

HENRY MOORHOUSE

The English Evangelist.

BY

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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.”

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### Bible Spreading.

“But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.”—1 PET. i. 25.

DURING his latter years he went largely into the work of Bible-selling. This was no commercial speculation; nor was it even a mere scheme for the circulation of the Scriptures; it was a purely evangelistic work. By means of the Bible-carriage he simply and solely aimed to advance the kingdom of heaven, and to spread the knowledge of the King. Such was his faith in the Word of God, such his love for the oracle of saving truth, that no greater joy was his than the joy of putting this invaluable treasure into the hands of the poverty-stricken heathen of England, unless it were the supreme delight of winning a soul for Christ. He refused all remuneration by the sale of the book; any profits derived from the business were devoted to the purchase and gratuitous circulation of Gospel tracts and such like Christian literature. Every carriage was consecrated as solemnly as if it were a grand cathedral. Every movement was a missionary enterprise, every book sold was accompanied with invocation of the Holy Spirit; and every good day's work was celebrated with a renewal of the angels' song on the birth of our Saviour, “Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good-will to men.”

To fairs and other places of public resort he took his caravan, finding thus opportunities not only of putting the Word of God into the hands of vast numbers of the people, but also of preaching the Gospel to many thousands. The immediate results were frequently of a remarkable character; hundreds were awakened to a sense of eternal verities, and many were converted. It was a work of faith, a labour of love; but it could only have been carried on extensively and with success by a man possessed of a real talent for business. The old auctioneer was again at work; but this time it was not “Brummagem wares “of dubious value, but gems of purest gold and pearls of great price: and for foolish jocularities were substituted kind, gracious, holy words, with hearty benedictions on buyers and sales, and a joyful sounding of the jubilee trumpet amidst the din and hubbub of the world and its business. It is sad enough to know that England is so far a heathen country as to need Christian work of this kind, but it is, at the same time, gratifying to learn, as we do from the success of Henry Moorhouse on this field, that the heathenism of our land and day can be effectively assailed from many points, and that what the Church of Christ needs is not so much more bishops, as more Bible-carriages, and Bible-men, that is to say, men with the Bible in their hearts.

In March, 1878, he brought his large Bible-carriage to London, where, for a month, he resided with his fellow-worker in Christ, Miss Macpherson, the devoted friend and benefactress of the city arabs. The waters he had recently fished in had been fished out, as he said, and he was in search of fresh pools. Although in a state of extreme bodily weakness he gave a series of Bible lectures; but his chief burden was the Bible-carriage, which was stationed at Whitechapel. Not far from "The Dublin Castle," could be seen in the evenings the two lamps of the carriage, flaring as brightly as any cheap jack's, while the evangelists and their helpers are busy selling the books and preaching the Gospel at the same time. One of the well-known ladies of the Home of Industry is leading "Hold the Fort" on a small harmonium; her two sons are selling Testaments by scores; some of the poor people are listening to the music and the hymn; others are intent on making a purchase, and the great crowd is surging to and fro. Yonder is a poor man, standing and listening. Now and again he takes a shilling from his waistcoat pocket, and, after looking at it, replaces it. What is he going to do, he is asked by the lady at the harmonium, who notices his movements: will he buy one or two of the nice books? "Well," said he, "my missus gave me a shilling tonight when I gave her my week's wages, to buy myself a new meerschaum pipe, and this youngster wants me to buy him a book. Poor chap," he says, "he ain't got no dad; so here goes. I'll have it all in books, and take my own chicks one apiece."

This poorly-clad working-man hands up his only shilling, and in return receives six twopenny Testaments. The quick eye of the miserable little arab boy begins to gleam; and in another moment his face is mantled with smiles, and his heart chuckles with infinite delight as he presses to his bosom the coveted treasure, which comes to him as a windfall of rare fortune—a very God-send. The benefactor never imagines he has done anything worth talking about: and yet there is many a fine gentleman, and many a titled lady in the West-end, who spend their thousands on pleasures less ennobling and less satisfying than the joy that poor man finds as he hands the arab his little book, and carefully stows away in his coat pockets the remaining five for his own children. He probably never heard the Scripture saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," but all the same, he feels it in his heart, and this makes a world of difference betwixt one man and another. Pity the poor rich man who spends his all upon himself, and is not a whit the better for it, but the worse; drop a tear for him as his carriage rolls past: but pull off your hat and bow to the noble and rich poor man who can sacrifice his last shilling and the new pipe in an act of genuine kindness and manly spirit. There is hope for England so long as this sort of man is found in the land.

