. I have mouths to feed whose entry into this troubled life is chargeable solely to me. I will work for a dollar a day to do my duty towards them. Judge W. L. Jackson, Judge H. H. Bruee, Cary B. Blackburn or Major Tom Hays, would, I am sure, put in a good word for me; and Judge Price himself, I think has some hope for me. I had a violent chill to-day, and am in the hospital department, and my fingers are somewhat stiff from researches in the geological department.\* Hence this cramped writing. Come and see me, and do not give me up as hopeless. Truly, — —.

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BOWLING GREEN, KY., March 27, 1888.

*Rev. Steve Holcombe :*

DEAR SIR: I am so much obliged to you for the kind letter you were pleased to write me. You no doubt think ere this that the seed has fallen on stony ground, and, perhaps, among thorns; but I can assure you that I made up my mind when in your city to lead a different life, and to devote the remainder of my life to the service of my God. I have so often thought of you, and have wished to see you. Pray for me, and I do hope we may meet again. If ever convenient, call and see me. Our doors will be open, yes, wide open, to you. Thanking you again for your remembrance of me, I am, yours truly, — —.

\*He means the rock-pile.

SICK BED, February 5th.

*Dear Christian Brother :*

I have a tenant in a little house, a grocery, on Sixth street, right next to the First Presbyterian church, who is a fearfully wicked man, a common drunkard, and steeped in sin; and I come to you to-day to beg you to seek him out and try to rescue him. He has four or five little motherless children, whose lives are full of the bitterest sorrow; they are so dirty and unkempt that the public school teacher had to send them home. They are under no control; have no one to train them for God, and ought to be where some one would save them from themselves and ruin. When I leased my house to him, he was a very handsome, well-to-do man; young, apparently honest, paid his rent regularly, and had a very nice little wife, who has since died—I think with a broken heart. Will you not look him up at once? Or, if you are too full of other cases, will you not get some one of your workers to try to lead him back to good paths? He is a very desperate case, I know, and seems almost past saving now; but you know God's grace can reach any heart. I would lay this poor dissolute creature, lost to all sense of honor, shame or manliness, on your soul, my brother, and beseech you, for Christ's sake, for the sake of these poor motherless children, whose souls are worth saving for Christ, do try to bring your influence and your prayers for God's help, to this miserable man's case, and see if you can help. If he is past God's mercy—and I can not believe that—will you not see what

can be done for the little ones? The oldest boy is a bright little fellow, and may become a great light in our Father's work. I hear that this man has been to hear Mr. Moody. I do not know if it helped him: Will you not send after him, and try to get him to go to-night? I will meet you in prayer there for him.

In bonds of Christian friendship,

JENNIE CASSEDAY.

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ALEXANDER'S HOTEL,  
LOUISVILLE, KY., May 30, 1888.

*My Dear Mr. Holcombe:*

I am struggling as hard as ever a poor wretch did against my appetite for liquor. I have asked the good Lord to help me overcome the habit, but I feel that my prayers amount to nothing. May I ask you to ask the Great Controller of us all to give me strength to overcome this habit? Save me, or help save me, I beg and implore you. Please give me your prayers.

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OCTOBER 16, 1887.

*My Dear Steve:*

Your kind favor of the 7th instant reached me in due time. I was, of course, delighted to hear from you, and inexpressibly glad to hear of the improved state of your health. I also note with much pleasure what you say in regard to the pleasant and extensive trip that you have just finished. It gratifies and pleases

me beyond expression to know that the people of Louisville are at last awakened to your worth, and are willing to manifest some substantial recognition of the same. "All things work well for those who love the Lord." I believe the quotation is correct. Oh, had I continued in the way you pointed out to me, how different my situation and circumstances would be. Instead of being broken in health and bankrupt in purse, separated from all that I love and hold most dear, I would be, I am sure, what I was while I was endeavoring to lead a Christian life—a happy husband and father and a respectable citizen. Oh, Steve, my dear friend, I am wretched, miserable, broken hearted. When I reflect upon what I was and what I might have been, and consider what I am and how little I have to look forward to, I simply get desperate. But I will not weary you with my troubles. As regards myself and habits, I may say, without exaggeration, that I am in better health and my mode of living is plainer and more regular than it has ever been. I rise every morning between four and five o'clock, and retire between eight and nine. My food is of the plainest and coarsest kind. My companions are, I regret to say, cowboys. You know, I presume, what they are, so I will say nothing about them. I neither drink nor smoke; I chew tobacco very moderately, and expect to quit that. I suffer terribly at times for the want of congenial company. You must excuse this effort, as I am surrounded by a lot of boys who are making a terrible lot of noise. Give my love to all of your family. God bless you, my dear Steve. Pray for me and mine.

Your friend,      — — —

NOVEMBER 2, 1887.

*My Dear Steve :*

Your letter of the 27th is before me. It is just such a letter as I expected—so full of sympathy, love and good, wholesome advice. I wish it were possible, or, rather, expedient, to listen to your advice and return home, for I am heartily sick and tired of the life I am now living. Don't you know that my life out here reminds me, in a measure, of your western experience? Of course, I am not subjected to the hardships and deprivations that you were forced to undergo. But, as far as bodily comfort and companionship are concerned, I must say that your experience must have been rather "tough," if it was worse than mine. Now, don't misunderstand me, I have plenty to eat, such as it is. I have a fairly good bed, in a fairly good room. My companions are, as you know, cowboys. That they are rough and all that, goes without saying, but let me tell you, my dear friend, I have received better treatment and more consideration from these wild, half-civilized cowboys, upon whom I have no earthly claim, than I ever received from some from whom I had a right to expect, if not fair treatment, at least some consideration. The people one meets out here are always willing to give a fellow a "white man's chance." When you write, tell me something about the dear old Mission and its workers. What has become of Davidson, Peck, Booker and all of the boys? I would be extremely sorry to hear that any of them had forsaken the narrow for the broad way. The dear old Mission! What a train of happy memories is connected with it. I almost

forgot to inquire about Clay Price. Tell me about all of them. I am about to change my quarters. Don't know where I will go. You had better wait until you hear from me again before answering. With much love to yourself and family, I am, as ever,

Your friend,

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DECEMBER 10, 1887.

*My Dear Steve:*

Your letter, or rather note, of November 29th, reached me in due course. You advise me to keep up a brave heart. Steve, old fellow, my heart is broken. I know you will smile and shake your head; but I honestly believe that if there is such a thing as a broken heart, mine is broken. Haven't I suffered enough? Well, how is the Mission getting along? I noticed in the *Courier-Journal* the other day that George Kerr had been reclaimed. Well, well, who would have thought it? I know him well. He is a fellow of some parts. If he can only keep sober, he is abundantly qualified to do well. Write me something about the boys. I would be mighty glad to hear good reports of them. Have you seen the ... —s lately. Give them my regards when you see them; and remind them for me, that they are in debt to me a letter. They and you, old fellow, are about all the friends I have left. What a sad commentary upon human nature is the mutability of so-called friendship! When I was prosperous, I had all the friends I wanted, and more, too. Now, I can count them upon the fingers of one hand.

Ah, well, I suppose it has been the same time out of mind ; I am not an exception. Now, Steve, write me a long letter, and tell me all the news.

Very truly your friend, ———.

FROM A CONVERT.

KANSAS CITY, MO., May 30, 1888.

*Rev. Steve P. Holcombe, Louisville, Ky.:*

Yours received. Would have written sooner but I have been away and busy. I have been at Fulton, Mo., since the tenth instant. Brother Jones left Monday morning. I tell you I just had a glorious time. Steve, I love the work! and God is blessing me wonderfully; everything is prosperous; business is getting better; my health is getting better. In short, everything is just glorious. Of course, I feel gloomy sometimes; but, blessed be God, he will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; and, with every temptation there is a way of escape. I feel just that way. Every time temptation comes to me, I flee to God for help, and I never yet failed. I have gone into this for life; and, God helping me, I will stick. I have not tasted drink of any kind since about January 9th, and I tell you I was a slave to it. I never think of drinking now; my thought is all in a different channel; bless God for it. Our little mission is gradually growing, and we hope for grand things from it. Pray for us. Brother Morris wishes to be remembered to yourself and family. I am a member of his church, and I love



him. He is a grand man. I am going to Chillicothe, Missouri, the 12th of June—Brother Jones will be there for ten days. Give my regards to all who know me; and tell them I am trusting Jesus for everything. May God bless you in your good work. I shall never forget you. Write as soon as convenient.

Your friend and brother,

HARRY CHAPMAN.

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FROM A CONVERT.

CHICAGO, July 21, 1884.

*My Dear Brother Steve:*

Your kind postal of the 21st to hand this p. m. I must really beg your pardon for having neglected your cards; but I have no excuse to offer. It has been nothing but carelessness. I was absent from Chicago a week with my friend D., and had a very pleasant time. It is probable that he will start into business in Chicago. He will know in the next few weeks. The Lord has taken wonderfully good care of me since I have been here, although on one or two occasions I have had to do with only one meal a day. He has blessed me all the time. He has kept me cheerful through all, and I feel to-day that I am nearer to Him than I have ever been. I have put myself into His hands unreservedly, and I feel that He is taking care of me. Yesterday I got a letter from my brother. He asked me to pray for him, and I shall certainly continue to do so as long as I live. Whenever you see him, speak to him about the salvation of his soul.

I have written to him about it, and he wants to try and become a Christian. Pray for him. Sunday I saw Dr. S. He is better dressed than I ever saw him. I notice he wears the Murphy ribbon in his button-hole. I am glad he is looking so well. This was the first time I had seen him for weeks. Steve, there is only one thing lacking to make my happiness complete, and that is to have my mother think more favorably of my reformation. I have written to her twice, and she has not even deigned to answer. I feel, however, that the Lord will bring this about all right. As to my getting into a situation, it will be some time yet, as business hardly ever starts up here until about September. Then the Lord will put me into something permanent, I know. The captain is indeed happy with his family reunited with him. He ought to shout God's praises from morning till night; but he is not the only one that can shout—*my* heart is forever full. Neither hard times, nor anything else, can keep me down as long as I have Jesus with me. I must close; it is time to go to convert's meeting. My prayers are for you and the Mission. I humbly ask you, as well as all the good Christians there, to pray for me. May God bless you and yours. Your brother in Christ,

FRED ROPKE.

Remember me to Mrs. Holcombe and the rest of the family, as well as to all inquiring friends.

FROM THE SAME.

CHICAGO, August 3, 1884.

*Dear Steve:*

Your kind letter to hand. I feel ashamed of myself for not answering your letters more promptly. It does my heart good to think that you at last have confidence in me, and that my going to Chicago must not necessarily round up in my going to hell. It seems to me, although I have not been in the service of our glorious Master as long as you have, yet I have, or rather had, more faith in His power to keep me than you had; but your remark has often been recalled to my mind. Do you remember saying "that if I went to Chicago, I was certainly bound for hell?" Was this charity or placing much faith in God's word? Well, let the matter drop. I have just come home from a glorious meeting. Oh, how I thank God this morning for a lightness of heart and a buoyancy of spirit that lift me above surrounding trials and troubles! I am poor in purse; but, bless His holy name, I am rich in promises and faith. My temporal affairs are not in a very prosperous condition, but notwithstanding all this, I have the confidence He will take care of me. He has done this in a wonderful manner to this time, and He certainly has not changed since I have become one of His. Captain Davidson keeps me pretty well posted as to your meetings. I am glad they are well attended. The Lord willing, I will be with you on a visit this coming winter, and I will bring a friend. You will then see in what style they conduct their meetings here in Chicago. I have as yet received no answer to my long letter

to H., but I praise God that my humble words have set him to thinking. My prayers ascend to heaven daily that he may be saved. Your friend, Frank Jones, is here in Chicago. I saw him once on Clark street, but had no chance to talk to him. This has been some two weeks ago. Remember me in Christian love to the Millers, Captain Denny, Dalton, Ben Harney, Tom Watts—in fact, all; but especially give my regards to Mrs. Holcombe. Don't forget Mulligan, and my prayers are that God may bless you as abundantly as he is blessing your brother in Christ,

FRED ROPKE.

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FROM A CONVERT.

LOUISVILLE, KY., September 12, 1887.

*Rev. S. P. Holcombe, New York City:*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND: You do not know the pleasure your letter gave me. I have wanted to write you ever since my return, but did not know where a letter would reach you, nor do I know where to direct this, but suppose I can get your address from Will. I was at the Mission last night, and missed you sadly. We all missed you in many ways. Your good, hard, common horse sense is sadly needed. It is the same old story; we never appreciate a man until it is too late. I used to think I could pick many flaws in your management of the mission work, but I have now come to the conclusion that you can't be downed in that line, and

hereafter I shall not even think a thought against your management. Last night we had some ignoramus to preach, and his grammar and ways of expressing himself were (to say the least) tiresome; but we had testimonies afterward, and I said to myself, "Well, Brother Steve is away, and I have been on the quiet lay for a long time; I think, for the sake of Christ and old Steve, I will give a red-hot testimony right from the shoulder," and I did. I was followed by Hocker in a like strain, and others chiming in, we made the welkin ring from turret to foundation-stone. But the banner-bearer was not there; so the good intended to be done fell short. Only one stood up for prayer. But never mind, we will have our old veteran leader with us soon, when we will unfurl our battle-flag anew and carry terror and dismay into old Beelzebub's camp. I think if our winter campaign is well organized, there will be no "Indians on the warpath next spring." I miss you and want to see you so bad, that you may give me a hundred lectures and I won't shirk. Your true blues are all holding fast. Your Old Guard is a true and tried one. I think they all can be depended on both on dress parade and under fire. Your family are all well. May our heavenly Father bless you, my dear friend, both here and hereafter. Your sins have been great; but oh, what would I not give to know that, after life's fitful fever is over, I would be permitted to occupy a seat in the beautiful land of the blest alongside of you. Truly your faith has made you whole. Good-bye, and once more, God bless you.

Your sincere friend,

P. B.

FROM A CONVERT.

ATLANTA, GA., February 3, 1885.

*Dear Brother Holcombe:*

Your letter of December 17th was received in due time. Your postal card was also received a few days ago. I have no lawful excuse to offer but pure procrastination, from time to time, for not answering. You are not forgotten by me or my wife and daughter. We often speak of you, and the question is often asked, "Will he come and see us this year and hold another mission meeting?" You did so much good in Atlanta. The meetings were kept up until the bad weather broke us up; they were well attended nearly every night, and the good seed you sowed germinated; and, by Brother Barclay's good tilling and the assistance and the goodness of God, has brought forth much fruit of repentance; and, thank God, we all bless the day He sent you to us. If your Mission managers could see the great good you accomplished while with us, I do not think they would say no to your making Atlanta another visit; and we look forward to the day as not being far distant when you will do so. I am trying my best to live right. I know I am changed; I feel very different from what I did before you visited us. You have known me fifteen years; and you know how bad and sinful I was, and how dissipated. I have not even wanted a drink of anything since your visit. You know I told you I had put my foot on the serpent and I intended to keep it there. I do not go with any of my old associates who drink or who visit bar

rooms. I select good company; I keep up the family altar, and we are a happy little family now. Can you appreciate that you saved one of your old lost friends by your good work? When I met you and saw and heard of the great blessing God had bestowed upon you and your dear family, I set about obtaining the like blessing for myself; and I feel in my heart that I have received it. God has been very merciful to me and blesses all my undertakings and I am so thankful for all of His kind mercies. Brother Barclay told me he wrote you a few days ago, and I suppose he gave you all the news. I have not been to the mission Sunday-school for some time on account of the bad weather, and you know I live a long way off. But, God willing, I shall go next Sunday. My wife and daughter join in much love to you and your family, and wish you a happy and successful year in the Master's cause.

Yours truly,      \_\_\_\_\_.

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FROM AN OFFENDED GENTLEMAN.

LOUISVILLE, KY., January 13, 1887.

*My Dear Sir:*

Your letter surprises me. You came to me un-introduced; I was glad to see you, and, I hope, treated you with the consideration which I think your merit demands. You again approached me to-day. To-night I received a letter from you which is to me offensive and impolite. I am not coming to your

place, and I will thank you to abate your interest in my behalf. I believe in your work, and wish you success; but I hope you will let me alone. My self-constituted friends have done me more injury than *even* my own indiscretions. Very truly,

To Rev. Steve P. Holcombe. ———.

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FROM A GAMBLER.

FEBRUARY 4, 1884.

*Mr. Steve Holcombe, Esq., Lewisville, Ky.:*

DEAR FRIEND: I take my pen in hand to drop you a few lines, as I haven't heard of you for a long time, I learnt from a friend, of your whereabouts, and that you had forever Retired from Gambling, I want to accumulate a few hundred dollars and Retire from the Business in the future, and as we have long Been friends, I hope you will not Refuse giveing me your sure system of winning at the Game of Poker. From your friend,

DAVID W. MILLER,

*Ridgeville, Randolph Co., Ind.*

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849 SEVENTH ST., LOUISVILLE, May 28, 1888.

*Rev. Steve Holcombe:*

DEAR SIR: I have a large family Bible, which has been in my family a number of years. You will do me a personal favor by accepting it as a souvenir of my late son, Charles A. Gill. It was through your



Christian instrumentality and kindness that my dear son embraced his Saviour and died a Christian.

“ Hoping that God will add many stars to your crown, I am your sincere friend,

HANNAH GILL.

Two more Bibles will be given you by the same hand for distribution. H. G.

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FROM A CHRISTIAN BROTHER.

MEMPHIS, TENN., May 6, 1887.

*My Dear Friend and Brother Holcombe:*

Your card well received, but I have been so busy that I have waited for a time to write to you. I am in good health and have a good situation, thank God. Am always alone. My children in Switzerland are well. When I passed through Louisville, as I wrote you from New York, I wished I had been able to stop for twenty-four hours, but had a through sleeper to Memphis, and could not stay over. I heard of your great trial lately. Hope God did sustain you, and that good will come out of it for your soul. The more I live, the more I am separated from this world. My body is in it, but my mind and spirit are longing for a better state, where evil shall not be present, within or without. The Bible becomes clearer to my soul every day, and with the grace of God I hope to come to the end a faithful and obedient child of the Almighty Father in heaven. I suffer very much mentally; it is a constant agony. I am absolutely, completely broken down

in my own will; have given up entirely all worldly pleasures; have no pleasure except in doing the will of God the best I can. My old enemy, myself, with my passions and self-indulgence, I pay no more attention to. May God use me according to His good will, and make me so as to be worthy of His service. Everything of this world has been taken away from me; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" is my daily bread. I often wish to be in Louisville. Maybe I shall return there later, to have some Christian friends around me. I have here \$150.00 a month, and the finest situation that can be wished in my line of business. What are you doing? I suppose always the same—taking care of the lost and neglected. Your reward shall be great, as you come nearer fulfilling the Master's teaching than brilliant preachers who do not touch the burdens of poor sinners. How is your family, especially your sweet little daughter? I hope you are all well. This world is nothing but a tremendous deception to all who are attached to it; everything is corrupt, and has the sting of death and sin. It is a constant warfare with evil and evil forces around you. It is only worth living for the good we can do to others. I can not understand at all the joy that some find in it, except in doing entirely, to the best of your ability, the will of God. There is surely no other source of life in the universe. I am writing now to dear Brother A. A few months ago he wrote to me. He, also, has had great sorrows. It is very strange that alone pain and suffering can make us wise and pure in heart. How antagonistic are the ways of God and those of men? Absolutely opposed in all things. Oh, let us

be true to God, even unto death, cutting mercilessly all that is worldly and carnal, so as to live for the spirit and not lose eternal life. My dear brother, please do pray for your lonely brother, that God may bring His presence into my worried soul and help me in the battle. The enemy is very powerful, and shows no mercy. His mission is to destroy and to lie, and he knows how to do it. May God bless you and keep you forever.

Your true friend,

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FROM SAM P. JONES.

CHICAGO, ILL., March 16, 1886.

*Rev. Steve Holcombe, Louisville, Ky. :*

DEAR BROTHER HOLCOMBE: Yours of March 10th received. I thought you were wise enough to know, when you wanted to plant yourself in permanent quarters, that the devil would do his best to prevent it. The devil don't like you anyway; but keep your equilibrium—God is with you; and He is more than all that can be against you. I have just passed through the most terrific storm of criticism almost of my life; and thank God I have witnessed in Chicago, within the last twenty-four hours, the grandest triumph of the Gospel I ever saw. I wish you could be here a few days and see the power of God, and rejoice with us in the work.

I enclose an article, which you can take to the *Courier-Journal* if you like.

kindest regards to your loved ones and all the brethren, and may God's blessing be upon your work.

Fraternally yours,

SAM P. JONES.

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FROM THE SAME.

GIBSON HOUSE,  
 CINCINNATI, OHIO, June 13, 1886.

*My Dear Brother Holcombe:*

I received your message sent by Brother Cleveland. I would like you to come over about the middle of next week. I think we will have some of the slain of the Lord for you to look after by that time. Our meeting moves off gloriously. I have never seen a better start anywhere. Thank God for the prospect of a glorious victory in this wicked city. The house is packed day and night, and the preachers and people stand shoulder to shoulder with me. Love to your family.

Affectionately,

SAM P. JONES.

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FROM REV. DR. WILLITS (Warren Memorial Church).

*Mr. Steve Holcombe:*

DEAR SIR: The bearer, Ch. H., is a stranger to me; but he will tell you his story. It is the old story of fight with appetite, and you will be better able to advise him than myself.

Truly yours,

A. A. WILLITS.

FROM DR. JOHN A. BROADUS.

MARCH 23, 1885.

*Dear Brother Holcombe:*

The bearer is Mr. B., once a merchant in Richmond, Va., fallen by drinking habits, separated from wife and children, *lost*. He spoke to me after sermon yesterday morning, and came to my house this morning. He does not ask immediate relief, having some money; but wants to find employment, and thinks he can stop drinking. He is evidently an intelligent man, and earnestly desirous of regaining himself. He used to be an Episcopal communicant. Now, if you can in any way help Mr. B., I shall be exceedingly glad. Your friend and brother,

JOHN A. BROADUS.

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The following letter is from one of the converts whose testimony is given elsewhere, but it is interesting as an independent account given soon after his conversion.

LOUISVILLE, KY., January 28, 1884.

*Rev. G. Alexander:*

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER: The few brotherly words you spoke to me during our short acquaintance, and your kindness toward me, a poor drunken outcast at the time, will ever be remembered. Often I make inquiries of Brother Holcombe regarding you and your health. At his suggestion, I write you and give a brief history of my life, in hope it may encourage some poor fellow whom you are seeking to save for a better life, and give him renewed courage to battle against sin; and for the glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

My father, as a wealthy man, determined to give his children the benefit of a good education. With this end in view, he left my younger brother and myself in Germany in 1864, after a visit there with the family. We stayed until 1867, when we returned to Louisville, I to enter the banking house of Theodore Schwartz & Co. With them I stayed until 1869, when my father became bondsman for the sheriff, Captain John A. Martin. Out of courtesy, Captain Martin made me, although only nineteen years of age, one of his deputies. From that time I date my downfall. Money flowed in freely; and, being young and inexperienced, I spent it just as freely, if not more so. In two years, at the age of twenty-one, I was considered about as reckless a young man as there was in the city. My father was always proud of his oldest son, and indulged me in almost everything. The habit of intemperance was gaining a sure hold; and when he died, in 1872, I was considered by some a confirmed drunkard.

Gradually I sank lower and lower, until I became what I was when you first saw me eight months ago—a poor miserable outcast from society, and a burden to myself and friends. I was forsaken and despised by all. I shudder to think that my life should ever flow in the same channel again. During all these years of dissipation I wandered all over this country—from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic almost to the Pacific. I drifted aimlessly with no other object in view but to gratify a terrible longing for strong drink. I had been in the city but a short while when I heard of Brother Holcombe's efforts to redeem the fallen. Having known him before his conversion,

curiosity led me to listen to him. During all this time I knew and felt that a day of reckoning would come, but whenever such thoughts entered my mind, I dismissed them, as they made me tremble at the very idea of having to give an account of the misdeeds of a wasted life. On the 25th of last June I was passing up Jefferson street, and heard singing in the basement at No. 436. My first impulse was to turn and go away, as I was in no suitable dress to go into a place of worship. Then the thought came into my mind, "This is Steve Holcombe's place; I'll go in and see what it looks like." Thank God, I did go in. The songs of those Sunday-school children awakened chords in my heart which I thought had died long ago. Tears came into my eyes, and then and there I vowed, if by God's help salvation was possible for me, I certainly would make the trial. Glorious have been the results. That evening I heard Brother Holcombe once more; introduced myself to him and promised him I would attend evening service, which I did.

From that day to this I have been growing in grace. The Lord has blessed me wonderfully. My worldly affairs have prospered; and, what is worth more than all the world to me, I am continually happy. Nothing disturbs my peace, and I allow nothing to interfere with it. My trust is in my Saviour; He has promised to care for those who trust Him, and I have implicit faith in that promise. My old appetite and desires are all taken away and I find pleasure and joy in things that in former years I considered ridiculous.

Very truly yours,

FRED ROPKE.

# TESTIMONIALS.



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## CAPTAIN EGBERT J. MARTIN.

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I was born in Louisville in 1842; was educated in New York and Virginia; served in General Lee's army during the war on the staff of my uncle, General Edward Johnson. The only commission I received was received on the third day of July, 1863, at the battle of Gettysburg.

My first drinking commenced in Georgia, where I was planting rice with General Gordon. That was in 1867. I did not drink during the war at all except that I might have taken a drink occasionally when I met with friends. My uncle would not permit liquor about his headquarters. On leaving Georgia, I went to New York, and went into business. I acquired quite a reputation there, and had a good income. My periodical drinking continued, however, and each year became greater and greater. Nothing was said about it for seven years and a half. I would not drink around my place of business. When I felt the spell coming on me, I would quit and go off, and be gone seven or eight days, and be back to business again when I had straightened up, and nothing was said about it; but the thing will increase on a man, and, of course, with each succeeding year the habit became stronger, and the intervals shorter.

I conceived the idea that a change of climate would do me good. Visits to the mountains seemed to benefit me, and I thought I would go West, and the change would effect a cure. I went to Colorado, made friends

there, went into business, and was successful. I was married to my wife in Denver, Colorado. I believed as my wife did, that my drinking was a matter under my control. I had been leading an aimless life, with no family ties; and after I was married, I thought a strong effort on my part would stop it. I wanted to get back to salt water again, and have everything in my favor; and the next morning after we were married, I started for California. I was very successful there. I was in a short time made special agent of the California Electric Light Company, at a salary of three thousand dollars a year. They wanted to make a contract with me for five years, giving me three thousand dollars a year, if I would bind myself not to drink during the five years. I found it was not such an easy thing to quit drinking. I consulted physicians there. There was a doctor in Oakland who said he had a specific for drunkenness; and he gave it to me. The result was that when I wanted a drink, I threw the medicine away and got the drink. What I always wanted, and tried to get, was something to take away the appetite for drink. There were times when I had no more desire for drink than you or any other man; but when it seized me, it seized me in an uncontrollable way, and I would drink for the deliberate purpose of making myself sick and getting over it as quick as possible. I knew it had to be gone through with, and I drank until I made myself sick.

I never attended to business when I drank liquor. I never mixed up my business affairs with my drinking. Everybody I had anything to do with knew I was thoroughly reliable. I never lied about being drunk.

I never said I was sick or had the cholera infantum or anything of that sort. Everybody who employed me knew as much about it as I did.

When my little boy was born, I felt a sacred duty was imposed upon me; and I tried to encourage my ideas of morality. I had always been a moral man, and, although an infidel, had never sought to break down the religious opinions of any one, because I had nothing to give them instead. My rationalism satisfied me. It was a belief, an opinion, with which I was willing to face my Maker, because I believed I was right. I believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, but I did not believe that the great Ruler of the universe thought enough of us insignificant human beings to interest Himself in our affairs. I did not believe in the Christians God. There in Virginia I had been surrounded by members of the church. Everybody was either a Baptist, a Methodist, or a member of some other denomination; drunkards and saloon-keepers and all belonged to the church. They could do wrong and afterward go straight to church. That kind of religion disgusted me, and that kind of religion confirmed my skepticism. I wanted to get away and I even planned to go to Australia. After my little boy was born, I stayed sober for six months, and then I commenced drinking again. I did not conceal the truth from myself. I said, "You are false to everything that is manly; you are a disgrace to yourself." I decided to go back to Virginia (my wife had never been there) and settle up a lawsuit I had pending in the courts.

But after a short stay in Virginia I had an offer to return to New York and go to work, and went to New

York; and after I had been there a month, I received a dispatch stating that a compromise had been agreed upon without consulting me at all. I went back to Richmond and rejected the compromise.

A decision was made in my favor, but the case was taken to the Court of Appeals. I had used up everything I had in litigation; and when, at last, I got a telegram that the Court of Appeals had reversed the case, and we had lost everything, it just broke me down. It took me more than a month to realize that it was a fact—I could not get it into my head; and it broke me down completely. I loved my wife and I loved my child, and was troubled about them, and for the two years I was fighting these Virginia gentlemen I was in a state of high excitement. I had nothing to do except to worry, and I drank more than ever in my life. I said, "My God! it is awful. I have lost everything. I know I am a drunkard; it is no use denying it, because the appetite is on me all the time." And many a time I threw myself down in the woods and sobbed aloud if Fate would have mercy on me. I had given up all hope. I thought the good fortune which had followed me all my life would never return. I had sent my wife off; so I had lost her, too. She went to her sister's, in Ohio; and I arranged that my mother should remain at the old place. I wrote to a cousin of mine whom I had not met since the war. He used, frequently, to come to our home, a delightful and healthful place, thirteen miles from Richmond. I thought I would write him that I desired to get out of Virginia, and had not the means, and would make Louisville my objective point. So I

wrote him, but received no reply. I wrote to another man, stating the circumstances—that I wanted to get out of Virginia and go to work; but I received no answer from him; and I came to the conclusion if I wanted to get out of Virginia I would have to walk. I had secured my wife and child, and as for myself it little mattered what befell me or how I fared.

I was walking through the woods one day and saw a man getting out railroad ties. He told me of a place near by, called the "Lost Land." A year before that, my uncle's executor gave me a deed that was taken from the old house at my oldest uncle's death. It was for a little slip of land—an avenue—that my grandfather had bought in 1815. Well, I thought nothing of it. I told the old negro woman that when everything was settled up, I was going to give her that land; and I put the deed away with other papers and forgot all about it. When I was worrying about the means, and making efforts to get the means to get out of Virginia, this man, who was hewing in the woods, told me about the little piece of woodland that had so much sill timber on it, and he spoke of it as the "Lost Land," and his speaking of the "Lost Land" reminded me of this deed, and I hurried home, found the deed, and saw that it located the land at about where he mentioned. I went to the County Surveyor, who had succeeded his father and grandfather in the office, and we found that the property of which this formed a part had been sold in large lots, and it was there between the lines of the other property, unclaimed by any one, and for seventy-three years had escaped taxation, because the deed convey-

ing it had never been recorded in the county books, and it was supposed by the county officials that all of the original tract had been divided off in the larger subdivisions. We found it, ran the lines around it, and I sold ten acres for one hundred dollars—enough to pay a grocery bill, buy me a suit of clothes and land me in Louisville.

I had loved the old place—loved it all my life, because I had spent many days there when a happy, careless boy. My mother was born there, my grandmother and my great-grandfather lie buried there. It was bought in 1782 by my great-grandfather, who was not only a gentleman but a scholar. He graduated at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Edinburgh, and afterward spent seven years in Europe. I was very much attached to the old place, and on leaving it I drank to deaden the pain.

I came here to Louisville, and I drank after I got here to keep from thinking. I tell you things looked blue, and I tell you the fact, the liquor I drank every day made me feel worse and worse, and my brain was affected from the excitement I had passed through. I found myself in a second or third-class hotel which stood nearly on the spot where I was born. I lay in my room for three days. I came to the conclusion there was no use kicking; the end was at hand. Fate had brought me back here, where I was born, to die. I even said it to myself, "Destiny has brought you back here, to the city where you were born, to die; and to die by your own hands. You have no respect for yourself, nor have others respect for you. You know by living you will bring further disgrace upon the wife and child you love

so well. If you will commit suicide people will say, 'He was an unfortunate man, but a brave one; his only fault was his drinking.' " I tried to shut out all thoughts of my wife and child, but I could not. I said to myself, "I was born here; I have not outraged the law; I have done nothing dishonorable; nothing why any man related to me should shun me. But I have lost everything; I am accursed; I am alone here. My wife's people know I am here, but do not communicate with me. And they tell me there is a God." A man came to my room in the hotel and said they wanted the room. "You say you have no money and no friends, so we can not keep you here any longer. You must give us the room." Under these circumstances I was coming nearer and nearer the final determination to commit suicide when a man, a stranger, came into my room who was himself a drunkard. I told him my condition and my determination. He said, "Wait till I send that man Holcombe down to see you. Maybe he can help you." Mr. Holcombe dropped everything and came to me at once. I did not know who he was. He said, "My name is Holcombe; I am from the Mission." Well, sir, if he had commenced at me as most preachers would have done, and told me in a sort of mechanical way that I had brought it all on myself, I would have said, "I am much obliged to you for your politeness and your well-meant efforts, but it does me no good, and I am very much distressed and would much prefer to be alone." He said, "There is no use trusting in yourself; you can not save yourself." That struck me at once as a correct diagnosis of my case, and I said, "That is just the conclusion I have come



to myself." Then he told me what had been done for him, and he got down on his knees and prayed. And when he prayed for me and my wife and child, that is what reached my heart. I said "There is *something* in that man's religion at any rate. I do not believe in this stuff I have seen in the churches; but there is something in that sort of religion. It is the last straw I have to catch at. I will try it." I got up out of bed where I had been for three wretched days, and came up to the Mission. There I came in contact with some influence I had never felt before. I came to the conclusion that there was truth in the Christian religion, and I said, "That is all right, but that is not what I want. I want that inward consciousness that I am not going to drink." I might get up and say, "I am ready to confess I am wrong; I believe religion is right; I have seen evidences of it; I believe you are right and I am wrong." But I had no inward consciousness of any change in me, and I did not feel secure or in any way protected against the habit of drinking." I knew if there was anything in religion, there must be something a man would be conscious of. I said, "There is something in this religion, but I have not got the hang of it." It occurred to me that perhaps after all, my chief motive and desire in all this was the welfare of my wife and child and the recovery of our domestic happiness. And lying on that bed I said, "I am willing to do anything. There is nothing that I am not willing to do, if I can only get rid of this appetite. I will get up and state that I was a drunkard; I will acknowledge every tramp as my brother; and, although I have no desire to do it, I will go out and preach. Just let me

know that I am free from this thing and that I can go on in life;" and all at once—I could not connect the thought and result together—there came upon me a perfect sense of relief. I was just as conscious then of divine interposition as I ever was afterward; and I said to myself, "This is what they call regeneration," and turned over and went to sleep. From that time I commenced a new sober life; and I never have wanted liquor; I never have had a desire for it since, and it is now going on two years.

I think many men are called, but few are chosen. There are a great many men who get far enough in the surrender to feel good and change their opinions; but they do not get down to the bed-rock of regeneration. I do not believe in any change, or in any doctrine that says there is regeneration through anything except a complete surrender. Men are ready to believe that Christ was the son of God, but go straight home and continue their old way of life. They must say, "I will not only quit serving the devil, but I will commence serving God." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy strength."

I do not let theological opinions disturb me now. My simple faith and theology is this: That I have the peace of God and He keeps me. I have knowledge of God's power and mercy, and feel that God keeps me.

My wife and child have come back and are now with me, and are as happy as they can be; and there is not a man in this country with less money and more happiness than I. I am happier than I ever was in my life.

NOTE.—Captain Martin is now engaged in business in the house of Bayless Bros. & Co., Louisville.

R. N. DENNY.

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I was born in 1846 in the State of Illinois. At that time, before there were many railroads, it was a comparatively backwoods country where I was raised. Our nearest market was St. Louis, sixty miles from where we lived. My father kept a country store there, and hauled his produce to St. Louis. My father was a professed Christian, so also was my grandfather, yet each of them kept a demijohn of whisky in the house. They would prepare roots and whisky, and herbs and whisky, which was used for all kinds of medical purposes and for all kinds of ills that flesh is heir to; and I believe at that time I got the appetite for whisky, if I did not inherit it. I have drunk whisky as far back as I can remember. I had a great many relatives who were Christians; but I gloried in my obstinacy and would have nothing to do with Christianity.

In my seventeenth year I went into the army. Of course, being among the Romans, I had to be a Roman, too; and consequently, the drinking habit grew upon me; and I acquired also a passion for gambling. After the war I did not do much good. I drifted about from place to place for something over a year, and then joined the regular army. I belonged to the Seventh Regular Cavalry, Custer's command, which was massacred on the Little Big Horn. At that time I did not belong to the command, as my time had expired some time before..

