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1900

### The Elder Brother

T. C. Reade

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# The Elder Brother

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WHO builds the Home, the Church,  
the School?

WHO manages the Store, toils in the  
Shop, cultivates the Farm,  
builds and operates the Mill  
and the Factory?

WHO carries on Commerce, builds  
the State, makes the Nation?

WHO furnishes the Money, the  
Thought, the Time, the Heart,  
Love and Sacrifice to lead the  
cause of Christ to victory?

## The Elder Brother.

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Rev. T. C. Reade, H. M., D. D.

1900.

# A Gigantic Enterprise Undertaken

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD  
for the Saving and Upbuilding of  
the COLORED PEOPLE OF THE  
South.

## The Life of Samuel Morris

has had a wonderful influence to bless and save and lead on to perfection the colored people and I have had hundreds of letters from them telling how they have been helped by reading the book. Now I want to send A MILLION COPIES FREE to these people and my plan is this :

For every 50 cents in stamps sent to me for that purpose I will mail a package of 10 of these books to a colored minister in the South and request him to hand them out to the most spiritual of his members. I have the addresses of more than 3,000 colored preachers and am now sending several hundred books each day.

WHO WILL HELP IN THIS GOD WORK ?

SEND TO

Rev. T. C. Reade, A. M., D. D.,  
UPLAND, INDIANA.

# THE ELDER BROTHER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A GREAT REVIVAL AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PREACHER.

A few years ago, in the city of Brighton, there was a very remarkable religious revival. It was remarkable for its dimensions, for in its more immediate developments it brought several hundred people into the kingdom of God, and, in its onward sweep, it has saved thousands more; it was remarkable for its staying qualities, for while many revivals continue but a few days or weeks at most, this one ran on month after month and, with some changes in methods and outward developments, lasted for years; it was remarkable for its depth, for, if we represent revival work as breaking up the soil, then this revival not only broke up but subsoiled the whole community; if we represent the revival as a time of seed-sowing in which the seed is the word of God, then it may be said that this particular revival was a time of lavish sowing and that every variety of good seed was sown. It was not enough that the people were urged to repent and with penitential tears to confess their wrong doings, but they were urged to go to those whom they had wronged and ask forgiveness; they were told that they could not hope for peace and pardon with God until they had made reparation and restitution to those whom

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they had in any way injured; they were admonished that they must forgive, freely, frankly and forever if they would be forgiven. The penitent was taught that as soon as he had righted, as far as possible, the wrongs that he had done and had confessed his sins and had accomplished his reformation by God's help, he was to pray for and expect pardon; this he was to receive as God's gracious gift in answer to the prayer of faith. He was told that God had promised that, "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He was also told that with the pardon of sin he had reason to expect the new birth by which he should be made a child of God. God would not pardon him and then turn him away, a pardoned alien, with all his old sinful propensities and will, but would, at the moment of his justification, "wash him with the washing of regeneration and renew him with the renewing of the Holy Ghost." This change in his nature, so radical and deep, he was told was to be a conscious change; that is, a change of which he himself should become directly conscious; he was to look with wonder and joy on his new being just as he looked with shame and sorrow on his old being; he was to feel new impulses, new desires, new hopes, new love and, above all, he was to receive the witness or attestation of the Holy Ghost to the new relationship to God into which he had been brought. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God;" and when he was happily pardoned and regenerated he was told that this was only the beginning; he was henceforth to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; he was urged to "leave the principles of the doc-

trine of Christ and go on to perfection;" he was commanded, "as ye have received Christ Jesus so walk ye in Him." But this seed-sowing was not confined to the great world-field that lies outside the kingdom of God. It was noted that all the epistles of the New Testament were addressed to Christian people. It was argued from this that the church is one of the most important and hopeful fields for the seed-sower, and hence the Bible was closely and carefully studied to find out the privileges and duties of Christian people. The voice of the minister rang out loud and clear as he stood before his congregation: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of God is risen upon thee." To this trumpet call was added the exhortation of Jesus, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Those who were at ease in Zion were made to hear God's fearful threat and woe; those who had lost their first love were admonished to repent and do their first works again, lest God should remove their candlestick out of its place; those who were lukewarm were told that unless there was a speedy change God would spew them out of His mouth. Christians were informed that it was their happy privilege to be made "perfect in love in this life." They were told, in fact, that perfect love had been God's standard of experience for His children from the beginning. That He required no less than this of Enoch and Abraham and Moses and David; that the Mosaic law of ten commandments meant, when rightly interpreted as our Saviour

summarized it for the benefit of the inquiring lawyer, perfect love to God and our fellow men: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself." That the Christian people might obtain that mighty transformation and purification of soul and that in-filling of the Holy Ghost which would enable them to love God and all their fellowmen with a perfect love, special meetings were held in which they were instructed to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," to surrender completely, to render to God the things that are God's, to yield to God's will and service all and forever time, talent, soul, body, property, friends, present and future, to become and to remain conformed to the will of God. Having put all upon the altar as a living sacrifice, they were told that their sacrificing could not save them. They had only put themselves into an attitude so far as they were able where God could help them. The next duty was to pray as they prayed when seeking pardon. The same commands and promises were put into their lips—"ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean, a new heart will I give unto you and a new spirit will I create within you, I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;" "what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." These and many kindred scriptures were put into their lips and they were urged now, at once and forever, to accept Christ as



the Sanctifier. Many of them did it and received the baptism, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." While they prayed,

"Refining fire go through my heart,  
Illuminate my soul,  
Scatter thy life through every part  
And sanctify the whole,"

their faith laid hold, their hope anchored, the altar sanctified the gift. Victory came, peace came, joy came, a flood-tide of glory swept through their souls. The fire that burns up and burns out sin was there—the fire that tries and purifies the gold. But above all, love was dominant; love to God so strong, so absorbing, so tender, so commanding. They hurried into His presence, they rushed into His arms, they said, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth;" "Here am I, Lord, send me." "Thou, Lord, art the joy of my heart and my portion forever; Thou art the fairest among thousands, the one altogether lovely; in Thy presence is fullness of joy and at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore; Thy presence makes my paradise and where Thou art is heaven." And they loved their fellowmen with a deep, earnest, practical love. They were ready and glad to minister to their bodies, giving food and raiment and a chance to labor to all who needed it, and they burned with a quenchless passion to save the souls of men. They cried,

"O, that the world might taste and see  
The riches of His grace,  
The arms of love that compassed me  
Would all mankind embrace."

They were ready to spend and be spent; that is, to give all they had and then to give themselves. All men had sud-

denly become their neighbors; all grudges and heartburnings and envies and jealousies were gone, and instead, their souls were vocal with an eternal love song. They hastened to

“Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in mercy from sin and the grave.”

