

HENRY MOORHOUSE

The English Evangelist.

BY

REV. JOHN MACPHERSON,

AUTHOR OF

*“The Christian Hero”;*

*“Life and Labours of Duncan Matheson”;* *“Revival and Revival Work”;*

ETC., ETC.

“GOD GAVE THE BEST IN HEAVEN FOR THE WORST ON EARTH.”—Page 106.

LONDON: MORGAN AND SCOTT,

OFFICE OF “The Christian,” 12, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, E.C.

*And may be Ordered of any Bookseller.*

## CHAPTER III.

### New Life.

“And they began to be merry.”—LUKE XV. 24.

LIVING Christianity is, of all things, practical. It is so, because the Spirit of Christ in the believer creates a tender conscience; and a conscience, purged and sweetened by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and the peace-speaking blood of atonement, is the true spring of uprightness and honour as in the sight of God. Work, honest work, must ever follow genuine conversion. It may be ruling a kingdom or trundling a wheelbarrow, sitting on the woolsack or making sacks to hold wool, brain-work or work that needs no brains, building a St. Paul's or cobbling old shoes, reforming a nation or sweeping a kitchen; in any case, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will be manifested in hearty and faithful service. The Lord's vineyard is wider than church or chapel, Sabbath-school or Mission-hall, prayer-meeting or Bible-reading; it is as wide as earth with its ten thousand honest occupations, and it means not only coming to Jesus, but also Jesus coming to every human relation, every worldly interest, every word and deed of life in the flesh.

“What is wrong with your shoes?” said a pastor's wife to her guest, a minister who was assisting her husband in evangelistic services. Surveying his boots with a curious air, the other replied, “It seems to me as if your servant-girl has been rubbing up my shoes with grate and fire-iron polish; they are glancing so bright.” “I will tell you all about that,” said the mistress. “Don't you know that Betsy was converted at the meeting last night, and she is just brushing the shoes with all the warmth of first love?” Yes; first love is warm, and it should always be practical! it should go into first works, and glance brightly in the very drudgeries of every-day life.

“What good does your religion do you?” demanded a furious carter, whose cart had got into collision with a neighbour's in one of our narrow streets. “I will tell you one good thing it does me,” was the reply of the Christian carter, who took calmly the flourishing and cracking of the angry man's whip; “before I was converted I needed a new whip every year, but since I was turned to the Saviour, seven years ago, one whip has served me all the time, and it is as good as ever.” That is practical Christianity; it even goes into a carter's whip.

Henry Moorhouse was now a new man; old things had passed away, all things had become new. Immediate separation from evil companions and

all dishonourable courses, was the unquestionable result of his conversion. "Whatsoever things are true," says the Apostle Paul to the Philipians, "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." To some of us who knew Moorhouse only in his latest years it seemed as if he had made those lofty Christian rules the constant and successful study of his life. His first outset in the path of well-doing is attested by those who knew him well.

Entering into partnership with his former companion, Thomas Castle, now, happily, a fellow-Christian, they began business on the joint capital of three-pence. Betaking themselves to a "swag-shop," that is to say, a shop where hawkers are supplied with such articles as thread, tape, scissors, etc., at wholesale prices, they invested their small store of cash. By great diligence, and owing mainly to Henry's talent for business, by the end of the week they had thirty shillings each after paying all expenses.

Castle, having no turn for business, left his companion, and found employment in a sawmill, meanwhile taking part in open-air preaching, and bearing a powerful testimony to the grace of God, who had changed the prize-fighter into a humble wrestler for the prize of life eternal. His career was cut short by an accident in the mill, resulting in his death. "Tom, my lad, art thou going to die?" said his sister to him, shortly before the end. "No, Hannah," he replied, with a smile, "not going to die; going to live; for he that believeth on Jesus shall never die." So he fell asleep.