I came to Louisville in 1871, and commenced working as a restaurant and hotel cook. I was very apt at the business, and was soon able to command the best situations to be had, having been *chef* at the Galt House. During all this time I had been a drunkard in different stages. I was what is called a "periodical drunkard." I often braced up and went without a drink for six months or a year—something like that length of time—and always had work when I was not drinking; but I became so unreliable, that I could get no employment when another man could be had. It was said of me everywhere, "Denny is a good man, but he drinks." About 1873 I got married, and up to 1883 I had four children. Of course, my drinking, and everything of that kind, brought my family to want—in fact, to beggary. For a long time I always took my wages home on pay-day, and my wife, in her good-heartedness, always offered me money; would often ask me of a morning if I did not feel bad, and would give me fifteen cents or a quarter, not knowing that she was giving me money for my own damnation, until the year of the first Exposition here—1882. I had a position there at twelve dollars a week. I stayed there ten weeks; and I do not believe I got home with five dollars in the whole ten weeks. The man with whom I worked had a bar attachment to his restaurant, and I could get what credit I wanted there; and on Saturday night when I found my wages were short, I would get drunk, and conclude to try and win something at gambling, but I invariably lost.

At the close of the Exposition, it was on the verge of winter, and times were very dull. I was behind with my

rent and in debt to everybody I could get in debt to, my family were without decent clothing, had no fire, and I was almost naked myself, with no prospects of a situation. A short time afterward I got a position on a steamboat, which paid me fairly well, and which I believe I kept two, maybe three, weeks, and got drunk as usual. I failed to take my money home, and, of course, told my wife some lie. I had to say something. Sometimes my wife believed me, and sometimes she did not. At that time it was winter, it must have been in December, and very cold. My children were barefooted, and I was just about to be set out on the street because I had not paid my rent. I woke up one very cold morning very early, and we had not a morsel of food in the house or coal to make a fire with. I walked down toward the river and met the same man I had been working with a few weeks before. He stopped and asked me if I did not want to go back on the boat. I told him I would be glad to go back. He asked me how long before I would get drunk; and I said, as I had said a thousand times before, "I will never drink again." I made one trip, which was three days, and got drunk. It was on the second day of January, 1883, that I shipped, and I came back on the fifth, which was the coldest day I ever saw in Louisville. The thermometer was twenty-six degrees below zero between New Albany and the mouth of Salt river. There were during these dark days a few charitable people that used to give my family some of the necessaries of life—and but for that I can not see how they would have kept from starvation. I appreciated my situation nearly all the time, knew how wrong I was doing, would admit it to myself but would not admit

it to anybody else. If a man had called me a drunkard, I would have called him a liar.

In the providence of God the Fifth and Walnut-street church established the Holcombe Mission near where I lived, and among other waifs picked up on the street and taken to the Sunday-school were my children. While I had always been pretty bad myself, I had always tried to teach my children better. I shuddered at the thought of my boys going on in the way that I was going. When they went to Sunday-school and learned the songs there and came home and sang them, it broke me all to pieces. I had nothing left to do but to go and get drunk in self-defense. The Sunday-school teacher (Mrs. J. R. Clarke), who taught my children, had been trying to find me for a long time. She must have thought from seeing my children at Sunday-school that there was some good in me; and after awhile she sent me a Bible with a great many passages marked in it. She was looking for me and had sent for me to come and see her, and I had been trying to keep out of her way for a long time. Finally she found me at home one day, and would take no excuse, but insisted that I must come to Holcombe's Mission; and, of course, I promised to go, because I could not help myself. I could not get out of it; and if I had a redeeming trait in the world, it was that I would not break a positive promise.

I promised her to come, and that day I did go. They were holding noonday meetings at the time. I do not remember just now that I was very deeply impressed. I was of a skeptical turn of mind and very critical. I well remember I criticised all the testimonies

given there; but the thing was so strange to me, so different from anything that I was used to, that I was very considerably impressed in a strange kind of way, which is unaccountable to me even now. I had taken a seat near the door, so that I might get out very quick; but Brother Holcombe headed me off, and caught me before I got to the door. I did not know him personally at that time, but had known of him for a long time. Of course, I could not get out of the Mission without promising to come again. After having come two or three times, I was asked to say something, but did not feel like saying anything. Finally I stood up one day, perhaps the third or fourth day I was there. It was not a time when they were asking people if they wanted an interest in their prayers. I got up and said I wanted an interest in their prayers that I might be saved from myself. I had known for a long time that I was helpless, so far as delivering myself from drink was concerned. I knew nothing about Christianity, in fact, I did not care much about it, because I had not studied on the subject, and would not study on the subject. For many years I had not dared to stop and think seriously about such a subject, but when I heard that the Gospel of Christ was able to deliver such a man as I, I heard it gladly, because I had found there was no earthly power that could deliver such a man as I was. In the meantime, I had been reading my Bible, and had committed some of it to memory; and there was a good deal of mystery attached to the whole thing — things that I could not understand. When they asked me to speak, I quoted a passage from the Bible. One day I quoted

the passage about a man having put his hand to the plow and looking back, not being worthy of the kingdom of God. Brother Messick, pastor of the church which I afterward joined, prayed directly afterward, and in his prayer he quoted this passage of Scripture, and prayed in such an encouraging and helpful way, that I rose from my knees satisfied in my heart that I was changed.

Well, from that time until now I have never drunk anything. That was in January or February, 1883. I have never had a desire for liquor but once since. Last summer I went to Crab Orchard. I was *chef* down there, and I had to handle very choice wines and liquors in my business, and I handled one brand of wine that I was particularly fond of in old times. I was tempted that time to drink wine. It seemed the tempter said to me: "You are way down here where nobody knows anything about you. It is good, and you know it won't hurt you. It don't cost you anything and it is nothing but wine, and you need not take too much." At that time I could get all the liquor I wanted. If I wanted it, I could order a hogshead of it just by a scratch of the pen. With that single exception, I have never had a temptation to drink. I don't know that I had an appetite to drink then. It was a clear cut temptation from without, and not from within.

I have had no trouble about getting positions since my conversion and deliverance from the appetite for drink. My family are well housed, well clothed and well fed, and have everything they need, and have had since the time I became a Christian man. They them-



selves are the greatest evidences in the world of what Christianity can do for a man. A short time ago—six months ago—I established myself in business, and have been doing a thriving, prosperous business from that time until now.

I might say something about my going to the work-house: Two years ago, or a little over, I was asked to go to the work-house one Sunday evening. I was very much impressed with the necessity for working for the poor men there. I was at that time identified with the Mission work, and the services at the work-house were all under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A. I continued going to the work-house for some length of time—three or four months. The Y. M. C. A. very kindly divided time with me and other Mission workers. After having gone to the work-house three or four months, I stopped going. The Chairman of the Devotional Committee of the Y. M. C. A. sent for me and gave me charge of the work-house and jail, which, of course, I accepted in the name of the Mission; and from that time until now both of them have been under Mission workers. I was very anxious to return to the work-house, but our head decided that I should take the jail, where I have continued to go for a year and a half—I suppose about that length of time—every Sunday when I was in the city, with possibly one or two exceptions.

· NOTE.—Mr. Denny is at present the joint-proprietor, with Mr. Ropke, of a thriving restaurant on Third street, between Jefferson and Green, Louisville.

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B. F. DAVIDSON.

B. F. DAVIDSON.

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Twenty years ago I resided in the city of Cincinnati; was President of a Boatman's Insurance Company, proprietor of a ship chandlery, and interested largely in some twenty odd steamboats; and also interested largely in other insurance companies, and was rated as worth half a million of dollars. Through depreciation in property, bad debts, and indorsing for other parties largely, in four years I had lost all my money. To retrieve my fortune, I then started West, not being willing, of course, to accept a position where I had been a proprietor. While there, associating with the miners and Western people generally, I contracted the habit of drinking. This grew upon me and was continued, with short intermissions of soberness, up to four years ago—about last January. I was brought very low as a consequence of my dissipation, and I have traveled as a tramp from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the lakes to the Gulf, spending my time in alternately fighting and yielding to the demon of drink. For five years previous to my coming to Louisville, I had given up all hope of ever being able to make anything of myself, as I had tried, in vain, every known remedy to cure me of the appetite. My pride was effectually humbled, and I was in despair.

From the time that I went West—which was in 1872—until my arrival in 1884, my children, a daughter and son, knew not whether I was dead or alive—knew nothing of me whatever. After I took to drink, I lost all interest in them and everything else.

As soon as I got off the ferry-boat in Louisville, in as sad a plight as any wretched man was ever in, I met an old friend, who had known me in years previous, and who handed me two dollars, requesting me to call at his office the next morning, when he would give me such assistance as I needed. The two dollars I spent that day for whisky. That night I begged a quarter to pay for my lodging. The next day, by begging, I filled up pretty well on whisky again. Toward evening I went into a Main-street house and asked a gentleman for a quarter to pay for a night's lodging. I had lost all pride, all self-respect, and could beg with a brazen face. The gentleman handed me a card of Holcombe's Mission. As I did not know or care anything about missions or churches, I merely stuck the card in my pocket and went on my way. After walking around for some time I heard the remark: "There goes that old man now." Upon looking up I recognized the gentleman whom I last asked for a quarter to pay for a night's lodging, and another man, engaged in conversation. The other gentleman, who proved to be the Rev. Steve Holcombe, of Holcombe's Mission, took me by the hand and invited me up to the Mission rooms, where I told him my story. He asked me if I ever had asked God through Jesus Christ to assist me in my endeavors to become a sober man. I told him I had not, as I had made up my mind years ago that God had no use for me. I felt as though I had sinned beyond redemption.

I had left home very early in life. My mother was the best Christian woman I had ever seen. She

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was a Methodist, but she never could preach Christianity to me—I fell back on my own righteousness. I did not drink, I did not smoke, I did not chew, I did not swear, I did not run after women, I did not loaf around saloons like other young men. When my mother was after me to join the church, I told her that would not make me any better: “Look at your church members; is that man any better than I am?” My sister, along toward the last, having joined the Episcopal church, I took two pews in that church; was a lay member, but I did not attend it. That was in Newport—St. Paul’s Episcopal church, Newport. When the minister insisted on my going to church, I told him that while he would be preaching sermons I would be building steamboats, so his sermons would not do me any good.

After I got to drinking, my poor daughter did not see me. I did not go to my children at all. I never got but one letter from them during that time, from 1872 to 1884, and that was a letter that went to Cincinnati, and they held it there, I believe, for two years. I was at Cincinnati a good many times; but they could never get me to stay there long enough to get my children down to see me. As soon as I had an idea that they were manœuvring for anything of that kind, I would get out of town at once, and they would not know where I had gone.

During my life as a tramp, there is no kind of work that can be thought of that I did not work at more or less, and the money I earned—sometimes I earned as much as eight dollars a day—eventually went to the barkeepers; I could not even buy my clothes.

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After a long talk with Brother Holcombe, I told him that, having tried everything else, I was perfectly willing to try God. That night I went to church, and went up to be prayed for. There was no regular meeting at the Mission then, from the fact that the church that was running the Mission had a revival. So, with Brother Holcombe, I went around to the revival meeting at the Fifth and Walnut-street church. When the invitation was given for those who wanted to be prayed for to come forward, I was among the first to accept it, and went up clothed in all my rags. After prayer I felt much better than I had for many years. That night I went back and lay on the floor in the Mission, having refused an invitation from Brother Holcombe to go to a boarding-house, telling him if God, in His mercy, would take from me the appetite for strong drink, I had still strength and will enough left to make my own living. The next morning I asked Brother Holcombe to go with me to the paper-mill of Bremaker-Moore Company, where they were building a dam to prevent an overflow from stopping the engines in the paper-mill. I secured a position there, at a dollar and a quarter a day, to shovel mud. As soon as the river commenced to fall that occupation was gone; but the superintendent of the mill, becoming in the meantime somewhat acquainted with my history, offered me a situation inside, which I held for three weeks, when I was sent for to see the business manager of the *Post*. I accepted a position on the *Post* as advertising solicitor at fifteen dollars a week, which was afterward increased to twenty-five. I was then made business manager, at thirty dollars, which position I now hold.

I can say this: That while I had an abundance of means to find happiness, pleasure and contentment, and had sought it in every possible way that a man could, I failed to find it until I accepted Christ as my Saviour, and gave myself into His hands. Since then I have had a happiness I never knew before. My life has been one of constant peace and uninterrupted prosperity. My children are both happily married, and I have married myself.

Though I was before so proud that I could not accept my mother's teaching, I was at a point where I would have accepted anything. They would tell me that doctor so-and-so would cure me; which was no kindness to me, because it kept me from asking God's help. But nothing would do me any good. So I said, "God, here I am; accept me. If there is any good in me, bring it out. I am down, down, down; I can not help myself."

Brother Holcombe had told me what God had done for him. I had confidence in him from the start, from the fact of his having told me he was a gambler so long; and when he told me God had redeemed him from the desire for gambling, I thought he might take away the appetite for drink from me; and He has done so, I am very thankful to say. I expect I was the worst-looking sight you ever saw, but I do not take a back seat now for any one—I look as well as anybody. As I told a man last week: "With the Lord on my side, I do not fear anything!" I had had charge of men, and had succeeded in managing them. I did not accept religion because I was a weak-minded man. As evidence of that, I have proved it since as I had proved it before. I proved that when I was trying to be a good man in



my own way. I have proved since that I was not a weak-minded man from the responsible positions I have held and do hold.

But, as I was going to say, I had not shaved for two years, and had not had my hair cut, I am satisfied, for one year. My hair was hanging down on my shoulders; my face, of course, not very clean; my clothes were rags. My shoes were simply tops, and the gentleman who gave me these two dollars, told me: "Captain, you are the hardest-looking man I ever saw in my life. I do not know how I recognized you." I said: "This is the condition I am in, and drinking has brought me to it."

I have been asked by several prominent men how it is I get up night after night and tell people how bad I have been. I told them it was like this; if they had been sick nigh unto death and were going to die, and a physician came and gave them some medicine and made whole men out of them, would they not be going around the streets telling people about that physician? I said that is the reason I get up every night and tell people about it. Christ was the physician that healed me. That is the remedy I have for all evil now—the blood of Jesus Christ. It was utterly impossible for a man to exist and be in a worse condition than I was. I was physically and mentally a wreck; and now by accepting Christ—becoming a Christian—I am physically, morally, mentally and spiritually restored and well. That is the reason why I do not hesitate to tell anybody—even people coming into my office. An editor of a paper said to me: "Is it possible you were a tramp?" I told him it was; and he was talking some-

thing about attacking me through his paper, about what I had been. I said, "Blaze away; it won't hurt me. I do not deny having been a tramp and a drunkard—everything that was mean. But what am I now?" I do not care what they bring back of my past record; they can not hurt me, for I do not deny it. It is what I am now. I think now that I was as bad and mean as a man could possibly be. But I am no longer what I was, by the grace of Him who called me out of the former darkness into His light.

## H. CLAY PRICE.

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I used to know Brother Holcombe in those days; knew him to be a gambler. He was considered one of the best of gamblers, but I always looked upon him as being an honorable gambler, so far as I have heard. I knew him even before he was a gambler.

Well, my father and mother were very pious, my mother especially. She was a praying woman, and everybody knew her by the name of "Aunt Kittie," and my father as "Uncle Billy." My father did not think it was any harm to play cards in the parlor every night. When I was young he loved to play whist. I had a sister older than I, sixteen or seventeen years old, and she used to invite young men, and father used to invite them, to come there and play cards; and the moment they commenced to fix the table, my father beckoned his head to me, and I knew what that meant—to get out. We had a young negro that used to wait on the ladies in the parlor, and he told me one time, "You steal a deck of cards and I will show you how to play cards." And I stole a deck of cards from the house and we went back in the stable; and that is the way I came to learn how to play cards. I was twelve or fifteen years old at that time—not any older than that—and I commenced playing cards for money, and I kept on playing cards for money with the boys; for money or for anything. I was sent off to school—to St. Mary's College, and we got to playing cards there



H. C. PRICE.

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for money, and we were caught, and the oldest one was expelled from school, and I promised never to do it any more, and the other boys promised not to do it any more, and they did not. But I kept on and I was caught playing cards, and I was expelled from school. After that my father sent me to St. Joseph's College in Ohio. I ran off from that school and came home, and I was appointed a Deputy Marshal by my brother-in-law, W. S. D. McGowen; and I got to gambling then sure enough and running after women; and about that time the war came on, and I went off with my brother-in-law into the army, and I gambled all through the army—everywhere I could get five cents to play with. All I had I gambled away. I came back home and I gambled here; played in the faro banks all the time. And a proprietor of a gambling house by the name of Jo. Croxton came to me and said, "You are too good a man to be gambling around. I will give you an interest, and you can take charge of my house." I did not know much about gambling, but I knew how to take care of his house. He gave me the bank roll; and I went on down and down.

I was married then and had a faithful, gentle and devoted wife, but I thought I was smarter than anybody about gambling, and I thought I could make big money, and so I would leave my wife, devoted and dependent as she was, and I kept traveling on around the country, going to different towns. I went to Nashville; from there I went to New Orleans. I came back to Nashville. I left Nashville and went to Huntsville, Ala.; came back here and went to St. Louis; then to Chicago and Lexington. After that I went back to

Nashville again. I made a good deal of money if I could have kept it; but the Lord would not let me have it. I averaged here for years and years \$500 a month. Sometimes I made more—made as much as \$1,700 a month, and once I went up as high as \$2,100 a month—made big winnings. As fast as I got this money I could not keep it—threw it away on women all the time and gambling against the bank and poker; would spit at a mark for money. I have lost hundreds and hundreds of dollars without getting off of my seat, with men I knew were robbing me all the time. It was a passion I had to gamble and I'd not stop. In one game of poker that I was in I bet and lost \$900 on one hand, and I have never played at poker since that time.

When the gambling-houses were broken up here in Louisville, I concluded I would go off to Chicago. I had some money and I went to Chicago; and as soon as I got there, I got broke, lost all the money I had. I was among strangers and I was dead broke. Finally I got another situation, and worked there for some time. I then got hold of some money again, and I came home and remained some time. My wife was begging me all the time not to go away—did not think I ought to go away; she said that I could stay here and get some work to do, and make an honest living. But I thought I had better go back to Chicago and make some money; and I made some money as soon as I got there by playing faro bank; and I did very well at that time, made a good deal of money; and you know how a man feels when he has five hundred dollars in his pocket; and yet all that time I did not send my

wife anything. I thought I would get about one thousand dollars and open some kind of a bar-room or cigar shop, or something of the kind. But the day before Christmas I got to playing against the faro bank, and got broke; and I was the most miserable man in the world, to think that I had lost the last chance I had. The day before Christmas my wife wrote me, "Why don't you come home? I had rather see you home than there again making money." I said, "Yesterday I got broke—I played to win. I had nothing to eat all day." But accidentally I found a twenty-five cent piece in my pocket; and I got up and went and bought a ten-cent dinner, and paid fifteen cents for a cigar. I have done that many times, I suppose, bought a quarter dinner and given the other quarter for a cigar. I just got to studying about it, studying about what I was to do. I said, "If I come back to Louisville, I will starve. I am not competent to keep a set of books, or clerk anywhere; but," I said, "I will go back if I do starve." So I wrote to my patient wife: "I have lost every cent I had in the world. I have got to work one week longer to make enough money to come home on, and I am coming. You may look for me the first of next week." As soon as they paid me off that evening I jumped on the cars and came home, having just the money to pay my fare.

Before this Brother Holcombe had met me time and again after he had been converted. He used to come after me; and every time he would see me, may be I would be looking at something in the street—he would hit me on the shoulder and say, "How do you do, old boy?" and then he would talk to me about my salva-



tion, and about Jesus Christ. I used to hide from him; but it looked like every time he came around he would nail me, and talk to me about Jesus. That was when I was gambling here and prosperous. He told me about my mother and told me I ought to quit gambling. I said, "Brother Holcombe, what shall I do if I quit gambling? I have no way to make a living." He said, "Look to God, and He will help you." I went away about that time; and as soon as I came back, every time he would see me he would nail me again. After awhile I got interested in him. I would look for him and when I would catch him, I would say, "You can not get away from me now." That was after I came from Chicago. I had nowhere to go except to visit bar-rooms. So I began to go down around the old Mission every night. I heard the singing and praying down there. One night I said, "I am going to see Brother Holcombe." The clock struck eight, and I said "I am not going in to-night, it is too late. I will go to-morrow;" and to-morrow night came and I went down there and went in very early, before they commenced singing; and they sang and prayed and Brother Holcombe preached, and the next night I went, and the next night I went, and I went every night. And then they moved up here on Jefferson street and after they moved up here, I stayed away a week, and then I commenced coming again; and here I am now, thank God. I think God has been my friend all the way through. To think He has let me go as far as He could, and at last brought me home. I tell you it is a great thing for a man that has been living the life I have, to get up and say that he is now a child of God.

It came gradually, a little bit of it at a time, but when I was down in the Mission that night, God came to me in full power. I felt that I did not care what happened to me. I was willing to go if God called on me. Whatever He said I was willing to do. After my conversion I got a place where I was making a dollar a day, at Robinson's, on Ninth, between Broadway and York streets, and I worked there until I went up on a new railroad. They promised to give me forty-five dollars a month. I thought at the time, and so did Brother Holcombe, I would get forty-five dollars a month. He said, "You will get forty-five dollars a month, and it is so much easier than the work you are doing." I thought they would pay all my expenses and I worked up there at forty-five dollars and I had to pay all my own expenses; and all I received was not a cent more or less than thirteen dollars a month. But I was happier a thousand times—I will say a hundred thousand times—than I was with six or seven hundred dollars a month.

You may think gamblers are happy, and it looks like it; but they are not—they are miserable. Just to look back in our lives and think what we have done with all the money! It is nothing to be compared with the life of a Christian. If I could go back to-morrow and make a million dollars gambling, I would not do it. I would say, "Take your million of dollars. I will stay where I am." My wife is the best woman in the world. I leave her at home and she is reading the Bible. You can not go in there any time, when she is not at work, that she is not either singing or reading the Bible. She was raised a Catholic. She is now trying to help

me along. She has joined the Methodist church; she is with me. I do not think she was a Christian before we came in contact with Brother Holcombe. It was just her interest in me, and her patient, long-suffering love. She never went to church nor prayed nor knelt down. She prayed after she went to bed like I did, for I said prayers every day even then. I always said, "If I forget, God will forget me." Every day of my life I prayed; and if I forgot it, I asked the Lord to forgive me; but I never would kneel down. I prayed after I went to bed; but now I get down on my knees and pray. Do you know how we do at night? We get down on our knees and say the Lord's prayer; and after we get through, I pray; and after I get through, the old lady prays. You see the old lady was raising our little girl up to be a Catholic; and I said to her, after we were converted—maybe a month afterward—"I don't know whether I am right or wrong—I want you to say—do you not think it is right to teach Kittie to do the way we do in our prayers? I think it would be a sin to try to teach her any other way. Now, let us set her an example, and she will come over gradually and gradually until she will be one of us." She has asked her mother about Jesus. She said to her mother one day, "I can't pray like you all can." The old lady said to her, "You will learn after awhile." Last night I was out late, and when I came home she said, "We will all kneel down and pray." We started off, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and Kittie went along with us, repeating it. She knows all that, you know. After we were done saying that, I prayed; and after I got through the old lady prayed; and after we had prayed I said, "Kittie,

you must say your prayer." She said, "I can not pray like you do." But she did the best she could.

If you ask me how I came to change my life, it was this way: I knew that Brother Holcombe was a good man, and knew that he was reformed and I had so much faith in him, and I studied about that so much that I just thought if he could be such a good man, why could not I be a good man; and that is the way it came. I tell you, backwardness is a fault with a good many preachers. If I was a preacher and I saw a man on the street that I saw was going wrong, I would go right up to him and touch him on the shoulder. I do it now—I never let him get away; I never let a friend of mine get away, I do not care who he is. I go to him and tell him what God has done for me. I say, "Why don't you come up to the Mission? Don't you know Brother Holcombe?" If he says "No; I don't live here," I say, "If you come up there, we will be pleased to see you. You don't know what good it might do your soul."

I do wish I had an education. I reckon there has been more money spent on me than on all the rest of my family. I went to three colleges; was expelled from one and ran away from the other two. I was the worst boy on earth; there is no use talking. I would rather fight than eat; but no more fighting for me; I am done. You know that I have been trying to get work to do, and at last I have found a place. I am earnestly praying every day more and more—I *can* pray now. A man asked me the other day—I don't know whether I answered him right or not—he asked me, "Do you ever expect to go back to gambling?"

I said, "I would starve to death before I would gamble any more." He said, "What about your wife—if you knew your wife was going to starve, would you gamble?" I said, "Before I would let my wife and child starve, I would gamble—I would gamble to get them something to eat; but," I said, "there is no danger of their starving. But you put that question to me so strong." I said, "I know that God would not censure me for that, but there is no danger of it."

I wish I could say more. I know I mean what I have said, God knows I do, and it is all true as near as I can remember.

NOTE.—Mr. Price is a brother of the late Hon. J. Hop Price, for many years a well-known lawyer and judge in Louisville. He is now engaged as night watchman on Main street.

## MILES TURPIN.

I had the example of Christian parents, and, of course, I had the benefit of a Christian education; but, like all young men, I was rather inclined to be wild; and after I had served four years in the Confederate army, my habits were formed rather for the worse. After I had returned home, being without avocation, I naturally resorted to what all idle men do; that was the beginning. I contracted the habit of frolicing, gambling and drinking, in that early period of my life, which has followed me through all these years, up to March 14, 1886, when, after considerable journeying through North America and portions of Mexico, I happened in Cincinnati, and heard a great many times about Steve Holcombe's conversion. Having known Steve in his gambling days, it occurred to me, like all persons in pursuit of happiness, going from place to place and not finding it, that if there was such a change and improvement in Steve as the newspapers described, I would come to Louisville and see for myself concluding that if religion had done so much for him, it might do something for me. I was a dissipated man—dissipated in the extreme. I had contracted this habit of drinking, and was rarely ever sober. I have some capacity, as a business man, and I have had a great many positions, but I had to give them up from this habit of drinking. While a man would express his deep friendship for me, he would say his business would not tolerate my drinking; consequently, I have been frequently but politely dismissed.

I had lived in I don't know how many places in the United States. I had lived in New Orleans, Savannah, Ga., Charleston, S. C., Birmingham, Montgomery, Selma, Vidalia, La., Cincinnati, Louisville, Ky., Macon, Ga., Pensacola, Fla., Fernandina, Fla., throughout the length and breadth of Western Mexico, Lower California and the Pacific coast, and through the State of Texas, end to end. In all these tortuous windings I was searching for happiness; but a man who is more or less full of whisky and without the religion of Jesus Christ is of necessity unhappy, in himself, and, in consequence, shunned by his fellowmen. No man can wander around the world in that condition without feeling a void which human wisdom can not fill; and I was forced to this conclusion by a careful survey of my past career. The desperation of the case was such, that I resolved if I could not find employment, and if I could not find happiness, which I then knew nothing about, I would destroy myself. I have contemplated suicide many times with the utmost seriousness; and I certainly in my sinful life was not afraid of death. But then it was because I was in despair.

I was in Cincinnati; had previously held a political position there, which paid me quite a handsome sum; but in the change of politics my pecuniary condition changed, and I found myself alone, poor and full of rum and corruption; as vile a sinner as ever lived. It was at that time that I heard of Steve. I was in a deplorable condition; I knew not where to turn for comfort, and it occurred to me that if I could go to Louisville and have these assertions verified about Steve's regeneration and if I could see and satisfy

myself. I would do so, as vile as I was, and ask God to have mercy upon me. Of course, I was an infidel (at least, I imagined myself an infidel), an atheist, if you please, and my chief delight was deriding all Christian work, and ridiculing the Bible; and to more thoroughly uphold my atheistical notions I went so far as to defame the Saviour of mankind, not in vulgar language or profane, but by a mode of expression that was plain and unmistakable. *Now*, I do not see how a man can be an infidel. When a man says he is an atheist, I believe he is a liar. A man must be insane who does not recognize a Supreme Power and the Master-hand that made the world, and who does not rely upon and give obedience to that Higher Power. I do not believe that any atheist is honest in the announcement that he does not believe in God or a Creator. I believe now, since my conversion, that no man is in his right mind unless he has the habit of prayer.

All nature points to the existence of a Creator—every action of life, every hair of the head shows an unseen hand. If it is a mistake, it is a mistake man can never fathom; but if not and if, as we are told by the word of faith, you believe, you shall be saved. If you cast your burden upon Him, and there is a possibility of a hereafter, you lose nothing in this world. A man is wiser, purer, more companionable, more affectionate and more charitable. There must be immortality of the soul; there must be a future reward. Reflection upon these great facts induced me to become a Christian man. As I had served the devil so long as one of his allies, and had been treated so



badly by him. I deserted him and put my faith in God, where I intend to remain the remainder of my life.

I got to Louisville a little over a year ago, the 15th of March, and went immediately to find Mr. Holcombe. He was sitting by the fire. He knew me at once. I shook hands with him and sat down by the fire, and had a conversation with him. He immediately entered upon the subject of religion, and I told him my condition. I told him what I wanted to do—I wanted to see for myself if it was possible for a man like him to become regenerated—if it was possible for such a great scoundrel as I knew him to be to become a Christian man. I wanted to see for myself if it were possible to make, out of so vile a creature, such a good man as he was said to be. As I said last night, I came, like the conqueror of old, and saw, but, unlike the conqueror of old, I was conquered. I made up my mind that I was done with the old life. Steve's appearance convinced me that he was cured, and I confessed then and there that I was convinced. That was the starting point. There was only one thing I have never been thoroughly satisfied about; I find that the Christian influence grows gradually on me, and becomes stronger and stronger the longer I live. I confess myself, when I first became a Christian man, with the exception of drinking whisky, I was like I was before; but, encouraged by my experiences in the beginning, I gradually began to see that it was a better life. A man was purer, and there was some hope a man could be changed through and through, and take his place among men; and from that time forward I was continually growing in grace. From the very moment I resolved to quit, I did not drink any

more. After I saw Steve, I did not take a drop, though I had tried before to quit it many a time. I had oftentimes joined temperance societies, and made resolutions, which were of no avail. A man in that case was bound by no tie except his assertion—by his word, and might break it just as a man allows a note to be protested in bank. The moment I determined to change my life, this appetite for whisky left me. It was because my ideas were changed.

I used to think that no drunken man could become a Christian; but now I hope, by the grace of God, I am a Christian. I could not explain it; I do not believe any man can explain it. He may attempt it, but he can not do it. A man who lives a Christian life can hardly calculate the advantages; it is a matter of impossibility. In the first place, his associates put an entirely different estimate on him. His ambitions are entirely changed, and certainly his hope is. It makes him a more charitable man, a more forbearing man with the faults of his neighbors, makes him a more tolerant man, makes him a better citizen; and if he were a politician—though it is scarcely within the bounds of possibility—it would make him an honest politician.

I have had no trouble to get along in business since my conversion. Just as soon as I tried to get business, when I was once really in earnest about it, I had a number of offers. I have still a number of offers. When I became a Christian man I determined, in my own mind, I would live up to Christianity so far as I could in every particular, humbly and conscientiously. The opinions of man have no weight with me now. All I am I hold by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ.

## FRED ROPKE.

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I think it was on the 25th of June, 1883, I was stopping at Fifth and Jefferson. Previous to that time I had been tramping the country for about eight years, from 1874 until the middle of 1883. My father was a Louisville man. He gave me all the advantages that wealth could command. He sent me to Germany in 1864, where I remained three years at school. In 1869 or 1870, I went into the sheriff's office here in Louisville. Previous to that time I had been with Theodore Schwartz & Co. I went from Theodore Schwartz & Co. into the sheriff's office. I got that position from courtesy of the sheriff to my father, who was his bondsman. I contracted the habit of drinking right there, through the associations. And, being ashamed to remain among my friends as a drunkard, I went then from pillar to post all over the country.

I left home just after my father's death, in 1872, not knowing whither I was going. I dragged around the country from that time until the summer of 1883—eleven years; and if there ever was a man sick and tired, it was I. I beat my way through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

The box car was my home the greater part of the time. Of course, during those years, I came home off and on; but nothing could stop me in my downward course. As soon as I lost self-control I persuaded myself there

was no hereafter, no God and no devil. I took to that idea to console myself for what I was doing more than for anything else; and I had a perfect indifference as to what became of me, except at times when I was alone and sober and thoughtful. But I never had any aim; no ambition at all; in fact, I had given up all hope. I do not know what I wandered for. I would come home and stay for a month or so, and I would get drunk and get ashamed of myself and go away. I would walk all night to get out of Louisville.

I had been brought up by religious parents. My father was a very religious man. He was considered by people as a fanatic because he was making money in the whisky business, and sold out rather than continue it. He lost money by selling out during the war. He saw what it was drifting to, and sold out. After that there was not a drop of whisky handled in his house on Main street until after his death. My mother also was a very religious woman, so that I had a careful religious training. But I had read a good deal of Ingersoll and Tom Paine. I heard Ingersoll lecture on one or two occasions; I wanted to get all the proof I could to sustain me. I wanted some consolation; I knew where I was drifting; there was a consciousness all this time that I was wrong; and I trembled at the thought of one day giving an account for the misdeeds of a wasted life; but I could not possibly help myself. From the mental anxiety I went through it is a wonder my hair is not gray to-day. It was terrible. I had two attacks of delirium tremens.

What brought me to realize my condition more than anything else, took place just before the time I

first met Brother Holcombe. I was out on Second street mending umbrellas; for that was the way I made my living. I had become thoroughly hardened. I would have cut my throat, only cowardice kept me from it. Well, I was mending umbrellas out on Second street, and Mrs. Werne heard me as I was calling out, and knowing that Henry, her husband, and I had been to school together—had been boys together, she called me and said, "Fred, I want you to come in." She insisted on my coming to their house to dinner the next day. "Fix up," she said, "and come to dinner with us;" but I do not believe I had a stitch of clothes except what was on my back. She insisted, however, on my coming; some of my friends would be there. That brought me to realize to what depths I had fallen.

The next week I went to New Albany; and I was told to leave the town, and I left the town under the escort of two policemen. To such abject wretchedness was I reduced, I could not endure to stay among friends, and I was in such a plight strangers could not endure me among them. But once I was coming down the street, and heard the singing in the Holcombe Mission; and I was considerably touched to think that I had come through the religious training of a Christian home and of church and Sunday-school; and that is all it amounted to. I went that evening to the courthouse steps, and heard Mr. Holcombe preach there; and from that day to this I have not drunk a single drop; and it is only through God's grace that I realize that I am able to resist temptation. I felt that I was not worth anything; I felt that there

was no power in myself. My skepticism all melted away. The view I took of it was that if God could help Holcombe, he could and would help such a one as I. I knew Mr. Holcombe very well. When I was deputy sheriff, I had a warrant for his arrest one time from Franklin county, and went there armed, knowing his dangerous reputation. I thought if Holcombe could be saved, there certainly was some hope for me, and under the inspiration of that hope I turned to God. It was my last and only hope. But it was not disappointed, for He has saved me.

I remember the first time I went up to be prayed for; I felt that I would from that time have strength—I had no doubt that I would have it from that time on. It was in the back room of the old mission. I felt—I don't know why it was—I felt then and there that, by God's help, I would make a man of myself; and I went out with that feeling, although I had been under the influence of liquor for months before. I can not say that I had no appetite for it, but I had strength to resist it. That was the 25th of June, 1883.

I would do anything for whisky when I wandered around. I did not gamble, but I was licentious. I lived for nothing else; I had no other aim in life but to gratify my passions, and I would adopt any extreme to do it, and did do it. I left nothing untouched—I would sell my coat to gratify my passions. If I wanted a drink of whisky and my hat would pay for it, I would let it go. Once, on coming back from New Orleans, my mother gave me a suit of clothes; and I did not keep that suit of clothes three days.

All of the time I was tramping around, my mother was living in Louisville, worth seventy-five thousand dollars. She was willing to do anything for me, and suffered much because of my wicked ways. I remember on one occasion, when I left her to go to Denver, Colorado, she begged me to stay at home, and reminded me how she would suffer from anxiety about me, day and night, till I should return. But I had just been released from jail for drunkenness and I did not want to stay in Louisville. So I left my mother in sorrow and despair.

One thing I am thankful for to-day; that after my conversion I did not get into anything right away; that I made a bare living with my umbrellas; and that continued two years before I got into a permanent situation. I believe those were the two happiest years of my life. I had a tough time to get something to eat sometimes, but that was good for me. I pegged away at an old umbrella for twenty-five or thirty cents down in the old mission; and I was thankful to get them to fix. It seemed to me it was sweeter; I enjoyed it more.