They were busy day and night, bearing the gospel message to those at home and those who sat in the valley and shadow of death. I need not tell you that they were happy. Who could receive such a blessing and not be happy? Who could receive a visit from the King and not be happy? Who could open the heart's door and receive the King of glory into his soul and hear Him say, “I will abide with thee forever,” and not be happy? I need not tell you that some laughed and some wept and some shouted for joy. Do not become alarmed now and cry “fanaticism,” “confusion,” for all the fire that visited the city of Brighton in that great revival back in the seventies was the baptismal fire included in the Savior's promise. There are some people that are more sensitive than sensible on the subject of shouting. They will go to an evening party and chatter and scream like a flock of magpies, but when they come to church they want everything as solemn and still as the chamber of death. For my part, I love to hear good, spirit-filled people shout and I am glad that God sometimes so fills my own soul with glory that I am compelled to take part with them in this delightful religious service. The Psalms of David are full of shouting and the heaven of the Apocalypse is vocal with shouting. Does anyone suppose that shouting is to be suspended from the Psalms to the Apocalypse? No; God has always had a shouting host and



I suppose when they "return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" they will make the heavenly city ring with their shouting of praise to God. But the most remarkable thing about this revival in Brighton, the thing which should convey the most helpful, practical lesson, was the very thing which we are most inclined either to overlook or to forget. I refer to the circumstances of its origin. When we see a rushing river it is easy to forget the little fountains, away in the hills, which gave that river birth. No one thinks of the rain-drop while he gazes on the great, heaving, billowy ocean; yet rain-drops form the ocean. We view with wild excitement the mighty conflagration that wraps a whole city in flames, but do we usually on such occasions call up the scripture, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth?" It is my purpose now to go back to the beginning and show how this great revival originated, for many will be anxious to know, especially those who are already saying, "Can we not have such a revival as that in our town?" To describe the origin of this revival I find it necessary to introduce you to the preacher who, from day to day and from night to night, proclaimed the fiery gospel which burned its way into so many hearts. His name was Ludwig—Rev. Henry Ludwig. He was a Methodist and descended from a long Methodist ancestry; his father and his grandfather were preachers. He was born into the saddle-bag fraternity. There was nothing about his appearance that would indicate genius or even unusual talent; only an honest, sincere, intelligent face, such as you can see in a thousand pulpits in this country on any Sabbath in the year. There was something unusual, however, in his dress; it was so plain.

He did not affect the conventional shad-belly coat and white, bell-shaped hat of the Methodist preachers of pioneer times, yet he would compare favorably with the best of them in his absolute freedom from "gold and costly array." His dress was anything but clerical. He wore gray instead of the conventional black; a plain sack coat, and a vest that buttoned up to the neck, which was the only thing about him that looked preacher-like. I call attention to this plainness of dress because people who went to hear Mr. Ludwig preach say it was a "new wrinkle" with him since the revival began. "Up to that time," they observed, "he was one of the most stylish young preachers in the conference." Mr. Ludwig was thoroughly educated. His father had been considered quite a learned man for his time, but he knew full well that his son must far surpass him in his literary attainments if he would keep pace with the rapid, onward march of the age. So, after giving him the advantage of a thorough college course, he graduated him in theology before he turned him over to that excellent Methodist seminary which is created in every annual conference in the church—a seminary whose four years' course of study includes vast fields of history, literature and philosophy, as well as a broad, carefully arranged and thoroughly comprehensive course in theology. When young Ludwig graduated from his conference course he was thoroughly prepared to teach and to preach the gospel, and he should then and there have received the degree of Doctor of Divinity, either from the conference or from some college with which the conference was connected. The word doctor, as you know, comes from a Latin word which means a teacher, and a Doctor of Divinity is, "being interpreted," a teacher

or preacher of the gospel. Only this and nothing more. When the conference, therefore, has guided a minister through his course of study and has adjudged him fully competent for his work and has accordingly graduated him, he should receive a certificate or diploma recognizing him as a "Doctor of Divinity." But such is not the custom in the Methodist church, and so Rev. Henry Ludwig is not a D. D. to this day, so far as we know. If this custom prevailed of making every graduate from a conference course a D. D., the degree would mean something. It would mean, at least, as much as a license to practice law or medicine; but, as it is, this title does not stand for anything in particular. It may, sometimes, represent a money consideration, but more frequently it is only a result of friendship, and sometimes of favoritism. Often it stands for real merit, but seldom, indeed, for superior learning. Mr. Ludwig had preached a dozen years before the time of the great revival at Brighton, and was considered one of the strongest, brightest men in his conference. He was always in demand in the large, wealthy churches. No congregation in the conference felt afflicted when he was announced as its pastor. He looked well after all the interests committed to his care and was able each year to bring in a report of "sinners converted and backsliders reclaimed."

From the very beginning of his ministry Mr. Ludwig had advanced over a smooth, yet rapidly ascending road, until he stood with the favored few at the top of the hill. He was respected and honored by all, and the young men of the conference deferred to his judgment and delighted in his leadership. He was ambitious, to be sure, but so were most, if not all, his brethren. So far as human ob-



servation could discern, he had about the average modicum of self-love and self-seeking. He possessed only the usual amount of self-esteem and self-assertion and when he measured his faults and his virtues by those of his brethren, he felt quite complacent and happy.

But there come times to us all when we cannot measure ourselves by our fellowmen. There come times when a voice speaks to us and we pause and attend. It may speak loud and clear from heaven; it may be a small, still voice spoken into the ear, or, it may be an inaudible message, spoken in the whisper gallery of the soul; but, when God speaks, the good always listen and learn. Then we question no longer what others do or possess, but rather "what does God expect me to do and possess." When God speaks to the soul we lose sight of everyone else and cry out with Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" We come before a new judgment seat. Public opinion, the laws of custom, the expectations of the people and all things else sink out of sight and God's requirements rise up paramount to all. A new measuring rod is laid upon our lives; a new line and plummet are stretched along the walls of our character. The voice of God came to Rev. Henry Ludwig and it came on the following occasion:

## CHAPTER II.

### A VIEW OF A METHODIST ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND A VISIT TO GOOD AUNT HANNAH.

Mr. Ludwig had attended the annual session of his conference and on his way home had stopped to visit an aged aunt who lived in a little village only a few miles from

where the conference was held. It was a sort of country village and very old and the great elms on either side of its only street and the fields and orchards that stretched out as a background for every dwelling place, as well as the quiet that always prevailed there, made it an excellent resting place. Mr. Ludwig had made it a rule ever since he had been in the ministry to spend the first week after conference in this place. He used to say, "There is no time in the whole year when a minister needs rest so badly as right after conference. You see," he would add, "he cannot rest before the conference, for that is the busiest time of the whole year. The people are slow about religious work and the tendency is to put things off to the last minute; hence the preacher is kept in a constant hurry, finishing up his work and making out his reports till the very hour he starts for conference. Then a minister cannot rest at conference, for, in addition to the regular session work and nightly entertainments, there are so many little things coming up to worry and fret one. You cannot rest at conference."

Mr. Ludwig felt the need of rest now more than he usually did, because at this particular conference session he had been greatly enlisted in a little scheme, originated by his brethren, of course, and sprung on him as a complete surprise, to make him presiding elder. The scheme had failed, for the reason that there were several other similar schemes progressing at the same time, and some of them were stronger and better planned than his, but the matter had worried and fretted him and he felt worn and tired. He never felt more glad than when he drove up through the village street and the stage coach stopped at



the home of his aunt and he found his cheerful wife and bright-eyed ten-year-old daughter waiting at the gate to welcome him. "Thank God," he said, as he stepped down from the coach, "here is a place where there are no clashing claims, no envies, no jealousies; here all is harmony and peace," and the kiss of his wife and the caress of his child were as dear to him that day as though he had been fanned by the wing of an angel. His aunt with whom he had come to spend his vacation was a sister to his mother and her first name was Hannah. To this was appended on the tax duplicate and certain legal papers the name of Price, but to all the villagers she was known only as Aunt Hannah, and under that style I introduce her to all of my readers. Aunt Hannah had long since buried her husband, in the hope of a happy resurrection, and as she had no children of her own, and as Henry Ludwig had been left motherless when only seven years of age, she had always taken a deep interest in him and used to call him her boy. She looked forward to his annual visit with great delight and the week he spent in her home was an exceedingly bright spot both in her life and his. Aunt Hannah was not a Methodist, but belonged to that small, though greatly respected, body of Christians called Friends, or Quakers. Nearly all the citizens of this little village were Friends, and the Friends' meeting house was the only church edifice in the town. Aunt Hannah was eminently spiritual—one of God's chosen ones who dwell in His secret place and abide under His shadow. Henry Ludwig never returned from his week's vacation without feeling stronger and better for the influence of this saintly woman. The particular visit to which I refer passed in the usual quiet,