Meanwhile, Henry entered into the employment of a shop-keeper in Oxford Street, Manchester, where he further proved his talents as a salesman. His master, he soon perceived, was over-stocked, and Henry suggested that the surplus should be sold by auction. To this his master objected, on the ground that the auctioneer's commission would swallow up the profits. In his zeal for his master, he offered to take out a license, pay for it, and sell the goods himself. This he did, commencing to auction in another shop his master had in Deansgate. Here he was most successful in selling, and greatly pleased his employer. Prosperous in business, prospering in spirit, he pursued an honourable course of Christian virtue, and was beginning to realize more and more the blessedness of the man whose character is portrayed in the first Psalm. He was now the tree planted by the rivers of water, and his leaf was green.

The following letter illustrates the change in the character of Henry Moorhouse, and reveals the joy and zeal of the young convert:—

"My dear brother in our risen Jesus—My soul is this morning filled with great joy, and I can today break forth into singing, and repeat—

“Above the rest this note shall swell,  
My Jesus hath done all things well.’

“Bless His Holy Name, He has done so. If, my dear brother, you had been with me last night, you would have been grateful to Him for His great mercies to us. He, last night, showed me that it was ‘not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.’ We had a glorious meeting in Fairfield Street; the room was crowded to excess, and the power of God was felt right into our hearts. The blood of my dear Jesus, God’s own Son (oh, is it not a happy privilege to call Him my Jesus?) was washing away the unbelief of many sin-sick souls last night, and I know that many will spend a happy Christmas that would not have done so, only for the grace of my dear Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

After the meeting was over we were requested by some friends to go and see their father. We went, I and Tom and Mr. H——, and when I was introduced to him the old man wept and said, ‘Oh, Harry, I knew thee when thou wast so very wicked, but I am glad to see thee so altered.’ We retired into the parlour, and there the power of the Holy Ghost fell right upon us. We had prayer together for a dear young man that was there that wished to give his heart to God, and, when we were praying, the old man began to cry out, ‘Lord Jesus, help me!’ We wrestled with God for about half an hour that He would drive away the clouds of unbelief from around his heart, and the old man was crying bitterly, and he said, ‘Oh, Jesus, what shall I do? Thou hast given me everything in this world that I could desire; and what have I given Thee in return?’ We told him to give Him his heart, and, while we were praying again, the old man shouted out, ‘That’s Jesus—I see Him, I see Him! glory be unto His name; I am saved through the blood!’ And the old man began to pray.

“Shortly after his wife came in, and he said to her, ‘Oh, Mary, Mary, God has forgiven me my sins; I’ve seen Jesus on the cross; I’ve felt the precious blood in my heart; and I feel so happy: I must tell everybody what the Lord has done for me.’ And then the old man began again to praise God for His mercies unto him. Oh, glory be unto His Name, He is, indeed, making bare His arm amongst us. The blood of my dear Saviour has not been shed in vain. Calvary has not had its victim for nought. Satan has not had his head bruised for nought. Glory be unto Christ’s holy name, He will bring us safe to glory in spite of all in earth or hell, if we will only be faithful unto Him! Oh, may God bless you, my dear brother, and put you close

to the precious blood of my dear Saviour Jesus Christ.—H. M.”

The conversion of Henry Moorhouse was sound and thorough. But no work of regenerating grace, be it never so profound or complete, exempts from subsequent conflict. The shores of the Red Sea may resound with the sweet song of redemption; but the wilderness lies not far ahead. So with our young convert. His joy was full; but he soon discovered in the cup of his happiness drops of the old gall of bitterness. Although his peace was like a river, the rocky bed of the deceitful heart quickly disturbed its even flow, and turned the peaceful stream into an angry torrent.

When Robert Annan of Dundee,<sup>1</sup> in the triumphant hour of conversion, imagined, like many another young convert, that sin would not much trouble him any more, great was his horror one day to find, as the result of sore provocation, the old habit of profane swearing threatening to return upon him, an oath almost leaping from his heart to his mouth. Annan, happily, was equal to the occasion. Putting both his hands upon his mouth he gagged himself effectually, being willing to seem a fool rather than sin. This child-like method of self-control he continued to employ, till, at length, the renewed will was strong enough to need the aid of the willing hand no more. Thus grace obtained the victory.