There is no comparison between the new life and the old. I thought at one time that I was enjoying myself; but I have had to suffer in my new life for all the enjoyment that I had in the old—I have to suffer physically—even yet. I am an old man before my time. Even to-day on my coming in contact with it the influence of the old association will crop out. Sometimes my passions worry me considerably. The only relief I find is by keeping close to God. I realize that from day to day if I do not do that—pay

strict attention to my religious duties—I will fall. I know that if I neglect them for one week, I get away off. I am happy in being placed where I am. My place is a kind of rendezvous for religious people; and their society and conversation help to strengthen me. Since my conversion, I was offered a position in a liquor house, but I would not take it, because I was afraid of it, and the very next day I obtained a situation with the Finzer Brothers. I went to a minister and made it the subject of prayer as to whether I should accept the situation; and finally decided to decline it, and the next day I got a situation that I had filled in years gone by, with Finzer Brothers in this city. It is now the height of my ambition to have the opportunity to convince the people who were and are my friends in Louisville that there is something in me, and by the grace of God I am no longer the failure I was.

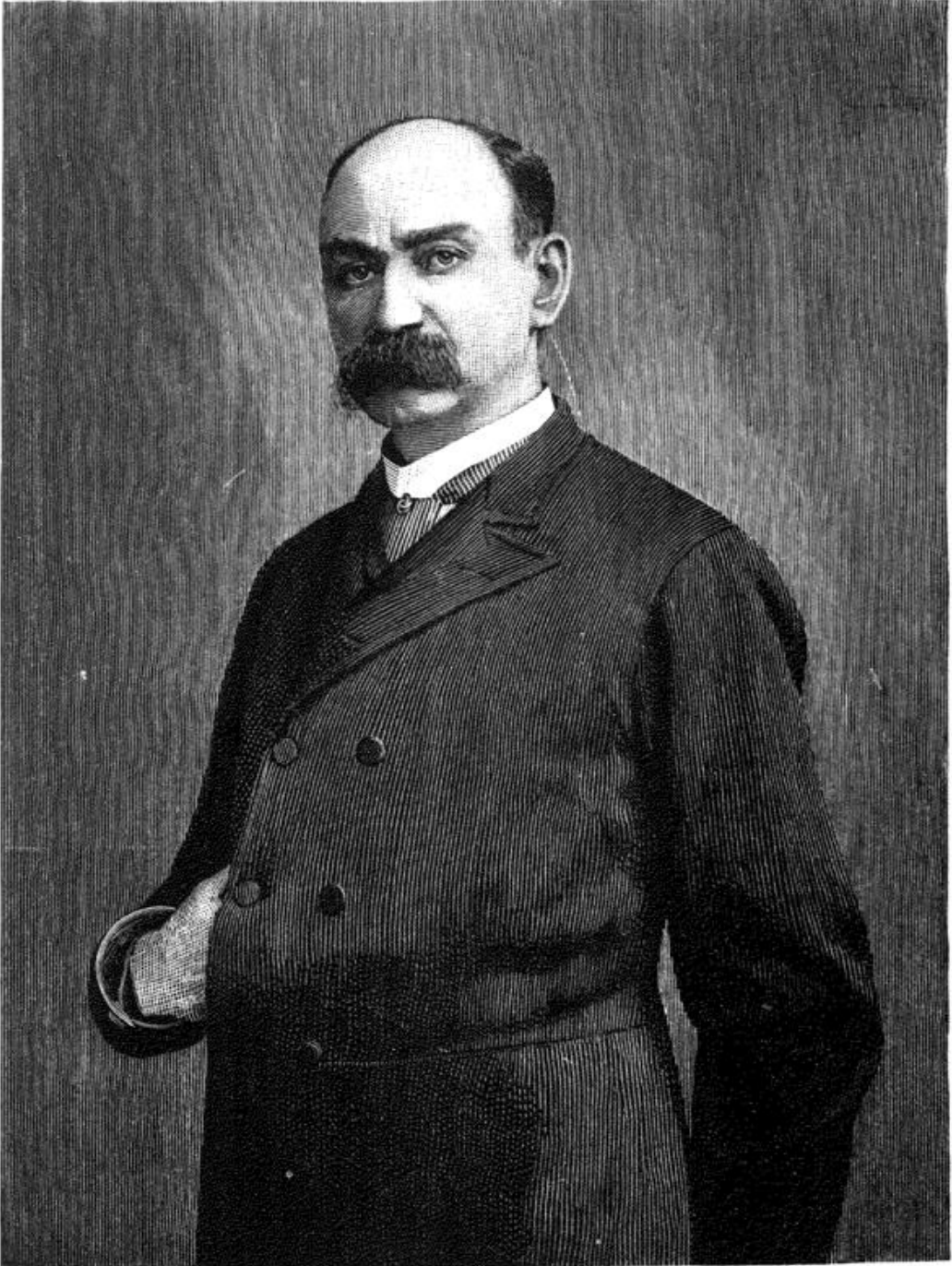


JAMES THOMPSON HOCKER.

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I was born in Shelby county, Kentucky, in 1837, and no man had better advantages for being a Christian or becoming one than I had. I had a pious mother and father, and all the influences of my home were of that character. My father and mother were both members of the Baptist church, and I recollect that they used to have me go to Sunday-school, but I think now I went there because they asked me to go. Thinking over my condition, I did not have any other incentive at that time than to obey my mother's request. At about the age of fifteen I left my home, and it seems to me now when I did do so I left behind me all good impulses and all good feeling, and any religious inclination I might have had seemed to leave me when I stepped over the threshold; and I think the devil joined me then and told me he would keep me company all the rest of my life, and he did do it pretty closely for thirty years. I do not suppose that he had a better servant, or one who did his behests more faithfully than I.

Whether I inherited the appetite for drink has been a question with me. On both sides of my house—the Old Virginia stock—I had several relatives who drank to excess; and it seems to me that the appetite must have passed through our family to me. I remember the first drink I ever took in my life; it was whisky, and I liked it. Most people don't like the first drink.



J. T. HOCKER.

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When I came to this city I went into business as a clerk. The devil and I dropped into company as hail fellows well met. He persuaded me to think it was proper for young men to take a drink before calling on their lady friends. He prompted me to go in with the boys. "This is the right way for you to do," he would say, "I am your friend." I had the usual compunctions of conscience that the young man feels when he goes into bar-rooms. I took wine at first, but the devil said: "That is not the thing; whisky is better." I obeyed him; I took whisky, until whisky pretty nearly took me forever.

Along in 1871—March, 1871—I was working at a clothing house, and I married a lady who was thoroughly conversant with all my habits; who knew that the habit for drink had fastened itself on me; but who, with a woman's faithful, trusting heart, married me, hoping, as they generally do, that her influence might reform me. Perhaps for a year or so the devil and I rather separated, but he had me in sight all the while. This continued for six or seven months, until, on one occasion, I went out to a fishing party. We carried two or three gallons of whisky, and two or three pounds of solid food. I went fishing with two or three personal acquaintances, who prevailed on me to indulge with them in drinking, and from this time forward, until about one year ago, I was as fully devoted to my old ways as ever.

The appetite for drink was on me, and dragged me down day by day, deeper and deeper into the mire; and still, through all this, my wife's loyal heart never faltered, unwavering as she was in her trust in me, that

I would yet reform. She still, when others failed me, remained my faithful friend. My wife was forced, however, by my conduct, to return to her mother's home, because, instead of supporting her, I was spending all my earnings for whisky and in debauchery of other kinds.

I shall have to go back a little in my story. About eight years ago I was working in a clothing house at the corner of Third and Market streets. I noticed across the street, one morning, a man whom I knew setting out on the sidewalk a lot of vegetables, apples, etc. I looked at him, and recognized him as Steve Holcombe, a man who had recently reformed his way of living, and abandoned his old life. In the meantime, I had become an infidel, I had begun to doubt the divinity of Christ, and even doubted that there was a God. I read all of Ingersoll's books, and went back and read Paine's essay on Reason and Common Sense. I was thoroughly fortified with all the infidel batteries that I could bring to bear on Christian people. As soon as I laid eyes on Brother Holcombe I started across the street and opened on him; and I kept this up for months. I fortified myself with a couple of drinks, so as to be very brave, and went over and tackled him regularly every morning.

At last, I stood and watched him one morning. I reasoned this way: "There is a man I have known for twenty-five years. I know of no man who was more thoroughly steeped in wickedness, who was a more persistent sinner, and I have tried to batter him down with my infidel batteries for months, and he is as solid as a stone wall;" and all this led me to think that there

was something in the religion of Jesus Christ ; and, thinking this way, I rather refrained from my attacks upon him and his position ; but I often thought of him afterward, and the thought occurred to me, there must be something in this thing, for no power living, or anything that I know of, could sustain that man in his position. It must be something beyond human.

The 20th day of last April I was on a protracted debauch ; had been for three weeks. My brain was thoroughly stunned with the effects of the liquor I had drunk. I was sitting in a bar-room at seven o'clock in the evening, as far as my memory now serves me, and I appeared to see the face of my wife and child ; and then one of my boon companions said, "Join us in a drink." Just then I could no more have taken that drink than I could have transformed myself into an angel of light. At that moment I thought some impending calamity that neither I nor any human power could avert was about to crush me. The next thing that came into my mind was that I must see Mr. Holcombe ; and I went out of that saloon into the night, scarcely knowing what I did, feeling that some terrible accident was going to happen ; but still this impulse moved me to go to the man I had fought so long and so persistently. I happened to find him before the old Mission, on Jefferson street, near Fifth. He seemed to think that I had now some other object in view than to attack him as formerly, because, the first time in all my career, he was the only man who did reach out his hand and said, "God bless you, my brother." I said: "I want to talk to you ; I want you to pray for me." He said, "God bless you, I am the happiest man to meet

you that I know of." He asked me to walk down to the Mission. The services were about to commence. I stayed with him that evening. In the morning he made a special prayer for me; and during all my wanderings, I had felt that, perhaps, the prayers of my mother and father would, in the end, reach the throne of grace; and I had never lost my faith in the efficacy of prayer. When he prayed for me, I felt my mother's hand on my head and heard her saying, "God bless and keep my boy." When I left him he said, "Won't you go to your room to-night and pray?" I had no room. He loaned me the money to get a room. I went to the hotel and procured lodging. He said to me, "Say any prayer you think of." The only prayer I could recall was one I had heard in my childhood, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!" When I made that prayer before the Christian's God, I did it with fear and trembling, for it seemed profanity for a wretch like me, who had defied God's laws, to prostrate himself at His feet and ask the Christian's God to have mercy on him; but I kept up that prayer in my weak, broken way. And to-day, having tried this life one year, you don't know of a man happier than I am. My wife, no longer broken-hearted as in those years of darkness and sorrow, now daily bids me welcome to our happy home. And we recognize together that nothing but this religion of Jesus Christ could have brought this about. I know, from the experiences I have had, that God has forgiven me, the sinner.

I had from a child been the most inveterate swearer. Since my conversion I have not sworn an oath; I never have taken a drop of beer or anything that might

intoxicate me, and I have never had a return of the appetite. And I hope, by God's mercy, that when the last call shall come I shall be found fighting for God; and I feel I want to fall with "my back to the field and my feet to the foe." Immediately after my conversion I attached myself to the Fifth and Walnut-street church; and if you inquire of those who know me, they will tell you that, since I stepped out of the old life into this, I have walked consistently.

I have told you a true story. I can think of no more to say. I may add, however, that since I have come into this new life, under God's mercy, I have been the humble instrument of bringing into the light three of my acquaintances, of whose conversion I know personally. I was the only wandering, wayward, prodigal son in my father's family; and there is probably not now a happier household in the State.

NOTE.—Mr. Hocker is at present engaged in business in one of the large clothing houses of Louisville.



### SAMUEL P. DALTON.

I was born in Shelbyville, Tenn., January 20, 1849, and am, therefore, thirty-nine years of age. My father and mother were both members of the church; and they tried to bring me up as a Christian. I went to Sunday-school and church almost all my life. My father has been dead twenty odd years. My mother is still living. As I say, I was brought up a Christian, and I was converted when I was about seventeen years of age, while a boy clerking in a brick-yard alone. I was licensed soon afterward to exhort in the Methodist church. After that I married; I removed to Paducah, Ky., and I was a member of the church there for several years. After that I lost my wife, broke up housekeeping and went to traveling. I traveled awhile, and then moved to Louisville. I lived here seven years.

In the meantime, I became indifferent to Christianity and formed the habit of moderate drinking; I was a moderate drinker for a couple of years, and gradually I drifted farther and farther away till at last I came to believe in Ingersoll's teachings. I formed this idea, that the world was made to enjoy, and that we had a right to enjoy it in any way we wished. I never would go to church and I would avoid meeting any of my church friends as much as possible. I became very unhappy and miserable in my irreligious life, and found that serving the devil was hard.

One day while in this unhappy condition my attention was called to a crowd of people on Jefferson



S. P. DALTON.

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street, near the courthouse. Going over to satisfy my curiosity, I found they were a Christian band from the Holcombe Mission preaching the Gospel. Of course, I would not go to church, and when I went over there to see what they were doing, I looked upon them as so many cranks; but there was one prayer that touched my heart. It was this: "Oh Lord, if there are any persons in this audience who are miserable or unhappy on account of their sins, I pray Thee to give them no peace until they give their hearts to God." And God answered the prayer in my case. I had no peace until I gave my heart to God and renewed my vows to the church. After hearing this prayer I went home very miserable and unhappy, and fought the feeling for six months afterward—tried to drive it away by drinking; but could not do so. Finally one night about midnight, in my room, I gave my heart to God and made new vows. I was again brought back to God on the 15th of October, 1882.

Then I went to see Brother Morris, pastor of the Fifth and Walnut-street Methodist church, and told him what I had done. Of course, he met me with open arms, and invited me to the church, and on the following Sunday I joined the Methodist church. Directly afterward Mr. Morris introduced me to Brother Holcombe. He said: "Brother Dalton, here is a man you ought to know and be with. His Mission is the place for you to do Christian work." He saw, I suppose, that I ought to be doing some good, and he wanted me right there.

I went, then, to Brother Holcombe's Mission, and remained with him for about two years, working there

almost every night for these two years, keeping door, and doing, to the best of my ability, all the good I could. I can say that my connection with the Mission, I have no doubt, has had all to do with strengthening me in the Christian life and leading me into usefulness, giving me strength and energy to engage in saving others, and confirming myself in Christian character.

I have witnessed some of the most remarkable conversions at Holcombe's Mission that I think ever were known anywhere, and I regard Holcombe as one of the most remarkable men on earth for mission work. It seems that he can use more means to put men to thinking than any other man that I know of.

I was always fond of going to the theater. After I had become a Christian, I had an idea that I could still continue going to theaters, and so stated to Brother Holcombe and Brother Alexander. They simply said this: "Brother Dalton, if you get the love of God in your heart you will find a great deal more pleasure in God's service than you will in attending theaters;" and from my own experience I have found it true. I have no desire to go to theaters; my own pleasure is in Christian work; and I do not think a man can make a practice of attending theaters regularly and exert the same influence for the salvation of others as if he did not attend.

I believe as firmly as I do anything, that when I was a boy, God called me to some kind of Christian work; and I was the most miserable man in the world when I lost my religion. After meeting with Brother Holcombe, he seemed to be a great wall of protection to me—and he does yet. He has infused

into my life more Christian zeal than I ever had before. I am of a temperament that is easily led off—easily influenced; and I feel that God, in His wisdom, leads me into Christian work in order to save my own soul as well as others. Since I have been away from Louisville, in Cleveland, Ohio, in business, I think there has not been a day or night but what I have thought of Brother Holcombe and the Mission. It seems to have such an everlasting effect on me, that at all times I feel a restraining influence which comes out from that Mission. If at any time I am tempted to become discouraged, the remembrance of him and the mission work that he is engaged in, seems to be a protection, something that upholds me in my Christian faith; and I have learned to love Brother Holcombe as I never loved any man on earth who was no kin to me. He is a man whom I have watched very closely, and understand thoroughly; and believe he is one of the most honest, earnest and upright Christian men that I ever met in all my life, and one who will do more, and endure more, to lead a man to Christ than any one I ever knew.

The result of that Christian experience which I had while associated with Brother Holcombe has been the means of my seeking an opportunity for Christian work in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, where I am now residing. I joined the Franklin-avenue Methodist church, of Cleveland, a grand body of Christians, too, about 650 members; and it seemed that the Lord had opened the way into this church to harness me into Christian work there. Being a man from the South, I hardly expected them to receive me as

cordially as they did; but it seemed that, after watching me, and knowing me, when I was not expecting it, I was elected one of the stewards of that church a very short time after joining it; and I have been put on different committees, and have been treated as well as a Christian gentleman could possibly desire to be treated, and I have learned to love them. My aim and object in life now is to do all the good I possibly can in this new field of labor.

The Lord has been very good to me since I reentered His service, and I have found complete happiness and contentment in this Christian life, and no man on earth is happier than I when I am doing Christian work, and I am quite unhappy when I am not, being fully convinced that the Lord has a Christian work of some kind for me to engage in, and always being blest in the least effort I make for the salvation of others.

God has prospered me in business, too. I have been very successful in my business life, not getting rich, but making a good, honest living, having the confidence and respect of my employers, and the full confidence of those who work for me. I have endeavored, to the best of my ability, to use every means within my power to exert as good an influence over the men in my employ as I possibly can under the circumstances. I correspond with Brother Holcombe regularly, and have for the last three years, and I very often use his letters in endeavoring to bring others to Christ; and frequently in my talks and Christian work I take a great pride in referring to the Mission in Louisville, and believe there has been some good done in simply telling of these remarkable conversions that I

have witnessed there, convincing me that the Mission is not only exerting a good influence in the city of Louisville, but is being felt all over this country.

After being away a little over three years, I returned to Kentucky on a visit to my mother and family in Paducah, and also to Brother Holcombe and my friends in Louisville, and stopped with Brother Holcombe. Of course, he received me with open arms and a hearty welcome, and I had the pleasure of meeting many of those men whom I had known when they were in their sinful lives, bound by the power of strong drink, and it did my heart good to look into their happy, shining faces, sober as they are, and active in business, and engaged in Christian work, thereby receiving new strength and stronger faith in the Blessed Gospel of Christ. I am fully persuaded there is no other power under heaven that would save men from these terrible habits except the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Coming into the presence of Brother Holcombe seemed to have a peculiar effect upon me. It seemed that I received a new baptism of the Holy Ghost. I do not know what it is; I know that God's blessing is just as rich and precious in Cleveland as it is in Louisville, but having been associated with Brother Holcombe in this Christian work, and witnessing such wonderful conversions, and God's blessings having been bestowed upon us so richly, it seems that the place is precious to my soul, and the remembrance of those things so cheers my heart that it gives me new strength and new zeal, and I never could, under any circumstances, in my future life, doubt the reality of the Christian religion.



### COLONEL MOSES GIBSON.

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My birthplace was Bowling Green, Rappahannock county, Virginia. I was born May 7, 1837. My ancestors were Quakers, and my grandfather a Hicksite Quaker. He married a Methodist, and was, consequently, turned out of the church. The family originally came from the north of Ireland, opposite Glasgow; non-conformists. They came to this country about the time Penn did, and got over into Loudon county, Virginia. On my mother's side I am descended from Nathaniel Pendleton, who is a brother of Edmund Pendleton, and aid-de-camp of General Green during the Revolutionary war. On both sides a considerable number of the men were in both legal and literary pursuits. My mother was raised in the Presbyterian church—joined the Presbyterian church. I was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Foot, one of the corner-stones of the old school church. My father was never a member of any church until very late in life. My mother had me baptized by the Rev. Dr. Foot when I was six years old.

I was always, as a boy, religiously inclined; and never cared for those enjoyments and pleasures that boys indulge in so much, like playing ball, hunting and fishing, tobogganing, coasting and all such kind of sport. I was more of a house boy. I liked to stay at home and read, and was very affectionate in my disposition. Very early in life I started out in the world, and when I was fourteen years old I was a

store boy; and even with all that, my early training, to a certain extent, kept me out of bad company, although I slept in the store, and was really under no restraint from the time I was about fourteen. I generally, when I found I was too far gone, pulled up stakes and went somewhere else; and in that way I grew up. I very rarely failed to go to church twice every Sunday; and I looked upon religion more as a pleasure and a matter of pride for the respectability of it. I liked the church, even after I grew up to be a man. But during the latter part of the war, I became impressed. I believe it was in October, 1864, I professed religion in a little church in New Market, Virginia; and after the war, I went to Baltimore, and united myself there with the Episcopal church. I never was confirmed, however, until some time in 1868, here in Calvary church in Louisville. But I always considered myself a member of the church, went to Sunday-school, and attended to my duties very particularly. I never drank anything, and never kept bad company. My association was always the most refined, principally that of ladies. I was fond of society, parties, theaters and things of that kind, which our church never objected to very particularly, but I kept myself in bounds.

It was only about 1874 or 1875 that I became associated with some gentlemen here who were very learned, and who were very earnest men; and we got into the study of the Bible in search of truth. We got all the books of modern thought on the subject that we could. We conversed together and talked together a great deal. We got all the modern au-

thors, and studied them very thoroughly; and studied so much, that we finally studied ourselves into infidelity. We studied Draper, Max Muller, Ledyard, Bishop Colenzo and Judge Strange. Judge Strange's was the most powerful book, to me, of any. It was a reference to the Old Testament legends and the miracles of the New. I gradually by the association, and by reading these modern treatises on theology, etc., drifted into that thoughtful infidelity, which is the worst sort in the world, because I had a great respect for religion, but did not believe it. I believed in a God, but could not consistently believe that he was the God of the Bible, or that the Bible itself could be an inspired book, because so much of it was inconsistent with demands of human reason.

Following these convictions, I gradually drifted into the most complete infidelity that a man ever did on earth. I did not believe anything, still I did not attempt in any way to have my associates and friends believe that I was an infidel. I never boasted of it, I never made light of religion. I continued to go to church, continued to keep in the church; and when Ingersoll was here I would not go to hear him. I was satisfied that Ingersoll's teachings were, to a great extent, what I believed; but I did not like to hear a man get up and ridicule my mother's God; and my answer to those who wanted me to go was that I would not listen to any man who tried to ridicule the religion of my mother.

About 1878 I commenced drinking. I was then about forty-one years old. I got to taking a drink here and there, but do not suppose I took over a hundred

drinks during the year. In 1879 I got to drinking a little more. In 1880 I got to drinking pretty hard. During the year 1879 I took rarely less than three, and very often six to eight drinks, a day, and in 1881 I was a confirmed, genteel tippler. I rarely took less than three or more than I could stand, but in a genteel way and in a genteel saloon.

I sold out my business and traveled seven or eight months for pleasure, and kept up the same thing everywhere. I seldom gambled. I played poker for twenty-five cents ante, and bet on horse races. I never was a profane man except when I was intoxicated; then I would be a little profane. I always remembered more than anything else the early teachings of my mother; they clung to me. I had respect not only for the church but respect for the ministry and respect for Christian people.

After I commenced drinking I would have given anything in the world if I could have stopped. I would get up in the morning and I would feel a lassitude—feel debilitated. I would not care to eat anything—a biscuit and a cup of coffee—and by eleven o'clock that was all emptied, and my stomach would crave something. Probably if I had sat down at a restaurant and made a good dinner it would have helped me; but it was so much easier to get a toddy, and that toddy did away with the craving, and probably in an hour and a half I would want the same thing, and, instead of going to dinner, I would take another drink, and about three o'clock I would want this toning of the stomach again.

In the fall of 1883 I thought I would call a halt. I quit drinking in October, 1883, of my own will, and I

did not drink a drop of anything until July, 1884; and then I got at it in the same old way. I got to taking a toddy a day, and then I got to taking two, and for two months I was taking a toddy before every meal; and then my stomach got so I did not care to eat—I took the toddy without the dinner; and in the course of the year—probably by the first of October—I had got to drinking all the way from six drinks a day to about a dozen. I kept that up until I got to being genteelly intoxicated—always genteel, but always going to bed being pretty well intoxicated. When I got to bed, I would lie down and sleep; and when I got up in the morning I would have a toddy.

About October we sold out our business here. The winter was beginning, and I had no money. I began to be a little reckless; and I commenced drinking the first of October, and I was full until the first of January. I do not think from the first of October, 1884, until the first of January, 1887, there was a day that I did not take six drinks, and generally ten or twelve—pretty stiff drinks, too. I generally drank about two ounces of whisky. It never affected my health at all. It stimulated my mind; it made me bright—exceedingly so—so much so that if there was anybody about the bar-room I was the center of attraction. I could discourse upon any subject; but I was very bright and vivacious. I never was afraid of anything on the face of the earth; I guess there never was a man more fearless than I was when under the influence of whisky; otherwise, I was very timid.

I kept that thing up, and on the first of January I was walking down the street. I had gone to bed

pretty sober on the night before; and I got up on the morning of the first of January and dressed myself up nicely, intending to go to church. I met a friend of mine, who said he was going around to the office, and asked me to go with him. I said I would. On the way around there he suggested we should have a pint of whisky. I said, "I believe I will quit; I am getting tired of whisky." "Well," he said, "let us have a bottle anyway; it is the first of January." "Yes," I said, "as it is the first of January." We sat there and drank that, and sent out and got another pint and drank that. After that, I went down to Louis Roderer's and sat there, and some gentlemen came in and they got to throwing dice for the drinks, and I was invited to join them, and I did; and I took six drinks there with them. The weather was cold; the pavement covered with ice. As long as I stayed in the house, the liquor did not affect me, but as soon as I got out of the door, the cold coming right into contact with it, seemed to throw all the undigested alcohol into my brain. I went back to this friend of mine. He was not there. I walked up Market street, and went to my room and went to bed. It was there, I suppose, I mashed my nose and cut my face badly. The servant girl came up stairs and found me lying on the floor. She went down and got help, and they bathed my face, and they both together put me to bed. I had been unconscious from the moment I left the bar-room and was so up to five o'clock the next morning.

They put me to bed, and I was totally unconscious until I woke up the next morning at five o'clock. It

occurred to me that something was the matter; I felt the wound on my face. I got up and lighted the candle and looked into the glass, and saw that my face was all bruised and bloody. I said, "I suppose I ran against something and mashed my face last night." The next morning I heard this servant girl in the next room. I heard her saying, "Poor man, poor man." Pretty soon she came in and said, "What in the world is the matter with you? How did you hurt your face?" She then told me the condition they had found me in; and if they had not found me I would have frozen to death. I said, "If this thing is going to work that way on me, I must call a halt." I could not eat anything but some milk. I lay in bed all day.

I could not pray. I had got into that frame of mind I could not pray. I did not believe in the efficacy of prayer. I had lost sight of Christ as God, but I had great respect for Christ as a teacher. I lay there all that day, Monday. I was then thoroughly sober; and I said, "I will just see if there is any efficacy in religion, anyhow. I believe I will try it." I had gotten up and dressed myself. I had not eaten any breakfast. I drank some coffee. Not having taken anything to eat, I felt pretty weak, and I said, "I believe I will take a drink." I went around to a friend of mine on First street, and he was not there. Then I walked around to a saloon on Third street. Several gentlemen were there that I used to drink with. I stood around there for awhile, hoping that some one would ask me to take a drink, but nobody asked me.

Finally I came up here to Mr. Holcombe's and found him here, and we got to talking the matter

over. I told him that I was tired of this kind of life. I wanted to take a pledge. "I do not give pledges to anybody to stop drinking." He said there was but one remedy—reliance upon Christ; that Christ was all—Christ and the love of God. If I determined to live up to the teachings of the Bible, if I was willing about it, that he believed I would be cured. Well, I told him that I thought that my mind was sufficiently prepared; that I had made up my mind to quit if I possibly could; that if the Lord wanted to take me the way I was, I had made up my mind to believe; that I had not believed anything for a long time, and that if I did believe I would have to take it by faith, and not by reason.

Finally, after talking it over, Mr. Holcombe prayed, and after prayer I said I had better go down to my boarding-house. "No," he said, "you stay with me awhile." I said I could not do that; I had to go down to my boarding-house. He said, "No!" he thought I had better stay awhile; that I could stay with him just the same, as I was around there; that I might get out and get to drinking; that I was not strong enough. I concluded I would stay with him, and I stayed with him for three weeks.

I went down stairs to the Mission meeting that night, and stood up for prayer. After the prayer, I felt a great deal better—in fact, I felt as much converted as I am now. Since then, I have had no trouble.

I never had made a prayer in public in my life; I never had talked religion in my life, and I got up a week afterward and preached a sermon an hour long. The second or third night I made a prayer. Before



that night I had never prayed in public. The only prayer I would say was, "Our Father Who Art In Heaven."

I have never taken a drink since then, and I do not now chew tobacco. I had either a cigar or a chew of tobacco in my mouth all the time during the last year. From the time I was fifteen years old, I used to smoke from three to a dozen cigars a day. My general average of cigars was six a day. I have not chewed tobacco, I have not smoked a cigar, I have not taken a drink of liquor since January. A man talking to me the other day said: "You have the strongest will power on earth. If I had the will power you have, I could do anything I wanted." I said, "I do not think so. I do not believe I ever would have stopped smoking and chewing without the change which has been produced in me through faith and prayer."

I will tell you what broke me of chewing tobacco. It was Monday that I came here to the Mission, the 3d of January, and on Tuesday night I professed conversion. Wednesday morning I went out to see Mr. Minnegerode, and had my name again placed on the church record as a member of Calvary church. The first Sunday in the month was our communion, and I was very anxious that I should perform all the obligations necessary to fill out the measure of my conversion, and to do it as soon as possible; and I happened to be down in Cyrus Young's office, and he told me that they were going to have communion. They had quarterly meeting at the Broadway Methodist church. Dr. Brewer preached, and there I took my first communion. From there I went over to the house of a friend of

mine, who has since died, named Lewis. I took dinner with him, and stayed there until half-past three o'clock. Well, I took a chew of tobacco going down the street, and when I had just commenced chewing it, I said: "You are a pretty kind of a Christian. You have got your mouth full of that stuff that a hog would not eat, and immediately after taking the bread and wine commemorative of the death of Christ. It is not right for a Christian to take that after having partaken of these emblems." And I spit it out of my mouth. For two or three days it bothered me a great deal—much more than drinking. I never had a desire to take a drink since that Monday, although I have been asked repeatedly. I was down at a hotel with two or three gentlemen the other day, and somebody got up and suggested taking a drink. I said, "No; I have joined the church; I am a Christian, and I do not believe in Christians or church members drinking." Shortly after that they offered me a cigar, which I refused.

I have now charge of a chapel, and have preached two sermons up there this week, one Sunday night and one Thursday night. I preached on the Prodigal Son the other night. I have held seven or eight services up there. I hold forth here at the Mission one night in the week—that is Tuesday night. I never killed anybody; have never won a thousand dollars at cards; and I never was in the gutter. I was a refined tippler. I was a leader of society all these years, as everybody who knows me is aware. I was prominent in social life and prominent in church life before I was an infidel, previous to 1874, and a member of the vestry of Advent church here. I kept up my acquaintances. All the

drinking I did was with the tony men, at the high-typed, tony saloons. I am now a communicant of Calvary church. I am a lay reader, and, for the present, have charge of Campbell-street chapel. I go up there two nights a week. I was going up to Campbell street, the other evening, to hold service and I met Bishop Dudley, who was going up to Trinity to confirm a class, and he asked me where I was going. I told him I was going over to Campbell street to hold service. He asked me who did my singing. I said I did all the preaching and singing myself.

The sum of it is, I felt that mine was a bad case; I had been struggling for two years and a half to rid myself of this appetite, by making to myself all kinds of promises day after day, but was unable to do it; I said to myself, "Mine is a bad case—an aggravated case—and it needs heroic treatment. I can say I will quit drinking. I can go and kneel down and feel very well about it; but the question is, whether I would not go back to the same old way of living; and I reflected that I might be renewed or regenerated—if the Lord created me, He could re-create me—to the man He had made and created in His own image, if he believed, He could give back his manhood; would re-create him and give him a new birth." I felt that, and felt that I must make a public confession. Mine was a bad case, and there was only one way to cure me—a public confession before God and the world, and a prayer for strength to make me live up to that profession—and when I made that profession, I felt relieved.

I have had more strength since then. I have not had the least desire for liquor. Last night was the first

time I ever dreamed about drinking since; and then I dreamed that I wanted a lemonade very badly and went to the saloon to get it; and my conscience pricked me even in my sleep for the desire for a lemonade and going into a saloon to get it. Before, I used to dream about going into drinking saloons. Instead of having a desire for a drink of whisky, I give you my word and honor, it was nauseating to me. That was not a qualm of conscience, but a physical sensation. It came when I picked up a glass that had had whisky in it. I smelled it, and set it down. And, by the grace of God, I am determined that I have drunk my last drop of intoxicating liquor.

## CAPTAIN BEN PECK.

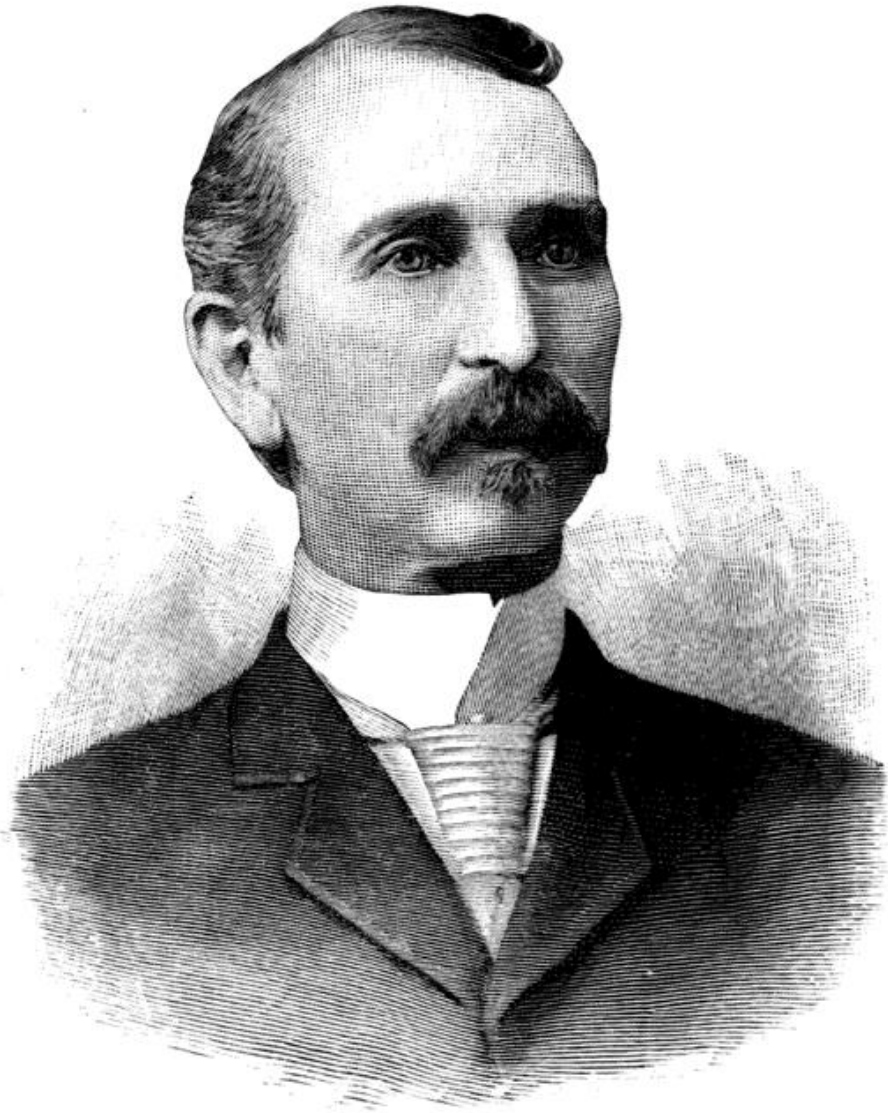
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I have had rather an eventful life; but I don't know that it would be interesting to the public.

I certainly had less reason to be a bad boy, and worse man, than almost anybody ever had. I was surrounded by the very best Christian influences. My father was a prominent minister of the Baptist denomination in this State. He died, though, when I was quite young. My mother's people had been Christian people very far back. The male members on my father's side were Baptist ministers as far as I could trace it. I lost my father when I was about eight years old. My mother tried to raise me right—taught me right; but we were living out here in a little town—Hodgensville—and I was wild from the start. I was not worse than any other boys, but I was in all sorts of mischief. I was looked upon as a bad boy, and regarded as no exception to the general rule, that preacher's boys are worse than other boys.

When about twelve years old, I joined the church at a revival. I believe I was truly converted, and for a short while I lived up to the duties of my church; but I soon neglected going to church—first I neglected going to prayer-meeting—and I got back so far that I would not be picked out as a Christian by any means.

The war came up when I was fourteen years old, and I went into it; and the first night out I got to drinking and playing cards; and I suppose I was known as the leader in all the mischief got up in the brigade.



CAPTAIN N. B. PECK.

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I was notorious throughout the command as a reckless, bad boy from the beginning.

My mother had been opposed to my going into the army at all; but, if I was going, she would have preferred my serving on the other side. I never shall forget one thing she said to me at starting. When the time came to go, I would not have hesitated to back out if she had given me any encouragement at all. She said, "My son, you have determined; you have cast your lot with the South. I had rather you would do your duty and be a brave soldier." But she continued to pray for me.