restful, happy way, and would not have been considered at all noteworthy had it not been that on the Sabbath, when Mr. Ludwig and his family went with his aunt to worship in the village meeting house, they were greeted with a sermon singularly personal and unusually forceful. The minister resided in the city where the Methodist conference had been held, and after announcing as his text, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love," he informed his congregation that he had attended the sessions of this conference and the impressions that were there made upon his mind had caused him to choose the text. This announcement, of course, aroused the attention of Mr. Ludwig, who had purposely refrained from an introduction to the preacher, because he wanted to remain in the pew without seeming rude in refusing an invitation to the pulpit, which he knew he should otherwise receive. The text was one he had himself often used when trying to awaken new zeal and fidelity in the backslidden part of his membership, but he could not imagine what relation it could have to a Methodist conference. "Perhaps," he said to himself, "the preacher is full of denominational prejudice and he is going to draw an unfavorable comparison between our church and his own, or perhaps he is going to bring us into contrast with the pure and noble apostolic church." But this was not the preacher's plan. He began by saying that he had recently read a "Brief History of Methodism," and spoke of the profound impressions it had made on his soul. He pictured the Holy club at Oxford, spoke of the marvelous revival that spread with sin-curing fire all over Great Britain, noted the zeal and self-sacrifice of the early Methodist preachers and the

great success of their ministry, and then, with tears of humility, told how he was overwhelmed with grief and shame at his own lack of zeal and faith and power when he stood in contrast with those great men. "This," said he, is the Methodism of history, but, as you all know, it is not the Methodism of the present day." He then referred to the fact that the Methodist church had grown to immense numbers and vast wealth and claimed that with her increase in wealth there had come a corresponding decrease in humility, holiness and power. The evidence he adduced was such as he had gathered at the conference of the preceding week.

"The church in which the conference was held," said the Quaker preacher, "was said to be complete in all its appointments, and it certainly ought to be, for it was built at a cost of \$50,000. This is a large sum of money to be spent on a single church, and while the congregation was well able to pay for it, it seems to me a much plainer edifice would have done equally well and the money saved would have erected several churches in communities where they are unable to have any at all. Why, they told me that the cost of the steeple alone, after making all due allowance for a suitable belfry, was enough to erect a pretty little village church; but you see they must have the highest steeple in town or they couldn't be happy. In my opinion a high steeple is a sign of low piety. I observed, also, that while they had rooms for Sunday school and League, a parlor, a waiting room and a kitchen, they had no room designed purposely for class meeting. When I inquired the cause of this, they told me that the class meeting had become almost obsolete in that church; that only a few old people attended

now, and that they met with so little encouragement from the pastor that they were fast dropping out. This made me feel very sad, for in reading the history of Methodism I had been led to believe that the class meeting was one of the most potent agencies in keeping up the purity and spirituality of that church. If the Methodists have no further use for the class meeting, perhaps they might pass it over to us Quakers, or to some other church that would be willing to accept the advantages it brings. I was also quite surprised to hear them call the pretty brass railing in front of the platform an altar. I had always heretofore understood that Methodist churches were not temples, but mere meeting houses like those of our own denomination; that Methodist preachers were not priests, and that Methodism had no altars. I thought they had completely discarded the sacerdotalism of the old English church from which they sprang. But, friends, these things, though they astonished me somewhat, did not pain and grieve me as did the conversation and conduct of the ministers who were in attendance at the conference. Almost their entire thought seemed to be about getting better places and larger salaries. Many complained that their abilities had not been properly recognized; that they had been kept on circuits when they should have had stations. Others murmured about their small salaries and threatened to give up the work unless they fared better.

Whenever any particular appointment in the conference was discussed they did not ask about its wants, its successes or its failures, but 'What does it pay?' Then the preachers kept talking about their 'class,' their 'rank,' and seemed to be very much afraid that they might be



demoted or might not be promoted. Everyone seemed to want the best; no one asked for the weaker charges and the smaller salaries; no one said, 'If there is a place no one else wants, give it to me.' They seemed to have quite forgotten that saying of Christ, 'If any will be greatest among you, let him be your servant.' I noticed, also, that a certain office called the presiding eldership was very much sought after." Mr. Ludwig had been carelessly following the remarks of the preacher, sometimes smiling at what he considered quaint, illy considered views, and sometimes wincing a little as the truth disturbed his conscience, but at this point he became deeply interested. That very morning he had been telling his wife and Aunt Hannah how anxious many of his friends were to make him presiding elder and how a "clique" had been formed and questionable methods used to defeat him. He felt that he had been wronged and spoke in very uncomplimentary terms of some of his brethren. He had seemed to think the question had but one side and that side was exceedingly favorable to him, but now that an impartial stranger was to give his views, he became quite nervous, and especially so because he could easily imagine what his wife and aunt were thinking about. "Now," said the preacher, "I discovered that there were two new presiding elders to be made and a certain number of delegates to be elected to the general conference of the church, and that the entire membership of the conference was divided up into factions and all were actively working for their favorite candidates. I have witnessed the operations of several political bodies, but I have never known an organization where there was more scheming for power and place than there was at this Meth-



odist conference. O, how I wished that the Master might appear with His stinging rebukes among them. On Sunday afternoon the bishop addressed a class of young preachers and told them not to covet the best places nor the largest salaries. 'Go cheerfully,' said he, 'where you are sent, though the work may be hard and the pay poor and you may scarcely know how you are to keep the wolf from the door. Was not your Master poor? Did not Mr. Wesley hunger as he traveled through Cornwall and thank God that the blackberries were plenty.' A brother sitting near me whispered: 'That is beautiful sentiment, but thin as moonshine. The bishop rides over the country in a palace car and gets four thousand dollars a year. I had him dedicate a church last summer and, though my people are poor and we had hard work to raise the debt, he demanded fifty dollars for his services and would not take less.' Why, I thought, is it possible that these great, good men take time for which the church pays a liberal price and use it to make money for themselves? At first I doubted it, but on further inquiry I was assured that not only the bishop, but many official secretaries and editors do the same thing. Woe to any church when her ministers become so corrupt. Woe to those who have broken the vows of their espousal to Christ and have joined themselves to mammon. The love of money is the root of all evil, and the Methodist ministers of today are dominant by that love.

"How can they expect the lay members of their church to give freely to the Lord's cause when they see their pastors, to whom they look for example, so greedy and grasping? The Methodist church, my friends, has ceased to be that great evangelizing power it once was and in

many places is having a hard struggle to maintain its present status. In many places it is actually losing ground. There must, of course, be a cause for this, and the cause, as I believe, lies mainly with the worldly-minded, money-loving ministry. I am not a pessimist in any bad sense of that term, but I am too pessimistic to call black white or evil good, or to juggle with facts and figures so as to make things appear better than they actually are.

“But,” the preacher continued, “my feelings today are not feelings of bitterness, but of sadness. I am full of inexpressible sorrow that this great church, which was so full of fervent zeal and holy love; this church, whose sole mission was to spread scriptural holiness throughout these lands; this church, which gave such glowing promise of enlightening and saving the world, should so soon have ‘left its first love.’ Alas, the pure gold has grown dim. Already above the shining name, ‘Methodism,’ they are writing the hateful word, ‘Ichabod,’ for her glory is departed. I have recently read the biography of one of the pioneer Methodist preachers, and my soul was touched and inspired to the loftiest purpose as I learned how these noble men swam the rivers and slept in the forests while they rode about from place to place to preach the gospel to the scattered inhabitants of the wilderness. With a hymn book and a Bible and a few other good books in their saddlebags, they contrived to make themselves reasonably good theologians and many of them were giants in the pulpit. They were not troubled with any higher criticism notions; they would as soon have thought of doubting their father’s veracity or their mother’s purity; they would as soon have been caught digging out the foundations of the house in

which they lived as doubting or disputing the divine authenticity of the Bible. These men sacrificed too much for the gospel not to believe it. When a man preaches the gospel for one hundred dollars a year and takes his pay largely in coon-skins and slippery-elm bark, you may be sure he believes what he preaches. It remains for those who grow fat in gospel livings, who dwell in elegantly furnished parsonages and who receive salaries varying from fifteen hundred to three or four thousand dollars a year to discover that the Bible, which was the word of God to their fathers and mothers, is, after all, only a man-made book and full of errors. In the days of these grand old preachers they always had revivals; the church always grew, and they didn't keep the apologists busy explaining how it happened that there was apparent decline and falling off in membership and piety in so many places. I cannot forbear reading you some verses which I met with in a newspaper. They were written as a tribute to

### THE METHODIST PIONEER PREACHERS.

Gone are the Fathers—gone to rest;  
Their mighty work of faith is done,  
Their conflict past and glory won;  
Green be their graves, their memories  
blest.