In like manner, Henry Moorhouse learned to distrust himself and maintain a strict watch at every avenue of the soul. On one occasion finding himself in the wrong, he did not conceal the matter or palliate the offence. Promptly and with perfect candour he confessed his fault. This he did, too, in the presence of some to whom he was an utter stranger. “I am a Christian,” said he, with much feeling; and a Christian should ever love his neighbour as himself, and do to others as he would have others do to him.” This afforded him an opportunity of bearing a testimony to the Saviour, who had done so much for him. His frankness, his evident sincerity, the testimony he bore to Christ, and the high calling of the sons of God, as well as his self-diminishing confession, made a deep impression on all present, some of whom were moved to tears.

This child-like transparency, this self-denying candour, this manly readiness to confess a fault, he constantly set himself to cultivate, and found it an effective means of promoting peace of mind and growth in gracious character. At first, amidst the joys and triumphs of faith, he had almost lost sight of the “old man.” Bitter was his sense of humiliation when he discovered sin lurking in the thickets of his heart, and ready to spring a surprise upon him. War between the flesh and the spirit he saw there must be, and he began to gird his loins for the conflict.

---

<sup>1</sup> See “The Christian Hero; A Sketch of the Life of Robert Annan.” Morgan and Scott.

The first stage in the Christian course is, in many respects, the most important. It gives tone and complexion to all that follows. Our young convert was now laying the foundations. He had found the way to his closet, and he had learned to shut the door. He was much in prayer, and by habitual exercise was gradually rising to an eminent post on the watch-tower. Exuberant though his joy was, he found it did not exempt him from conflict. Nay, the more grace abounded, the more urgent seemed to grow the necessity to watch and pray. The more grace, the more cross; the more blessing, the more battle. The bitter memories of his former life, the humbling experiences of his first Christian days, the sense of his weakness, the dread of sin, the constantly increasing knowledge of his own heart, and of Satan's devices, led him to frequent deep searchings of soul, and a jealous watching of himself, with the never-to-be-omitted prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." His constant watchword was—

"My soul, be on thy guard!"

At home, in the house of strangers where he sojourned, on entering into any company, on going forth to public duty, he could still be heard saying, "O my soul, be on thy guard!" To watch and pray is doubtless one of the best accomplishments of the good soldier of Jesus Christ; and this he now cultivated with never-wearying diligence.

As one result, it was touching to hear him with mingled solemnity and tenderness addressing young Christians on the perils of temptation—temptations everywhere and in all things: temptations from within, from without, and from beneath; that is, from the heart, from the world, and from the devil: temptations in the body, and temptations in the soul; temptations in speech, and temptations in silence; temptations in work, and temptations in rest; temptations at home, and temptations abroad; temptations in society, and temptations in solitude; temptations in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity, in joy and in sorrow, from enemies and from friends: to self-trust and to despair, to shame and to undue boldness, to procrastination and to precipitancy, to carnal security and to unbelieving fear: in short, temptations in everything—"the greatest temptation out of hell" being, as Samuel Rutherford has said, "when there is no temptation."

This watching unto prayer more and more moderated his joy, toning it into that evenness and cheerful serenity of spirit which is the loftiest and safest condition of the soul outside of heaven.

It was at this period, too, that he acquired the habit of searching the Scriptures with prayer for light. More than anything else, perhaps, this practice was the spring of that stream of living water which brought refreshing to thousands in subsequent years. At first he renewed his strength

by prayer; by-and-by he happily learned to conjoin the Word with prayer, thus making communion complete. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," became the motto of his spiritual life. He spoke and listened to God alternately, now putting his mouth to the trumpet of prayer, and then putting his ear to the trumpet of the Word. When he came upon a passage of Scripture he did not understand, it gave him much concern. He would read, ponder, pray, search the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture; and when at length dawning light rewarded his persistent labours, he was wont to rejoice like one who had obtained a great victory, and secured much spoil. On such occasions, as his friends will readily remember, he would come out of his room, exclaiming, in tones as jubilant as those of the ancient philosopher, "I have found it! I have found it!"