After the war I came back home, and found that our property was all gone. My mother had sent me to Georgetown college before the war, and my idea was to educate myself for a lawyer. When I came home the property was dissipated, and I did not have enough to finish my education; and the question was, what would be the best for me to do. I came here to Louisville and went to drumming; met with phenomenal success from the start; went up and up; was hail fellow, well met, with everybody; situations offered me on every side. But I continued to drink and play cards as I did in the army, and gambled all the time, although not a professional gambler. I played against Holcombe's bank many a time. I went from bad to worse. I continued to dissipate and gamble; and eleven years ago my health was very much shattered from my excesses, and I became soured with myself and everybody. I was as miserable as a man could be, in that condition, as a matter of course; and a gentleman who had been a



comrade in the army with me, and had taken a great deal of interest in me, Captain Cross, in a conversation with me, insisted that I should go with him to Texas, where he was doing a flourishing business. I had tried, time and again, to reform, always in my own strength, and got further away from God all the time. I tried to believe that Christ was not the Son of God; that he was not inspired; I denied the divinity of Christ, although I never denied that there was a Supreme Ruler. Captain Cross wanted me to go to Texas, thinking that if I got away from the surroundings here, it would help me. Accordingly, I went to Texas with him, where I made plenty of money.

But I soon fell into the old ways, and found gambling houses as numerous there as they are here; I found dance-houses more accessible than the churches. I led a reckless life; and frequently did not hear from my family and friends for months at a time. Finally I drank until I drank myself into delirium tremens; tried to kill myself; went and bought morphine. But fortunately for me, they were watching me. That was in Paris, Texas. I was in bed for two or three weeks; and when I got up from that, I felt like I did not want to stay in Texas any longer.

I went to St. Louis and went into business there; had success as a salesman; had a big trade; and I went there with a determination not to drink any more whisky; but I was there only a few days before I was drinking and playing cards—my old life, in fact. Finally I got into a difficulty with a man, shot him and got shot myself. I got into a great deal of trouble on account of

it. It cost me a great deal of money and my mother a great deal of sorrow. One time I went to Mexico to get out of the way, where I led a reckless life; went into the army; played cards and drank whisky. I neglected business for whisky a great deal of the time. Then I came here to Louisville, and kept up the same practice; went to Cincinnati and did the same thing there. I let up for a little while when I went to new places. When I got back from St. Louis, I met Steve Holcombe and shook hands with him. The first thing he said to me was, "I have changed my life." I had not heard anything of it. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was serving the Lord instead of the devil; that he had a little mission somewhere. I did not pay any attention to it. But one Sunday I was passing down Jefferson street, and there was a crowd on the courthouse steps, and I saw Steve talking to them. I listened to him, and after the crowd went away I asked him how he was getting along and he told me.

I kept on drinking, however. Sometimes I had a situation and sometimes I did not. People did not want me; they did not know when I would be sober. If I got a situation, it was in the busy season. After the busy season was over, they would reduce my salary and give me to understand they wanted me to get a new place.

One time I was drunk for a week or ten days, and as I passed I heard them singing in the Mission down stairs and went in. I thought that would be a good place to rest. I went back a night or two; and one night Mr. Holcombe delivered a powerful testimony and mentioned some circumstances that had occurred

in his life, at some of which I had been present—I don't know that he had particular reference to me. I went back the next night and went up for prayer. I went again sober; but I did not see my way clear. I went back and took "a nip," as he said. I sank lower and lower; but I still went to that Mission. Something impelled me, I know now what it was. I got a situation, and was traveling; but whenever I got off a trip the spirit of the Lord impelled me to go to that Mission. I talked with Steve frequently, and promised him that I was going to try and reform; but I did not, and toward the last, in fact, I had almost quit going to the Mission. I said, "It is not for me, it is for these other men. I have gone too far."

I went in there in November. I was going away on a trip, and the next day I started. I met a friend on the street, and he asked me for a quarter. He wanted to get a drink and lunch. I told him it was about my time to get a drink, too, and we would go and get one together before I left. I was telling him about going to the Mission, and he hooted at the idea of a man of my sense going to the Mission. About two o'clock in the afternoon I was going down the street to take the boat, and I met another friend, and he certainly was the worst looking case I ever saw. I did not think he would live two weeks. He was a physical wreck, and almost a total mental wreck. After talking to him for a few minutes he asked me where I was going. I told him, and I told him, too, I did not care whether I ever got back or not. I told him it would be a relief to me if I never got back off of that trip. I had a family, saw them occasionally, and

sent them money when I could; but I never lived with them. After talking with him a little while, I said my time was up, and asked him if he would not go and take a parting drink with me. We went into the Opera House down there and took a drink. I never expected to see my friend alive again, even if I got back from that trip myself. That was the 30th day of November. I got back here the 18th day of December.

The most of the night of the 18th I spent down here at the Grand Central—"made a night of it." The next morning, when I got up, the very first man I saw asked me if I had seen a certain friend of mine. I told him, "No." He said: "You would not know him." I said: "What is the matter with him?" He said: "He is reformed; he is a Christian, and he looks twenty years younger than you ever saw him." I said: "You are a liar." He said: "I am not a liar. You won't know him. He looks like a gentleman." I said: "It is pretty funny if he can look like a gentleman in this short time." I had not gone another square before some one asked me if I had seen another friend of mine. I said: "No." "Well," he said, "you ought to see him. He has quit drinking, and looks like he used to look." I said: "What is the matter with him?" He said: "He has joined the church." I took a drink, and thought about this thing; went down to the store, and knocked around there all day long, thinking about those two men. But here I was, drunk and wretched and trying to get sober, but could not.

Somebody met me about four o'clock in the evening, and asked: "Where are you going?" I said: "I

am going around here to get a drink." He said: "How are you going to drink when your partners have quit drinking?" I asked him where they could be found; that I wanted to take a look at them. He told me that I could find them at the Mission. I concluded I would come up to the Mission, and did so, pretty full; and, honestly, I would not have known either of these men on the street. I never saw such a transformation as in them. After the services were over they came up and shook hands with me, and treated me as kindly as they used to do when we were drinking together. And I made up my mind if Christ could save them, I wanted some of it for myself.

I came to the Mission, and stood up for prayers all the time, but came half drunk for four or five nights, but still with the determination to have salvation if it was to be found; but the more I came the darker the way grew. I think (on the 29th of December) Mrs. Clark came and talked to me, and Mr. Atmore came and talked to me. I was sober—comparatively so. I told them that I had given up all hope; that I had sinned away my day of grace, and there was no hope for me. They cheered me, and I promised them I would pray that night. I went out of the Mission and got blind, staving drunk; was hardly able to get up stairs to my bed at eleven o'clock, at night. I did it out of despair. The doctors had told me before that unless I quit drinking whisky I would go dead. I was tired of life, but afraid to commit suicide. I concluded that the sooner I died, the better. I got up at three o'clock in the morning to come down stairs and get a drink. The bar-keeper was absent from his bar.

and I concluded that I would wash myself before I took a drink. I said to myself while I was washing: "You promised yourself you would not drink, and the very first night you get drunk, and get up in the morning to take another drink, and if you take it you will be drunk before night." I concluded I would stop. I took a seat by the stove, and very soon the bar-keeper came back. He looked at me and said: "Are you broke this morning, or too stingy to drink, or what is the matter?" He added: "Come on. If you are too stingy to take a drink yourself, take one with me." I was just dying for a drink. I was shaking—suffering physically and mentally. I got up two or three times to go to that bar to take a drink, but I argued to myself: "If you can not keep from taking a drink, you had better go up stairs and kill yourself." After awhile the boys commenced dropping in, and, as was the custom, said: "Come on, Peck, and take a drink." I told them, "No; I have quit."

I went around to the Mission that night, and went up to the front. I had a talk with some Christian people there about the matter, and talked with one of my converted friends. He said there was only one way to do—to give myself to God. I went to bed immediately after I left. I could not sleep. I continued to pray until somewhere along about three o'clock in the morning of the 2d of January; and the way was made clear for me. I don't know that there was any particular vision. I made up my mind that I would go and make my arrangements to join the church, and ask God's direction from that time on, and to lead another life—lead a Christian life as

much as it is possible for a sinful mortal like me to do.

I came up to the Mission that night, and told Sister Clark and Brother Holcombe that I was as happy as I could be; I had found what I was seeking for, and I felt that I could trust God. The next Wednesday night I went down to the Fourth and Walnut-street Baptist church, and put myself under the care of the church. Since that time I have been leading a different life. I am in perfect peace and rest. Everything, of course, has not gone to suit me exactly; but I always have been able to say: "I know it is for the best." My faith grows stronger and my future brighter day by day. I think these people who have been moral and religious all of their lives can not enjoy religion like a hard customer, as I was—if they do, they do not show it.

Friends and relatives who had forsaken and avoided me came to me at once and upheld and encouraged me. Business came to me without seeking it. I was encouraged on every hand. People that I thought despised me, I found did not. I had every encouragement, so far as this life is concerned, and I am, to-day, in a better fix, a long ways, than I have been for years.

My appetite for whisky has troubled me three or four times since I came to Christ, but all I have to do is to get down on my knees, and ask for strength to resist it. And before I get through praying I forget about it. I have confidence that God will keep me to the end, and my confidence grows stronger every day. Things that were a great trial to me at first are no longer so.

A very remarkable thing in my case is, that the thing that I expected to give me the most trouble has given me the least. I was certainly one of the most profane men that ever lived, and I was always afraid that the sin that I would have to guard against most would be profanity. But, if I have ever sworn an oath, it has been unconsciously, and I do not have to think about it—I do not have to guard against it; it horrifies me to hear a man swear now. I thought I could fight whisky easier than I could that. Strange to say, it has not bothered me in the least, but whisky has, on three or four occasions. A craving came on me yesterday. It was a terrible, miserable, bleak, rainy day. I was sitting in my room, writing, and all at once I concluded that I must have a stimulant. I have not recovered, and will not for months, from the effects of whisky. I said: "It is a cold, damp, miserable day. Go up there to the drug-store and get some port wine as a medicine. Do not go into a bar-room. There will be no harm in going there to get a little port wine. Bring it into your room. It will be the best thing you can do." I got up and put on my overcoat and my overshoes, and it struck me that it would not be the best thing for me; and I got down on my knees and prayed to God, and before I got through praying I forgot all about it. The devil had tempted me previously, but he put it that day in the shape of the port wine.

Just about ten days after I joined the church, I was in the Phoenix hotel. A friend of mine, a man that I had gambled and drunk with all my life, or at least, for a number of years, said to me, "You are



not drinking much from the way you look." I said, "No, I am not." He said he thought he would beckon me out, because he did not like to make that statement before the crowd, and had I been drinking as I did the last time he saw me, he would not have asked me. He wanted me to come in and take a drink with him. I said whisky had once got the upper hand of me, and he must excuse me. He said he knew I was a man, and could take a drink without getting drunk, and he wanted me to take it socially. I told him that might all be true. I might take the drink without getting drunk, and I might take it without its being a sin in his sight, or in the sight of other people; but that I had promised God that I would follow Him all my life, and walk in the way He wanted me to go; that I had joined the church, and our church rules forbade drinking. He then begged my pardon, with tears in his eyes, for having asked me, and bade me God speed.

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J. C. WILSON.

JAMES C. WILSON.

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I started out in gambling during the war—about 1862. That was in New York State. I was born and raised there. I will be forty-five years of age the next eighth of July. I started out in New York in 1862. My father kept a shoe store there then. He was pretty well to do. Having money, I cared nothing about getting any kind of business. I got in with a man by the name of Captain Brown, who was one of the principal gamblers there; and I began to be expert in short cards at first.

From there I went into the army during the war, and stayed there until 1865, and then went to Texas. At Austin, Texas, I got into trouble in 1866, on account of my gambling. I believe it was about the 20th of January. Myself and a man by the name of Ryan had been playing together, and I had beaten him, which made him mad. He called me very insulting names. He slapped me and hit me, and I drew my pistol on him. I first struck him once and then shot him, and killed him instantly. I was put in jail. I had not been there long and was a stranger. The thing occurred down near the Colorado river. A mob assembled, and came down with ropes to hang me. But the sheriff and his posse, in order to save me, carried me out of the city, and ran me up to San Antonio. I stayed in jail six months and was tried; but there was nothing done with me—the witnesses testified that I was justified in doing what I did.

After that I went to Rochester, New York, and from there to Toronto, Canada. I made my living by gambling; and, of course, gambled in all these places. I got broke very often, but always managed to get hold of a stake. I went from Canada back to New York City; and used to play on the falls steamers—Fisk's boats. I stayed there until I came to Louisville in 1870, when I went into the army again. I was here in the Taylor barracks with General Custer. I went out West with him, and was there discharged from the army, and went to gambling at Bismarck, Dakota. When I had got out of the army, I had made about six thousand dollars, and went to St. Paul, and from there to Chicago. I gambled there for awhile, and was unsuccessful; and from there I came to Louisville again.

I have been here since 1873, I believe. Shortly after I commenced gambling here, the gambling houses were closed, but were reopened in 1874 again, and I commenced gambling again, opening at the Richmond, the house on the South-west corner of Fifth and Market streets. Brother Holcombe before that, I think, was interested in the Richmond. That was the last house I dealt in, or worked in, until I opened for myself, which was at "84" Fifth street, between Main and Market. I was very unsuccessful there; had men working for me who did not attend to their business.

During all this time I had a wife and family, whom I really loved but whom I neglected and allowed to suffer greatly through my passion for gambling, the uncertainty of making a living and my wanderings from place to place. About this time I used to think

of Holcombe; and we gamblers used to remark among ourselves how it was that he had become religious. I used to get to studying to myself how he got along, and ask myself how a man could be a Christian who had been a gambler so long as he had.

About this time I met Dr. Jno. B. Richardson and Mr. Samuel B. Richardson. They talked with me in regard to swearing and gambling and the life I was leading. They influenced me as best they could and advised me to see Brother Holcombe, and together with Brother Holcombe they watched over my spiritual condition for a couple of years. I had become disgusted with the life I was leading; and came to Brother Holcombe for advice. I had quit "84" and was broke. I had some money when I quit, and bought the house which I am living in yet. I said to Brother Holcombe: "I am getting tired of this infernal gambling. How can I quit it? Show me something to do. How can I get out of this life?" He said, "Brother Wilson, come up stairs." He talked with me and prayed with me. He said, "Do not be discouraged. Take my advice. The first thing you do, commit yourself; take a stand and after that every night, and during the day, ask God for strength and help, and come to this mission and," he said, "I will help you to get something to do in every way I can." I never will forget the first night I got down on my knees and prayed. I laughed at myself, which showed how the devil was after me to lead me back to my old life. I actually laughed to think I was trying to pray in earnest. I came to the mission and told Steve. Brother Holcombe said, "Keep on in

that way, anyhow. Pray to God and ask for strength all the time. Keep away from gamblers and bad company, and do not mix with them," and I did so—I took his advice, and I began to get strength from Almighty God; He was helping me; He opened a way for me, though everything was new to me for awhile.

When I least expected it, I got a situation with the Louisville City Railway Company, which I still hold. I am happy and my family are happy, and all my surroundings are good; and I know, with the help of God, I will never touch a card again. If we trust in God, I know we are kept from all temptation. When any temptation comes to me, I always look to God for help; and the help comes as naturally as my pay does when pay-day comes. I feel that the number of friends I have made, and everything I have, I owe to our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and Brother Holcombe; and I trust I may be kept and continue in the life I am leading. I am happy and contented and all my surroundings are happy; and I hope all good people will pray for me that I may continue the life I am now leading.

I belong to the First Presbyterian Church, Dr. Witherspoon's church, and I am sorry I can not attend more regularly. My business occupies me so constantly that I can not get away.

I get only a dollar and a half a day. When I was a gambler, some months I would make three or four thousand dollars, and sometimes five thousand dollars; and some months I believe I have made more than that, so far as that is concerned; but a gambler, you

know, has his ups and downs. I have been so hard up that I have been tempted to commit murder for money. In Texas I looked for a man to kill him for his money, but when I found him I did not have the heart to do it. It seemed as if I could not use my hands.

It would take me from now until to-morrow morning to tell all of my experiences. I have been in Europe, California, Old and New Mexico, and I believe that God was with me even when I was wicked. I have a bad temper to this day, but, by God's grace, I can control it.

My parents were church members—Presbyterians, and I was raised in the church. My father died when I was fifteen years old, and my mother died when I was eight years old. If I had been put to hard work, and had had something to do, it might have been different with me; but my father was well-to-do, and I had too much money to spend. My parents tried to give me a good education, and I went to school; but when I got to gambling I could not get anything in my head but cards. I did not care for anything else. But, thank God, it is now just the reverse; it just gives me the chills to think of playing cards.

Three years ago, if a man had told me that I would quit gambling, I would have told him that he was crazy. I thank God and Brother Holcombe for what has been done for me. I am truly thankful there was such a man. I know if it had not been for him I would have been right in hell to-day. If I had not been helped and lifted up, just like a little



child in the new life, I think I would to-day be in hell. I never will forget Brother Holcombe.

I drank liquor, but was not a regular drunkard, because it made me too sick. I used to drink and get drunk, but I would get so sick I could not stand it. The habit was there, but the constitution could not endure it.

I have no trouble now; I am perfectly happy; I do not know what trouble is any more. Of course, we all have ups and downs; we can not have everything our own way; but I praise God and Brother Holcombe that I am able to bear them.

You must show that you are willing for the Lord to help you before He will do so. It is like a man teaching his children; if the child keeps shoving him off, the parent can not help the child, and so it is with God. But when a man has seen and felt the effects of sin, and his pride is broken down so that he is willing, then God will help him and save him, no matter how far he has gone in wickedness.

NOTE.—Mr. Wilson is employed by the Louisville City Railway Company, at the corner of Eighteenth and Chestnut streets, where, day after day, for years, he has faithfully discharged his duties, and he has the respect and esteem of his employers and of all who know him.

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WM. BIERLY.

## WILLIAM BIERLY.

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I am thirty-two years of age. I was born at Louisville in 1856. My father was a Catholic then, but he is not now. My mother died when I was so small that I don't know what she was. I will tell you how it was: My mother died when I was quite young, my father went into the war, and I was kicked and cuffed about from one place to another, here and there, till I had no respect for myself, and felt that I was nobody.

I was with my father in the soldiers' hospital for a long time. He was nurse in the soldiers' hospital. At this time I would drink whisky whenever I could get it, which appetite did not leave me until I was about eighteen years old.

When I was about eleven years old I got to being bad—got to stealing. My father was a strictly honest man himself, and my pilfering was abhorrent to him; so he had me put in the house of refuge when I was eleven years old. I was to remain in the house of refuge until I was twenty-one years old, but I got out before I was twenty-one. When I was nineteen I got to be a guard there. But I got to misbehaving, and got discharged from there before I was twenty-one.

When I came out of the house of refuge I boarded around at different places, first at one place and then another; and sometimes I had no place to board at all, and sometimes I could almost lie down on the ground and eat grass. I did not go to my father's,

but knocked about from one place to another. I got to stealing again, and I kept that up all the time. I never had a desire to do anything else wrong, but I always had the desire to steal; and while a boy I would steal anything I came across. I would go down to the river and steal a bag of peanuts, or burst in the head of a barrel of apples and take apples out—many a time have I done that. I worked in a tobacco shop for awhile, and would steal tobacco—I would steal anything.

I never was arrested when I was a boy. The first time I ever was arrested I was sent to the work-house, and Mr. Steve Holcombe got me out. After I got out of the work-house I attended the Mission, and there was a good religious impression made on me. That was the first time I ever had any religious impression.

I lived pretty straight for awhile, and after awhile my old desire to steal came back on me. Thank the Lord it does not bother me any more now. I was watching at the Louisville Exposition during the first year of the exposition, 1883, and I was boarding where there were some street car drivers boarding, and they had all their money boxes there at the boarding house. I was tempted to take a few of their boxes, and I did take two of them. I was arrested for it, tried, convicted and sentenced to six years in the penitentiary.

While I was in the penitentiary it seemed that everything turned around the other way with me; it seemed like I had got enough of it. I saw so many bad men there, I got disgusted. It seemed to me if ever I got out and got my liberty any more, I would try to do right if it took my head off.

During the time—two years—that I was in the penitentiary, I kept up a correspondence all the time with Mr. Holcombe; and Mr. Holcombe's Christian letters touched my heart, and I made up my mind by the grace of God I would lead a Christian life in the future. At the expiration of about two years, Mr. Holcombe, to my great surprise and delight, brought me a pardon from Governor Knott.

Since I have been out of the penitentiary I have been leading a Christian life, and have had no inclination to steal. I have been at work for Hegan Brothers, as engineer and fireman, for some time, have got married to a sweet girl, and am now living happily in the Lord; and I shall never cease to be grateful to God and Mr. Holcombe. I never go to sleep at night without thanking the Lord—and my wife joins me in it.

### CAPTAIN MAC PITTMAN.

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I was born in Baltimore in 1834. My ancestors were driven away from Arcadia by the English, on account of their Roman Catholic proclivities.

I was educated at two Catholic colleges, St. Mary's, at Baltimore; and St. Mary's at Wilmington, Delaware. At eighteen years of age, on account of the tyranny of my father, I ran away from home, and shipped in the United States Navy as a common sailor. I went around to San Francisco, and there joined "the gray-eyed man of destiny," General Walker.

I joined his expedition in September, 1885, and arrived in Nicaragua in October, the following month—the third day of October. There was a civil war then in progress in Nicaragua; and the pretense of this expedition was that we were hired by one of the parties to take part in it. Walker was to furnish three hundred Americans, who were to get one hundred dollars a month and five hundred acres of land, and their clothes and rations, of course. When I first arrived there, we were to escort specie trains across the isthmus—there are but twelve miles of land from water to water—from San Juan del Sur to Virgin Bay. I was one of the guard over the celebrated State prisoners, General Coral and the Secretary of War, whose name I forget, who were both executed. I was inside of the seventieth man who joined this expedition; when I joined him, Walker had but sixty



MAC. PITTMAN.



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men. The re-enforcements that came over made just one hundred men. He had sixty men, I think, and we numbered forty. With this one hundred men we took the city of Grenada, which had a population of twelve thousand, on the morning of October 13, 1855. A small division of men was sent to the town of Leon on the Pacific coast. The natives of that section of the country were all in favor of Walker; that part—the western part—is the Democratic part of the country. On our return to Grenada, on the 11th day of April, 1856, we went into the Battle of Rivas, after marching sixty-five miles. We fought from eight o'clock in the morning until two the next morning, by the flash of guns. I lost my arm that morning; and was promoted from the rank of sergeant to that of first lieutenant for taking a cannon in advance of the army. I returned to Grenada, and lay there for several months, and then returned to America. I went back with the re-enforcements from New York in the following August. In October, 1856, I resigned, and came back to America.

At the breaking out of the civil war, on the first call for troops, I refused a commission in the Federal army, and joined the Confederate forces.

In 1861 we formed the First Maryland regiment. The last six months of the war I spent as a prisoner in Fort Delaware, charged with the murder of the eleven men who were killed in Baltimore during the riot, on the 19th of April, 1861. I was court-martialed in Washington City, in the latter part of 1864, and was sent in irons to Fort Delaware, and remained there until May, 1865, when I was released.

From Fort Delaware I went to New York, and from there went to Virginia, where I married the great granddaughter of the illustrious patriot, Patrick Henry, at Danville. In January, 1866, I migrated to Texas, where I spent the little patrimony my grandfather had given me. When I left there, I took the position of commercial and marine editor of the *Savannah News*.

I never had given a thought to religion or my hereafter before this time. To illustrate this: When they amputated my arm, they asked me distinctly if I had any religion. They told me afterward they expected me to die. I said: "Yes, I have been raised a Catholic." They wanted to send for a priest. I said: "No, I do not want you to send for a priest." They asked me why? "Well," I said, "as I have lived, thus will I die; I don't have much faith in the hereafter business." I did not have much faith in hell, I meant.

I was interested, directly and indirectly, in several gambling establishments, and my proclivities were in that direction. The passion of gambling controlled me to such an extent that I was capable of all sins and crimes to indulge in it. It was one day up, one day down; one day with plenty, another day without a cent.

I continued in this wild, reckless career, until fate turned my footsteps toward the city of Louisville. For it was fate, sure enough, or I don't know what it was. I was sitting one Sunday in front of the old Willard Hotel. Steve Holcombe was preaching that Sunday on the courthouse steps. His remarks were such as to elicit my closest attention; so impressive were they that he seemed to picture before me a panorama of

my whole life, in referring to his own career. When he got through with his sermon, I walked up to him, and said: "Mr. Holcombe, you are the first man that I ever heard in my life who impressed me with the importance of preparing for death and meeting God." I then commenced attending the Mission, on Jefferson street, near Fifth, daily. I was there nearly every day.

I then went South, to New Orleans, and fell from grace again—commenced going through the same old routine—gambling, drinking, spreeing. In fact, I was a fearful periodical spreer; if I took one drink, I had to keep drinking for a month. As long as I kept away from it I was all right. I was very abusive when I was drinking; I would knock a man down with a club. I have been arrested, I guess, fifty times for fighting and drunken brawls.

From New Orleans I again came back to Louisville, the 6th of August a year ago, still going on in the same reckless manner, getting drunk, and being drunk, as usual, a week at a time—sometimes a month; in fact, I lived in bar-rooms here. One night, while Mr. Murphy was here—I do not recollect the night, but at one of Mr. Murphy's meetings—he appealed to us all to try and reform and be sober men. I met Mr. Werne and Miles Turpin there, and while there, Mr. Werne asked me if I did not intend to reform, or something like that—that was the substance of the conversation of himself and his wife with me—and he told me that Miles Turpin had reformed. I said: "If Miles Turpin has reformed, I can, too. From this day henceforth I will be a sober man." And I signed the Murphy pledge a short time afterward,

and I have not taken anything intoxicating from that day to this.

Mr. Werne then asked me to come up to the Mission, and I have not missed attending this Mission but three nights since, and the benefits that I have derived—the satisfaction, the happiness of mind, the contentment of spirit—I would not exchange for my old life for anything in the world. I mean I would not exchange my present life for the old one for any earthly consideration. I attribute this reformation to the strong personal interest that Mr. Holcombe has taken in my welfare, and if he does not save but one soul, as he says, it would pay him for all the trouble he has gone through within the last ten years or more.

The two following letters, though in the nature of testimonies, are from men of high standing in the community, who preferred, on account of others, not to give their testimonies in the form in which the foregoing are given :

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 24, 1888.

*Rev. Gross Alexander :*

MY DEAR BROTHER—Yours of 21st is just received. I can not see how a sketch of my life can do "The Life of Brother Holcombe" any good. As I understand it, you are writing the life and conversion of Steve Holcombe and not of others. My past history is sufficiently sad and regretful without having it paraded before the public in book form. I am far from being proud of it. I am exceedingly anxious it should sink into the shades of forgetfulness. Having marked out a new and brighter life, I am only too glad to let "the dead past bury its dead."

Most sincerely,

LOUISVILLE, KY., August 2, 1888.

*Dear Brother Alexander :*

Your kind letter was received several days ago, but I have delayed answering, in the expectation of seeing you here in person.

I am now anxious for the successful issue of the book, on account of the great moral influence it will have upon all classes of the community. But I can not consent to what you propose. I am endeavoring every day to blot out and forget the dark and cloudy

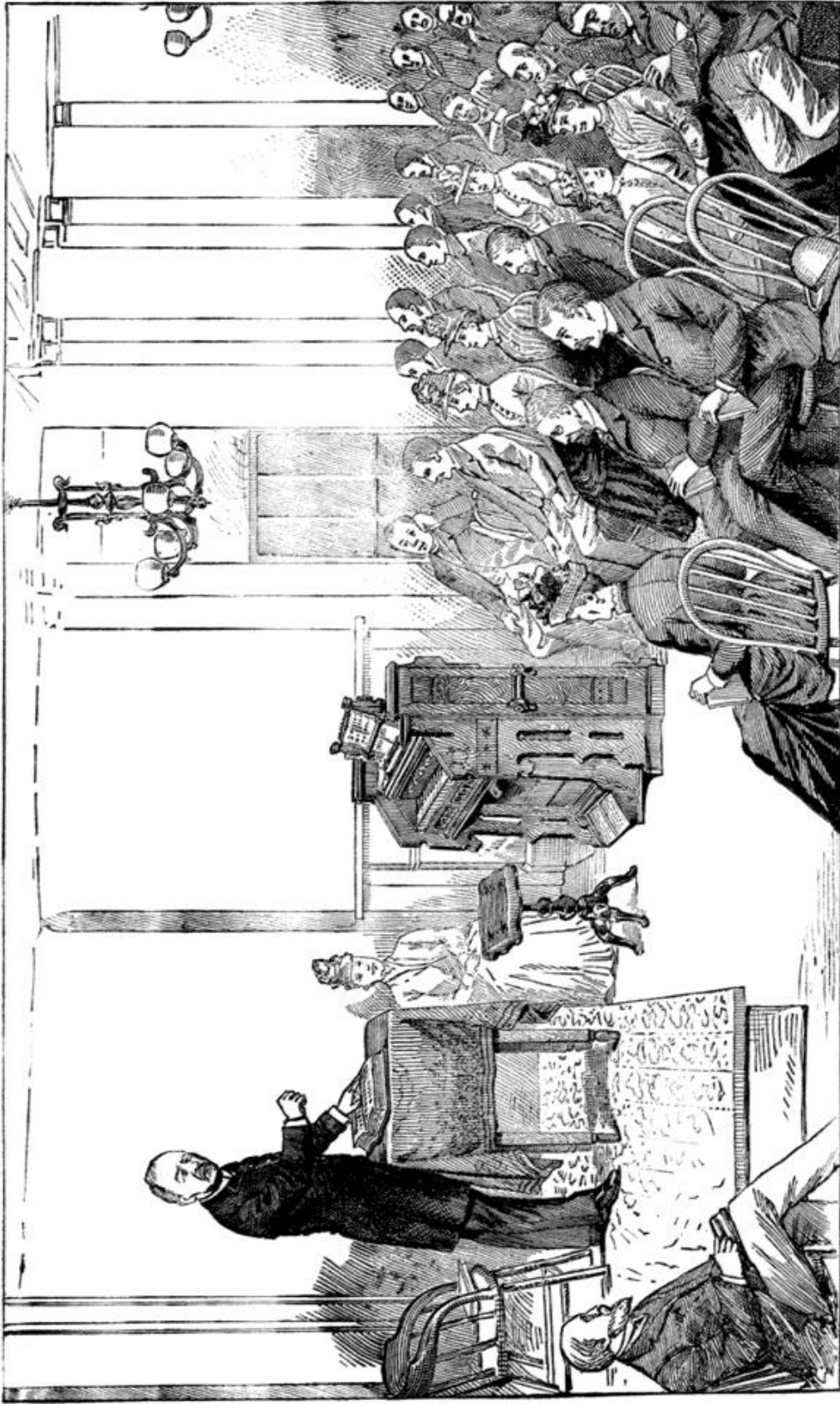
past of my life, keeping always a bright future in view. There are dark and painful episodes in the life of every man and though *he* may be willing to expose them to the eyes of the public, there are those who are bound to him by the ties of blood and relationship, who would blush at the recital. This is the position I occupy. I hope to see you here soon.

Yours truly,

— — —.

# **SERMONS.**





A NIGHT MEETING — MR. HOLCOMBE PREACHING.

MARK I: 15.

"The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel."

Verse 14 says, the Lord Jesus came into Galilee preaching; and this was the announcement which He made, namely, that the kingdom of God was at hand and they were to enter it by repentance and faith. The kingdom was brought to them; they did not have to go and search for it. It was brought to them, opened for them and they were *urged* to go in and become members of it. And so it is now. God's messengers are sent everywhere to find sinners, and when they are found, to say to them: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and drink, come buy and eat without money and without price" (Isaiah 55), and to cry, "All things are now ready; come ye, therefore, to the feast."

And so it is to-day, God sends the same message of good news, of glad tidings to you—even to you. The kingdom of God is *here—here to-day and now*; and if you *will*, you may enter it and be saved.

But what are men told to do in order that they may enter?

How are they to enter?

1. They are to *repent*.

And what is it to repent?

Some think that great sorrow of heart is a necessary part of repentance; and that tears and groans of agony must be a part of every repentance that is genuine, and they think that unless we feel deeply and keenly the baseness of our ingratitude to God we

are not truly penitent. Now, it is true that some people have *all these* marks of repentance, and it is very well to have them, but some men can not have them and never can get them. So that if all men are commanded to repent and can repent, these things are not an essential part of true repentance. To repent, then, is to turn unto God with the feeling that sin is wrong, and that, if we do not get rid of it, it will ruin us; and with the resolution and hope, by the help of God, to keep from sin and to live for Him during the rest of our lives. And if our repentance is genuine, we *will* leave off sin and practice righteousness. It will show itself by its *fruits*. Pretending or professing to repent without turning away from our sins and abandoning them is, as some one has said, like trying to pump the water out of a boat without stopping the leaks. If you have sorrow and regrets and tears, they are all right; but the *main thing* is to have such a feeling concerning sin as to turn *forever* away from it to God and to a life of righteousness. And if your repentance is genuine, you will not wait until you are converted before you begin to leave off all sin and to do all the good of every kind in your power. No; you will begin *at once and keep it up*, and the longer you keep at it the more you will feel that you must go on with it.

2. But there is another thing to be done. The Lord says:

“Repent and *believe* the Gospel.”

So you are to *believe*. You are to believe that God *does* accept you now through Jesus Christ *just because He says* He accepts and saves those who believe

in His Son. You may not receive the evidence of acceptance *at once* and so you are to hold on by faith till He does give you the evidence of your acceptance, even the witness of His spirit that your sins are forgiven and you made a child of God.

You must not let the difficulty of believing without feeling keep you back from believing and you must not let the remembrance of your great sins keep you from believing. Poor, unhappy men, you who are bruised and sore on account of your sins, I beg you cease from your evil ways. Why will you die? "What fearful thing is there in Heaven which makes you flee from that world? What fascinating object in hell, that excites such frenzied exertion to break every band, and overleap every bound, and force your way downward to the chambers of death?" Stop, I beseech you, and repent, and Jesus Christ shall blot out your sins, and remember your transgressions no more. Stop, and the host who follow your steps shall turn, and take hold on the path of life. Stop, and the wide waste of sin shall cease, and the song of the angels shall be heard again, "glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace, good will to men." Stop, and instead of wailing with the lost, you shall join the multitude which no man can number, in the ascription of blessing and honor, and glory, and power, to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and forever.

The kingdom of God is here to-night. Will you come in?

"Come humble sinner in whose breast," etc.

Come, angels invite you, we invite you, and, best of all, Christ invites you. O, do not, by your own actions,

bar this door forever against your immortal soul. What a fearful thing it will be to wake up in eternity to find this door, which to-day hangs wide open, barred against you and hung with crape. O, how fearful will be those words, too late! too late! All is lost.

“Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O! Lamb of God I come.

“Just as I am, tho' tossed about,  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O! Lamb of God I come.”

### JOHN III : 16.

“ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Many of the glorious truths of the Gospel are both above the conception of man and altogether contrary to what his unrenewed nature would desire to publish. Heathen writers could tell of the cruelty and vengeful wrath of their imaginary gods. They could tell of deeds of daring, the exploits of Hercules, Hector, Æneas and others; but it was foreign to their nature to write: “ God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

1. The Gospel is glad tidings. It is the news that God is reconciled and wants to be at peace with man. Is this not good news? Have you never heard good news that made your heart leap for joy? Well, this is better news than any you have ever heard. God, not angry with you, but loving you, so as, at a great sacrifice, to make a way for the salvation of the world.

2. What was that sacrifice? It was the gift of His own Son. Think of it, oh sinner! God consenteth to give up His Son, to leave His glory and come as a stranger into the world, and to be born in great poverty, and with all the conditions of us poor mortals. Think of God looking down on Jesus, His Son, living this poor earthly life, here among strangers who did not recognize His divinity—nay, who became jealous of Him, and persecuted Him trying to kill him; and at last, after unheard-of tortures inflicted

upon Him, did kill Him. Now, think of God giving up His Son to endure all this, and watching all this lonely and misunderstood and persecuted life of His only begotten Son, watching it and enduring it for thirty-three years, and then ask yourself how much God sacrificed to show His love for us sinners. Have you a son? If you have, don't you know how it stings you deeper for a man to mistreat or strike him than yourself? If a man should beat my little Pearl it would be harder for me to bear than anything, and yet this is what God endured for long years to show His love for you and me.

Think of the arrest of Jesus, His being tied, handcuffed, beaten more than once with fearful lashes, knocked in the face, spit on, and then nailed with spikes to a cross with thieves, and think of God looking at all this while it was going on, and you have some idea of what it means when it says God *gave* His only begotten Son.