All the while our evangelist is sitting at the end of the carriage platform, praying and coughing alternately. Too weak to address those crowds, he who had preached to thousands on two continents, is content to be silent, but not to be idle. He sees the word of God having free course—passing into the hands of the poor—and he is happy. “Give the people the Word,” he would say, “it will bring forth fruit: morning and evening sow the seed, it will not return void.” Great was his joy when a noble-souled gentleman undertook to maintain a Bible-carriage for London. The opening day was to him a day of rejoicing and praise.

On one occasion he had dropped into a hall in London, where the Gospel was preached, but wrapped up in so much of human wisdom, that Henry’s soul was vexed. “Come away,” said he to his friend; and on getting out, he stood and wept for a while in silence. “What is the matter?” inquired Miss Macpherson. “Oh, why will they murder the precious Gospel?” was his reply. “No heart, no tenderness, no love!” Then he brightened and added, “Get me the biggest hall in London, and every night for a month I will preach on ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.’” And weak though he was and burdened with the Bible-carriage work, he preached in various places, losing no opportunity of testifying with the living voice to the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the following letters, although for the most part brief and hurriedly written, we obtain clear glimpses of the man and his work:—

“STOCKTON-ON-TEES, *Feb.* 20, 1879.

“BELOVED MR. B———, Your kind, loving letter made me very happy: ’tis so nice to hear one i there. I told you then what a mighty man of God Moody was, but never dreamed he was going to be used so much as he has been. We are the same old friends we were then; success has not made him proud. He uses his ten talents; I use my one; and we both together praise the Lord for using us at all. Dear Mr. Sankey is going to rest after next Tuesday. We go to Harrogate on Saturday; then after I go to London for a month’s special meetings, taking the Bible-carriage with me. It is doing a grand work, and does not hinder me in my own inside work, but rather helps. We can reach people now with the Gospel in the markets and fairs, who have never been reached before. And I could tell you of many now rejoicing in the Lord through this Bible ministry. I get the Bibles and Testaments from dear Mr. Müller, very cheap; but the profits I spend in Gospel books, and give them away, so that I cannot be charged with making money out of the Bible. The cost per year will be about three hundred pounds; but that is about one-tenth some societies spend in doing a great deal less work.

“Dear Lord C—— has gone home to rest. He is a very delicate gentleman. But I shall give him your kind invitation. He is one of the mightiest men in the knowledge of the Scriptures I ever met or heard, and as simple as a child. If you would like to invite him for meetings, you may mention me, and I am sure if the Lord leads him, he will come. His address is Earl of C——, Thomastown, County Kilkenny.

“My wife is very well. How often we have talked about you, and wondered how you all were! Minnie, our daughter, cannot walk yet; but she is as bright as a bee, and as happy as a bird. We have a little son, seven months old, a sweet little fellow.

“We are having great crowds here: thousands come together, and many are blessed. Will you remember me to dear Mr. H——. With Christian love to beloved Mrs. B—— and your dear children. God bless you.

“H. MOORHOUSE.”

“I thank you for your kind donation. My address will be until Tuesday, the Hon. Mrs. J——, Bolton House, Harrogate. Mrs. J—— is the daughter of Lord K—— and is a devoted Christian.”

“*October 1, 1879.*”

“I don’t know how to thank you for your kind, loving letter; ’tis long since I had such a one. Love seems in so many hearts to have gone to sleep. Some day it will awake again, and show its loving face once more. How true a good word maketh glad the sorrowful heart.

“I was five weeks in London. Dear Dr. Barnardo was worn out, and I went to take his place at the ‘Edinburgh Castle.’ We had most blessed meetings; and about one hundred and fifty seemed anxious, and many, I trust, found a Saviour. I have often thought of the sweet hours I spent beneath your roof, and the true soul-fellowship I had with dear Mrs. —— and yourself. How glad I shall be to come again, I need not say: but it cannot be this month, as I am fixed for London, leaving on Friday (D.V.). I am so glad to be able to preach the glorious Gospel once more. I never thought I should, but the Lord has raised me up once more. My heart is very bad, and my cough as well; and I dread November with its fogs. Perhaps we could arrange a few meetings for that month at Chapel-le-Frith, or any of those places in which you take so much interest.

“Our little Minnie is a bright child, but cannot walk, paralysed since she was two years old; but she is a very happy little girl. Mary, my wife, joins in much love to dear Mrs. B—— and yourself. God bless you both!

“H. MOORHOUSE.”

“EDINBURGH CASTLE, ST. PAUL’S ROAD,  
BOW, LONDON, *Oct. 25, 1879.*”

“BELOVED MR. B——, I could not tell you the joy today at the prospect, if the Lord tarry, of soon seeing you all once more. I would so much have liked to come to you during dear Mr. Haslam’s visit. It does me good to meet him, and to hear him always helps me. He has always stood by me nobly at the meetings, and is a true man of God.