In this way he put on his spirit that fine edge which was his chief characteristic as a Christian teacher; and thus, too, he acquired the habit of maintaining the same fineness of edge, the loss of which is often the effect of much public work, and is the ruin of usefulness. He kept the grindstone in his closet on which he whetted a sickle that only grew sharper with the years. He fed his soul on truth and love. Thus he learned to keep the flame of personal love to his Saviour burning on the altar of his heart. So it has ever been with holy men and powerful preachers. Augustine was wont to break out in his preaching thus: "Oh, unspeakable love! oh, sweetness of mercy inconceivable! oh, most amazing condescension!! that God, for the sake of man, should be made man—that God for man should die in the flesh—that He should submit to be 'tempted in all things like as we are,' only without sin! . . . Let thy soul embrace thy crucified Jesus; let it drink deep of His most precious blood. . . . And oh, let this wonderful love take possession of all the love thou art capable of!" In like manner, Samuel Rutherford would exclaim, "He, He Himself is more excellent than heaven. Oh, what a life were it to sit beside this Well of Love, and drink and sing, sing and drink!" So Henry Moorhouse with trusting heart would sometimes say, "Oh that I could die for Jesus!"

This persistent course of close walking with God he continued to pursue after he entered into a quiet little home of his own. His marriage took place in October, 1870. In his early devoted friend Mary, he found a true Christian "help-meet." In full sympathy with him in his soul-winning, his wife smiled her blessing on him as he went forth on frequent journeyings and to distant fields. When he returned he found his house not only a haven of rest, but a sacred retreat, a school of Bible-study, a prophet's chamber on the wall. So we find him writing, "I do not forget the days, long since past and gone, when you, and you almost alone, tried to win me from a life of

sin to Christ. And if the Lord has put honour upon me in making me a servant of His, I feel glad, darling, because I have you to share it with me. I am just longing to be back with you, love; you spoiled me for long trips by making our little home so nice. I find no place like it anywhere, and I get home-sick when I am away about a week.”

In his own home he sought and found the discipline he needed for personal holiness and public service. In the course of the years his prayers for greater nearness and likeness to his Lord were answered in a manner he had little expected. He found a rare and most effective teacher in the person of his little paralyzed daughter, Minnie. In conversation with a friend on the subject of parental responsibility, he said he was not afraid, if it were so ordered in providence, to bring up a large family for God. Years afterwards, the same friend, meeting him, said, “How about the large family, Harry?” To which he replied, “My heavenly Father knew what was best for Harry. He has given me one little paralyzed girl; and she has done more to soften my heart for other poor little children and their sorrows than a crowd of healthy ones could have ever done.” The sufferings and helplessness of this child, her words and ways, supplied him with endless illustrations of grace and truth, always instructive, and often beautiful. For instance, when speaking on the words of promise, “I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness,” he said, “I have a little child at home, seven years old, paralyzed from babyhood, who, seeing me with a parcel I wanted to take upstairs, said, ‘I will carry the parcel for you, father.’ ‘How can you carry the parcel, Minnie?’ I asked. ‘Ah,’ replied the child, ‘I will carry the parcel, and you will carry me!’”

He was by natural temperament affectionate and tender-hearted; yet, no doubt, it was in the school of his little daughter’s sufferings that his spirit was touched to the singular fineness of feeling and gracious sweetness which, in his later years at least, were the predominating features of his character and preaching.

“I remember one time,” he says, “I got downhearted, cloudy, and dark. It was a very miserable day; at least, I was miserable. I do not think Christians ought to be miserable, no matter what kind of days there are. But so it was with me. It was Christmas Eve, and there was a thick fog all over Manchester, where I was; and the miserable sleety rain was coming down. I looked at my watch, and it was about eight o’clock. Four miles away there was a little cottage, with a bright fire and a nice cup of tea ready for me. I thought to myself, ‘I will get right home, and make myself comfortable.’ But at that moment I thought of a little child two miles away. There were no ’buses, and no trams—I should have to trudge all the way; and it was Christmas Eve. I began to think, ‘Well now, little girls will want to have a

doll tomorrow; I wonder if anybody has taken anything to this little child. It will be eleven o'clock before I get home if I go; and what will my wife say to my going home so late? And I will have to walk through the rain, and the slush, and the fog.' Something whispered, 'I would not do it if I were you.'