3. And the way to get this friendship of God and profit by this love is merely to *believe* with all your heart on Jesus. It is hard to believe that God loves, really loves, such sinners as you are, and yet I am a living witness that He does; for I was as bad as any of you, and if God did not love me and take hold of me and save me, then I don't know what has happened to me, certain. So you must *believe* it, even if it is hard to believe it.

4. But this glad tidings is for you and you and you—for *every one of you*. It is for *whosoever*, and that means everybody—everybody. A certain believing man in England said, "I rather it would *be who-*

*soever* than to have my name there. For if my name was there, I could say there might be another man of my name in the world, but when it says *whosoever*, I know it includes me."

5. It is to save us from *perishing*.

Oh, what an awful word is that, and what an awful thing it must be to perish. You have a taste of it now in your sins, and their saddening, darkening, hardening effect on you. You once had tender consciences. You once loved things and people that were pure and good and true, and you loved a Christian mother, wife, father or sister; but sin has so hardened you, that you care for none of these things now. Is it not so? Well, this is a little taste of what it is to finally and forever *perish*.

But Christ was given that you might *not perish*. What, can Christ save me from my hardness of heart, from my black sins, from my uncleanness and debauchery, and from my awful darkness of mind and conscience?

Yes; He can, glory to His name. I am a living witness. He has saved me. He can save others like me from all these awful effects of sin, even after they have lived in it for scores of years, as I did. Yes, and He saves from that awful *perishing* which comes after this little, short life is over, whatever it is. Yes; Jesus can shut and bar the door of hell, and no soul can enter there who believes in Him and lives for Him.

6. But He not only saves from perishing, He gives them eternal *life*.

What does that mean? Oh, I know not—only I



know it means life forever without death or decay or sickness or pain or sorrow or weakness or tiredness or parting or fear or anxiety. But what else it means I know not. This eternal life, this life forever in heaven, I expect—I fully expect—to get, though I was a poor gambler and swearer and adulterer, and all that I could be that was sinful, for forty years. Yes; I expect to get it. I know I am on my way thither, though I am not perfect. Won't you come and go with us? Oh, won't you come?

## TITUS II: 14.

“Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

This verse contains a comprehensive statement of the Gospel in few words. Let us ask God that His Holy Spirit may give us wisdom and insight to understand and profit by what we are here told.

In the first place, we are told that the ground of our salvation is through the self-surrender of Himself by Jesus, the Son of God.

We saw, in a passage of Scripture a week or two ago, how great the condescension of Jesus Christ was. Though He was equal with God, yet He took upon himself the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death—the death of the Cross. Our text now teaches us what this was for. “He gave Himself *for us*.”

Now, I will ask you, could God show His concern for us in a more striking and convincing way than in the *giving* of His Son to ignominy and death? Could Jesus, the Son of God, show His love for men in any more convincing way than in *giving Himself* for their recovery and salvation? Then, surely we ought to lay aside our habitual way of thinking of God as our enemy, and think of Him as our best friend. For no human friend ever did for us what God has done for us. And if we judge of one's love for us by the sacrifices he makes for us, then must we give the crown to Jesus, who was God manifest in the flesh. He bore our sins; He would bear our burdens, if we

would throw them on Him; He would fill us with His spirit, and with power, if we would trust Him and believe His promise.

But did He give Himself for us that we might remain *in sin*, and yet not be punished? This is what the Universalists say. But no! He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us *from* iniquity, and from *all* iniquity at that. He was manifested to deliver us from the *guilt* of our past sins; and, second, to deliver us from the dominion and power of sin, that being free from sin, we might live unto God.

And that man who thinks he has been pardoned for past sins is mistaken, unless he also has been saved from the *power* of sin, so as no longer to be led captive by the devil.

Let not what I say discourage anybody. If you have not been saved from the power of evil and of evil habits, you may be saved, and that here and now. The fact is, many of us are so selfish, we just want to be delivered from the danger, but not from the practice, of sin. Some of us enjoy sin.

If some who are here could have *all* desire for liquor utterly taken away by raising a hand, they would, perhaps, not raise a hand, because they love liquor too well. If some could be utterly and forever freed from lust by bowing their heads, they would not be willing to bow their heads, because they find so much pleasure in lust and in lewd thoughts, feelings and acts, that they do not *desire* to be freed from that which gives them this low, animal pleasure. And yet these same men will profess to have great desires to be cleansed from their sins. But, if you are willing, Christ is ready and able to deliver you from all these base and beastly

passions and habits. What do you say? Do you want to be redeemed from all iniquity to-night?

And when thus delivered from all iniquity, your soul being pure will desire nothing but to do good, and to bring other poor soiled and enslaved souls into the same liberty and purity. Since my conversion I have had no other desire and no other care but to do good and save others. And that is what the text says: "Zealous of good works."

Now, you who have been saved here, I want to ask you: What are you doing for others? If you do *not* abound in good works, and do not try to save others, it will be difficult or *impossible* to keep yourself saved. Jesus said: "Every branch that beareth not fruit He taketh away."—John xv: 1. And you will find your supply of grace running short and your faith growing weak and tottering, if you do not make it a point and business to do good to others—to their bodies and their souls. What do you say? Has anybody else heard from your lips of your great blessing and salvation? Do you tell your family and your friends about it? Do you tell others of their sins and their danger? Do you pray for others? Do you give your time (part of it at least) and your money in doing good to others? If you do, you will find your own cup gets fuller, your own faith stronger, your own heart more joyful. It is God's law and God's plan that you should give out to others. In so doing He will increase your own supply. Do you feel your weakness? It is right you should do so. But do the work, speak the word, and leave it to God who giveth the increase, and it shall abound to the salvation of others, the joy of your heart, and the glory of His blessed name.

ISAIAH LV : 6-7.

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked man forsake his way and let him return unto the Lord and He will abundantly pardon.”

If a father were to write a letter to a dissipated and rebellious son, far away from home, to persuade him to return, and to assure him of a cordial welcome, he could hardly fill it fuller of expressions of tenderness and love, expressions to inspire confidence, than the Bible is of such expressions from the great God. This chapter contains an invitation to seek God, and a precious promise of forgiveness to any who will do so.

1. *Seek* ye the Lord.

Now, you know what it means when it says *seek*. You know what it means when a man says he is seeking employment. He goes from place to place, from man to man, and he does this from day to day, and from week to week if he does not succeed; and the reason is, there is a *necessity* upon him. He *must* have employment, or himself and family are without bread, without clothing, without shelter. So when we talk about a man seeking the Lord, we mean that he searches diligently for Him, and from day to day, and from week to week, because there is something worse than starvation to suffer if he does not find God. I tell you when a man has soul-hunger, it is worse than body-hunger if he does not find God. When a man is sick of sin and feels his loneliness and orphanage, and that he is without God and without hope in the world, and that he dare not go into eternity in his

condition of guilt and uncleanness, it is more fearful than hunger of the body, and it will make him seek for God with all his soul.

*How* am I to seek God? you say. Well, seek Him by prayer. "Call upon Him," as the text says. "Ask and it shall be given you." Go off to yourself. Shut out everybody. Be entirely alone. Then get down upon your knees and call upon God. Plead His promises. Tell Him you have heard that He receives and saves sinners, and that you are a sinner, and that you do not mean to let Him go until He blesses you.

Seek Him by reading good, religious books and papers, and especially the Bible; and don't read any other sort of reading unless it is necessary till you find Him. Keep your mind on God all the time.

Seek Him by going with good, Christian people, pious, godly men and women who walk with God, no matter what their name or denomination may be. If you say you don't know where to find such, come to our Mission rooms, to the Walnut-street church, to all our meetings, preaching, prayer-meeting, Sunday-school, class-meetings, ask us questions, use us in any way we can help you to find God.

Seeking Him by putting out of the way those things which are *hindrances*. The text refers to this. It says, "Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts and thus let him return unto God."

The forsaking of sin is the main feature of what we call *repentance*.

You can not come to God unless you come giving up your sins entirely or crying to God for help to give them up.

You can, by God's grace, give up all your sins and all your sinful and slavish habits. A proof of this is my own deliverance from evil habits, as whisky, tobacco and evil passions, as lewdness, licentiousness.

1. You must give up sin. You can not expect to retain it and please God or serve God. Do not question this. You must give up sin. There is no escape. Turn away from it with all your heart and soul.

2. You must give up *all* sin, your besetting sin, the sin that has the most power over you.

3. Give up all sin *now*.

Do not wait. God will help you. You know not that you will be living to-morrow or next Sunday; and if you are, it will not be any easier then than it is to-day. Now is the day of salvation.

4. Give up all sin, give it up *now*, and give it up *forever*. You can not give it up for awhile and then turn to it again. That will do you no good. You might as well not give it up at all as to turn back to it again.

And look to God for help, for present help, for all-sufficient strength.

Tell Him by His help you mean to be His, no matter what it costs; and believe on Jesus Christ, His Son, as the bearer of your past sins and the giver of the Holy Spirit, and very soon you will be happier than the men who own these hotels and business houses and Broadway palaces and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Yes; you will. I know from my experience and that of others.

My text says, God will have mercy on you and will *abundantly* pardon you.

## THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

LUKE VIII: 5-15.

Jesus may have seen a farmer sowing seed, and, directing the attention of the people to him, uttered this parable. He took the commonest and most familiar facts and occurrences and made them the means of expressing the great truths of His kingdom. So His ministers should try to do now—teach the truth of God in language easily understood by the men addressed.

He divides the hearers of the word into four classes: be ready then to decide in which class *you* are, for you are certainly in one.

1. The seed which fell on the hard beaten path is the word preached to men who do not receive any impression at all from hearing it.

They have forgotten it by the time the sound of the preacher's voice has died away. It does not enter their minds and produce any *thought*; nor their hearts, and produce any *feeling*.

Are there not thousands of people who go to church, who hear preaching constantly, and yet it produces no effect? They are no better, and *they do not try to be*.

But in the twelfth verse we find who is the cause of this astonishing indifference and hardness—it is the *devil* who causes them at once and forever to forget all that is said "lest they should *believe* and *be saved*."

There is an unseen adversary, then, who keeps us from thinking about religion all he can. If you



do not think about it much, that is a proof that you are under his influence.

2. The next class consists of those who from impulse become religious without counting the cost.

They do not stop to reflect that to be godly requires self-denial, humility, patience, crucifying the flesh with all its lusts. And so, when temptation comes or trial, they give up in disgust. They are like Pliable in Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress*—easily persuaded to start on the way to heaven, but just as easily discouraged and disgusted. There are lots of such people now. They lack stability.

3. The next class are those who hear, believe, receive and practice the word of God—who run well for a season, maybe for a *long season*, but are little by little, and in an unperceived way, drawn away from their first love, and then on to perdition.

Three things are here mentioned as drawing them gradually away from their devotion to Christ:

(a) *Cares.*

They have so much to attend to, they do not *have* time or *take* time for their religious duties, as prayer, going to meetings, etc., and missing these, they soon grow cold, and they are so occupied and worried with the multitude of things to be attended to, they have no *disposition* for religion. All this care may be about things that are lawful, as making a living, for example.

(b) *Riches.*

Oh, how deceitful riches are. We think we don't love them, but let us be asked to part with them, as Christ asked the young man, and *we see*. John Wesley

said, "As wealth increases, religion decreases," and he was right.

(c.) *Pleasure.*

The pleasure of fine, rich living, fashionable life, fine dress, theater-going, balls, parties, flirtations, the admiration and praise of others etc., etc.

4. The last class are those who *count the cost*, go in with their eyes open, who *won't* let cares, riches or pleasures draw them off, but who work, and serve, and pray with *patience* even unto the end.

## II. CORINTHIANS, II: 11.

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

The New Testament everywhere teaches that there is a personal evil spirit of wonderful cunning and deep malignity toward God and the human race. Hence, our conflict is not with flesh and blood; not against our own inclinations to evil, nor against sin in the abstract, but it is against the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

Therefore, yielding to sin is no small matter, for it is yielding to an enemy of unfathomable hatred toward us, and of the deepest cunning, who, in everything, has for his purpose our ruin and God's disappointment, and who, however lightly he may let his chains lie upon us while we are led captive by him, at his will, always draws them so tight, when we attempt to escape from him, that only Almighty God can break them off and set us free.

It makes a vast difference whether sin is only the indulgence of a passion which can have no intelligent design to damage and to ruin us, and which passes away when it is gratified, to trouble us no more, or whether it is the means adopted by an invisible but awfully real and hellish foe to lure us to an unforeseen ruin.

Yes, sin is not a mere pleasure whose effects are ended when the enjoyment is over, but it is the bait that hides the cruel hook thrown out for us by the

artful fisherman of hell. And he is all the more dangerous because we can not see him and realize always his ultimate purpose.

The skillful fisherman keeps himself out of sight and lets the fish see only the tempting bait, and so the poor, deceived creature is lured by a harmless looking pleasure on to agony and death.

And Satan not only controls the world, but he continually tempts Christians; those who have just recently escaped out of his snares and are on their way to heaven.

And now, what are some of his devices?

1. He makes a grand effort to persuade young Christians that they have never been converted. He almost invariably attacks them with this temptation. He sometimes pursues them for years with this fear, that they have never really experienced a change of heart. And, if he succeeds in persuading them of this, he has gained a grand point toward their fall. For to find that one is mistaken in the belief that he has passed from death unto life, is the most discouraging, disheartening thing he could experience.

I have known old ministers of the Gospel say that the first thing Satan ever tempted them with was this suggestion, that they were mistaken in believing that they had passed through that wonderful change which makes a sinner an heir of God, and fits him for heaven.

So, my brother, you are in the line of God's true servants if the enemy has troubled you with this temptation. Don't, therefore, let it discourage you. And do not, by any means, give up to it. Say to your

tempter that your Lord says he is a liar from the beginning, and that you can not believe him, but you prefer to believe God.

And the very fact that you are strongly tempted to believe you are not converted is one proof that you are. For if you were really *not* converted, but still in the flesh, the devil would tempt you to believe you *were* converted, in order to make you rest satisfied and deceived with your unsaved condition. As he *does* tempt many worldly-minded church members to believe they are changed enough to be safe, and so they rest satisfied in their unsaved condition, and perish.

So, there are many church members who become irreconcilably offended if you dare to suggest to them that you don't believe they are really children of God. Their temptation then is to believe the falsehood, that they are really converted and in a safe condition.

And if a man's temptation is to believe he is *not* converted, it is one proof that he *is* converted.

Besides, if the devil tempts you to believe you are not converted, you can cut the matter short by saying: "Well, then, I can be in a moment. For whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ hath everlasting life, and I do here and now believe on Him, and will hold on to Him by faith in spite of earth and hell." Old Brother Bottomly, a preacher in the Louisville Conference, was tempted to doubt his conversion the night after it occurred, as he was lying on his bed. He recognized Satan at once as the author of his temptation, and he said: "Well, Satan, if I have not been converted, as you say, I will be." And he got out of his bed, and down on his knees, and he gave himself

to God, and he believed on Jesus, and prayed, and soon he was rejoicing in full assurance, and the devil fled away out of hearing with his harassing temptation.

2. He tries to make them believe and feel, after the glow of the first love has subsided a little, that the service of God is hard and trying, and that it has nothing in it to satisfy the heart and to compensate for the pleasure of sin, which they have given up.

And if you begin to yield and to slacken your earnestness or zeal, he gets a great advantage and you lose the joy of religion by letting yourself lag away at a doubting distance from Christ, and then it does seem like the devil is telling the truth, because you don't keep close enough to Christ and put soul and will enough into His service to get the joy of it. Christ says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." And if your heart or your enemy says the contrary, tell them that they are false.

But don't allow yourself to be tempted to try if you can not find an easy way to heaven. It will get sweet and easy by a patient and whole-souled perseverance in it, but *not* by slackening your carefulness and experimenting with worldly pleasure to see how far you can go therein.

3. But his grand scheme for ruining young Christians, and the one he generally succeeds with, is the suggestion that there is no need of being so particular and so regular in everything and so rigid in the performance of duty and in the avoiding of all appearances of evil.

In other words, a sort of reaction comes, and a dangerous thing it often proves to be. Now, the temp-

tation is to give up the regular and rigid performance of duty because you don't *feel* as much like doing it as you did at first, or because some of your well-meaning, but unrenewed, friends say they can't see the need of being so particular and strict. There's no use of going to prayer-meeting every time, no use going to church twice every Sunday, no use having prayer at home every day, etc.

But if you miss any duty once it will be much easier to miss it the second time and you will be much more likely to neglect it again. And you can't afford to take such a dangerous risk in so important a matter.

And then we begin to think that there is no use being so particular about abstaining from the very beginnings of evil, or else we persuade ourselves that we have grown so strong and have been so changed we can be men now and enjoy things in moderation which formerly we could not use without going to excess.

Ah, brother, you are walking right into one of Satan's unseen traps. O, beware! For your happiness' sake, beware! for your family's sake, beware! Satan says, "It's no harm to take a dram if you don't get drunk; no harm to go to the race track if you don't bet; no harm to go to the ball-room if you don't dance," etc.

But we know that even in case of a youth who has never been in the habit of indulging in sins, they have a growing charm and power over him if he yields once or twice; how much greater the danger for one who has been the slave of these sins and has only recently broken off from them!

I heard a recently converted man say to a friend who was starting away on a trip, "Dunc, don't let the devil say to you 'Now, just take one drink and then stop.' For I tell you, if you take one drink you are gone." Now, this man understood the case and the danger.

There is no possibility of compromise. No possible middle ground in these things, especially for us who were once the slaves of our evil passions.

I have heard of a man who *for years* had abstained from drinking and his father, thinking he was safe, invited him to drink toddies with him. The son did so, and he went back to his old habit of drunkenness, had delirium tremens, forced his wife to get a divorce and brought distress and disgrace and anguish on his family as well as himself. That was a Mr. D., who has several times been to our Mission.

So, my brother, though you may think you would be safe to trifle with sin, and try to practice moderation, it is such an awful, awful risk you had better not make the experiment. Remember, it is only the bait of Satan to lure you to certain ruin.

For your sake, for your father's sake, for your mother's sake, for your wife's sake, for your children's sake, for Christ's sake, don't do it.



## COMPARISON OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED.

### PSALM I: 1-2.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and hence it is profitable for instruction and assistance to those who will attentively consider it. This Psalm is a part of the Scripture, and we may expect to find it instructive and helpful. It contains a description of the righteous man.

1. It tells what he does *not* do. He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. This is the beginning of an evil life—to go among those who are ungodly and to listen to their opinions and views and counsels. There is no sin, our evil hearts suggest to us, in merely going with worldly people, if we do not pattern after their ways and do as they do. We can go with them and yet not do as they do. But the history, the sad history, of many a struggling soul, shows that this is a great mistake. We can't go with bad associates and not be harmed by them. The very fact that we want to go with wicked people shows that there is in us an inclination toward sin which is dangerous, and which ought to be severely watched and kept down rather than encouraged. More men have been ruined by their associations than by any other one cause. And let me say by way of warning that if any of you, my friends, are purposing and trying to lead a new life, you will have to give up the associations of your old life and choose new ones, as I had to do, and did do.

But did you observe the word *walk* here in this verse? That word is intended to show that in the first part of a sinful life there is restlessness and uneasiness. The man who is just beginning to sin against light and conscience and God is uneasy about it. He can not be still. It is something new and strange, and his conscience rises up against his conduct; and till he goes on to the deadening of his conscience, it gives him distress and anxiety.

But it says, the good man does not "stand in the way of sinners." This is the second stage. When a man passes through the first stage and gets to this second one, then he not only listens to the conversation and counsel of those who are ungodly—that is, who make no professions of religion—but he goes now with open *sinners, in the way* with evil doers, violators of law, criminals against God and man. And now observe he takes a "*stand*." It is no longer "walk," for the restlessness and uneasiness have about passed away, and he takes a deliberate *stand* among wicked men, who do not fear to commit any sort of crime. And, my young friend, this is always the way with sin. It grows upon a man; and before he is aware of it, he has grown fond of it, sees no evil or danger in it, and deliberately chooses it as his course of life. Beware, then, of *beginning* in the way of evil.

But it says, in the third place, that he does not "sit in the seat of the scornful." Ah, here we have the third stage of the downward course of sin. First, there was a restlessness in even associating with ungodly people; second, a deliberate stand among

sinner, evil doer, as one of their number; and now it is *sitting down* in the seat of the *scornful*. When men have silenced the voice of conscience, and spent years in the practice of evil, they come at last to lose faith in everything—in God, in man, in virtue, in goodness; and they become cold and sneering scorers of everything that is called good. Have you not known men who have gone through this downward road? Nay, do you not know now some who are traveling this ruinous pathway? I have known young men to go among gamblers just to *look on*. They would have *feared* to touch the implements of sin, but they became familiarized with the sight, and then took part; and from bad to worse, have gone on and on, till it makes me shudder to know what they are to-day. I tell you, my friends, the course of sin is down, down, down. You may as soon expect to get in a boat on the current of Niagara above the falls and stand still, as to expect that you can launch yourself on the current of sin and not go down toward swift and certain ruin. Beware then! Hear the voice of warning before you have gone too far ever to return.

2. In the next place, this Psalm tells what a *good* man does. His delight is in the law of the Lord. He is satisfied that in sin there is only ruin; and turning with fear and dread away from sin, he yearns to find God, who alone can deliver him from sin and keep him from it and furnish him a satisfying portion instead of it.

But where can we find God, and how? Not *in* nature; for there is nothing clear enough in nature

to teach anything about God or how to come to His presence. But he can expect to find God in that revelation which God has made of Himself in His word. So he goes to that, and he finds there encouragement and instruction and tender invitations and promises of mercy and help; and the more he seeks the more he finds to draw him on, to satisfy his yearning heart and to charm his poor soul away from the love of sin. As he practices what he finds in God's word, he realizes the blessedness of it. It brings peace, purity, deliverance from darkness, uncertainty and fear; and so he longs to know more and more of it and he studies into it. Do you know that to one whose heart is changed the word of God is like a whole California of gold mines? He is *always* finding treasures there. Every time he reads it there is something new and rich and blessed. The deepest and most devout students of God's word say that there is no end to its wealth of instruction and consolation. If you want to know God and His salvation, you ought to set apart a certain time *every day* to prayerfully read and study into His word, always asking His guidance and help.

And it will soon come to pass that, as the text says, you will "*delight* in the law of God." Do you ever deliberately, carefully, studiously, humbly and prayerfully read the Bible? You say, "No." Then how can you expect to know anything of God? How can a physician know anything of the nature of the human body unless he studies into it? And how can you know anything of God and His wonderful mercy unless you go and search where God has revealed

this for man? There are some men who will not read the Bible because they can't understand it. Of course they can't understand it all, but, if they can understand one verse in a chapter, let them take that and study on it and believe it, and keep reading, and soon more and more will open out to their understanding, and it will be a constant surprise and delight to find the undreamed-of beauties and comforts of the word of God. Promise God now that you will *patiently* read some every day. You will then find your desire for sin and sinful associations leaving you.

PSALM I: 3-6.

We propose to-day a continuance of the study of the first Psalm, which we begun Sunday last. Then we saw the downward course of sin and of the sinner, and of the great transformation of the nature of men when they are converted or become righteous.

And now the inspired writer goes on to speak of the fruitfulness of such men. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth its fruit in its season." You know a tree planted by a river draws moisture from below, and does not depend on the uncertain rains that may or may not come. And so in time of drought it shall bear its fruit at its proper season.

So the man who is born of God, whose nature is transformed and made holy, is fruitful in good deeds, in benevolent works. Having himself been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the light, he has a desire, a strong desire, an unquenchable desire, that all others should know the same happiness, and he works by all means to persuade them, to get their good will and their confidence. He will feed and clothe them, take them up out of filth and rags and reclothe them and befriend them (as we are trying to do at the Mission) in order to get their good will and direct them to Christ.

Not only so, but when a man has truly the Spirit of God, he has an inexpressible pity for his poor brother mortals, and a tender sympathy for their sufferings and sorrows. His heart is a fountain of compas-

sion for those who are in distress; and this leads him to labor that he may in some way, and in all possible ways, bring them relief and comfort.

And, as the tree on the river is supplied with moisture from an unseen source, and without the showers, so the man whose heart is in communion with God never suffers a drought. When the benevolence of worldly men fails, his goes on and never fails. Men wonder that he does not get tired or grow weary or disappointed and discouraged. But no! he never does. His zeal not depending on changing influences from without, but supplied from an unseen and never-failing source—that is, God—never gives out. So he is always bearing fruit. Other men may be cold and selfish, and panics and famines may shut up their feelings of sympathy, but the man of God goes on working and bearing fruit in panics and famines, in cold and hot, in wet and dry, in plenty or in poverty, always and ever.

*“The ungodly are not so.”* No; the ungodly greedily devour all they can get, and crave all they can't get. They want selfish pleasure no matter what sacrifice or pain it may cost others. They want the property of other people, though it leave a widow in poverty and orphans in want. They want honor and promotion and fame, if it be built on the downfall of their neighbors and fellows. They want the passing animal pleasure of licentiousness, if it blight the life and ruin the soul of an innocent being and turn a happy home into a very hell of anguish. Self! Self! Self! always and ever! and if there be some semblance of benevolence, it is for

the higher selfishness of getting the honor that men bestow on charity, or to appease an angry and tormenting conscience, that lashes them with fury for their misdeeds done in secret.

“The ungodly are like the chaff.” They have no stability, no steadfastness, no fixed purpose or plan in life—nothing to tie to; and so they are the victims of circumstances and changes and moods and tempers, and are driven hither and thither by every passing breeze.

How I do pity the poor man who does not know or care what he is living for, and just pursues every day what *happens* to take his mind for that day.

And because the ungodly are not steadfast and fixed in their devotion to God, neither shall they be able to *stand* in the *judgment*.

Then, there is a judgment coming, is there? Oh, yes! All these things that men are doing are not done and then put away forever and forgotten. No! no! no! they are all to be brought into review again and exposed before God and all men assembled in judgment. All the midnight meanness you have done will then be brought to light. Where were you last night? What were you doing?

How would you like for me to tell right here before all this crowd all the mean and filthy things you have done in the last week and kept them hidden from father, mother, wife, children and every other mortal except the accomplices of your guilt and shame? Ah! you could not *stand*; no, you could not *stand*.

Then, how do you expect to stand when God is reciting to you all the misdoings of all the midnights of your whole lives before your father, mother, sisters, wife, neighbors and all the world?



## GOD'S LOVE FOR SINNERS.

ROMANS V : 8.

“But God commendeth His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

There are many of us who *feel* that we are *sinner*s, who know it, and who do not want any proof of it; but we can't be persuaded to believe that God has any love for us or interest in us. We have gotten to be such wicked sinners that maybe our friends have forsaken us, and we can not believe that God has any feeling of tenderness for us. We are willing to admit that God loves good people, those who are obedient, and that if *we* were good, He would *then* love us; but as it is, He can not love us, and there is no reason why He should love us. And then we go back and try to call up all our sins; all the times when we rejected Christ and the truth, and we find plenty of arguments to prove that God does not love us.

But stop! You are judging the great God by yourself. You know you would not love one who would have treated you as you have treated God, and so you conclude He does not love you. You find it *exceedingly* hard to believe in the love of God. This is one of the sad effects of sin. It darkens our hearts and separates us far, far from God, so that when we come to feel our need of Him we have no confidence that He will accept us or help us.

Besides, by your long service of sin, you have put yourself in the power of an enemy who makes it as difficult as possible for you to *believe* in God's love for you.

But I come to you to-day with a declaration and assurance from God's own word, that though you have been a sinner all your life, and still feel that you are the greatest of sinners, the great God loves you with a true, deep, warm and yearning love.

The great proof of it is the life and death of Jesus Christ, His Son.

Have you read about it in the Gospel?

Ah, if you had, and had seen Him delighting to be with the poor and the outcast, eating with them, choosing them for His friends, speaking words of heavenly cheer to them, pronouncing their sins forgiven and promising them heaven, then you would be moved and attracted and convinced. And then if you had read the pathetic story of His awful sufferings and death, and had reflected that "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; all we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us *all*," then hope would begin to dawn in your breast, and faith in His love would not be so difficult. But you have neglected to read and reflect about it, and so I am come to bring the glad tidings to you where you are, and to beg you to believe it for your own sake.

And now, here are some of the ways God has taken to tell you of His love: Psalm ciii., 13; Isaiah xlix., 15; Luke xi., 13; Luke xviii., 13, 14; Luke xv., 7, 10; Prodigal Son; Luke vii., 36 to end.

"I came not to call the righteous but *sinners* to repentance."

Why does God, in so many ways, express His love for sinners?

Because He wants to touch their hearts and melt them by tenderness.

A father whose son had gone away to California, and was a gambler in San Francisco, sent him word by a friend: "Your father loves you still." And it made him ashamed; it broke his heart; he repented, returned home and was saved.

So God sends me to-day to say to you: "Your Father loves you still." Will you not believe it and come to Him for safety? He will not abuse you for your sins; He will save you from your sins, and make you as happy as you were when you were little children at your mother's knee.

You know it is true that parents are more troubled about a wandering boy, and take more pains with him than with the good boys, and think more about him and pray more for him, because he is in danger and must be rescued or perish. So it is with God. Because you are lost, away from Him, on the road to ruin, He sends after you and He begs you to be reconciled.

## GODLINESS PROFITABLE FOR THIS LIFE.

### I. TIMOTHY IV: 8.

“But godliness is profitable unto all things having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”

There are not many who think this. Nearly everybody admits that religion is a good thing to have when he is about to die and to enter upon the future life; and all men, however hardened in vice, wickedness and crime, have a sure expectation and firm intention of making some preparation for death and what may follow death. They fully intend to make amends to conscience for the violations of it, of which they have been guilty.

There are men here to-day who know that this is true of themselves, who feel that the coffin and the grave and the unknown future beyond are the most fearful of realities, and who are firmly persuaded that a day of reckoning is coming, maybe slowly, but surely, and they do mean to make peace in some way with conscience before that time draws near. And so I say all men agree that religion is good for death and what is to follow; but how it can be an advantage to one in *this life*, they can not see.

1. But godliness is a help to a man in making a living.

If a man is honest, industrious, faithful and conscientious, he will be in demand. Such men are always in demand; and, when they are known, can get employment and can keep employment; but a man who is a true Christian, *is* honest, industrious, careful, temperate, trustworthy and conscientious, because he works

and lives not to please men but God. Hence, such a one is always wanted. Employers, rather than give up such men, will increase their salaries and offer them extra inducements. A Main-street merchant found he could not do without Willie Holcombe conveniently, so he raised his salary twenty dollars a month rather than lose him.

And, even if they are among strangers, and not known, yet God will turn the hearts of strangers toward them, as he turned the heart of the prison-keeper in Egypt toward Joseph. And when they have a chance to *try* and to show their value, their employers will not give them up.

But then if a man is in business for himself, he will get a large custom if people find out that he does business as a Christian—that is, he does not charge an unjust and exorbitant price, his goods are only what he says they are, he gives full and honest measure, his word can be trusted, he will correct mistakes and take back an article if it is found not to be good. Show people such a man and they will all want to patronize him. William Kendrick was such a man here in Louisville.

The Christian man has the *promise of God* that he shall be provided for—Matthew vi. : 32, 33—while the godless man has no such assurances at all.

2. But religion keeps a man from those vices which destroy the health—as dissipation, debauchery, intemperance, etc.—and health is one of the chief elements in human happiness.

3. Religion keeps men also from those crimes which bring men into ruin and disgrace and bitter remorse.

Many a man has come to the jail or penitentiary or gallows who would have escaped it all if he had had religion to protect and shield and restrain and assist him. And many a good and happy man there is who might have been a guilty criminal and a wretched convict but for the grace of God and the lessons and blessings of true religion. He might gradually have been led off and on and on till he would have become capable of committing any crime. (Illustration.)

I might have been a drunkard or a murderer still, if God had not changed my heart and helped me mightily and constantly by His grace.

4. But religion takes away the fear of death and the dread of the future and gives inward and constant peace—a heart happiness which poverty and disappointment and trials can not destroy. And nothing else can do this but true religion.

5. Religion can release a man from the power of those evil habits which make a man's life miserable—from acquired appetites, as drinking, opium eating, debauchery, licentiousness, swearing, gambling and even from tobacco.

6. Religion makes a good father, a good mother, a good husband, a good wife, good children, it makes the family happy, and the home bright, cheerful, joyous.

7. It makes a man a good citizen. So he can get along in peace with his neighbors and even become a peace-maker among them when they quarrel.

Thus have I tried to show you that, regardless of the future, godliness is profitable for this life. But if

this were not so, if the life of a Christian were an uninterrupted experience of pains and disappointments and sorrows, yet, in view of the interests of the soul, and the possibilities of the future, and the length of eternity, it would be the highest wisdom to cheerfully accept all these and endure them to the bitter end, in order to depart out of this world with a peaceful and unaccusing conscience and a sure preparation for heaven.

O man, what will you do with eternity, *eternity*, if you go thither unprepared? Did you ever try to think of eternity? As John Wesley says, "If a bird were to come once in a million of years and take away one grain of the earth, when it had taken the whole earth away, that would not be eternity, nor the beginning of eternity." And it is certain that eternity is the period of the desolation and confusion and remorse and suffering of the lost.

8. But even if we had to live in misery all this life, it would be better to do it and have religion; for it alone fits us for happiness in the life to come.

Take away property, comforts, friends, family, reputation, health, but give me religion, and I shall have a passport into the kingdom of heaven and an eternity of rest and blessedness.

O then, come to Jesus Christ and have all these things and heaven beside.

PROVERBS XII: 15.

“The way of transgressors is hard.”

Our friend's career affords a striking example of the truth of the text. Most people do not think the text true. But the Bible reverses nearly all of our notions about things, and when, in the light of experience and honest thought, we come to examine the Bible, we find it contains the truth on all subjects. The natural effects of a life of sin are injurious and destructive in every particular.

1. In the first place, vice destroys health. If a man indulges in gluttony, he brings on dyspepsia with its accompanying pains and distress and torture. All this is increased by a life of idleness, laziness and inactivity. If he indulges in intemperance, he soon becomes a wretched slave, and is consumed by inward fires till delirium tremens ends the miserable career. If he indulges in sensuality, he is likely to contract loathsome and painful diseases—diseases which make life a burden that can hardly be borne; diseases which poison the blood and can not, by any art or remedy, be expelled from the system, but which are transmitted to the innocent offspring, if there be any.

2. It brings disgrace and drives away friends who would otherwise rally around and help. This poor man spent two terms in the penitentiary, lost all his friends, and had to go to a *hospital* to die!

3. In destroying one's good name and alienating one's friends, it becomes the cause of poverty and want.



4. It destroys the happiness of families, and in this way adds to the wretchedness of the one who does all this mischief and damage.

5. It often produces insanity.

6. It produces remorse, uneasiness of mind, shame, hatred of self.

7. It is what makes men shudder and shiver like convicts under the gallows, when they think of death and come near death. My own fear of death was something terrible.

“The sting of death is sin.”

8. But this fear of death, this awful lashing of conscience on the verge of the grave, is but the intimation and the beginning of those awful experiences in the future world which the Bible describes in words of such dark and fearful import.

But there is a remedy for sin, there is a fountain opened in the house of King David for sin and uncleanness. Yes

“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.

“The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day,  
And there may *you*, though vile as he,  
Wash all your sins away.”

And beside that, when He gives salvation from the guilt of sin, He sends, also, the power to keep you from sin in the future. It is a full salvation and a *free* salvation.

How much better to accept Christ while you are in health and let your life of holiness and purity and

devotion *prove* that the work is a genuine work and that you really have been saved. I have almost *no* faith in death-bed repentances and conversions. Hardly one in a hundred is genuine. And then there is no way of testing the genuineness of it; but if you turn to Christ *now* you can have time and opportunity to exemplify and manifest the fruits of regeneration in your life. Christ has power to forgive sins, to give peace and to keep from sin and sinful habits. An experience of five years on my part enables me to speak boldly and confidently on this point. God grant some of you may turn to Him to-day.

NOTE.—This was delivered at the funeral of some man who died unsaved in a hospital. Mr. Holcombe is frequently called on to officiate at the funeral of such men, and of gamblers, and of strangers and unknown persons.—ED.

ROMANS XIV : 17.

“The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

We heard some time ago of the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Christ, at His coming, brought it near and proclaimed it to the people. At the time when our text was written, the kingdom had been set up, established among men, and many, very many, had entered into it. And now, St. Paul, finding that some of these had fallen into wrong notions as to what constituted citizenship in that kingdom, corrects these wrong notions, and sets before them the right and proper notions about the matter.

1. In the first place, he tells them that religion does *not* consist in certain things. They had gotten into the notion that they must, as a matter of great importance, attend to certain outward things. But it is not so. They thought, as the Jews, from whose nation Jesus, the founder of the kingdom, arose, observed certain customs as to eating and drinking and keeping certain seasons and days, they also had to do the same; and gradually they allowed these outward things to become more important to them than the inward spiritual life.

So now we (or some of us) have fallen into the notion that religion consists in certain outward things.

There are those who believe that it consists in connecting one's self with some certain church, and that the sanctity and virtue of that church will be imparted to them as members, and they will be saved. But this is not true.