God called; His voice was in their  
heart;

"What ye have seen, what ye have  
heard,

With haste to dying men impart;  
Go preach the soul-renewing word."

They tarried not for storm or flood;  
Their hearts were filled with strong  
desire,

And touched with apostolic fire,  
To tell the world of Jesus' blood.

All worldly good they counted loss;  
They hasted on with eager hand,  
To plant the standard of the cross  
On the far out-posts of the land.

Strong in the strength of Israel's God,  
A giant race of saints were they;  
'Mid savage men and beasts of prey  
Alone the wilderness they trod.

Yet not alone for where they went  
God's cloudy pillar walled them round,  
And where at eve they pitched their  
tent



God's angels made their camping  
ground.

They speak, and lo, the desert place  
Blooms at the magic of their voice.  
The sorrowing hearts of men rejoice  
To hear of God's redeeming grace.

Gone are the Fathers; gone, and yet  
They live in these unfolding years;

Let not the harvester forget  
Who ploughed in fire and sowed in  
tears.

A race of strong, God fearing men,  
Mighty in prayer, aglow with zeal,  
We mourn them most because we feel  
We ne'er shall see their like again.

“Let us hope and pray that this grand church may see the pit of lethargy and formality and worldliness into which she is falling and repent and return to the old, safe path of holiness and self-denial.”

This was the substance of what the preacher said of the Methodist conference, which had been the occasion of suggesting his text. He then went on to point out certain signs of backsliding in his own church, especially in the local society to which he ministered, and closed the service with a powerful appeal to the people to arouse and retrace their steps and a fervent prayer that God would revive His work and turn back the tide of iniquity that was rolling in upon the earth. The service was very impressive and many went away from that plain sermon to weep in secret and to pray. Mr. Ludwig tarried a few minutes and Aunt Hannah introduced him to the preacher, George Hopkins. Mr. Ludwig shook Brother Hopkins' hand fervently and thanked him for the honest, earnest sermon of the morning. He said but little more, but showed such agitation in his voice and look that it could easily be divined that great thoughts and mighty emotions were heaving and swelling in his soul. Mr. Hopkins seemed a little confused when he found that he had had a Methodist preacher for an auditor, but he soon rallied, and turning his honest face and great, blue,

earnest eyes upon Henry, he said: "Mr. Ludwig, I am glad thee was here this morning," then, hesitating a moment, he added, "I am glad I did not know thee was here." Two earnest men had met that morning. The one had convictions thoroughly formulated and pronounced, and they dominated his life and gave character to his sermons; the other had like convictions, but hitherto they had been stifled, parried, put into <sup>a</sup> straight-jacket and shut up in the iron cell of the soul. Now they were set free and from henceforth asserted their power to rule and transform. All unexpectedly, a crisis came in the life of Henry Ludwig. He heard a voice that called him to a new and nobler way of living; he saw the holy Nazarene plodding up and down the stony ways of Palestine and saying, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head," and he remembered the scripture, "If any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "Have I the spirit of Christ when I seek the best places and should be very complaining and unhappy if I did not get them? Have I the spirit of Christ when I can deliberately consent that my brethren should scheme and pull wires to make me presiding elder and then feel so mortified and humiliated when I do not get the office? Have I the spirit of Christ when I am so anxious about my own salary and about large congregations and so negligent of the real, spiritual condition of my people? My people are exceedingly worldly; churchly to be sure, but not Christly; and am I not the same?" Such thoughts as these kept pressing in upon Mr. Ludwig's mind until he became thoroughly wretched. He could not eat and all through that Sabbath night he tossed uneasy on his bed. Several



times he arose and knelt for a few moments in prayer. His wife noticed his agitation, but supposed it had grown out of his disappointment about the presiding-eldership. She thought he was having a battle with himself to become reconciled to the present situation and so, like the wise, good wife that she was, she prayed for him in whispers to God, but to him she said nothing. Aunt Hannah, too, had observed Henry's agitation and bitterness of soul, but she had rightly divined the cause. She had long felt that Henry was drifting with the tide of worldliness that was bearing his people farther and farther from Christ. She knew that Henry ministered to a church that was rich, selfish and formal; a church that in its stilted attitude of ease and elegance and social prestige was wholly out of sympathy with the great masses of struggling bread-winners around them. But she remembered a time when Henry was quite different. She remembered when the glow of his first-love for Christ was upon him; when his humility and zeal were such that he went anywhere to seek and save the lost. In his early ministry he had been a real fire-brand and wherever he went a religious conflagration resulted. But he had cooled off and most people said it was the natural result of increasing years—"Less zeal, but more judgment," they said; "Less fire, but more force;" "Fewer conversions, but more building up and establishing of the church." But Aunt Hannah knew better; she knew that zeal ought to grow the same as any other Christian grace, and as Christians come better to understand and more fully to appreciate their religion, the more anxious will they become that others shall enjoy its blessings; she knew that Henry had backslidden in heart and she had never

ceased to pray for his quickening. Now that she saw his mental struggles, she rejoiced because she believed that the Holy Ghost was dealing with him.

### CHAPTER III.

#### GETHSEMANE, GOLGOTHA AND PENTECOST.

Monday morning came and Mr. Ludwig hastened to get things ready for his journey home. His visit was ended and he was thinking of his great church and the happy reception he should have on his returning to his people and of the work that lay before him there. He was thinking more, however, of these new impressions that were forcing themselves upon him and wondering what he should do with his convictions when he reached Brighton. To yield to them meant to lose the esteem and confidence of most of his wealthy and influential members; to ignore them meant to slight the voice of conscience and fight the call of God. He seemed to have before his mind a picture of a worldly-minded, aspiring, time-serving preacher; a dumb dog that feared to bark at the evils and dangers that beset the community; a preacher who loved praise and waited for adulation and said many soft and pretty things that the people might think well of themselves and love the one who flattered them; a preacher who cried, "peace, peace," when there was no peace, and he saw in the picture the image of a hand with an index finger pointing at him, and a voice kept saying, "Thou art the man; thou art the man." Of course he looked tired and distressed; he had but little to say, and it was with difficulty that he got through the morning prayer. He was engaged in a controversy with

God; a new order of things was proposed to his soul, and his proud spirit was not ready to say amen. He had only knelt on one knee, a habit into which most Methodist ministers have fallen in these latter days, and which seems to harmonize well with the half-hearted service they render to God, and his prayer was brief and broken up into short, crisp sentences, as of one who was trying to feel his way and feared to venture on any long strides. He closed his prayer and was about to rise when Aunt Hanna began. She prayed with great fervency, yet in a subdued voice. She prayed much as did her memorable namesake, when, in answer to her earnest, believing petition, God lifted the shadow from her childless wifehood and made her the mother of the most majestic of all the Old Testament prophets. She prayed for "her boy"—for Henry. She spoke of the solemn night when his mother lay dying and with a hand on the head of each of her two boys, blest them and gave them to God for the work of the ministry. "One of these dear boys," she said, "is gone, we know not where. God pity and save him if he is yet alive." Her voice faltered; her cheeks were wet with tears. Henry had gotten down on both his knees and buried his face in his hands, and at the mention of his dying mother and his sinning, wandering brother, he sobbed aloud. "O Lord," she continued, "remember the prayer of that mother for her boys. Remember how she said, 'I ask not that they be great or noted preachers, but only that they may win souls to God and lead the people to become like our Master. Make them faithful shepherds to the flock.'" Then she expressed her gratitude that Henry had been led to become a Christian and had never doubted or disobeyed his call to the ministry.