"But then another thought came: 'Suppose that child were your little Minnie, and there was no one to give her anything.' I went into a toy-shop, bought a doll for a few pence, and started off through the cold and the wet. By-and-by I came to a cellar, where this child lived with her mother and little brother. I knocked at the door, and a voice said, 'Come in.' I put my thumb on the latch, and went inside. There was a miserable little bit of fire burning, and no candle. By the light of the fire I saw the little boy sitting on one side; and lying on the bed there was the little girl, about nine years old. She was suffering from a terrible disease; she was going to have her little leg taken off in a few weeks. She said to me, 'I am so glad you have come; nobody has been to see us; and mother has gone to see if she could get anything to do, and get some money to buy the Christmas dinner with.' I said, 'I have come to give you a doll;' and I gave it to her. The little thing looked at it; then she put her hand into the bed, and took out some old rags. She said, 'I have been trying to make a doll myself, but I have got a real one now.' She took the doll I gave her, and kissed it.

"In a moment the darkness had gone from my spirit; the cold, chilly feeling had disappeared; and I was as happy as ever I could be. I would not have missed taking that doll, that only cost threepence or fourpence, for a five-pound note. How glad it had made me! And the next day the happiness I had in seeing my own little girl was ten times more, because I knew another little girl was made happy too."

"My dear little girl," he writes from America, in a time of storm and shipwreck, to his daughter Minnie, "what a world of sorrow we live in; don't we, Minnie? It will soon be Christmas now, and I wonder if my little girl would like to try and make somebody happy that day. I wonder if Minnie would like to buy Mrs. C—— a Christmas dinner, and to send her little cousins (Uncle James's boys) a nice Christmas-box each? Minnie has money of her own, and Papa would be so glad if she would of her own accord do these things. I have no money, or else I would do it; but I am sure Minnie will—won't you, my pet? So with love to all at home, and praying God to bless my darling child, and all in Stretford.

"H. M."

This earnest desire and endeavour to train his little girl in self-sacrificing works of love shows how full his own heart was of Christian kindness. And yet he says his Father in heaven had taught him by his paralyzed child more

than he could teach her, more than he had learned by other means.

His “newness of life “was early fostered by holy associations and friendships. His conversion was in all respects a distinct, clear-cut separation from the world. He went clean over to the Lord’s side. There was no halting, no reservations in the interest of the flesh, no attempts to mince the matter, or maintain some secret, sly, or slender connection with the world. He started well. He identified himself with the most spiritually-minded men, the most thoroughly-devoted Christians, the most apostolic, self-denying, and disinterested soul-winners, the most decided and outspoken friends of true revival. He loved them. He loved their company, their zeal, their much prayer, their heroic bearing of the cross, their holy ways. But for this he might never have appeared on the field at all. Men possessing gifts and grace, sometimes, from a timorous, worldly-wise policy, fearing what is called “extremes,” which is really only a closer imitation of Christ than the world likes, shrink into themselves, and shrivel into an utterly unprofitable religious profession. Moorhouse was enabled to take a stand, and to share the offence of the cross with the men whose zeal and faithfulness scandalized the temporizers; and the cross brought him the holiest friendships on earth, advanced him to high usefulness in Christ, and the honour that comes from God.

Thus all his relationships were revolutionized. That this tree was of the Heavenly Father’s planting became apparent to all men from the fruit it bore. From the first in Henry Moorhouse could be seen “the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Clearly this was a new creation: old things had passed away, all things had become new. The more hideous the old, the more beautiful seemed the new. It was a marvel, a lesson, a gospel to look on the two Henrys—Henry the first by flesh and blood, and Henry the second by the grace of God. Nor did the stamp of “newness,” as in the case of too many young converts, become dim with age; so did he walk with God, it grew brighter and brighter with the advancing years.