Again, there are some who believe that some outward ceremony, and especially that of baptism by the proper authorities and in the proper mode, will procure salvation, and that it constitutes a man a member of the kingdom of heaven.

Again, some think their own morality and effort to do and live justly will give them a place among those who are in the pale of the kingdom, forgetting that God, Himself, says that the righteousness of us miserable sinners is but as filthy rags in His sight.

And there are many, very many, who think that if they are decent in their outward lives and attend the services of the house of God and contribute to the support of His church, they do all any man can require of them, and that, therefore, they may claim that they are also fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of faith.

But no, none of these outward things can make a man a new creature. He may comply with any one or all of these, and yet be really a bad man at heart, a rebel against God and His government. And the fact that there are many such in the church calling themselves Christians and performing the outward duties of religion, while those who see them every day and know their private walk see that they are not really better than many outsiders, is a great stumbling-block to serious and honest inquirers outside of the church. We admit it, and we are sorry for it, though, of course, it is no valid excuse for them, and will not stand in the trying hour of death or the ordeal of the judgment. But I want to say to you to-day, no matter

who it is, if they have no more than a performance of outward duties, ceremonies and services, they *are not* members of the kingdom of God.

2. But, in the second place, the Apostle does tell us what true religion consists in, in the latter part of the text. "It is righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost."

And, first, it is *righteousness*.

In another place it is said that, "The wisdom that cometh from above is first *pure*."

The object and aim of the Christian religion is to make men holy. That is *first*. The righteousness mentioned in the text is put first—before the joy and peace. And this is what the world demands of people who profess to be Christians, no less than God's law demands it. The world has no use or respect for Christians who are not righteous or for a Christianity that does not make men righteous.

When God comes into a human heart, He comes with power, with the power of God, and that is greater than all other power, and before it all opposing forces fall. The sins of men, such as avarice, or love of money; the lust of the flesh, such as gluttony, licentiousness, the hatred of fellowmen and the hatred of God, all these are broken and driven out when the spirit and power of God come in. There is not only this demand of God, then, for righteousness, but also ample supply of strength to meet it, and to meet it fully. Come, then, to God, you who are in bondage to evil habits, and who have striven in vain to deliver yourselves. You can not retain your evil practices and be a child of God. His first demand, His impera-

tive demand, is righteousness, and if you have the *will* He gives the *grace* to attain it.

But this is not all. When you believe with your heart in Christ, the Holy Ghost is given you, and He brings, with the righteousness and holiness which God requires, also joy and peace. Yes, when you surrender to Christ, He makes you happy.

MATTHEW XI: 28.

“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

1. The cry of all hearts is for rest, for contentment. Not only does the heart of humanity cry out for rest, rest, rest; their busy and tired hands and feet *toil* for it day and night, year in and year out.

It is for this that men labor through the days and weeks of summer's heat and expose themselves to the severities of winter's cold.

It is for this that they plow and sow and reap and gather into barns.

It is for this that they blow the bellows and swing the heavy hammers from morn until night.

It is for this they buy and sell and buy again to sell again.

It is for this that men will spend years of toil in schools and colleges, burning the midnight lamp till the eye is heavy and the brain is tired.

It is for this that they will leave wife and children to try their fortunes in some distant California or Australia.

It is for this they will abandon their homes in time of war to brave the dangers of the battle-field.

It is for this that they will worry away the hours of night in games to get each other's money.

It is for this they will devise schemes and lay plans to entrap their fellows, some times going to the length of committing murder.

It is for this that women will toil with the needle and bend over the sewing machine.

It is for this they will stand for weary hours behind counters measuring off goods or waiting for customers to buy.

It is for this that they work over the hot stove or wear out their hands in the wash-tub.

Yes, it is for this that some of them, weary of work-life, will venture on the slippery paths of pleasure, turn their thoughts toward the gilded chambers of licentiousness, sell virtue and abandon home and family to go in the ways that in the end take hold on death and hell.

We are a race of *toilers*. All over the world it is the same. We see it here in Louisville. It is work, work, work, go, go, go.

And are we happy? Have we rest?

But not only are we toiling, some in one way, some in another; some by innocent means, some by wicked means; some by what does no harm to ourselves or our neighbor, and some by what does harm to both, in order to obtain rest and happiness; it is also true that most of us are heavy laden, oppressed and saddened beneath burdens that we can not shake off, can not get rid of.

Some of us are bowed down under our poverty. No good house to live in, no comfortable home to turn into after the battles and toils of outside life, no comfortable shelter for our families. No assurance as to where we are to get to-morrow's bread. No comfortable and respectable clothes to wear, and, of course, no friends. For when a poor fellow gets poor and shabby, his friends drop off and pass by on the other side. No friends, none of that sympathy and



communion of friendship which all human hearts so crave and which they find to be the best part of what this life can give.

Yes; some of us have this burden to bear. And then some of us are bowed down beneath some great sorrow, which may be one thing in one case and another in another. In some cases it is domestic trouble, continual jars and broils in the family, no peace, no quiet, no love. Ah, if we could see into all the homes in this city, I fear we should find in many of them family trouble of some sort. Or it may be some dear one of yours is given to drink or to gambling and is wearing out his life as fast as vice can eat it away, with no hope beyond the grave.

Ah, yes; no doubt some of *you* are yourselves the slaves of evil habits which you hate and would do anything to break off. You have tried by resolving and promising and all to no purpose; you have felt ashamed and degraded because you had no power to do what you felt you ought to do and what you knew would be infinitely better for you.

Do you not know men who would willingly give a right arm for deliverance from some degrading and ruinous habit? But giving a right arm avails nothing, nor any human effort or means.

Then, again, some of you are bowed down by the recollection of your past life and its dissipation and crimes.

You may have mistreated father, mother, sister, and may have broken hearts by your cruelty that would gladly have bled for you. You may have crushed a loving and faithful wife by your selfishness and your

brutality and heartlessness. You may have driven your children to desperation and crime by your coldness and hardness to them.

And may be some life, innocent until you came upon it with your hellish art, has been corrupted and embittered and darkened by your base passions and lusts.

May be your hands have gone to that last extreme of human crime and have deprived a fellowman of life. And, oh, if any of these things be true, what must be the burden of remorse, remorse, remorse, that weighs upon your heart.

But you are the very ones whom Jesus addresses and invites in this tender appeal. Do you believe it?

2. In the second place, consider who it is that offers you rest. It is one who knows you and who knows what you need and one who has all power in heaven and in earth to give what you need.

3. Lastly, consider what this rest means which Jesus offers to you burdened and toiling ones.

1. It is rest from sin, both its guilt and power.

2. It is rest from all care. For He has said, we should cast all our care upon Him because He cares for us.

### MATTHEW V: 3.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

These words, as you know, are the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount as it is called. This Sermon on the Mount is the full exposition of the character of those who are members of Christ's kingdom. It is one of the most important parts of the Bible. At the time of Christ there were in the world many teachers and many schools of philosophy all trying to find what was best for men; or, thinking they had found it, were teaching their views to others. But, of course, none of them knew the truth and nearly every one taught a different thing from the others. There was no certainty. It all seemed like guess-work, and while the philosophers were guessing at what was best for men or trying to prove the views of each other to be false, the poor people were perishing in uncertainty and ignorance. But into this age of uncertainty and darkness and hunger, there came a Teacher from God Himself, who knew all things and who could without arguing or guessing tell with authority the simple and certain truth. What then does the Teacher say? He does not say that blessedness consists in any certain kind or degree of *knowledge* but in the *disposition* of the *mind and heart*.

Listen then and hear and be prepared to believe and accept with all your heart what this Instructor from God says. Remember He makes no mistakes. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows eternity as well as time. He knows the future as

well as the past and present. He knows God as well as He knows man. He has been all through eternity and knows the nature and purposes of God. He then is competent to say what is good for man, what is best for man. Will you hear it? And, having heard it, will you believe it? "Blessed"—ah, what a sweet word to begin with! "Blessed." But who are blessed? It may be blessed are the great or the powerful or the good and some of us are sadly conscious that we are not great or good. But no, troubled heart, poor fearing heart, it is for you. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That is what the Divine Teacher says. He brings it right down and home to your poor heart and leaves blessedness at your very door.

And what is it to be poor in spirit? No doubt some of you poor sinners are ready to say "I know what it is, for I am so wretchedly poor that I feel unworthy to set my polluted foot down anywhere in God's universe." Yes, that is it—you are dissatisfied with yourself, disgusted with yourself, weary of yourself; and you know you can not make your condition any better, for you have tried it and failed till you are heart-sick and hopeless. You are satisfied that neither your education, nor your wisdom, nor your shrewdness, nor your money, if you have any, nor your family, nor your friends, nor your strength, nor your will, nor all these put together and multiplied a thousand times can deliver you from soul-bondage and soul-darkness and satisfy your aching and breaking heart. Is that your feeling, my brother? Then you are the one I am talking to; nay, you are the

one my Divine Master is talking to. But God said the same thing in other words away back yonder one thousand years before Jesus came to earth. Read it in Psalm xxxiv: 18: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Have your sins broken your heart? Does the recollection of them cast down your spirit? You are not far from the kingdom of God then. Only believe on Jesus Christ who was not only Divine Teacher but also sin-bearer, and see God's willingness to save sinners, in the scene enacted on Calvary's trembling summit. What did Jesus suffer for if not for you and your sins? Say, what for, if not for you and all sinners? Answer that question. Do not turn it away or put it off but *answer* it.

Did I say you were not far from the kingdom of heaven? My text says, if you have the spirit I have described that "yours is, *is now*, the kingdom of heaven." Read it again. Will you believe it?

Oh, are you afraid to venture? Is it too good to be true? Well, I tell you I ventured and that with forty-two years of sin and crime on my heart to press me down and keep me back. Yes; I ventured and I found *such a welcome* that I was constrained in the joy of my heart to give up all other employment and spend my whole time and energy in telling of it to others who are in the condition I was in.

But if there are any here who are satisfied with themselves, who do not feel their need of help and cleansing and deliverance, then this message of comfort is not for you. If you think you know enough about eternity to risk going into it as you are, if you

think you know enough about God to meet him as you are, then we have no message of consolation for you. It is not because we do not want you to have a message of consolation and salvation, but because *you* do not want it.

It is said in one place that the "Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And now I am sure this text of ours has to-night found you out and shown you to yourself. Where do you stand? And even if you are persuaded, the suggestion to put it off till to-morrow or next week will knock it all in the head.

MATTHEW V : 4-5.

"4. Blessed *are* they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

"5. Blessed *are* the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."

Our talk to-night follows right along in the line of the one preceding. We shall continue to speak of that wonderful address of Jesus which is called the Sermon on the Mount and which we began to speak of before. We were speaking of those who are poor in spirit and tried to describe such. Now we go on and we find the next words of Jesus, the Divine Teacher, just suited to those who are poor in spirit, who are dissatisfied with themselves and their condition, and who are wretched because they have not the grace and favor of God, and who, as the Psalm says, have a "broken heart and a contrite spirit." (Psalm xxxiv., 18.) And what are these comforting words of Jesus? "Blessed are they that *mourn*, for they shall be *comforted*." Of course, those who are poor in spirit and broken in heart *will mourn*. They are comfortless and they will mourn for comfort. They are in darkness and they will mourn for light. They are in sin and under condemnation and they will mourn till the power of sin is destroyed and they are set free and until the voice of forgiving love assures them that there is henceforth nothing against them. Ah, yes, when a man is under conviction for sin he is, above all men, a mourner. There is hardly any sorrow that strikes deeper or any suspense that is more intense or awful.

But is there no one here who knows all about this, not because they have heard me describe it, but because they have felt it and groaned under it or, may be, *are* doing so now?

Well, let me assure you, on the authority of Jesus, there is comfort for you as surely as Jesus will not lie. Does He say "Cursed are they who mourn?" Or "To be pitied are they that mourn?" No, He says, "*Blessed* are they."

There, now, you are already comforted a little bit, are you not?

But what is the rest of this sentence of Jesus? "For they *shall* be comforted." And, indeed, the fact that you *mourn* for a better condition and a better life and for God, is itself a ground for you to surely expect comfort. For only God's spirit could make you dissatisfied with yourself, tired of your sins and eager to find God.

And if He began the work He will carry it on to completion, assuredly, if you do not hinder him by your turning back to sin or going with the vicious or refusing to have faith in Jesus as Saviour.

And the next verse comes right along to fill out the one we are considering. "*Blessed are the meek.*"

If a man is truly poor in spirit, mourning because of his sins and his ignorance of God and his insecurity in view of death, then he will not be egotistic and ambitious and greedy of praise and pompous and self-sufficient and disposed to stand on *his honor* and his rights. But he will have the opposite feelings exactly.

He feels his unworthiness so deeply and keenly that he is willing to give up his own rights and to



prefer others before himself. And Jesus adds, "the meek shall inherit the earth."

A man who has this spirit of humility, deep consciousness of his unworthiness and a disposition to bear all things rather than be contentious, will win everybody and they will want to give up to him.

You have perhaps read of the man who went to his neighbor to claim a piece of ground in his possession, and, contrary to his expectation, that neighbor said, "Well, then, if it is yours, I will not have a strife about it. I will move in my fence and let you have it." This gentle answer and this meek spirit made the other man so ashamed and so completely melted and won him that he said he would not take the land, and he went back home leaving it as it was.

And so if you have this meek and yielding spirit, and this patient and forgiving spirit, you will make even your enemies to be at peace with you. But this meekness of spirit includes, also, cheerful submission to all the hard and disappointing and trying experiences of life, and perfect contentment with one's lot.

A man who is always sour and bitter because things don't go to suit him is the opposite of a *meek* man. And one of the loveliest and most attractive and winning qualities of human character is this unfailing resignation, this *cheerful* acceptance of all that comes upon us. If the church were full of people of this description, they would soon win the world, and, as Jesus said, they would "inherit the earth."

Now, let me ask, have we all who profess to be Christians this meek spirit and character? Are we gentle and cheerful at home and abroad, when we are

disappointed as well as when we are gratified, when we are treated with ingratitude and injury as well as when we are treated with kindness, consideration and honor? Or are we crabbed and cross and discontented and complaining against those who cross our wills and against the lot that God has given to us in life? If we are of this last sort we shall not draw many to Jesus and to the acceptance of our religion. You can't catch flies with vinegar.

How disposed are we to lay our crossness and roughness to the charge of our health, our dyspepsia or neuralgia or nervousness. But it would be all the *more convincing* to men if, *in the midst* of bad health and nervousness, we should have a meek, quiet, patient, bright and cheerful spirit.

And if you haven't it, the way to get it is to be filled with God's spirit, and the way to do that is to pray, to commune with God in secret, to patiently wait for Him, as David did (Psalms xl, 1), and to be with Him so much that He shall become more real to you than the objects of sight and sound and feeling that surround you.

## MATTHEW V : 13.

“Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt hath lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.”

Jesus takes the most familiar facts and objects to convey the truths and doctrines which He wished to communicate. Here he uses for illustration an object, with the properties and uses of which everybody is familiar—namely, salt. It is good to prevent corruption and to preserve life. Without it life could not continue. I have heard of a party of travelers whose supply of salt almost gave out; and not having enough for themselves and their horses, the horses grew weak, would stagger, and finally fall and die, though they had food for them. Yet the lack of salt could not be supplied by any amount of food.

So it is with Christianity. It prevents corruption, moral corruption, in the individual, and so prevents social corruption, political corruption, national corruption, and is the means of purification in all these respects. But it not only prevents corruption, it imparts spiritual life and vigor and sends its possessors on their way filled with an energy that goes out after others.

Christianity is suited to be the salt of the earth. It demands a perfect morality, a perfect righteousness, and offers the highest motives to men to attain this. It teaches, with assurance, that there is a righteous God who demands holiness on our part, and, at the same time, it encourages men and inspires them with

hope because it declares that this God loves men, as sinners, and so it gets hold of men by the heart.

If man will only compare those nations that are Christian with those that are not, he will find out what a difference there is.

But the text refers to the holy lives of Christians as being the salt of the earth.

The savor of Christians is an unction from the spirit of God that produces purity, humility, patience, long-suffering, self-denial, tenderness, sympathy and unselfish love.

And when men see a person whose daily life presents all these beauties, they are forced to pause and regard it. It is such an unnatural and such an unearthly thing that they can not help it. And it is far more convincing and eloquent than all logic and rhetoric put together. There is no way of getting around it. Men know that a gifted orator can dress things up so as to make any cause seem a fair and plausible one, but men know also that neither a gifted orator nor any one less than God can make men humble, pure, patient, gentle, long-suffering, unselfish and glad to spend and be spent for others than themselves.

When men see such a life, they seek to know how it is realized, and finding that Christianity has done it, that faith in Jesus has done it, they are constrained to say: "We know that Christianity is from God. For nothing could do such wonderful miracles except God be in it," as Nicodemus said to Jesus.

There are so many men who are anxiously inquiring about spiritual things and about God and a future life. And they say: "Show us something that Chris-

tianity can do." And if we are living such lives, they find what they are seeking for and are satisfied. But there are many men who *won't* search the Bible to find out if it is true—and many who don't do so for want of time and of opportunity—and some who *can't* do so because they can't read or reason, and we *force* Christianity upon their attention by the beauty and unearthliness of holy Christian lives. Instead of waiting for them to come inquire and into Christianity, which they might never do, we carry it before their eyes in its loveliest and most attractive and powerful form when we live holy lives before them. And when men see many people living thus, it turns the tide of their feelings, reverses the current of their thoughts, and makes it easy instead of difficult to believe. Oh, that we had more of these entirely consecrated lives! They would do far more good than the preaching. When people see these consecrated women doing the work they do for the poor neglected children, they say: "Ah, now, that looks like something, sure enough, and we believe in that sort of religion." John Wesley said: "Give me one hundred men who love nothing but God, and who fear nothing but sin, and we will soon lay England at Jesus' feet."

How can we get and keep this savour, this divine unction which produces such a life? Only by much communion with God.

David knew no fear when he went to meet Goliath because he had communed so much with God in the sheep pastures that God was more of a reality to him than Goliath was. So it must be with us, my dear brothers, or we *lose this savour*.

And that is what the text says. Let us read it again.

You may retain outward forms of religion and perform outward duties, but the unction and zeal and power will be gone and men will find it out and see it and say that you are no better than they are.

So the text says, "Good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." And sad it is that more harm is done to the cause of Christianity by hypocritical or wicked or inconsistent professors of it than by all the Ingersolls in the world. Men look at the church to see what Christianity can do; and seeing it does nothing extraordinary in the way of making men better, they say it must be false. So it is the wicked and worldly professors of religion that make more infidels than anything else. Oh, let us be sure that we are not the darkness of the world. For if we are not its light, we become darkness.

The light in the lighthouse may be burning, but if the lights along the shore are not burning, too, the poor sailors may be lost.

"Brightly beams our Father's mercy  
From *His* lighthouse evermore,  
But to *us* He gives the keeping  
Of the lights along the shore."

## THE PRODIGAL SON,

HIS SIN, HIS WRETCHEDNESS AND HIS RECOVERY.

LUKE XV : 11-24.

1. This younger son thought he was wiser than his father and wanted to manage his own affairs. So it is with men who think they can manage their own affairs without God. And as this young man wanted to get as far from his father's presence as possible (see verse 13, "into a far country") so the sinner, when he determines to give himself up to pleasure and sin, wants to get as far from God as possible. He does not want to hear about Him or even think about Him. Was not this so with *you*?

2. The father did not *compel* the son to stay at home. He allowed him to choose what he preferred. So it is with God. He does not compel us to obedience. For my part I wish He did. But he lets us go and pursue sin with all our hearts, if we choose that above the innocence and joy of dwelling with Him.

3. "He *wasted* his substance with riotous living," verse 13, and so it is with the sinner—in the service of sin and Satan he wastes and destroys his property, his health, his reputation, his intellect, his conscience—all.

*"And he began to be in want."*

That is what sin brings a man to—want, want, want and wretchedness, wretchedness, wretchedness. Has not sin done this for *you*?

4. And it was this very wretchedness which brought **him** to his senses—"he came to himself" (verse 17).

And when he does come to himself he can think of only one place where he can hope to find relief and he bravely determines to go straight to the very father he had so shamefully abandoned and to make a full confession of his sin and throw himself on that father's mercy with the hope of being taken back as a hired servant. He is willing to take the *humblest* and *meanest* place, if he can only get back to that home he was, a short time before, so eager to leave. Nor does he offer *any excuse*, he calls his sin by the right name and confesses it without trying to excuse it or justify it.

5. And how did his father receive him?

Why, he did not wait till his poor, ragged, worn and wasted boy got in and made his confession but he saw him a great way off (verse 20) and he knew what had passed in the poor boy's heart and life, and, moved with compassion toward him, he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him a glad welcome back to his heart and his home. But the son goes on to make his confession and his offer to be a hired servant anyhow, and yet the father says, "No! no! bring forth the *best* robe and put it on him." So, though we may go to God expecting to *work as servants* for Him and for His favor, He gives us far more than we ask and He makes us His own *sons*. And, poor wretched sinners, I come now with this message for *you*, bruised and sore and despairing and wretched as you are on account of your sins. May God help you believe it.



## II. PETER I: 5-6.

"5. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;

"6. And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness."

I want to say something to you to-night about how to *grow* in the Christian life, and how to secure yourself from falling. And now, let me begin by saying what you, no doubt, have heard before, that there is no such thing as standing still in the Christian life. If you are not going forward, you are losing ground. See the Apostle here speaks of giving all diligence, to be adding something all the time. And why not exercise diligence in making sure of the salvation of your souls? Men use astonishing diligence in the affairs and pursuits of this life. The men of all professions and occupations use diligence and industry and toil and self-denial in order to make a little money or to gain a little honor. Why, you know there are thousands of men in this city who get up early in wet weather or dry, in summer's heat or winter's cold, and go hurrying up and down these streets to be at their places at the prescribed hour for beginning their day's toil; and they work, work, work, sometimes with tired hands and feet and weary hearts, till the sun goes down, because they know they must do it in order to get bread and meat and clothing for themselves and their families. They do not stop to think how they *feel*. No, no; feelings and preferences and all must be overlooked and forgotten; for they know that work must be done that

bread may be won. And we do not hear many complaining of this. They accept it as a matter of course. Why, I know how the gamblers will sit up late and do without sleep, and rack their brains, in order to devise some means of finding a poor victim and getting his money. Then why should not Christians, who are striving to avoid the danger and sorrow of sin and to gain eternal rest and reward—why should not they exercise diligence and self-denial and watchfulness also? And we are told in the text how to succeed in this. We are to *make up our minds* by God's grace to live a life of consecration and activity.

You have begun with faith, have you not? If any man here has been truly converted, he knows what faith is. He came to Christ as a hell-deserving sinner, and believed in Christ's mercy for forgiveness and salvation. So faith is the first step; faith is the foundation. And let me stop to say to any one here who is not yet saved, that, if he wants to be, he must throw himself as a sinner on the mercy of God in Christ; and God will save him at once, if he will do so. But, having exercised faith and received forgiveness and strength, you must add virtue, which means courage or boldness. It is sometimes very hard for a man who has lived a sinner and taken pride in it, to come out before the world, and especially before his old companions, and let them know that henceforth and forever he is a humble follower of Jesus Christ. But it is necessary. No middle ground is safe at all. If you try to meet the world as a reformed man, concealing the fact that you are a Christian, you will weaken, and give the devil a great advantage,

and probably fall. I told gamblers in Denver I was a Christian, and they let me alone. But, not only that, you must be bold enough to try to persuade others to become Christians. There are some poor cowards who are not ashamed to let their friends and the world know that they have *reformed*; but they are too chicken-hearted to say that they have humbled themselves, surrendered their pride and become *Christians*. I know more than one of that sort. And, again, there are some men who are content to be saved themselves, but are afraid of being called fanatics if they are bold enough to go to talking and trying to persuade others to be so. Boldness in going out after others strengthened me and kept me from many a temptation.

But, having this godly boldness, you must go on striving to get knowledge—knowledge of your own deceitful heart, knowledge of human nature, knowledge of the fullness of the gospel way of salvation. When a man is first converted, he is almost like a baby. Everything is new, and he hardly knows anything. So it was with me, but I trust I have grown in knowledge of myself and others and of the word of God and of the plan of salvation. Your knowledge will increase of itself if you are in earnest and if you will use all the means of growing better and stronger. Conversation with older Christians, when you get into a tight place, will help you. Earnest prayer to God will result in increase of knowledge. Reading His precious word, and studying short portions of it at a time, with prayer for guidance, will wonderfully enlighten you and increase your knowledge. You will

gain knowledge also by reading good books—the lives of very pious people, and the sermons of such men as Wesley, Spurgeon, etc. Why not have some good books to read? Could you invest your money to better advantage? In this way, having your mind always occupied with the subject of religion, you will have neither time nor temptation for sin or thoughts of sin.

There are some selfish men who, when they find themselves delivered from their evil appetites and raised up again to respectability and their right mind, begin to think of reading all sorts of worldly and profane literature, and want to cultivate their “literary taste” and prepare to shine in society. Such men forget the pit from which they were taken, and in their selfishness and worldliness and pride become blind to the awful peril to which they expose themselves in neglecting to keep their minds occupied with religious thoughts and subjects as far as is practicable. Some of our converts have fallen in this way.

But what is the next thing, to be added? It is *temperance*. This means entire self-control in things that are, in themselves, innocent and lawful. Of course, men understand that in things that are wrong and dangerous nothing is right or safe but an utter abstinence from them and abhorrence of them. (Read Romans xii., 9, second clause: “Abhor that which is evil.”) Temperance means here what we spoke about when we considered Paul’s saying that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, lest he should be a castaway (1 Corinthians, ix: 27). And as you grow in experience and in knowledge of your-

self you will find it absolutely necessary to keep down your body by denying it, and by asserting your entire mastery of it, through God's grace. Oh, be careful and be prayerful, and be self-denying, or some day, when you think all is secure, some sudden temptation will come and find you self-indulgent and careless, and, like David, you will fall before you are aware of it, and then, maybe, have not the heart and hope to ever try to be a Christian again. Men who have been addicted to bad habits before are especially in danger if they do not practice the strictest self-control in all things. But, with all this, you will often be provoked, and find your temper very troublesome. It troubled me long after conversion and troubles me now more than anything else. So it is necessary to bear all things, however unreasonable and provoking they may be; and this is exactly the next thing the Apostle puts down—namely, *patience*.

Oh, how I tremble for some of these men who are converted here. They do not know how necessary it is to keep right down in the dust, and not only to give diligence, but to *make it their chief business* for some time to watch and guard their thoughts and ways, and to pray always, and by all the means we have spoken of try to keep away—far, far away from temptation. I beg you to make up your minds to bear anything and everything. Always be ready for a disappointment, and determine not to let your contentment and happiness depend upon anything or anybody in this world. Then it won't make any difference what happens to you; it will come like water on a duck's back, and won't hurt you. Remember how humble you had

to get before you could get forgiveness and strength to resist your appetites. And did it kill you or did it damage you in any way? No! It killed your wretched sins, but not you. It robbed you of your bondage and darkness and despair and wretchedness. But it did not rob you of any good, did it? Then it won't hurt you to keep humble and in that same state of mind till you die. And you can afford to do so. How would you like to get back into bondage and darkness where you were? You say: "Not for the world!" But, if you knew you could, by diligence and watchfulness, gain the world, you would be diligent and watchful. And yet, by this diligence, you not only keep yourself secure from falling back, you make your family happy, you bless many others—and, best of all, you make *sure* of everlasting life, and escape the hell which we all fear more than all things else combined.

"Since I must fight if I would reign,  
Increase my courage, Lord ;  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy word."

## ECCLESIASTES XII: 13.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments**; for this is the whole duty of man.”

The book of Ecclesiastes contains the experience of a man who had tried every phase of life, who had tasted every kind of pleasure, and who, also, had experience in the service of God, with its consolations and its sacrifices; and he had also made a study of the great questions that come up in considering the affairs of the world about him. And after his long and thorough experience, and his deep and life-long study of the facts of human life and history, he at last reaches a conclusion concerning it all, and this conclusion he has recorded in the text I have read, “Fear God and keep His commandments,” etc.

### 1. Fear God.

The fear of God is natural to man until, by false teaching and evil association, it is destroyed. The severe things we see in nature about us lead us to have a dread of Him who is the author of all these things. And, then, death is an awful and a fear-inspiring thing, and the thought of what is to come after death, in that unknown country from which no traveler has ever returned to tell us of it, fills us with awe and sobers us whenever it comes to us. And most men even that are in their lives wicked, and seemingly have no thought of God or fear of Him, are often troubled with the fear of death and what is to come after death. This was my own experience.

2. But merely to have this fear of God is not sufficient, and will do no good if it does not lead a man to obey God and keep His commandments, as the text says. For example, I knew a fireman in an engine-house here who had this fear of God; but he lived a swearing, drinking man, and, of course, he was not at all benefited by his fear of God. No doubt this fear of God was created in the human mind in order to lead men to keep God's commandments. But how are we to know His commandments? Why, my brothers, they are given with great plainness in His Holy Word—so plain that the wayfaring man, though he be a fool, need not miss them if only he is willing to know them and to do them. And, as St. John says, "His commandments are not grievous." They only require of us what is most just and reasonably due to Him who is the giver, the free and bountiful giver, of all the good things of this life, and the gracious promiser of perfect blessedness in the life to come. And, on the human side, His commandments require of us only that we keep from doing to others what they ought not do to us, and that we do for others that which they ought to do for us. In other words, the commandments of God are all embraced in two sentences, "Love God with all your heart, because He first loved you," and "Love your fellowmen, because they are commanded to love you," and when you submit to God's Spirit, and become renewed in mind and heart, born again, made a new creature, you will see the reasonableness of keeping God's commandments, and the desirableness of it, in such a light that you will go on in His ways with delight, desiring to know more and more of Him.



3. And we are told that to do this is the *whole purpose* of man's existence, and when he does this he has fully answered the end of his existence, met all that is required of him and is secure amid the problems of life and the possibilities of the unknown future.

This, also, brings rest to the human heart, a rest to be found nowhere else. I am in a position to speak with some confidence and positiveness on this point; for, like the man who uttered the text, I have tried life in all its phases. I have had all the kinds of pleasure, and I have tested them to the bottom. I have found out all there is in them. For forty years I gave myself to seeking and enjoying worldly pleasure, and I ought to know what it can do for a human soul. But I have another advantage, too; I have tried the doctrine of my text. I have surrendered myself, my life, my prospects, my all, to God, and live only to keep His commandments and to please Him. My mind has been renewed, transformed, my life entirely turned around. I have passed through the struggle and the sacrifice that were involved in becoming a Christian, and I have been passing through those that belong to the life of a Christian. But you may say I speak thus because it is a novelty to me. No, sir; it is no longer a novelty. I have been trying it now for ten years—surely a long enough time to know pretty well how it compares with the old life; and my testimony, from forty years' experience of the old life and ten years of the new life, is that of the writer of my text, "Fear God and keep His commandments : for this is the whole duty of man."

## HEBREWS XII: 1, 2.

“1. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

“2. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The Apostle here speaks of a great number of witnesses, who, having tried God and His ways, are competent to testify as to what God can do for those who trust Him and serve Him. In the chapter just preceding he has spoken of Abraham and Joseph and Moses, and many others, and they, having lived the life of faith, were prepared to say whether it was a disappointment or not to trust God and to walk in His ways. And they were not disappointed. They obtained a good report, held fast to their faith in God, and were content to endure all sorts of trials and sufferings for the comfort and compensation of their religion. And so now there are witnesses, not a few, who have tested this matter, and tested it under circumstances the most adverse and trying, and they give no uncertain testimony as to the desirableness of religion. There are people who have none of the good things of this world; none of its honors; none of its pleasures; none of its wealth, and not many of its comforts, and yet they are contented, and even happy. Yes, far happier than many who have the best that this world can give. I am one of this class myself. Then the Apostle goes on to exhort them to hold fast,

and to go on, because others having tried it were conquerors.

He exhorts to three things :

1. To lay aside every weight, and especially every besetting sin that might have especial attraction and special power. And it is impossible to serve God and have peace of conscience and to overcome sin while the mind is divided and undecided. A man can not expect to win a race if he ties heavy weights upon his person; he must be unencumbered and free. So, in running the Christian race, we must free ourselves from everything we find to be a hindrance, no matter how desirable or how dear it may be to the flesh. So Jesus Himself says: "If anything so dear as a right arm or a right eye becomes a hindrance to us, it must be given up." There are men who say they want to serve God, and expect to do so, but then they enjoy certain things they know to be wrong and hurtful, and they will indulge in them just a little, not enough to cause them to get clear away from God. I know and you know men who think they can enjoy sin just a little, or once in awhile. In the first place, this is ungrateful and mean. It is the same as to say: "I want to be just religious enough to escape hell, and yet I want to enjoy all the pleasure I can from sin, too." Such a feeling dishonors God. And, in the second place, it is exceedingly dangerous. It shows that the heart is not right. While you are trifling thus with sin, you may become so fascinated by it and led away as to be enslaved before you know it, and lose all your taste for heavenly things. Besides, God will not long bear with a man who has no better heart

and no more self-sacrificing spirit than that. For myself, I should tremble and shudder if I were so far gone as to feel that I could go and deliberately indulge in some pleasant sin for awhile and then come back to resume the service of God when I had satiated my evil desires. Be assured, you can not serve God and sin. They are as opposite as light and darkness; you must give up one or the other. "But," you say, "how can I give up sin?" If you are *willing* to do so, God will see that you have the *power* to do it. Give it up if it gives you pain—yes, if it breaks your heart! God Himself will pour in the oil of comfort and joy, and heal all your wounds.

2. The Apostle exhorts to run with patience the race set before us. It is easy to do well for awhile; to abstain from sin while the excitement of novelty in the religious life is upon us; and how many there are who began well and did well for awhile, but when the novelty wore away, and the excitement of the change was gone, they grew weary and sought the old pleasures of sin again. Some have thus done in connection with our work here in this mission. Make up your mind before hand that when the time of temptation and loneliness comes, you will endure it and go through with it patiently, waiting for the removal of the temptation and the return of joy. And when temptation does come, pray, oh pray. Go alone and ask God to restore to you the joy of His salvation and trust Him until he does it. Go work for others; go mingle with Christian people, whether you feel like it or not, and you will soon find how to meet the enemy, and how to defeat his plans and purposes.

3. But his last exhortation is to look to Jesus. He bore our sins on the cross, and therefore we are released from them, if we trust Him and accept Him as our sin-bearer. He is alive forevermore; and when earnestly asked, He gives spiritual life and joy and strength by sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Then again, His life is the pattern of patience in loneliness and trials, which you and I are to follow; and can we desire or aspire to be or to do any better than did He?

“Would you lose your load of sin?  
Fix your eyes upon Jesus.  
Would you have God's peace within?  
Fix your eyes upon Jesus.”

ACTS II: 38.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

We may not be able to understand how it is, but these inspired Scriptures represent the work of salvation as applied to human hearts by the Holy Spirit. We do not hear enough of the Holy Spirit. We do not know Him and speak of Him and pray for His help and guidance and power, as the Scriptures teach us to do. These Scriptures are our guide; what they say we do not question, nor can we subtract from them or add to them. Let us see, then, what they teach us as to the Holy Spirit. In the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of St. John's Gospel Jesus distinctly promises His disciples that upon His departure He would send to them and to the world a divine agent whom He calls the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, etc., and He tells them what that divine agent would do. Let us, then, fix our minds now intently on what He says, and be prepared to believe it.

He said that this Spirit of Truth should “convince men of sin.” Well, the fact is, we do see men convinced of sin as sin, and not merely because it is damaging and ruinous. But we see this only in connection with the Christian religion. So it must be by means of some power that belongs to the Christian religion. And if any of you here to-night see your sins and feel them to be, not only damaging and destructive, but mean and hateful and crimes against the good Father who has borne with you and blessed you through all these years of sin, then you may know that it is God's Holy Spirit

that has produced that feeling in you ; and especially so if you feel that your ingratitude to God, who has provided for you a way of salvation at such great cost, and your cold and heartless neglect of Jesus Christ through all these years of sin are the most aggravated part of your guilt. And you may be sure if God is willing to begin a good work in you He is willing to carry it on to completion, and will do so if you do not hinder Him. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you." And since it is He who has begun this work, beware that you do not hinder it or stop it by your coldness, carelessness or sin.

But, in the second place, Jesus says the Holy Spirit should reveal Him to sinners as their sin-bearer and life-giver. So the promise is to you. Hold on in prayer and patient expectation. You can not be disappointed, for God can not lie. I was ignorant of Christ to an astonishing and shameful degree ; but I was told to pray and I did so. I shut myself up in my back room one evening and told God I was going to stay there until He blessed me, and I was blessed, and the only three words I uttered were "Jesus of Nazareth." By some power I was so illuminated and changed that I saw Jesus as the dearest and loveliest being I ever thought of. Was not this a fulfillment to me of the promise made in John xvi.: 14? And having received grace from my God, I continue to this day witnessing to small and to great the things I have experienced since becoming a Christian. Now, let us inquire what else this gracious divine agent working in man is to do.