She thanked God that his early years as a preacher had been so full of self-sacrificing devotion and crowned with such deep and broad revivals. "But," said she, and her voice trembled. "he seems to have changed; he does not seem to be burning up with holy zeal; he does not seem to be full of sympathy for the poor, the weak, the suffering; he does not seem to be walking in that holy atmosphere that encircles like a halo those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. O, Lord, let not the pure gold grow dim; bring back Thy servant—O, bring back my Henry to a better experience; bring him to the simpler paths, to the more humble and devoted paths; bring him into daily fellowship with Thyself. Thou hast spoken to his heart; Thou hast called him to a nobler and better life; Thou hast bidden him to tarry till he receive the promise of the Father. O, may he be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Henry saw that Aunt Hannah had rightly guessed the secret of his trouble and as he bade her good-bye he asked her to aid him by her daily prayers till he should find victory and peace. When he reached Brighton he found that the people had planned a fine reception at the church and that it was to be a great social event. A brief literary program had been arranged, some light refreshments provided and then sundry toasts and a social time were to follow.

Invitations had been sent out to a good many distinguished citizens of Brighton who were not members of Mr. Ludwig's church—lawyers, physicians, the judge of the court and the member of congress. There come crucial tests to the life of every good man, and they come just

when he begins seriously to mediate a new departure in the way of holier living. God would save us, if possible from making a mock and by-word of our religion by undertaking great, glorious things and then giving up and going back, and hence at the very outset He proposes the test. He proves our foundation before we begin to build. The gate to a holy life is exceedingly straight and few only are able to enter. Had Mr. Ludwig been feeling as he did when he started for conference this reception would have been the most grateful thing in the world to him, but in his present frame of mind it was most unwelcome. And then it was just at hand—it was Monday evening and on Tuesday night the reception was to occur. O, how Henry wished for a few days to think the matter over, to prepare, to adjust his new conviction to this unexpected situation; but no time could be had. The greatest trial of his life was just before him and he had only a few hours in which to get ready to meet it. His hour had come. He must now declare for out-and-out holy living; he must now become thoroughly spiritual and a leader of the spiritual, or he must bow the knee once more and become a worshiper at the shrine of wealth, popularity, ease. With a mind full of conflicting desires and a heart greatly distressed, he went to his little study in the church at just 6 o'clock on Monday evening. Before going he said to his wife, who had become very uneasy at his state of mind: "Dearest, pray for me; as you love me and desire me to be true to my convictions, pray for me. I have a battle to fight—a battle with the powers of darkness; a battle in which hell, earth and heaven are interested; a battle in which my soul shall be peeled and lacerated; a battle in which every fortress

of my heart shall be tried, and from that battle I shall come back to you flushed with victory and flooded with glory, or I shall come, defeated, shame-faced, a cowardly dastard unworthy to bear the name of the All-Conquering Christ. Pray for me, dearest; but do not disturb me till the battle is over." His wife comprehended the situation and in her soul she rejoiced, but she could only kiss him and weep and say, "I will pray for you." When Henry had gotten into his study and had locked the door, he fell upon both knees, as did Daniel when he worshipped with death grinning at him through the open window of his chamber—he fell upon both of his knees and poured out his soul with strong cries and tears. To get all things straight in his own mind, he recited before the Lord a brief history of his religious life; he spoke of how God had saved him, when a mere boy, and had not allowed his feet to enter the ways of hell, as those of his associates had done; he spoke of his bright, happy conversion, the evidence of which was so clear that he had no more thought of doubting it than of doubting his existence; he referred to the fact that the early years of his espousal to God had been years of great zeal, fervent piety, untiring and unswerving fidelity—years of humility and self-forgetfulness, in which he had only asked a humble place, however small, and a work to do, no matter how insignificant, so it was for God and his fellow man. He spoke, also, of his call to the ministry, so bright that no one doubted it, and of the splendid opportunities that had been afforded him in college and in the theological seminary to prepare for his God-appointed work. Others had passed through struggles of which he knew nothing; every hand seemed stretched out to help



him; he had graduated with honor, he had been welcomed to the ministry by friends and co-laborers of his father, and for a little while he had wrought with astonishing power and success. But a change had come over him; his head had been turned by flattery; his heart had been captured by names and titles and outward show. All these things he rehearsed before the Lord, and then prayed most earnestly. "O, God, forgive, forgive the folly, the sin, that have robbed me of that power I once possessed and have made me weak as other men. I turned away from a living fountain and sought to slake my soul's thirst at a broken cistern. Instead of the pure white light of the Sun of Righteousness, I have been walking in a phosphorescent gleam; instead of abiding joy, I have been satisfied with occasional pleasurable emotions, alternating with seasons of despondency; instead of walking and talking with Thee, I have been content to talk about Thee and occasionally to catch a glance of Thy face. O, God, this is not living; this is not holy living, and the result is that my preaching is cold and does not stir the hearts of my people. I see with sorrow and confess with tears that my people are growing more and more worldly and the poor no longer come to hear the gospel in my church. O, God, I know that all this is wrong, and the fault is all with me. I must be renewed, I must be quickened, or I must fail utterly and forever of doing the work to which I have been called." Mr. Ludwig prayed on in this vein until several hours had passed, but he seemed no nearer the end of the strife.

The conflict only deepened and his agony became more intense. Some pointed questions were asked by the Searching Spirit. He had to dispose of the evil which had

given so much immediate trouble; he had to say, "Lord, I will never henceforth seek for place or for salary; wherever I am sent by the properly constituted authorities, I will go, cheerfully, and be thankful that there is a place somewhere to preach the blessed gospel; nor will I ever again seek a position of honor and power among my brethren, but in honor will prefer others to myself." He was asked whether he would cease to emulate eloquence and the glamor of great epithets and high-sounding philosophies and preach the gospel in all its purity and simplicity; he was led to protest that he would willingly forego the praises of the rich and great and even bear the persecutions of the formal and worldly, that he might win Christ. But this was not enough; this had only to do with his public, professional life. The All-Searching Spirit now catechised him as to his purposes in his private life. "Are you willing to be the most loving of all husbands, the most considerate of all fathers, the kindest and most thoughtful of all neighbors? Are you ready to take on that humble spirit that will attract the poor, that gentleness that will win the children, that consoling sympathy of spirit that will cause the sick and sorrowing to take heart and gather strength when you visit them?" To all these questions he answered, "Yes, yes, Lord," and wondered that he found no relief, no strength, no joy. He knew not that the bloody garden is only a solemn warning of the coming cross. The cup did not pass from Jesus in the garden, but on the cross He drank it to the bitter dregs. So Henry was suddenly checked in his prayer and almost paralyzed with fear when a suggestion came to him, clear and unequivocal, as though a voice had spoken it, "Henry Ludwig, are you willing to

die?" Henry stopped short in his prayer and opened his eyes and looked around, but he saw nothing. He arose and paced the floor, but the voice seemed speaking still—he could not get away from it, "Are you willing to die?" He felt impressed that he must answer, "Yes," and the thought that at first seemed only a vague suggestion grew rapidly into conviction that this strange experience through which God had been leading him during the past few days was given to prepare him for death. It was the final test that was to fit him for glory. The thought completely overwhelmed him; he was young and in his vigorous prime; he had expected to spend many happy years with his little family—many useful years with the church; he had thought that this very severe testing through which he was passing was to fit him to be a more faithful and successful preacher. But the voice kept saying, "Are you willing, for Christ's sake, to die?" Henry had often thought of dying, but it was in the far future. He had hoped to grow old in the ministry. He did not fear what lay beyond death, but to die now, when there was so much to be done, and when he had just become thoroughly aroused to the necessity of doing it, it seemed that he could not endure the thought. The air grew dense around him; his cheeks grew palid; he fairly staggered in his walk across the floor. He said: "I am sick; I must get to the doctor," but the voice answered, "Christ is the only needed Physician." He reached out his hand for the door knob, saying, "I am in a bad way; I must go to my wife;" but the voice replied, "Stay and die. If you would have eternal life, you must be crucified with Christ."