“I have been here for several weeks now, and have had crowded meetings of just the right kind of people. The hall seats over fifteen hundred. I have been no worse for the exertion; and such blessing as I have not seen since I was at Oldham last year with dear Lord C——! Over one hundred and fifty souls have confessed Christ as their Saviour, and some of them so bright. An old man, seventy-three years, as clear a case as one could wish. But ’tis so little amongst the masses! After all, I am convinced, after sixteen years of this work, that the only way to reach the masses, is to go to them in the streets, markets, and fairs. Where I reach ten in halls, rooms, and theatres, the dear brethren with the Bible-carriage reach a hundred in the markets, etc. And what is needed now is fifty Bible-caravans to go to every city, town and village, in dear old wicked England, and preach the gospel to the masses.

“D.V., we open a new Bible-carriage for London about the middle of November, and wish dear Mrs. B—— and yourself could be at the opening of it.

“What a fine Christian Captain M—— is. I give a Bible-reading on Monday next at Mildmay. He wants me very much to give the Conference Hall a month; but I am afraid of promising as I did before and then had to break my promise.

“I hope you have had great blessing from the Mission. We never know when the fruit will appear, but it will if the true seed is sown. A man came up to me at Blackpool a few weeks since and told me he was saved sixteen years since through a text I quoted at the Promenade at Southport. Do you know Mr. M—— has given Mr. F—— notice to leave him next month? I am so sorry, as he was reaching people in the factories that could not be reached in any other way. I am afraid our marvellous sale of New Testaments has had something to do with it. But ’tis a pity in these days of sin to neglect any channel of doing good for our blessed Lord. We shall not have much more time down here to do His work, and eternity with Himself will make up for every act of self-denial down here.

“H. MOORHOUSE.”

The summer of 1880 found him in a hopelessly broken state of health, but full of his Bible-carriage work. Prayer for a carriage to move in Liverpool and neighbourhood begins to be answered, and he is full of hope and

joy. "Don't trouble," he writes to a friend whose work for Christ is a little threatened; "the Lord gave me this for you today, Psalm lvi. 9-13. Plenty of sail and a fair wind requires lots of ballast; and, though the ship moves slower, it sails safer. So rest; don't fight them; the Lord will confound them, and you will praise Him soon. Had a grand Bible-reading on the 'Rock' last night . . . *Praise God for the 'Life of our Lord' for one penny.*"

"I saw the dear young sailor I told you about, so wonderfully converted through 'the Rest' at Highbury. He came here last week very bright and very happy. Worth all the money and labour dear loved Mr. Mathieson and others have spent on that place is that one bright case. I am feeling much better, thank the Lord, and hope tomorrow to be out among the crowds circulating the blessed Book."

In November he writes, "So glad you are back again to the old workshop, and hope you will have a blessed time this winter (if He tarries). I think the reason why goodness and mercy follow us is just because He wants our eyes fixed on the Object before us, which is the Lord Himself. The Shepherd's dogs are not to be compared to the Shepherd. I have been very unwell, and have had to give up regular work again. But I am feeling better again the last few days, and am thinking of coming to London this week about the London carriage. We have never had a donation towards its support, and several have promised; and I want your advice. Mr. Grove has all the management, and God has blessed it wonderfully. I think the sales have averaged over fifteen pounds a week since he took charge of it, and near—

#### TWENTY THOUSAND

copies of the Scriptures have been circulated from it. Other carriages all doing well, thank the Lord."

Whilst prayer was his constant, never-failing resort in connection with this work, he put every iron in the fire and wisely gave his attention to the most minute details of the business. For instance, he saw well to neatness and variety in binding, and endeavoured, as far as possible, to meet every taste; and he was most successful in persuading others to sell or circulate the Book. His enthusiasm knew no bounds. "Take care! you have heart disease; you are a dying man," the doctors were constantly telling him. "Yes, I know," he would say, "but I desire to go home whilst preaching the blessed Gospel."

In two years, 1879 and 1880, no fewer than 120,000 Bibles and Testaments were sold, which, together with books and tracts given away, amount to some 2,100,000 messages from Heaven to poor, guilty, and lost sinners." And yet these figures give only a faint conception of the entire work ac-

complished. The prayers, conversations, pointed words, addresses—in short, the living-voice work, with the spiritual results, it is impossible to tabulate. But that many were thus brought to the fountain of living waters, and many saved, and the way prepared for the spread of the Gospel among tens of thousands of the people, there is no room to doubt. And all this, with its eternal results, was, under God, accomplished by a man without money or health, by a dying man who had nothing left him but faith.