He it is who produces that change in men which we call conversion or regeneration or new birth. You

remember in John (3d chapter) the expression, "Born of the Spirit," and again in Titus iii.: 5, it is said we are saved by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." When we know, then, that these changes are the immediate effect of the inworking of this divine agent, we need not be surprised that they are so sudden and so thorough as we see them to be in some cases that we know of. Let me say to those who have not yet experienced this wonderful deliverance from the power and love of sin and this inner revolution, that many of us have tested this matter who were in the deepest depths of sin and darkness, and God will do to depend on. Go ahead, go ahead; keep on praying and keep on hoping and trust yourself to Jesus, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

But, after we have experienced this change which we call conversion, God's spirit abides with us and keeps on doing great things for us when we are converted. We are not made angels or gods, but are still human, and, though delivered from the guilt and power of sin, we are hampered by ignorance and depressed by sorrow and encompassed with temptations. But just anticipating these needs of ours, the Holy Spirit is to be our teacher and to guide us into the truth. So we need not fear if we are only humble and honest and teachable; we shall not go dangerously astray, for God Himself will thus open to our minds the wonderful things of Scripture, and cause us to understand as much of it as we need.

But He, the Holy Spirit, is to be the comforter of God's people in their loneliness and trials and conflicts in this world of exile. I have been sustained by unseen



power in my trials as a Christian. But He enables them to overcome, and be more than conquerors, when they are assailed by temptation to sin. "He strengthens with might in the inner man" (Ephesians iii.: 16), and gives joy and peace; so that the soul, being content with these, does not need or desire the poor pleasures of sin. This has been my experience.

He sanctifies God's people; He makes them holier and holier; He produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, faith; and He gives power to reach, by our poor words, the hearts and consciences of others, though they be dead in sin. Jesus says, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts i.: 8.) There are some men who have this power to reach and awaken and interest sinners in the salvation of their souls. And they do have power to bring sinners into this new life of peace and purity and joy. And you and I might have this power, and far more of it than we do, if, like the Apostle, we would wait before God in patient, believing prayer till the Holy Spirit should come in fullness and power. Pentecost was a display of this power, and we may have another Pentecost when we are willing to wait for it and pray for it as did the little company in the upper room at Jerusalem.

LUKE V: 32.

"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

These words of Jesus were spoken to the Scribes and Pharisees, and combine in themselves a defense of His own course in mingling with sinners, and a keen rebuke of the spirit of those who brought against him an accusation of associating with sinners, as well as the declaration of the object of His mission into this poor darkened world. And does it not seem strange that a man should be required to defend himself for going to spend and be spent for the good of those who are most sorely in need of help and relief? But it has always been so. Men are so selfish, so utterly without concern for the interests of others that they want to monopolize and swallow up everything that is good. So when Jesus of Nazareth was revealed to the Jewish people, and made Himself conspicuous and famous by the daily performance of astonishing miracles, the Scribes and Pharisees, who thought that everything ought to be subservient to their own personal interests and aggrandizement, fell out with Jesus because He did not fall in with notions of what He ought to be and do. They did not care a baubee for the people, the rabble, the mob, the human cattle. Indeed they utterly despised them, and would have nothing to do with them. They might perish and rot so far as the Scribes and Pharisees were concerned, provided these latter could hold the places of honor and gain. And so utterly possessed were they by this feeling of all-consuming selfishness, that when

they saw this Jesus of Nazareth going with sinners, talking with sinners and eating with sinners, they set it down as a conclusion they would never give up that He was not, and could not be, and should not be, their Messiah. So that Jesus was thus forced to reason with them, and to make His defense before these self-constituted judges of His, and tell them why it was that He pursued the course He did. So it was in the time of John Wesley in England. He went among sinners, talked with them, taught them, and drew them by the magic force of his great love to follow him wherever he went to preach; and they so crowded the churches to hear the words of grace and tenderness that fell from his lips, that the doors were shut upon him, and he had to go out on the commons and into the fields beneath the sky of that God and Father whose words he was preaching, and whose lost children he was trying to save. This has been the experience of other zealous and earnest ministers of Christ. And they, too, have had to defend themselves for such a course. Our dear Brother Morris felt himself pressed to say why he went to the courthouse steps to try to lift up the fallen and save the wretched and the lost. But the words of Jesus contain also a scathing rebuke of the self-righteous spirit of those hard-headed, hard-hearted Scribes and Pharisees. It was the same as saying, "you claim that you are the righteous of the world. You are not willing to be classed with sinners, or to be called sinners, or to believe yourselves sinners. Therefore you have no need of me, and I have nothing for you; for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners,

to repentance." Let us beware then, my dear friends and brethren, of thinking or feeling that we are better than others, or that we are not sinners. Now, need I stop here to prove that any of you are sinners? Does any one here need to have arguments worked out and laid before him to prove to him that he is a poor, miserable, blind sinner? If there is any one here who thinks and feels that he is not, then he has no business here, he has no business with Christ, and we have nothing to tell him or give him here. We bid him farewell, and turn away from him, to work for and to talk to others. If I were to go to see a sick man concerned about his soul, and he were to begin to tell about his good deeds and his freedom from sins and vices, I would get my hat and tell him good-bye; that I knew nothing about salvation for anybody but sinners. But for sinners I have and hold up a Saviour, a divine Saviour, who, blessed be God, is able to save to the uttermost all who come to him, and to save them here and now. If you want to see a specimen of Christ's interest in sinners and feeling for sinners, look at His life. In the beginning of His ministry He chooses Matthew, one of the despised class of publicans, to be one of His disciples—nay, one of His Apostles. Then He went to Matthew's house to dinner. It was as if some leading minister of the Gospel here to-day would be seen walking down the street with some leading gambler, on his way to take dinner and spend the afternoon with him. It was as if Mr. Moody should come to Louisville to conduct one of his great meetings, and, instead of stopping with Mr. Carley or Mr. Carter or Judge Bullock, should

stop with John Young or Harry Johnson, and be his willing guest. So Jesus went to the house of another big gambler, so to speak, in his day. It was the publican Zaccheus (Luke xix., 1-10), and Jesus not only went there to dinner, but took salvation with Him to Zaccheus' house. So by His tenderness and grace, Jesus drew to Him the poor outcast women of His day. One wretched sinner of this class was so won by His concern for sinners, that she pressed her way into a rich man's house where Jesus was dining, and going to Him washed His feet with her tears, and anointed them with costly perfume, Jesus not only not forbidding her, but defending her for it (Luke 7). And Jesus spoke the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Silver, the Lost Prodigal Son, and said—oh, hear it—“There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.”

JAMES I : 25, 26.

"25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

"26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

James, the writer of this language, is that inspired servant of God, who gets impatient with mere professions of piety, and who wants to see action, action! not mere words, not dead faith, but also action. He speaks, in the text, of "forgetful hearers of the Word." Now, do you not know all about what that means? Have you not, many a time, read the Bible, or heard a sermon from it that, like a mirror, held up to your heart, showed you yourself even better than you knew yourself? And have you not said: "Well, I will change; that picture is true, and it is too dark to be endured any longer?" But, instead of carrying out your purpose and doing what you say, you went away and forgot all about it, and soon you were as dead as ever. And, instead of continuing to read the Bible and see yourself there; and instead of continuing to go where faithful ministers would uncover your poor, wicked heart and life to your eyes, you went on your accustomed ways of business or pleasure, and became a "forgetful hearer of the Word," and it did you no good. How, then, in the name of God, can a man keep himself from forgetting the things he reads or hears from the Bible? Why, it is very simple—to go to *doing* at once, without waiting even till to-morrow.

“Do what?” you say. Why, go to praying. Cut yourself off from retreat by coming out on the side of Christ and taking your place among those who are seeking His mercy and salvation, till you can take your place among those who have that salvation. But I want to say a very solemn word to those who profess to have already obtained salvation. Are *you doing*, as well as *hearing* the Word of God? Does your life exemplify “holiness to the Lord,” and does it abound in good works and good words? Do you abstain from evil and keep yourself from evil associations? Do you turn away from dangerous and suspicious places and people? Do you obey readily and heartily what you find to be commanded in God’s Word? If you do not do the things you hear, then you, too, will soon become “forgetful hearers,” and little by little the world will re-assert its power over you, and the flesh will get the upper hand, and at the last you may wind up as our poor friend Eicheler did. Doing is as important a part of the Gospel as hearing. Read the last part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew vii., 24–27). Notice that Jesus says the man who does His sayings is like one who buildeth on a solid and enduring foundation that can stand storms and temptations. Now, do you not find that if you do what you find in the Bible, then the Bible becomes sweeter and sweeter to you? You do not shut it up then and shove it aside for fear of finding yourself condemned, for when you do its biddings it will not condemn you, but commend you, and that makes you love it and keeps you from forgetting it. And thus you grow stronger and stronger, and sin will grow

weaker and weaker, and you will surely find that you have built on a strong foundation. But, in the last part of the text is a subject I want to talk about. Read verse 26. It is the tongue. If any man seems to be religious, and fails to control his tongue, then he is mistaken. Oh, have you not found your tongue to be one of the most troublesome things you have to contend with? If you want to see James' idea of the tongue, read chapter iii., 1-10. Do you watch your conversation? Do you guard the door of your lips? Do you? I am in earnest.

Do you ever indulge in the least obscenity? Some so-called Christians do, and it is sickening and disgusting to others; and while it shows what their thoughts dwell on, it does themselves great harm, for it keeps temptation before their minds, and makes it a great deal more difficult to resist temptations when they come in their lives. Do you mean it only as innocent fun? It is not innocent. For if you are so hardened as to unclean thoughts, that they don't hurt *you*, they will hurt others.

What about swearing? If the devil can get you to swear a few times, then he will say: "Oh, you might as well confess that you are no Christian, and give up this hypocritical business." There is one of the Ten Commandments forbidding to take God's name in vain; the Sermon on the Mount forbids it still more strongly, and James, in chapter v., 12, condemns it in the strongest language. And yet there are some church members who practice it, especially when they get mad. That man's heart is not right, and he is treading on very dangerous ground who is not changed



enough to avoid swearing. And if a man, by God's grace, will turn away from it and from the thought of it, he will soon become so that it will make him shudder to hear others swear. I know this from my own experience.

If you do not watch yourself in conversation, you will tell things that are not true; and so, in trying to be polite, you will have to watch or your tongue will tell a falsehood, and you will recollect it with shame and lose strength of faith in God.

And then that tongue often indulges in gossip about your acquaintances that does them great harm. And have you not, in moments of temper and passion, said cruel and, perhaps, false things to your dear ones; to those who have worked for you, and maybe would die for you? It cut them to the heart, and you have not made acknowledgment of your sin to them.

JAMES I : 8.

“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

One of the commonest and greatest faults and weaknesses of men is this that I am going to speak about to you to-night, and that is indecision. It is not only a weakness and a fault and a great hindrance in regard to religion, but in any and all the affairs of life. Do you not know men of competent ability and of good advantages and education who amount to very little in the world? And when you ask yourself why it is, is it not because they have not enough decision of character to keep at any one thing long enough to master the difficulties with which it is beset and to win success in spite of obstacles? Some of them are confused by the great number of ways that seem to open before them and are not decided as to which one they will pursue. And after embarking in one pursuit and continuing in it for awhile, they conclude they could do better at something else; and before they have studied and labored long enough to obtain success in this second enterprise, they conclude they could do better by changing for a third or going back to the first. And so, because study and time and labor are necessary to success in any occupation or profession and they do not bestow these, they do not succeed, and, in the nature of the case, can not succeed. Or, if they are not embarrassed by the number of openings before them, they are divided in their minds between a life of ease, indulgence and pleasure and a life of labor and self-denial, and, though they would be something and are not without ambition,

yet a life of indolence and rest offers so many inducements that they prefer it to a life of hard work and of discouragements and battles and anxieties, or, at least, if they do not positively prefer such a life, yet they hanker after it; and in their effort to have ease and pleasure and, at the same time, to pursue some honorable and profitable calling, *they miss both*, and have no satisfaction, but only a consciousness of their own weakness and uselessness and a contempt for themselves. But maybe I need not ask you if you know persons of this sort. You who listen to me to-night may be of just that kind. Possibly—nay, probably—there are men here to-night whose lives have been failures just because of the miserable weakness I have been trying to describe. But if this weakness of character is the cause of many failures and the utter disappointment that many lives have ended in, in worldly matters, how much more so is it in religious concerns and interests. If concentration of thought and fixedness of purpose and firmness of will are necessary to overcome obstacles and to master success in business or in the learned professions, they are more so in the matter of religion. If indecision and dividedness of mind and wavering of purpose cause men to fail in worldly matters, much more so will they cause men to fail in religion. Some men are forever wavering between accepting and rejecting Christianity. To-day they are satisfied that Christianity is true, and to-morrow they say they have found proof that Christianity is false. Then, again, they get into trouble and find that nothing can help them but Christianity, and they believe it until some man comes along and argues

against it, and away they go off after him. So they never believe in Christianity long enough at any time to get any good from it, and they will not utterly and finally reject it so as to be no longer troubled by it. But the trouble with most of the people who are in this wretched state of indecision is that they believe in Christianity, and are persuaded that it is far better to be a Christian and safer, but they love the world and the ways of the world and the honors of the world and the pleasures of the world; and it is impossible to love the world and partake of the pleasures of the world and at the same time to serve God with your whole heart. "Ye can not serve two masters," and yet you see people who are trying to do it. So they do not make good Christians, for their hearts are in the world, and their lives and influence are not for Christianity, but for the world. Nor do they get the good and pleasure of a worldly life, for they are restrained and harassed by their fear of conscience, God and hell. And Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, says, "Ye can not serve two masters." Many have tried it. Some whose histories are given in the Bible tried it. Saul, the first king of Israel, tried it. When God sent him to destroy the Amalekites, he obeyed the command in part, but not altogether. (I. Samuel xv., 13-25.) But God is not mocked, and because Saul trifled with Him He rejected Saul, and Saul went from bad to worse, until at last, in his abandonment to the power of evil, he committed murder after murder and finally died a suicide. The rich young man in the New Testament was another case of divided mind. He saw the desirableness of being good, and

the safety of being at peace with God, and showed a zeal in trying to be good; but when Jesus told him to sell all he had and give it to the poor, he refused. He wanted to do both, obey God and inherit the kingdom of heaven and have a fortune for selfish enjoyment or for miserable greed at the same time. But he could not do both. King Agrippa said "he was almost persuaded" to be a Christian. His mind was divided; he could not do both. He chose to keep his worldly possessions, and, of course, could not be a Christian (Acts xxvi., 28). But, on the other hand, those men who were decided and positive in their rejection of the pleasures of the world found no great trouble in serving God. Moses was a man of this sort (Hebrews xi., 25-27). He deliberately chose to suffer afflictions with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Paul was another man of this positive character. When Jesus revealed Himself to Paul his surrender was immediate and complete. He said, "What wilt thou have me do?" And to the end of a long and laborious life, amid persecutions and sufferings and disgraces and loneliness and bonds, he continually cried, "None of these things move me." And his Christian life was victorious and glorious.

## II. TIMOTHY III: 5.

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.”

This text is a description of certain false teachers who had arisen in the midst of the church, or who would arise and assume the name of disciples of Christ, as well as authority to teach. They would assume the outward form of Christianity and adopt its expressions and conform to its usage in outward respects, but would deny that there was any supernatural power or divine unction in it. And there are such men to-day. But if Christianity be not attended by any supernatural agency and energy present in it and with it, then it is no better than any other of the so-called religions of the world. If it has only form and body, without a living and life-giving soul and divinity in it, it is on a level with the heathen religions, for they all have these. And, indeed, all men have a form of religion, and many of them are so devoted to it that they will suffer and some of them die before they will give it up. The ancient Jews held to the forms of their religion, and fought for it in bloody and bitter wars. And the Pharisees at the time of Christ were the most careful and scrupulous observers of all the forms of their religion, and yet Jesus denounced them as the wickedest sinners of His time. There are men of this kind in the Christian churches of to-day, men who go through the forms of religion, who perform the outward duties of religion, and who would not give these up for any consideration; and yet they

not only do not experience anything of the power of inward religion, but they go so far as to deny that there is any such inward power, and call those who claim to have it fanatical.

But read the following passages, and see if we have not Scripture warrant for this power of religion: I. Corinthians ii., 4; I. Thessalonians i., 5; II. Timothy i., 7; Ephesians iii., 16; and our text, II. Timothy iii., 5.

1. The power of Christianity is shown in the conviction for sin.

It is impossible to get men to see and realize the sinfulness and hatefulness of sin. It is impossible for any power of men's eloquence to pierce through the deep native depravity of the heart—through the selfish motives, desires, ambitions and interests, and get men to see and feel the nature and danger of sin. Oh, the impossibility of making men feel guilt and danger by any human means while they are dead in sin! But under the power of this force, or, rather, this agent, who works in and through Christianity, the poor sinner sees and feels all this. He sees that, of all bitter and perilous things, sin is the most bitter and perilous and dreadful. He feels smitten with remorse. He feels that there is no beauty in the world, or in anything, because of the blackness and ugliness and foulness of his own evil heart and life. And he feels that, above all things, he must get rid of sin, and at whatever cost, and speedily at that, for the agony is unendurable. Everything seems as nothing compared with salvation from sin. "He will go and sell all he has to buy it," as Jesus says. This sense of sin and danger produces an earthquake in the spiritual nature

that upheaves the hidden depths of the soul. Like the pilgrim in Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*, he puts his fingers in his ears and flees from the City of Destruction. Like the murderers of Jesus when convicted by this power, he cries out, "What must I do to be saved?"

2. It is shown in what we call conversion.

But this power which belongs to Christianity, not only produces this awful sense of the guilt and danger of sin, it also delivers from the guilt and power of sin, and makes the man a new creature. The awful sense of condemnation and the fear of a just and endless retribution are taken away. He may not know how or just why, but he knows it is so, and he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But, not only so, he finds to his amazement and joy that his whole inner nature is reversed, re-created, and he no longer is a slave of sinful habits and passions, but he is delivered from these, and now loves holiness and holy people and holy things and holy thoughts. The whole current of his nature is changed. "Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new," and, instead of the old defilement and darkness and devilishness, there flows out and on a life of purity, consecration, self-forgetfulness and holiness. Now, do you not call that a power which can bring to pass such effects as this? Do you know of any other power that can do anything like it?

And now, my brother, you who profess to be a follower of Jesus, have you experienced this power, or have you only the form of godliness without the power? That is what is the matter with most of the



church members of this day. They have a form of godliness, but in too many cases only a form. They do not know anything of the power of which I have been speaking. But let no one be discouraged who has not experienced this blessed deliverance from the power of the enemy, provided you are seeking for it. You shall not seek long in vain, if you seek it in earnest. May God reveal Himself to us all now and here.

## I. CORINTHIANS IX : 26, 27.

"I therefore so run not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air :

"But I keep under my body, and bring it in.o subjection : lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

This is the language of St. Paul, the Apostle. As we have already remarked of Jesus, that He took the most familiar facts and experiences of every-day life by which to teach His doctrines, so we may say of His great Apostle, Paul. The Grecian games, consisting of running matches and boxing matches, were well known among the people of St. Paul's day, and especially so at Corinth, and these furnished him the illustrations which he frequently used in his letters. In another place he speaks of laying aside all weights and running with patience the race set before us. In this place he speaks both of running and boxing. His object is to show that, as in these games the utmost attention and energy and self-denial were necessary to success, and that these would insure success, so it is in the Christian race and the Christian fight. He says: "I, for my part, run not as uncertainly," that is, I run no risk, I indulge in nothing that would make it in the least degree uncertain as to my gaining the desired object ; I know what is required of me, and I know that if I do not fully observe all that is commanded me and required of me, I, to that extent, render my success uncertain, and this I am determined, by the grace of God, not to do. Then he says : "I fight not as one that beateth

the air.' The boxers would frequently take exercise by striking into the air, as we see men practicing gymnastics now; but Paul meant to say that he was not taking exercise—he was facing an earnest and dangerous foe, and it was a life and death matter to him to know just what that foe was, and to know just how to attack it so as to conquer it. And what was that foe? Hear it, you who think you are safe and can just go smoothly to heaven as if you were sliding down hill. Hear what Paul's greatest foe was: It was his body—yes, his body, with its appetites and passions, its constant craving for gratification and pleasure. What! do you mean to say that Paul, the great Apostle, was in danger of being led away by the appetites of the body? Well, that is what he himself says. He was not in danger of falling because of doubt, for he had had such a wonderful conversion, and such an actual vision of Christ, that he could never, never doubt that, nor does he anywhere, in any of his epistles, show the slightest wavering in this respect, but he does show that he knew and felt there was danger of being, in some unguarded moment, misled and brought into sin by the appetites of an unmastered body. So, he says in the next verse: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that when I have preached to others, I myself should be lost." He still keeps up the figure of the boxing matches in the games, and says: "The foe I have to contend with is my body," and as the winner in the fist fight of the games beats his foe black, till he cries "enough!" so do I deny my body till it ceases to have any desire or disposition toward

the objects of unholy passions, till it meekly gives up, and I feel that I am perfect master, and it is under my feet as it were. When the body is fed and gratified and pampered, its animal appetites and passions are nursed and become strong. So men who live high and eat to gluttony and drink wines and liquors are usually in a perfect strut of sensual passion. I guess that is why the Lord keeps me so poor, and why I have so little to live on and so little to feed on. It is that, by this necessary self-denial, I may keep my poor body down, out of danger of betraying me into sin.

David was as great a man in some respects as Paul, he communed with God in the solitudes of Bethlehem's sheep pastures, till he became strong enough to overcome a giant and to put a whole army to flight. He composed most of the Psalms, the most spiritual songs in the world. He withstood all the temptations of honor, and endured, with matchless meekness, the hatred and persecution of Saul, the king (I. Samuel xxiv). But his poor body, with its sensual passions, got the better of him, and he committed the awful sin of adultery. Doubtless, when he had become king, he forgot the self-denial which he practiced when he was a shepherd, and when he was a persecuted and hunted fugitive, and instead of that he lived high, fed high, drank high, and so he fell, and fell very low.

Solomon was a wise man. He knew all the secrets of the human heart. He wrote Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, books full of profound knowledge, as well as of deepest piety. Yet Solomon was led away from God by indulging in sensuality. And if David and Solomon, with all their faith and wisdom and power and piety,

found that their bodies, because not kept down, led them into sin, we need not wonder that Paul saw and shunned this danger. But how is a man to keep his body under? By totally abstaining from everything that heats the blood and inflames passion, as drinking, etc., and high living; by fleeing from evil conversation, evil books, evil thoughts; by fasting and abstinence, frequently practiced. Moses fasted; Elijah, David, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jesus, Paul, the early church and Wesley and the early Methodists—all these eminent servants of God fasted, and there must be something good and profitable in it. I am satisfied it is one of the ways of keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection. And may God help us to use all the means in our power for securing ourselves from our greatest enemy.

## ACTS XX: 21.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This verse is a part of St. Paul's account of his own ministry at the city of Ephesus in Asia. He revisits them after having spent three years of labor among them, and in his address to them he reminds them of his manner of life among them, and recounts the substance of his preaching among them; and the burden of his preaching was as is stated in the text: “Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And the first point to be noticed is that St. Paul made no difference among men; he was no respecter of persons or classes. You all know the Jews were the church people of that day. They not only claimed to be the pious of that day, but they claimed to be the only pious people, and the only ones qualified to teach others. But Paul, finding their religion was altogether outward and formal, as is the religion of many of the church people to-day, preached to them just as he did to the vilest of the heathens around them, the necessity of repentance, of turning from their sins and passions to God, with self-abhorrence and hope of mercy and pardon. And in this he has only followed the example of his Divine Master; for Christ said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a sort of reverend doctor of divinity, “Except ye be born again, ye can not enter into the kingdom of God.” (John iii., 3.) And so now it makes no difference if you belong to the Catholic church or the Episcopal church or the Methodist

church, or any or all others, it will do you absolutely no good at all if you have not repented of your sins and evil doings and turned to God in prayer and hope for grace to enable you to live above the power of sin.

But, in the next place, Paul said he preached "repentance toward God." It is God, then, whom you have offended by your sins. As David says in the fifty-first Psalm, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." And because you have sinned against God, you must repent toward God, and as in the sight of Him who sees and knows all, even the secret thoughts and passions and purposes of the heart. God is judge, and God is a consuming fire. But what is it to repent? Ordinarily, when we hear persons speak of repentance, we think at once about being sorry and of feeling a deep grief because we have done wrong; and some of us think it means to weep and moan and to be afflicted with an awful bitterness of soul because of our sins, when we hear any one speak of repentance in a religious sense. And, indeed, this may be the kind of repentance which many people have, and doubtless do have. But there *may* be true repentance without this extreme sorrow for sin, provided there is enough sorrow for sin and hatred of sin and dread of sin to turn away from it, and to at once and forever forsake it. Nor must you wait for this extreme sorrow, which you may have heard others speak of, but if you are convinced of the evil of sin and the baseness of sin and the ruinousness of sin, then cease to follow it, cease to practice it, and cease at once, however much it may cost you to do so. The old prophet, speaking

to the Jews who came with sighs and groans and tears to God's altar, but without mending their ways, says, "Cease to do evil, learn to do right, put away the evil from you." And John the Baptist says, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," that is, such fruit as will show that you have indeed and in heart turned away from evil and from sin. Meanwhile, ask God to help you repent, tell Him you are nothing but sin and that you look to Him for grace to repent right and to turn away from all sin. And as long as you cleave to one sin, you need not expect to get any relief. Many give up one thing and another, but think they can hold on to one sin—one darling sin, one idolized sin—and that God will excuse this one, if they give up all others. "But be not deceived; God is not mocked," nor can you trifle with Him. Having thus let go your hold of sin, of your secret darling sins, and turned away from them with hope of mercy from God, you can trust in Jesus Christ, His Son crucified for your sins, and in your stead, and you will surely have peace, and that quickly.

Observe, Paul says he preached faith, not in God the Father, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Jesus that God reconciles the world unto Himself. And if you do not accept Jesus and trust in God's mercy, as shown in Jesus, you will get no relief and no peace. God has promised nothing outside of Jesus. But He has promised everything to him who accepts Jesus Christ's suffering and sacrifice as the sufficient and satisfactory penalty due to his own sins, and believes that Jesus bore his sins in His body on the cross. If Jesus satisfied Paul, He ought to satisfy



you, and be worthy of your confidence and trust and worship. Turn from sin, then, with humility and shame that you have so long grieved God, and trust in Jesus, and Jesus alone, and keep doing so for days if necessary, and you can not, and shall not, fail to obtain salvation.

## ON SELF-DENIAL.

LUKE IX : 23.

“And He said unto them all, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

Religion depends on this more than on any other one thing. If we are willing to give up all our own preferences and to deny all our desires and inclinations, we shall not have much trouble at any other point. The greatest hindrance to getting religion or *keeping* religion is our own desire for ease, comfort and self-gratification, and our aversion to enduring any hardship or privation or suffering. The reason why self-denial is necessary is that our very nature is corrupted and diseased and we are blinded by sin. Once the will of man was the same as the will of God; but, since the fall, the will of man and that of God are directly opposed; and if we live according to God's will, we must go directly against our own.

Self-denial is necessary in avoiding sin to which we are inclined and which we find give us pleasure.

But it is necessary also, when no sin or temptation is present, to preserve that frame of mind which keeps us in readiness for temptation and enables us to resist it when it does come.

A constant habit of self-denial is necessary to make us proof against the gradual and unperceived approach of sin either in the form of coldness and distaste for religion, or sloth, or a desire to gratify the flesh. So Paul (I. Cor. ix., 27) said he kept his

body under and brought it into subjection, lest *even he*, through the deceitfulness of sin, should become a castaway.

It follows that self-denial is absolutely necessary to growing in grace. We are mistaken if we imagine we are growing in grace, when we are practicing no self-denial. Jesus said (Luke ix., 23): "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily*." Now what does that word "daily" mean in this connection? Indeed growth in piety is a growing out of self so that self is *crucified*, as Paul says he was.

Self-denial must be practiced then.

1. In abstaining from sins of all kinds.
2. In performing all our duties of religion, however hard and unpleasant they may be, as attending all church services, ordinances, etc., and giving according to your ability.
3. In practicing private prayer however hard and distasteful it may be at first. Some men have prayed three hours a day in secret, as, for example, Luther.
4. In abstinence from food, *i. e.*, fasting; and sometimes from sleep when it is necessary to have time to pray, etc.

Get the upper hand of your animal nature and keep it by *daily* self-denial and you will mount up with wings as eagles, you will run and not be weary, you will walk and not faint.

## I. JOHN III : 5.

“And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.”

These are Christmas days. This is the period of the year that is celebrated as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. I fear that if some stranger from a foreign land, who knew nothing of the character of Jesus and His history and nothing of Christianity, were to happen in our midst during this Christmas time, he would think, from the character of our festivities and the kind of our demonstrations, that we were either, by our bonfires and guns and rockets and fireworks, celebrating some warlike hero who, in the midst of belching cannon and blazing musketry, had delivered his country from peril, or else that we were, by our revelry and dissipation and debauchery and riot, celebrating some heathen god of pleasure like Bacchus, the Roman god of the wine cup. And it is strange—unaccountably strange—that men should so pervert the sacred Christmas time into a season of unusual and disgraceful indulgence in sin. What does our text say? “He was manifested to take away our sins.” “He was manifested;” what does that mean? Oh, it means more than you and I will give ourselves time to fully take in. It is said that the angels desire to look into the wonderful fact of the condescension of Jesus Christ, the prince of princes, in becoming man in order to save sinners. But though *angels* thus desire, very few of *us*, for whom this wonderful humiliation was suffered, give enough time or attention to it to either understand it or care much about it. We are too much occupied with

these lower things to take any special interest in things infinitely higher.

Paul, in the second chapter of the Phillippians, tells us how Jesus humbled himself. Let us see verse 5 : "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made *Himself* of *no reputation* and took on Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself and became obedient unto *death*, yea even unto the death of the cross."

Christ, then, was the equal of God, the Father, worshipped by angels; and yet He consented to become man, and so be made "a little lower than the angels." But He not only became man, He became a servant among men. So His life was one of lowly service and unremitting toil for others. He once girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of His disciples. But He not only became man and servant to man, He went to a deeper depth of humiliation than any other ever descended to: He suffered as an evil-doer, though in fact He was the only good and pure man that ever lived. "He was numbered among the transgressors," though He was guilty of no transgression, and He descended down to the bottom floor of disgrace—He was nailed on a cross and left there to die as you hang the worst criminals by the neck till they are dead.

Yes, He was born poor; He lived in toil and sorrow and died in shame: the Prince of Glory did all this. But, stop and ask, Why did He endure all this when He might and could have avoided it? Let God answer: "Surely He hath borne *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows. He was wounded for *our* transgressions. He was bruised for *our* iniquities; all we like sheep had

gone astray, and the Lord laid on *Him* the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah lviii., 4, 6.) Yes, "He was manifested to take away our transgressions" in the sense that He suffered in our stead for those transgressions that are past. But what good would it do to forgive sinners if they were not changed and renewed, so that they could have the power in the future to abstain from sin? What good would it do for God to say to a drunkard, "Your sins are forgiven" if He did not at the same time so change that drunkard as to make him able to keep from drinking in the future? What good to forgive the past sins of a debauchee or a liar or a gambler or a thief or a murderer if, at the same time, their hearts were not so changed that they would and could keep from sinning again? It would do no good, for they would go straight into the sins they had been practicing. Well, does Jesus make provision for this? Yes, He does. He was manifested not only to take away the guilt of our transgressions, but also their *power* over us. Do we not read in the Scripture that if the Son shall make us free we shall be free indeed? Jesus promised a mighty agent which should work in the hearts of men and renew their natures. I, myself, am as different a man as if I had been blotted out of existence and born again a new creature. And these are the very expressions the Scripture uses for describing the wonderful change. This, then, is what Jesus was born in poverty, lived in sorrow and died in shame for, and at this time of remembrance and rejoicing He makes appeal to you:

"I gave my life for thee, my precious blood I shed  
 That thou mightest ransomed be, and quickened from the dead.  
 My Father's house of light, my glory-circled throne,  
 I left for earthly night, far wanderings, sad and lone.  
 I've borne it all for thee ; what hast thou borne for me?"

## NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY VIII: 2-11.

The people of Israel had journeyed long and wearily since leaving Egypt. For forty years they had wandered and now at last had come to the borders of the Promised Land. Only the narrow Jordan was between them and the Canaan of their hopes. They were encamped upon the eastern bank of this river and were only awaiting orders to pass over and possess the goodly land which lay before them. And Moses, who was not to cross over with them, but to be buried in the land of Moab, gives this parting address to them. They were just passing from one stage of their journey to another and they need to be reminded of the *past* and instructed and warned as to the *future*.

So he says:

“Thou shalt *remember* all the way which the Lord hath led thee these forty years.”

1. They were to remember the trials and temptations they had. The object of these, he says (verse 2), was to *humble* them and to *prove* them that they might know what was in their hearts. And so, my brother, if during the past year, or during your past life, you have had trials and temptations, it was that you might learn your own weakness, a hard lesson for proud mortals to learn, and so be humbled to distrust yourself and seek help from God. And if you have had sorrow or bereavement it was for the same purpose, that you might learn to give up seeking perfect happiness in

anything or any creature on earth and seek it in God. And have not some of you learned this lesson or are you not beginning to learn it at last? Have not the sins and the sorrows of your past life humbled you and at last brought you to feel your *need of God*? But another object of these past experiences of trial was to prove what was in your heart. A man does not know what there is in his heart till temptation brings it out. He does not know how bad it is. I thought I was patient; but when temptation came, I found my heart had much impatience in it. I thought I was humble and did not think highly of myself till people began to praise me and I found I enjoyed it and loved it and I was not humble.

2. But they were to remember God's goodness to them also (see verses 3 and 4). He had fed them Himself with manna and kept their clothes from wearing out and their feet from swelling. And so *you* are to remember the goodness of God to you during the past year and during your past life. Remember how He has spared you in the midst of your wickedness as He spared me in my neglect of Him *for forty years*, and how He has furnished you many blessings and would have given you more, but you would not. And if He has allowed your wickedness to bring you into trouble and distress, it is to cause you to *stop* and *reflect* upon your ways and turn from them unto Him for deliverance and true happiness. Thus you are to recall, from the past year and from your past life, your sins and sorrows, and God's manifold mercies to you.

II. But, just entering upon this new year, you are to look ahead also, even as the Israelites were to look



ahead to the goodly land into which the Lord was going to bring them (see verses 7, 8 and 9).

1. God *promises* you much, my brother, on condition that you follow Him and obey Him. He promises to bless you temporally and spiritually, and to give you happiness—a goodly possession—if you, for your part, give yourself up, *unreservedly* to His directions. He has done much for *me*, since I began to follow and obey Him years ago.

2. Moses ends his discourse with a solemn warning (verse 11). *Beware* that you forget not the Lord your God, and go at any time to trusting to yourself or any earthly help.

## ON AFFLICTION AND SUFFERING.

### LAMENTATIONS, III: 32-33.

“32. But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.

“33. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.”

There is a vast deal of suffering and of sorrow in the world, and the most of it, if not all, is due directly or indirectly to *sin* as the cause. Sin is followed by suffering, as for example, intemperance ruins the health and brings on a slavery worse in some cases than death; and sensuality is often followed by loathsome and painful diseases. Thus God declares His feeling towards sin in these sufferings that result from it. He has set up a barrier to keep men from the practice of it. But we will consider how afflictions and sufferings may all be overruled to the good of the sufferer and his deliverance from the evil of *sin*.

1. Sufferings which are the direct effect of sin have a tendency to make us turn away from sin. For example, the poverty and distress of the Prodigal son were the cause of his returning to his Father. So it was with Jack Harrington and others whom we know.

2. But sufferings and misfortunes which are not the direct effect of sin stir up the memory to a recollection of past sins, and excite a remorse for them. For example, a lady who is the wife of a whisky dealer told her husband she believed that their losses and misfortunes were judgments sent on them for being in that business.

3. Sometimes it takes the greatest and most prolonged suffering to conquer man's stubbornness and independence of God. But suffering humbles him, and, his pride being out of the way, he has no more trouble.

4. Sorrow that is too great for any earthly consolation leads the sorrowing one to seek comfort in God. One of the greatest and best preachers of Germany was thus led to God by the loss of his young wife. So parents are brought to God by the death of children and children by the death of parents.

5. Sometimes suffering is necessary to wean us from some idol which we would not otherwise be willing to give up.

6. Sometimes when we forget God and become absorbed in the world, nothing but some affliction will make us come to ourselves and turn again to God with repentance and consecration. Read Psalm cxix., 67-75.