By this time his emotions became so intense that he fell



upon his face and cried in the bitterest agony, "O, God, let this cup pass from me," but it would not pass; God's hand held it to his lips and bade him drink. "O, God," said he, "for my wife's sake, let the cup pass," but still it remained; "For my child's sake, for the sake of the church, for the sake of Christ," but still it was there, and the voice said, "Are you willing to die?" It became plain to him at last that the struggle through which he was passing must end in one of two ways—it must end in death and victory, or in surrender and defeat, and a life more worldly and fruitless than ever before. This became clear to his mind, and by God's help he decided the question right. "Yes, Lord," said he, "I am willing to die. I wish it could have been avoided; I wish for the sake of my family that I could have lived; I would like to have stayed to tell the people more of Thy love and saving power, but, Lord, if the choice is between life and the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace, I welcome death. I cannot recede from this new light that has broken on my soul; I must follow on to know the Lord; I must lose myself and win Christ; I must fly from myself to Jesus, and if there is no other way except through death, then Lord, I am willing, I am ready to die." At that moment it seemed to him as though the earth had given way beneath him; it seemed as though his heart had fled from his bosom. His strength was gone, all was gone, and he was sinking, sinking. "Ah!" he said to himself, "this is death, I am dying. I did not know it was coming so soon, but God knows best, and it is all right. Farewell, wife, child, companions, earth; farewell! I hasten on to the joys of the immortals. Death is more painless than I supposed—more calm—but how strange that I

do not see Jesus. I thought surely He would be with me in this hour. Where is my Savior, my Jesus?"

Still he continued sinking. He had been called a rising man, but now he was a sinking man. He had been called a man of purpose and plans and ideas, but now all purpose was lost save one the purpose to find Christ in all the fullness of His love. "Ah," said he, "I hoped to find Him in the temple, or, if not, at least on the highway; but He was not there, and I followed to the garden and thence to the cross, and still I have not found Him, and I must sink with Him in the grave that I may rise with Him. Amen, O God, so mote it be, but let me find Christ." He knew that he was nearing the object of his search; he never felt so little and weak before, and as one always feels little and weak when he is approaching a great object like a mountain or an ocean, so he knew he was getting near to the Infinite and Holy God. He sank away from self. He loosed his hold on honor, fame, ease, the praise of men, position, wealth, health, life, and cried, "Welcome, death, if I may but find Jesus." From all these things he seemed to sink away farther and farther, until they appeared but a speck in the distance, and then vanished out of sight. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I am dead, completely dead; but still I go on thinking, hoping, believing, though I know not what I am or where I am." That moment God spoke to him as He has spoken to so many others, in the language of some familiar scripture: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live—yet not I—but 'Glory to God forever'—Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh—(Am I still in the flesh? Whether in the body or out of the body, I know not)—I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

loved me and gave Himself for me." "Christ lives in me. I thought to find Him by rising, but I have been sinking, sinking, until at last I have fallen into the everlasting arms. O, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace! I was never so low before, never so little as now. I thought surely the Lord would call me up into the mountain to behold his glory, but instead I left self up in the mountain and sank down ten thousand fathoms below my pride and ambition, and here away down and out of sight of all I find Christ. Ah, Lord! Thou hast well been called meek and lowly. In losing self I have found Thee, and a nobler self—a new man created in Thy image and inspired by Thy Spirit. I have at last found the mind of Christ." While these thoughts were engaging the attention of Mr. Ludwig, he had somehow gotten upon his feet and had somehow gotten out of his little study room and was going up and down the aisles of the church, clapping his hands and shouting praises to God. He had never shouted before. He had sometimes wished he could shout, but he had generally shouting days of the primitive Methodists.

Mr. Ludwig had never shouted before, but he afterward became noted as the shouting preacher of his conference. In a little while he made his way over to the parsonage, and there he found his devoted wife waiting for his return. In her face he read the emotions of joy and triumph. She was expecting his return. She was expecting him to return a conqueror. "I am not surprised at your joy, Henry," she said, "for I have been praying for you and in my heart have had the assurance that you had obtained victory." That night was a time of great joy in the little parsonage. It was the beginning of a new era in the life of the pastor and his devoted wife.



## CHAPTER IV.

THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS "THE MINISTER'S CONFESSION" AND AN INTRODUCTION TO "BROTHER HEDGES" AND TO "THE PRODIGAL.

Moses went from the glories of Sinai to meet the rebellious Israelites, and Elijah came from the earthquake and the fire and the "still small voice" of Horeb to meet the angry and revengeful king, so Henry Ludwig came from his little study in the church, where God had met him—had met him and slain him and made him alive; had met him and inspired him with a new purpose and filled him with a new joy—to meet the admiring and loving constituency, who had gathered to give him an enthusiastic welcome home. He had spent most of the day in visiting and conversing with the more spiritual members of his flock, and by the time of the evening gathering many had become aware of the fact that their pastor had entered into a new experience. They had heard with joy the story of his struggle and his triumph and were prepared for the unusual turn of affairs at the reception. When the refreshments had been served, a prominent lawyer, who was a member of Mr. Ludwig's church, arose and extended the greetings of the church and congregation. He spoke of Mr. Ludwig's eloquence in the pulpit, of his beautiful and impressive way of conducting the church services, but he dwelt most enthusiastically upon the fact that as pastor of the church at Brighton he had been careful and conservative; he had given offense to none; he had preached the truth and the whole truth, but he had done it in such a way

that none could take exceptions to it; he had no hobbies and was at the farthest remove from what is commonly called a gospel crank. He had been successful in drawing vast audiences, and especially the intellectual, the opulent, the influential had flocked to hear him. He spoke, also, of his social qualities, by virtue of which he was a welcome guest in every home, and no social gathering was thought to be quite complete without him. "In view of the bright and enviable record you have made among us," he said, "we welcome you, sir, to another year's service as pastor of the M. E. Church at Brighton, and trust its success may add luster to the fame you have already acquired and endear you still more to a loving and admiring people." In concluding, he introduced his excellency, the mayor of the city, who in a few carefully chosen words, extended the welcome of the citizens at large. The mayor said that it was his misfortune not to belong to any church, but that, as occasion permitted, he was in the habit of attending religious services. At several different times during Mr. Ludwig's pastorate in Brighton he had occupied a pew in his church and had always been pleased and benefited by his discourses. He spoke in highest praise of his practical wisdom in refraining from the discussion of those questions that were so sure to create differences of sentiment and arouse strife and contention in the community. He was a true peacemaker. Whatever other ministers might do you could always feel sure that Mr. Ludwig would refrain from the discussion of all questions of finance, city government and other political issues, either local or general, and with true ministerial dignity would confine himself to the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the affairs

of his church." The time was when this flattery would have been very grateful to the ears of Mr. Ludwig, but now it filled his soul with inexpressible shame and sorrow. In his response he reviewed briefly the period of his pastorate at Brighton and frankly confessed that he had only partially done the work committed to him by his Master. He had been a man-pleaser; he had refrained from speaking against certain evils and advocating certain good movements because he had feared to provoke opposition. "I confess with shame," he said, "that I have been a time-server, a man-pleaser, and have coveted the praise of men more than the approval of God. I do not deserve your praise tonight, but rather your censure. But God has opened my eyes and has shown me the better way and has inspired me with a new purpose and a new life. Henceforth I must preach to you a full gospel and encourage you both by preaching and example to emulate the highest and best things. In the past I have tried to know and teach many and divers and startling lessons among you, but henceforth I shall know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He then rehearsed to them the experience of refining and purifying, of dying and reviving through which he had so recently passed; he spoke of the garden, the cross and the tomb, and then of the resurrection glory, and said: "All this God in His mercy has vouchsafed to me and He is ready to bestow the same joy to all who will accept it." He told them that while he had been gratified with large congregations and a constantly growing membership throughout his ministry at Brighton, he still had seen but few conversions, and fewer still among his membership had entered into the joy of perfect love. "These



things ought not so to have been, my brethren," he said, "but the past is gone forever and God graciously forgives my penitent soul; henceforth we must make full proof of our ministry and of our dear Lord's gospel. On next Sabbath, God willing, we shall begin a series of meetings for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers, and until that time let us all, by close heart searching, consecration and prayer, get ready for the work. We need nothing now so much as a general, deep, wide-reaching revival in the city of Brighton, and let us bring all the tithes into the store-house and put His promise to the test." The reception closed and the people went home. All were surprised, most offended. They saw the light, but were unwilling to follow, and hence they bewailed the fact that their beloved pastor had taken up with these unpopular and practical notions. Some, however, gave glad welcome to the truth and went away to weep and pray, and with the very first meeting on the following Sabbath the power of the Lord fell upon the people. This was the modest yet ominous beginning of the mighty revival of which we spoke in our opening chapters. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

Having traced the process by which the great revival in Brighton was evolved and some of the circumstances under which it developed, I wish now to introduce to my readers a person who, aside from Mr. Ludwig himself, was the most potent human factor in that mighty spiritual work, which resulted in the saving of hundreds of sinners and the complete revolution of social and religious affairs in that city. The name of this individual was Hedges, and his occupation was that of a blacksmith; hence he was com-

monly called "Hedges, the blacksmith." He was tall and broad-shouldered, with grizzled hair and great, grimy hands; a modest man with very humble occupation. He had been a class leader in the church at Brighton for many years—in fact, he had been the class leader, for, while all the other classes were like certain periodic stars, now bright, now dim, now invisible, and while all the other class leaders had their ups and downs and were often discouraged and generally quite negligent, Hedges was always faithful, always happy, and his class room was always full. It often happened that the only religious fire and warmth that could be found in the whole church glowed on the altar in the little class room where Hedges presided. He was a true shepherd and Sabbath by Sabbath he led his little flock into the green pastures of an ever new, ever better religious experience. When the revival was announced he and his faithful few were ready; they were the true Gideon's band that were to lead the Lord's host to victory. Hedges was mighty in prayer; he was strong and earnest in testimony; his prayers were not sentence prayers, which are at best only a modern travesty on a very solemn service; his testimonies were not sentence testimonies, and hence not after the fashion of the day, but he was never tedious and always spoke to the point and from the heart. He told what he knew, and hence people listened. Every one had faith in Hedges and believed that he walked with God. In times of religious dearth and apathy he was neglected and was looked upon as a sort of curiosity; an old foggy, well meaning, but too religious; a relic of a departed glory, a true old-time Methodist, but born out of due time, and hence compelled to lead a sort of lonely life, far away

from the burning center of that great religious movement which set the world on fire. Nevertheless, even in such times as I have referred to, Hedges had his work. When people were about to die they would send for Hedges to pray for them, and sometimes he was called even into the homes of the great and learned and fastidious. A certain colonel, very rich and very wicked, was about to die, and his friends thought it would be perfectly proper, quite conventional, indeed, to send for a clergyman. So they consulted him as to a certain great divine, and he said: "No; I attended his church twice and he talked about everything in the world almost, but nothing that would help a poor fellow in an hour like this." Then they mentioned another, with whom the colonel was quite well acquainted and of whom he seemed very fond. "No," he said, "No; he is a fine fellow; I like him; he enjoys a good cigar, he is a judge of a good horse, he has ridden with me many a time, smoked many a cigar at my expense, but he never asked me about my soul. No, don't send for him; send for old Hedges; I think he knows the Lord," and so Hedges came straight from his blacksmith's forge to the mansion of the dying colonel and had the happy satisfaction of guiding the dying man to Christ. Many who were in trouble sought his advice and his prayers. "Please pray for my son," some anxious father would say; "he is becoming dissipated and I fear he is on the way to ruin." "Won't you pray for my daughter?" some distressed mother would say, while the tears flowed fast over her cheeks. "She has gone wrong and she is breaking my heart." When the revival broke out Hedges was in great demand; he was wanted everywhere; penitents requested him to pray for them because



they said he seemed to know the way to the throne so perfectly; and why should he not? Did he not make the journey several times every day? Seekers liked to have him by their side, for he seemed to know the very promise that would lead them into the light. He was also in special demand among those Christians, who, like Apollos, wanted to know the way of the Lord more perfectly. He had long professed to enjoy the blessing of perfect love; he had professed it when it was a name of reproach and jest, and when he was on this account called a bigot, a fanatic, a fool; but he went right on modestly, yet positively, testifying to the cleansing and keeping power of God's grace, and at the same time leading a blameless and joyful Christian life in support of his testimony. People believed, even those who reviled, and so the ensign was lifted up among them. But now the revival was in progress and the minister had become a tongue of fire to proclaim the blessed doctrine, and many Christians had heard a voice calling them to a new consecration and a new baptism. So they naturally sought the counsel and help of "Hedges, the blacksmith." Then, again, the after-meeting, as it was called, was always a very busy place for Hedges. When the sermon was done and inquirers were invited to the place of prayer, he used to move about in the congregation pleading with the people to be reconciled to God. His power was such that few could resist him. He never argued, but with tears on his cheeks and melting tenderness in his voice, he besought the people to come to Jesus and be saved. One night Mr. Ludwig preached on the parable of the prodigal son. It was a memorable night; it was a memorable sermon. He traced the history of the poor, misguided younger brother from the

sad morning when, with high head and stubborn heart, he rode away from his father's house to spend his patrimony in riotous living. He portrayed his sin and consequent degradation; he spoke of his suffering and sorrow; he spoke of the awful, agonizing struggle through which he passed before he surrendered and made his way back to his home. Then he spoke of the mother, not mentioned in the scripture, to be sure, but who had probably died of grief at his absence, and of the father who so tenderly and anxiously waited and prayed for his return. His heart was with his wandering boy and he was only too glad to receive and forgive him. At this point Mr. Ludwig paused a moment, and then with an emotion that almost choked his speech he told with tears the story of a prodigal who had gone out from his own father's house. "I once had a brother," he said, a younger brother, bright, intelligent and noble hearted. My father, as you know, was a minister, and he desired that both of his sons should follow that holy calling. To this end he educated us in the same schools and gave us like advantages. My mother died when we were young, but I can still remember that she prayed just before her death, with one hand resting on my head and the other on the head of my younger brother, James, and she asked God, the orphan's God, to supply a mother's place to her boys and bring them to be good men and faithful and useful ministers of His gospel. But James never liked the restraint of home nor of school. He determined to have what he called a good time, and boasted that he would sow his wild oats as other young fellows were doing, notwithstanding the fact that he was a minister's son. He sought wicked associates and fell into many vices. He went with me to

college, where my father hoped he would be reformed and converted, but instead he became more wild and reckless than ever, and at last was publicly expelled from the school, and he was so overwhelmed with the disgrace that he refused to come home. He wrote just one letter, but that letter broke my father's heart and hastened his footsteps to the grave. In that letter he bade us all good-bye, as he said he had resolved never to see us again. He said he had begun a life of vice, from which he could not break away, and he had so disgraced himself and his family that he could never look us in the face again. He begged my father to cross his name from the record in the old family Bible and never mention him again in family prayer. 'I am lost,' he said, 'lost; good-bye.'