The case of Sister P——, at Portland, was one of this kind. She was a backslider and put off her return to God and kept putting it off. But she had a great sorrow. Her son left home under a cloud, her son's wife lost her mind and then died, and her son was put in prison. To this was added her own bad health. These things broke the spell of the world, woke her up from her apathy and made her seek God with all her heart and she found Him again, and died in great peace and triumph.

7. Then suffering purifies us and develops us and prepares us for work we could not otherwise do. "Tribulation worketh *patience*." What *excellent train-*

*ing* I got when I rubbed the engine for a dollar and a half a day. It brought patience and resignation and a better preparation for the work I am doing than any other sort of experience, perhaps, could have given me.

### REVELATIONS XXI: 3.

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

The subject suggested by the text is, the future and final conquest of the world by the Church of Christ, and the rest and reward of that church in Heaven.

And the Scriptures do teach that, in time, all nations shall learn righteousness. The time is coming when neighbor shall not say to neighbor, “Know ye the Lord,” but when all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest; and the knowledge of God shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the deep. When this blessed time is to be, and what are to be the signs of its approach, are not questions for us to attempt to discuss here to-day, though we may be allowed to say that the Gospel is being preached to more people to-day than at any former period in the history of the church. There is a missionary zeal in the church to-day that has not been paralleled in all her history. There is not only a readiness among heathen people to hear the Gospel, but there seems to be a positive hunger for it, and within the last few years the Gospel has penetrated to the interior of nations and continents that were previously inaccessible. Certainly the church is more aggressive and bold in her plans and operations to-day than ever before. And if it be a prophecy of the not distant conquest of the world to the reign of Christ, we take courage, and say: “God speed the day!” It is well for us to pause now, and to reflect

upon the reward promised to us in the end of our course. We do not give enough attention to this. To study about it; to learn what we do not know concerning it; to realize the unspeakable blessedness of that state would make us more patient in waiting, more cheerful in suffering, more earnest and active and untiring in our efforts to help others to the attainment and enjoyment of it.

Heaven, then, is represented in the Bible as a place of *perfect beauty, perfect security, perfect rest and perfect joy.*

It is so represented as to appeal to the desires and longings of all classes of people. To the inhabitant of the city, what could be more pleasing than the freedom and freshness and beauty of the country? So heaven is described as having its landscapes, with its fruit-bearing trees, its crystal rivers and gurgling fountains. But for the rustic peasant, it is said to be a resplendent city, with walls of sapphire and gates of pearl and streets of gold.

But in some respects we are all alike.

We want to be free from sin and danger.

To a Christian heart, sin is the most abhorred and dreadful of all things. It gives more pain and causes more darkness than any other cause; and the fear of it causes more suspense than the fear of all bodily suffering.

But in heaven we shall be free from sin, and free from all fear of sin and all liability to sin. For nothing that defileth or maketh a lie can ever enter there; and they who are so happy as to gain heaven shall go out no more forever.

We all dread sorrow and grief and pain. And truly we all have our share of it in this life. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." "Man is of few days and full of trouble," but we leave it all behind when we go in at the gate of the City of God. "And there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Christians in this world feel that they are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land, away from their home and their Father's house. Their hearts have been so changed, and they have tasted of the powers of the world to come, and have come into communion with God, so that neither the pleasures of the world nor the friendships of earth can content them—their hearts are not here, but away in heaven.

I heard a Christian man say, not long ago (though he has a sweet family and many friends), that he felt that day an unutterable loneliness, as if he were an exile. His heart had such a longing for his Father and his kindred and his home beyond the skies. Oh, the sympathy and love and tenderness we know we shall get at home! It makes us all feel a thrill that responds to the poet's immortal lines:

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

And all the sympathy and tenderness of father, mother, brother and sister are transcended by the sympathy and tenderness of God, for marvelous to tell it is said that "God *Himself* shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."

And how we thirst for *knowledge* here. We know nothing now. We are surrounded on all sides by

things we do not understand. If we undertake to investigate, we soon reach the limit of our capacity and have to stop before we have learned anything. "But then we shall know as also we are known."

What it means, when it says we shall "sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb" we know not, nor what it implies when it says we are to "enter into the joy of our Lord;" nor do we understand that wonderful saying, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." No, no; now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, and "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But we know that "if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him." The suffering comes first, the humiliation first, the toil and weariness, the *cross* first, and then the crown. Peter the Great, of Russia, during one of his wars, was separated from his army and lost, and, to escape detection, took off his royal apparel and dressed in common garb. In his wanderings he came to a humble cottage, and was kindly received and ministered unto by the peasant woman, who knew not who he was. She gave him a home until danger was passed, and then helped him to get back to his capital. When the war was ended, Peter sent for this poor peasant woman, brought her to his splendid court, and, marrying her, made her the partner of his throne and his empire. She who had ministered to him in his sufferings now reigned with him as Queen Catherine, of Russia.

So, my brethren, see that you serve Christ, suffer for Him; spend and be spent for His cause, and *then*, oh, then, how sweet to rest and reign forevermore.



ECCLESIASTES XII: 13.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Now, boys, here is a piece of advice given by the wisest of men. Can any of you tell me who was the wisest man? (Solomon.) Well this Solomon was the son of a king. Can any of you tell me whose son Solomon was? (David's.) And, of course, Solomon had all that money could buy from his childhood up; and when his father died, he became king in his place. He lived to be an old man and he had a wide experience of life. In other words he tried everything that he thought he could get happiness from and his experience is given in the book of Ecclesiastes. He tried all sorts of pleasures and he tried them fully, because there was nothing to hinder or to check him. He denied himself nothing that his heart desired. He knew fully the effects of all sorts of enjoyment and when he had passed through it all he wrote it down as the lesson of his experience for all boys and young men to read. And what was it? Does he say “Young man, you have a long life before you. Now you must enjoy the pleasures of life while you are young?” Does he say you must run off from your father's house and presence like the Prodigal son did, so you can have a good time in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world and then in your after life, when you get more settled, you can think about your Creator and death and heaven and hell and eternity? Was that the lesson which his long and extended

experience taught him? Ah, no. It was a far different one. He would say this: "Young men, boys, I have been all over the road you are traveling now. I have had your feelings, your hopes, your ambitions, your passions, your temptations. And in one part of my life I concluded I would give myself up to the enjoyment of pleasure of every kind and I did so. And I know all about it and this is what I would say to you all just starting out. Remember *now* your Creator in the days of your *youth* and give your hearts *and lives* to Him, if you want to be happy.

1. In the first place by so doing you will avoid wretched poverty. For a man whose heart and life are given to God can not be a spendthrift. But just look at some young men how they spend their money or that of their fathers. However large a fortune they may have, they soon come to *poverty*.

And a man whose life is given to God is industrious and loves to work. He can not bear to be idle, for he knows and *feels* it to be a great sin. Besides all this God promises to see that those who live for Him shall not want what is best for them. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount declares that if God provides for sparrows and clothes lilies, He will be sure to see to the needs of His own children. So the way to get the best assurance that you will be blessed with things needful in this life is to give yourself up to God to be His, through thick and thin.

2. If you give your heart to God *now*, you will be kept from the sins which bring men into *disgrace*. "A good name is rather to be chosen than riches." Ah! you know not into what awful sins your passions will

plunge you, if you do not get the control of yourself, which only religion can give. You may be led along little by little, almost without knowing it, till you may wake up to find that you can not, *can not*, break off from your sins—your hated and ruinous sins. But if you give God your heart to be changed, renewed purified *now*, you will avoid all these awful dangers.

3. But this verse says "the years will draw nigh in which thou shalt take no pleasure in these things that relate to God." My dear young friend, that is terribly true. The longer you live away from God the less and less will be your care for Him and for your soul. How few old men ever turn to God! Yes, very few, forty years of age and over, ever do so. I heard Dr. Munhall ask once, in a large congregation, that all who were converted after seventy years of age would stand up. Not one stood up. Then he asked that all who had been converted after they were sixty years of age would stand up. Not one stood up. Then he asked all who were converted after fifty years to stand up. Only one, I believe, did so. When he asked all who were converted after forty years to stand up, only three or four did so. When he asked all converted after thirty years to stand up, perhaps eight or ten did so. A few more had been converted after twenty years of age; but when he asked all who were converted *under* twenty years to stand, most of the congregation arose.

True, I was converted after I was forty years of age, but it was a bare chance. And oh, how hard it was for me. And if I had not had the most patient of friends to sympathize with me, encourage me and

guide me, I should never have gotten along. I beg you do not follow my example in putting off your return to God.

Look at the men *whom you know*. How little interest they take in religion and their interest grows less and less all the time. The years have already come when they have no pleasure in the things of God. They have encouraged all their feelings, desires and ambitions but this, and this has almost died out. They have devoted all their thought and affections to making money and enjoying it, to seeking pleasure and enjoying it, to acquiring fame and enjoying it, and so their hearts are completely hardened and insensible to the religion which they cast aside ten, twenty or thirty years ago. And they will probably *never* feel the all-absorbing interest in religion which is necessary to obtain it. Hence, they will go on blinder and blinder, colder and colder, more and more hardened down to old age and to the grave and to a hopeless eternity. I beg you, my young friends, all who hear me to put off your return to God not one day longer.

NOTE.—The address, of which this is the outline, was delivered on a Sunday-school occasion and is a specimen of Mr. Holcombe's talks to young people.—ED.

MARK II: 15.

“And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.”

1. This class of persons *feel* that they are outcast, and not recognized by those who are esteemed the good. Hence, they feel backward, and will not make advances toward the good for fear of being slighted.

2. If those who are looked upon and honored as good and pious and pure, will show that they *want* to be friendly and sociable, it will take these persons by surprise, and will win their feelings—and this is nearly half the battle.

3. Besides, if the good, instead of waiting for these sinners to make advances, which they will not do, will take pains to show their interest in the welfare of these, their unfortunate brothers, it will make them believe that the pious are sincere, and not hypocritical, and that religion is a reality and not a mere profession. This is a great step toward gaining them. Most of this class believe in the Gospel in some vague sense, but it is too vague to amount to anything. But when they see the grand principle of the Gospel—*Love*—embodied in the Christian, and coming after them in their lost condition, it makes an impression, and it moves them to *action*. You can not drive men, nor can you convince them by abusing them and by shutting them out as too vile to be your associates. This only drives them further away. But all men have a chord in their natures that can be touched by

love and kindness. It was this gentleness and sympathy that drew the thousands around John Wesley. It was this wonderful tenderness that made the publicans and sinners and harlots, the outcast and the low and the vile seek the company of the loving Jesus and press into His presence, even when He was the guest of the great and noble of His day. They knew Jesus would never repulse them—they knew He would love them, help them, save them.

“Down in the human heart  
Crushed by the Tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.”

4. There has to be such an interest felt for those of this class as will make you cease to care for what people will say about your going among them and working with them. This was the sort of interest Jesus had for them.

5. Imagine your own dear son to be one of this number, and see what feelings you would have, what earnestness and what planning. These are some of the ways and means of getting at this class of persons. For we have to use means and reason in all things.

6. But the *agent*, the only one who can accomplish anything is *God's Holy Spirit*, and the Holy Spirit comes *only* in answer to prayer and trust. Prayer is to be first and second and third and everywhere and always, and then we may hope that our plans will succeed.

## PREPARATION FOR WINNING SOULS.

I am sure, my dear brethren, that in the discussion of this topic we are to be allowed some liberty and some latitude; and, if I shall speak in a general way, I trust I shall not be counted out of order. And, not to detain you with preliminaries, I say that, to be a winner of souls, a man must have the anointing of the Holy One, reproducing the mind that was in Christ, who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich," and who "being in the form of God, thought it not a usurpation to be equal with God, but He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient as far as unto death, even death on a cross."

A sympathy that arises from any other motive, or comes from any other source, than His divine and supernatural anointing, will fall short of the mark, and will be found too shallow and weak to bear with the hardheartedness, the perversity and the ingratitude of sinful men.

This anointing, on the other hand, brings with it a yearning love and a profound sympathy for those who are in the blindness and bondage of sin, which impels one to *seek out* the lost, to be at patient pains to save them, and to bear with all their dullness, slothfulness, selfishness, perverseness and thanklessness, while they are under training, so to speak.

It makes a man as ready and anxious to save the soul of a solitary sinner, however humble and degrad-

ed he may be, as to preach with power to the great congregations. It was this that made John Wesley as willing and careful and patient in talking to a negro servant girl as to a multitude. And it was this which lead a greater than John Wesley to lead with patient love along, the poor Samaritan adulteress whom He met at the well of Jacob.

But what is more important and imperative for the immediate work of getting a dead soul to a living Saviour, this divine anointing imparts that peculiar and energetic pungency which pierces to the heart and conscience of a sinner, rouses his fears, and prepares him for the reception of Christ.

Not only so, this unction from the Holy One is accompanied with a practical wisdom and *insight* which discerns, if not all things, yet, at least, *many practical things*. It enables a man to see that the first thing to be done in the way of saving a sinner is to convict him of sin. To get him to admit theoretically that he is a sinner, is equal to zero, amounts to nothing. But, in a way not to repel him, he must be made to *feel* that he is sinful, and so, wretched. It is wonderful what tact some men have in this respect. Here lies, undoubtedly, the secret of Sam Jones' power. He turns all classes of men, Pharisees in the church and sinners out of it, inside out, and makes them see, in spite of all spiritual apathy and all self-deception, what they are. He shows them secrets which they thought nobody knew but themselves.

But a greater than he did the same thing—Jesus touched the *sore spot* in the conscience of the Samaritan woman and compelled her to say: "He told me



all things that I have done." This revealing the secrets of the heart is a thing that fascinates and attracts and wins a sinner; and he feels, if you know so well without being told, all the particulars of his inner life and all the desperate trouble of his case, you surely can not make a mistake in pointing out the way of escape. Just as a patient yields immediate and unquestioning confidence to the physician who can tell him all his symptoms and describe his feelings better than he himself can do it.

If preaching the love of Christ without convicting of sin would have saved people, then most people in the United States would have been saved long ago, for the love of Christ has been told and retold and preached and re-preached, and it does not bring sinners to repentance. To be sure there are some sinners who have found, by bitter experience, the ripe fruits of sin, and these may be already prepared to accept a deliverer and a deliverance as soon as offered to them.

The possession of this unction presupposes that a man is correct, upright, holy in his life; for God would not give it to one who was not so. I believe Mr. Moody was right when he said: "If a man's life is not above reproach, the less he says the better." A friend of mine says he knows a minister who, though no doubt a good man and a fine talker, will *lie* now and then. Of course, he would not call it lying, nor would his admirers call it lying, but lying it is; and so he has no power. His preaching is like a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

There are some men who have some little success in soul-saving, but who would have much more

success, if their lives were thoroughly holy, and Christ-like. And indeed some men would not have the success they do have, if the public knew their secret life. For example, there are some men who indulge evil thoughts (if they do not go further) and who are not chaste in their associations with women; and there are others who are ill-tempered, cross, fault-finding, sour and bitter in their home life. If these things were publicly and generally known, they would lose what power they have with the people. Brethren, we can hardly be too careful of these things. But a full and constant anointing of the Holy One would correct all these evils at the *source*, namely, in the heart. It makes a sober Christian man tremble to know how little some of the preachers and evangelists of the day *pray*. It would be no wonder if under stress of some sudden and strong temptation, they should fall into scandalous sin and disgrace themselves and the cause they represent. There is an old and true saying that "when a man's life is lightning, his words will be thunderbolts."

We are advised to make ourselves familiar with the Scriptures, to equip ourselves with weapons from the armory of God's word; and excellent advice it is.

No man can maintain a spiritual life who does not habitually and diligently study God's holy word. No man is prepared to understand the wants of souls or to deal with them who is not familiar with the Scriptures. It is a marked characteristic of our honored brother, D. L. Moody, that he can, not only discern the deeper, inner spiritual sense of all the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New,

but he can handle and apply them with a skill, effectiveness and power that are truly wonderful. And, what is more, he is peculiarly apt in selecting just the right passages for any particular case or occasion. He is truly a masterly handler of the sword of the spirit, and his success is largely due to this fact.

But there is a class of workers who seem to think that it is sufficient to know by heart some Scriptures, or to have a certain facility in referring to different passages, and they rely upon this, congratulating themselves that they are doing well. But it is all perfunctory and lifeless and dead. There is no charm, no warmth, no power in it. A man must be more than a mechanical text-peddler in order to impress, arouse, comfort and save the souls of men. You may pitch cold lead at a man all day long and never break his skin; but let a full charge of ignited gunpowder drive it out of a well-aimed rifle, and the effect is terrific. So these text-mongers may throw Scripture at people all day long, and they laugh at it. But let the same missile be hurled forth with the energy of a soul on fire of the Holy Ghost, and the slain of the Lord will be many.

So, my brother, there is absolutely no substitute for this unction of the Holy Spirit. And this unction is given in answer to self-denying and daily prayer.

If we would know the secret of power with men, we *must* spend much time in secret communion with God.

NOTE.—This address is one of two delivered by Mr. Holcombe before the convention of Christian workers of United States and Canada in the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, September 21-28, 1887.—ED.

## THE MISSION—PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

### I. THE PAST.

Two years ago I was working in the Fire Department of the city, because I could get nothing else to do. The close and slavish confinement, the necessity of being always at my place, both of nights and Sundays, and the consequent lack of opportunity to do anything for the cause of my Master, made it almost intolerable for me, and several times I made up my mind I would give up the place, even though I had nothing else to fall back on for a living for myself and family. But through the advice of friends and the help of God, I was kept from that rash step. However, I determined I must do something for my Lord and for the men of my acquaintance and former occupation who would not, I knew, go inside of a church. So, though I was getting under sixty dollars a month, and had a large family to support, I determined to rent a room at my own expense in the central part of the city for holding Gospel meetings, and to hire a substitute to take my place in the Fire Department when I was absent and engaged in the work of my Lord.

I made known my plans to my former pastor, and he became interested and promised to help me. He was living in the country, and hardly ever attended the preachers' meeting here on Mondays; but it happened on the next Monday after I told him of my purpose that he was at the preachers' meeting, and, on my name being mentioned by some one present, he took

occasion to speak at length of my conversion, trials, poverty; my intense yearning to engage entirely in the work of God, and my immediate purpose to commence Gospel meetings in entire dependence on God alone for help. He went so far as to ask the preachers present to speak of the matter to their members and make an effort to get assistance from them for the expenses of my proposed work. But one of the preachers present, though saying very little at the time, was moved to lay before his official board a proposition not to *assist* in paying the expenses of such a plan of work, but to take me from the Fire Department and pay me a regular salary and defray all the other necessary expenses of such a Mission work as my heart was set on doing. And his official members were *also moved* to agree to his proposition, and when he came to me and told me of what had taken place, I was constrained to say: "This is God's doing, and it is marvelous in my eyes." So the very thing I desired above all other things; the very thing I should have chosen if I could have had my wish, was brought to pass. And I saw that by waiting God's time, He rewarded me in granting me the desire of my heart, and meanwhile I had learned lessons of patience and preparation that I could not have learned so well anywhere else. (Mr. Holcombe went on to speak of the beginning of his work in the Tyler Block, with the assistance and co-operation of Rev. Mr. Morris; of the results accomplished during that first period; of the removal of the Mission to Jefferson street, between Fourth and Fifth streets, and the results accomplished there, and, lastly, of the removal to the present building, etc. See his life.)

## II. THE PRESENT.

At present we have the house on Jefferson street. We have a Sunday-school of scholars who do not attend any other school, and would not. It is supplied with able and devoted teachers, such as Brother Atmore and others. The devotion of Brother Atmore is shown by his refusing to leave his class one Sunday to go to the Masonic Temple during Sam Jones' meetings. The children show a wonderful improvement since they have been coming to the Sunday-school. Brother Atmore's boys were almost unmanageable at first, but they are now so changed that it is very noticeable. This Sunday-school feature of the work is one of the most important and promising parts of it, and we believe the results to be accomplished by it *alone* will amply repay all the outlay of labor, time and means that has been made in the enterprise. We have also a reading-room in connection with the Mission-room, where we have papers, magazines, books, etc. The words of invitation and welcome painted on the door have drawn in some who, but for the reception, sympathy and help which they found there, might have gone on in their wretchedness to suicide.

While we furnish lodging, food, etc., to those who are destitute, yet it is with a view to their spiritual welfare and ultimate salvation. And so soon as we find a man is availing himself of our charity with no intention or effort to become a Christian, we let him go.

## III. THE FUTURE.

In looking at the past, we find there are several plain and striking results of the work. The most apparent is the radical and astonishing change for the better that has taken place in the cases of many unhappy men and their families. Two years ago these men "sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the laws of God. Therefore He brought down their hearts. They fell down and there was none to help. And none but themselves and God knew the bitterness of their bondage and the depth of their dark and unrelieved despair. But they were brought into contact with a new force and a new agency by means of the efforts and sympathy and instructions of those engaged in this work, and to-day their old life with its bitterness and bondage and darkness is left behind from one to two years in a path that, it is hoped, is not to be retraced forever, and now these men are happy again, and some of them prosperous in business. And what shall be said of their families—their wives and children, innocent sufferers from the vices of husbands and fathers?

Husband is husband again, father is father again, and the long dark night of hopeless sorrow and bitter tears has ended—ended at last, and ended, let us hope and pray, forever.

But if it be also true, as He said, who spake as never man spake, that it profits nothing to gain the whole world and lose one's own soul; if there is for the unsaved an undying worm and an unquenchable

fire, and for the saved an inheritance of joy that is incorruptible and a glory that fadeth never more away, then where or how shall we *begin* to compute the result of this mission work? It is recorded in eternity, and only the unfolding of eternity can unfold the good that has thus far been done.

But aside from these direct results, there is another one which can not be estimated, namely the demonstration of the power of the Gospel to do for helpless, enslaved, lost men what nothing else in the universe can do. There is naturally in the hearts of men a doubt as to the divinity of that religion which fails to do what it proposes to do, and so in times of religious deadness, men lose faith, and unbelief grows stronger and more stubborn in proportion as they see no actual instances of the power of the Gospel to save bad men. But when bad men have been reached and quickened and convicted and made holy by the Gospel, then the tide turns and faith becomes natural and easy and contagious, not to say necessary. Many of my old companions were brought to believe in the Gospel when I was changed by it; and now when scores of the worst cases in Louisville have been reached and saved, and have *stayed saved* so long, men are brought back from unbelief to faith, and naturally turn to the Gospel with increasing hope.

But this return of faith has not only been noticeable in the case of the unsaved classes, the churches have seen this work, and have had their faith in the divine power of the Gospel to save all men increased, and a corresponding activity is witnessed among many of the churches in the city. They



have learned also that to save lost men we must, like Jesus, not wait for them to come to us, but we must go to them and after them, just as has been done in this work.

There is a passage in Malachi which says, "Bring all the tithes into my storehouse and prove me herewith if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out such a blessing there shall not be room enough to receive it."

This Walnut-street church, led by its devoted pastor, was willing to accept God's challenge, and they brought the tithes, they laid down their money, they made the venture, and God has given them a great blessing.

But this is only the pledge of far greater blessings yet to be given them, if they will continue to honor God, by the faith that lays upon His altar, sacrifices that cost something and amount to something.

Let us not stop to congratulate ourselves upon what has been done and rest satisfied with that, but accept it only as an indication of what He will do for us if we have faith to claim a deep wide-spread and continuous revival.

**NOTE.**—The foregoing is the substance of an address delivered by request of the Directors of the Mission on the occasion of a reunion of the converts and mass-meeting of the Christian people of Louisville, in the Walnut-street Methodist Church, in April, 1886.—ED.

## CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

From September 21st to 28th, the second convention of Christian Workers in the United States and Canada was held in Broadway Tabernacle, New York City. From the published report of the proceedings, this speech of the Rev. S. P. Holcombe is taken :

It would be presumptuous in me to stand up here and say how you should conduct a "Gospel Meeting." I do not propose to do that; but will simply tell you how, for six years, I have conducted one at Louisville, Kentucky, and with some success. I say some success, for we have succeeded in gaining the confidence and respect of all classes—preachers, Christians, gamblers, drunkards and infidels. Not only have we succeeded in reaching the hearts of the people, but also their pocket-books.

Beginning in a basement room, at a rent of twenty dollars per month, we now own a building of thirty rooms. As an instance of the respect all classes have for our work, while we were negotiating for this property a German Singing Society also wanted it. This kept the price up above our figures.

I called on the President of the Club, who is an infidel, told him I wanted that property for my Mission work. Said he: "Mr. Holcombe, I am not a Christian, neither do I believe in the churches, but I do believe in the kind of work that you are doing. I shall withdraw until the Holcombe Mission is done." We soon had the property.

Since my conversion I have tried to be a man, just as much as before. As Dr. Pentecost said the other day: "When I put off the old man, I

did not put on the old woman," and by this I mean no disrespect to the dear old women, for many of them have more manhood in them than some of us men, and my wife is one of them. What I mean is, that since I have become a Christian I have not lost any of my manhood.

When I was a gambler, I had gambling houses all over the country. The object was to get other people's money without giving them any equivalent, in order to gratify my base passion. I could not, of course, call on the police for protection, as my business was not legitimate. Hence, I had to protect myself, which I did at all hazards.

So, when I opened a house for the Lord, to win souls for Him, I determined I would take care of it at any cost. I think some who are engaged in Christian work are too stilted, others are too lax. I have tried to be both stiff and limber; when it was a matter of no consequence, to bend like the willow; when it was something vital to my Master's cause, to be as stiff as steel. In other words I have tried to be "all things to all men" that I might win some.

I think all Missions ought to have a leader. Ours has one. I am the leader of the meetings. Not that I do all the talking, but I look out for the details.

I have a time for opening and a time for closing the meeting, and I always close at the time. If my opening time is 7:30, I begin the meeting if there is no one there but myself, which, however, has never occurred; and if my closing hour is at 9 o'clock,

I close at 9—not 9:30 or 10. We have in Louisville a class of poor people who attend the Mission and who work every day. They must be at their places of labor at an early hour in the morning. They love to be at the meeting, and when they know that they will be dismissed promptly, they will come. I feel that if I were to keep these men and women up till 10, 11 or 12 o'clock, and let them get up at 5 and go to a hard day's work, while I lie in bed until 8 or 9, that I would be a robber.

Now, I do not say that I go home at 9 o'clock; for if there is a single one anxious enough about his soul's eternal salvation to stay till the dawning of the morning, I will remain with him. I simply say that I have a time for opening and a time for closing, and I keep promptly to it.

I have no set way of conducting the meetings. I try to take advantage of the situation and do the best I can under the circumstances.

We always have a Scripture lesson read and a few remarks by the leader. If I ask him to speak twenty minutes, I mean twenty minutes; and, if he is a bishop, I will stop him when his time is up. I don't ask you to agree that this is right—I am only telling you how I conduct a Gospel meeting. After this we have Christians to give their experience, never allowing more than three minutes, and I make it my business to know what kind of lives those who testify are living. If one gets up and begins to talk about the love of Jesus, who I know has that day been drinking, or in a house of prostitution, I stop him right there. I do not allow him to talk, and

injure the cause, and then tell him afterward. I say, "Brother, we don't want to hear from you to-night," and so I stop him at once.

I am very careful as to who testifies in my meetings and what they say. If a man who is not a Christian undertakes to exhort others to become Christians, I stop him, because he is trying to talk about something of which he knows nothing, and this is one of the hardest things in the world to do.

Where everybody is invited to take part in a meeting, we are apt to have cranks to deal with. They must be checked and kept down rather than encouraged. By cranks I mean those who have eccentric and unsound views, and think that nobody else can know as well about these things as themselves.

I was holding a series of Gospel meetings in Atlanta, Ga., on one occasion, and had been talking from Acts ii., 38, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In the address I undertook, as best I could, to show that He, the Holy Ghost, convinces men of sin, and that He reveals Jesus to poor sinners as their sin bearer and life giver, and that it is He that produces that change in men which we call conversion or regeneration or the new birth; and that He, the Holy Ghost, is the comforter of God's people, in their loneliness and trials and conflicts here in this world of exile, as well as our teacher to guide us into the truth. When I had gotten through, I said, "Now we will have short talks from others, and no one will talk more than three minutes." Up jumped a street preacher, who began saying that I

had been talking about the Holy Ghost, but I did not know what I was talking about. He knew all about Him, and would tell them about Him. (This was pretty trying, but I kept mum, however.) He then began a harangue. When his time was up, I stopped him. "You are going to limit the Holy Ghost, are you? You are going to take the responsibility of stopping Him, are you?" "No, but I am going to stop you, and that at once." And at once he stopped.

I never allow those who testify to abuse others. Some will begin to talk about the gambling hells. I stop them and say: "No man will go farther to stop these things than I, but this is not the place for that kind of talk." Others, as soon as they are converted, begin to find fault with the churches, and abuse the ministers. I do not approve of this, and I discourage it. I am sorry to know that many who are conducting Gospel meetings are inclined to find fault with Christians, magnifying themselves and their work and underrating the churches and the work of their faithful pastors.

Some of these Mission workers have spent the best part of their lives in sin, never looking into the Bible—have been converted only a short time; have had a little success; got the big-head, and think they know better how to do God's work than those dear men who have been good all their lives and made a study of God's Word.

My dear brethren, in the Mission work, we must remember that all who have ever done any mighty work for God have been trained for it, and trained

slowly. Moses, you remember, when he was going to his work down in Egypt, commenced killing people. He was the great chieftain, and was going to deliver his brethren by killing his enemies. This was not the way God wanted it done. God saw that there was good material in Moses, and that He could use him, but he must be trained. So He sent him away to the solitudes of Horeb and Sinai, and kept him there forty years. Then when God called him to go down and bring His people out, he had learned the lesson God wanted him to learn, had gotten down in the dust, was humbled, and he said: "Who am I, Lord?" Moses had gotten more of the Holy Ghost. The more we get of the Holy Ghost the closer we get to God. The more we see of Him, and the more we see of God, the less we think of ourselves; the more insignificant we become in our own eyes.

The Twelve had a grand work to do, but they were slowly trained for it. So, then, let us young converts, whose work God has honored and blessed, be very careful how we magnify ourselves, and underrate the regular ministry. These men are doing a noble work in their respective fields, and they are just as ready and willing to take hold of the poor outcast as we Mission workers are.

There are preachers who are occupying pulpits, where they are getting twenty-five hundred or three thousand dollars a year, and they are doing just as much to save poor drunkards as we ignorant, humble Mission workers are.

You who were at the Chicago Convention last year remember what Dr. Lawrence told us about taking

one of these poor, wretched drunkards to his beautiful home; how, notwithstanding he was full of vermin, he had him take a bath, burned his clothes, put clean ones on him, gave him a bed and took care of him as a brother. I tell you, my friends, I was touched by that story as well as taught a valuable lesson. I know of many instances of the same kind that I might tell.

You remember Dr. John A. Broadus, a well-known Baptist minister in Louisville. I know him well. He has been one of my best friends. Not very long before I left home, a drunkard came to the Mission and showed me a note from Dr. Broadus, saying: "This man has called on me for help. I do not like to give him any money, as he is under the influence of liquor. Give him whatever you think best, and I will settle the bill." I asked the man, as I knew him well: "How did you happen to go to Dr. Broadus?" "Because I had heard so many say that he had helped them." I gave him nothing. My friends, we must not underrate the willingness of the preachers to help the poor outcast, for they are much interested in their very welfare.

I love the Missions and the Mission work. Just at this present time, the Missions have got a boom over the country, but if we are not very careful how we talk and act, the Missions will suffer. And the only reason some of them have not quit already is because those who support them, for want of time to hunt up real results, have had to take printed reports.

It is easy for us to find fault with Christians, rich Christians, and say they are cold and indifferent about the souls of men, but the history of the church proves



that this is a great mistake. These Missions have to be supported by rich Christians, and when you find a man that has got much money, you will find that he is not a fool. He is generally a man with a long head and farsightedness. He wants to see where his money is going, and what is being done with it. If you use it properly, he will give it liberally. If he finds that you are one of those fellows that want to give his money to every beggar that comes along, he will stop his subscription at once. These are simple facts. If we want this Mission work to succeed we have got to be very careful.

I never allow any begging in my Mission, I don't care how pitiable the object may be. When tramps want food, I send them to the wood yard to work for it. If men will not work, neither shall they eat of the money intrusted to me for spiritual work.

I have no indiscriminate praying. When I want a prayer, I want to know something about the man or woman who is to make it. I ask some one who, I have good reason to believe, is a true Christian, that is, who walks and talks with God. I do not care about their name or denomination. I feel that there is a great responsibility in going to God for these poor sinners, and I want the best man or woman that I can get to talk to God for them. I say: "I am going to call on some one to pray. I don't want you to pray for Africans, Chinese or any other of the heathen nations here. When you go home, you can pray for them all night if you want to, but now we want you to pray for this special work."

I believe in good singing, and try to have it. I would like to have a hundred in the choir. I seldom have over two persons. I suppose the reason is that I will not allow any one to sit on my platform and sing these sweet hymns unless I have good reason to believe they are living pure, holy, consistent Christian lives. I think the man or woman who sits in the choir ought to be as good as he who stands in the pulpit.

Some will come to me and say: "So-and-so is a fine singer; has such a fine voice." "What church does he or she belong to?" "Oh, they are not members." "Well, then, excuse me, if you please." "But that might save them!" "I shall not try the experiment."

I have polite ushers to welcome the people, and to shake hands with them as they come in and also as they go out, and invite them back. They are also supplied with tracts for distribution, tracts that have passed under my observation, as I allow nobody to distribute tracts unless I know what they are.

I try to keep the run of the converts; in fact, I try to know all about them. I try to get them into some church of their choice, that one which they will feel the most at home in and where they will get the right sort of care. It is a very easy thing to get one of these poor drunkards, who hasn't got any place to sleep or anything to eat, to say, "I am going to try and be a better man and follow Christ!" It is a very easy thing, I say, and the poor fellows mean it. But, oh! my friends, how hard it is to get them up to the sticking point. They want to be

watched over and given the very best nursing. If I had not had the very best care and nursing of one of the most godly of ministers, I do not think I should be standing before you to-day a Christian man.

I try to follow them up and help the pastors to nurse them. In order to keep track of them we use a book, something like a bank check-book. When they want to unite with some church, we give them a certificate of introduction. In it I ask the pastor to let me know when it is presented. On the stub I take the man's name, age, residence, where from, to whom introduced, with space for remarks as to future career, etc. If he has a home, we visit him at his home, and if he has not, I invite him to visit me at my home at any time, day or night, which is in the same building over the Mission, and we talk together and pray together.

QUESTION. "Will you please state whether you ever recommend fasting as a means of keeping the body under?"

ANSWER. "I think it is a good idea. I think fasting a good thing to keep the body under. Owing to my poverty, since I have become a Christian, I have had little to feed on. This necessary self-denial has enabled me to keep my poor body down, and from betraying me into sin. No man was ever a greater slave to his passions than I. My passion for gambling was so great I would have committed murder to gratify it. I was very licentious. I just gave loose reins to my passions; but to-day, I thank God, I can stand up before you and say that I am complete master of myself. I know it is a help to live a plain life.

Q. "How many meetings a week do you hold?"

A. "We have them every night."

Q. "Do the men go to the churches when you send them? Do you prepare them?"

A. "I do not hurry them into the churches. And yet I don't say they must be converted before they go in. When a man is sick of sin, willing to give it up, I think he is about as ready for the church as we can get him."

Q. "Do you have much or little Bible reading in the services?"

A. "We do not have much Bible reading. I know that it is the power of God unto salvation; but the class of men who attend Missions, as a rule, are in no condition to be profited by a long Bible reading. The mission of the Missions is to stop these men in their downward course, put them to thinking, get them into churches; then have the Bible read and explained to them by those who are more competent than I am."

Q. "How long do you hold service?"

A. "Exactly one hour and a half; never more, sometimes a little less. The first half hour is taken up in prayer and singing, the other hour in exhortation and testimonies and prayers for the inquirers. After dismissing, we remain with any anxious ones."

Q. "When do you have your converts' meeting?"

A. "Every Sunday morning, beginning at 9.30 o'clock and closing at 10:30, in time for them to get to church."

Q. "Do the churches take good care of the converts?"

A. "As a rule, yes. Some better than others."

Q. "Do the converts come to your Mission after they have joined the church?"

A. "Oh, yes, sir. They feel more at home in the Mission than they do in church, because it was there they entered upon the Christian life. Many of our Christian workers make a great mistake. They find fault with the churches because they don't receive these tramps—I must call them tramps—in their filthy condition and give them the best seats, etc. I want to say right here that a clean church, where clean people go, is no place for a body of tramps. We must remember, my friends, that people who are clean, who have good clothes and clean homes, also have some rights to be considered. I say it is not right to take these people into a fine church, and put them side by side with the clean ones until they themselves are thoroughly clean. I took fifty or sixty of them into a church once, but afterward I was aware that I had made a great mistake. The Mission is the place to clean them up, and then send them to a clean church, and they will feel better themselves, and be warmly welcomed by the members. I don't like dirt any better than other folks, but some one has to do this work, and I am perfectly willing to do it."