"O, I can never forget the agony of my poor father when he read that letter. It broke his heart. An awful gloom settled down on him and he could never get from under it. From that sad day it always seemed as though we were having a funeral at our house. Father only lived a short time after receiving that letter, but as long as he lived he kept up a diligent search for James. He prayed night and day for James, and when he was dying he put his right hand in blessing upon my head and his left hand moved about on the covers of the bed as though he were feeling for something, and he uttered these words: 'God save my poor, erring boy; O, God, save James.' The name of my prodigal brother was the last word on my father's lips. Since my father died I have searched everywhere for my brother, but can find no trace of him. I suppose that he is dead, but, O, did he die impenitent? Did he die unforgiven?" Mr. Ludwig could go no further. He was com-



pletely overwhelmed with grief, and bent forward on the pulpit and wept as though his heart would break. The whole congregation wept with him, and that night many prodigal sons and daughters came home to God. When the sermon was over Hedges started out into the congregation as usual, and finding the people moved and melted, he readily succeeded in leading many to the place of prayer. At last he approached a man about thirty years of age who seemed to be a laborer from the mills, but whose dress was unusually shabby and whose face bore evident marks of violent dissipation. He was greatly agitated and tears were on his cheeks, but when Hedges asked him to go to the place of prayer he answered: "No, I have been praying right here in this pew. I have given up to God and have promised to do right from this on to the end of my life, and He has forgiven me. I cannot go to the place of prayer or take any part in the meeting here, but I hope to do a little elsewhere. I have resolved, since God has saved me, to give the little that is left of my poor, wrecked and shattered life to the rescue of others. Can you call on me at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning?" With that he drew from his pocket a bit of greasy paper and wrote on it in a beautiful, though trembling hand, the words,

#### THE PRODIGAL,

92 Water Street,

Brighton.

He handed this to Hedges, and said: "Will you call? I am a tough looking young fellow, but I am all right now, and I want to see you. I believe in you and I want you to help me. I have been an awful sinner, but tonight I surrendered and came home, and my Father has graciously

received me. I must do a little to show my gratitude before I die, and I want you to help me. Will you come?" "To be sure I will," said the great-hearted Hedges, as he grasped the poor fellow's hand, "and may the Lord come with me and make our meeting a blessing." At 9 o'clock the next morning Hedges found his way to Water street and presented himself at a miserable lodging house that bore the number 92. "The Prodigal" met him at the door and ushered him into a dingy little room, strong with the fumes of whisky and tobacco. "You see," said "The Prodigal," as he gave Hedges a seat, "a man's habits make his surroundings. This wretched hovel, this smell of whisky and tobacco and the profane and obscene conversation that is always going on in this quarter are in perfect keeping with the reckless life I have lived. I have known better things, but sin has brought me to this. Even this is better than I deserve. I have been trying this morning to clean up a little. You see, I had a dreadful struggle last night in the church before you came to me. The moment the preacher announced his text a voice rang in my ears, 'Come home, O prodigal, come home! I have called and waited long and you have refused. This is my last call. Come home, come home!' It startled me and I looked around to see if anyone had spoken, but I soon discovered that it was God's voice, and I answered, 'Lord, if I can still be saved, save me. Save me from this burning appetite for drink, from the love of tobacco, from all my other vices; save me if salvation is still possible.' I groaned and agonized in spirit and died to sin and God in mercy saved me, and when He saved me He took out of my nature the love of strong drink and of all other forms of wickedness.

I rejoice to tell you that my salvation was complete and this morning I have gathered up and destroyed all the bottles, pipes and other appendages of vice about my room and have been trying to ventilate and fumigate a little, but I tell you, Mr. Hedges, wickedness will leave its stains and odors, even after you get rid of the thing itself. It will leave its blights and scars on one's body, too, as you can see by looking at me, and nothing but the resurrection shall ever efface them." "True," said Hedges, "but how sweet to know that the soul is made pure at once and recreated in the likeness and image of God, so that the vilest sinner when born from above becomes at once a child of God." The Prodigal then told Hedges that on the preceding night, when God spoke peace to his soul, He had impressed it upon his mind that he should tell his fellow workmen in the mills of the wonderful salvation he had found, "And," said he, "the impression seemed to be that I should begin at once, that there was no time to lose. Now," he continued, "the plan that comes to my mind is this: The workmen, as you know, are on short hours and they get out at 4 o'clock. Most of them must pass the corner of Second and Market streets on their way home, and I must meet them there this evening and tell them what God has done for my soul. Some will stop and the news will spread. Those fellows are poor and wicked and you can't get them to church, and so I must talk to them where I can. But this is all new to me and I am afraid to try it alone, so I want you to go with me—for a while, at least, till I get a little confidence. Will you go?" Hedges was completely surprised. He had supposed that he was wanted to help "The Prodigal" himself in getting more firmly established in the faith, and



for that he felt prepared, but the work that was now proposed was entirely new to him and he hesitated.

Such a thing as a street meeting had never been known in Brighton. The undertaking seemed stupendous. Just to think of meeting six or eight hundred men on their homeward march, jesting, cursing, disputing, hurrying to the saloon to get a drink or two before going to their suppers—to try to stop this surging mass of men, generally ignorant and vile, and get them interested in religious things—it seemed an undertaking for Paul or even Christ Himself, but too great for an ordinary Christian worker. And Hedges was all the more surprised, because this bold undertaking was proposed by a convert of a single day. In the enthusiasm of his first love, a Christian is ready to do and dare everything. Hedges was driven to his knees. He could not see the way clear to go, yet he feared the effect that his refusal might have on “The Prodigal;” so he asked counsel of God. He prayed earnestly, but he seemed to receive no answer, and closed his prayer as much perplexed as when he began, and was about to rise from his knees when “The Prodigal” began to pray. “O, God,” he said, “it is a new thing for me to talk with Thee. In my childhood and early boyhood I prayed. Since then I have called upon Thee when in great trouble, but, for the most part, those long, sad, rebellious, miserable years have passed without a prayer. I have cursed, but I have not prayed; I have sinned, but I have not repented; I have hardened my heart and stiffened my neck and refused to listen to Thy voice, and O, how merciful Thou art to me now. But in Thy infinite love, in answer to the prayers of my mother and father no doubt, Thou hast rescued me from the very gates

of hell, and now I must go and tell my fellow workmen that they, too, may be saved. Some of them will hear and obey; some will curse and revile, but I must tell them. If they mock me, did they not mock Thee, also, O, my Lord? If they even stone me, is that worse than Thy crucifixion?" "The Prodigal" went on with his prayer, pleading the promises with which he seemed strangely familiar and using language and eloquence that would have done credit to any minister in the city. Hedges was captivated. He saw that this besotted wretch was no ordinary personage, and long before the prayer ended he had made up his mind to go with him to meet the working men and abide the results. That evening, when the whistle blew at the mills and the workmen came pouring down Second street, they found Hedges and "The Prodigal" waiting for them at the Market street corner. Hedges was rather an off-hand, extemporaneous worker, yet he had always been accustomed to observing some rules and order in his procedure, and so when he saw the surging mass coming, some running and all talking loud and laughing, he was taken completely off-guard and would no doubt have allowed them all to pass without saying a word, but "The Prodigal" stepped out into the street and, throwing up his hands, shouted: "Hello, mates; stop a bit, I have good news for you." A few stopped, while others answered with a curt saying or a curse. "The Prodigal" imitated St. Paul, by telling only his own experience. He told his experience in sin and then his short experience in grace. In telling how he had sinned and how in consequence he had suffered, he had an appreciative audience, for nearly every one who heard him had drunk the cup of iniquity to its bitter dregs, but when he

told of his repentance and pardon and the joy and peace that had come to him, the story was new and had all its accustomed power to captivate the heart. The crowd that surrounded him grew to nearly a hundred and in the half hour that he talked to them many wept who had not wept for years before, and some resolved on a new life. Hedges sang a hymn and prayed and "The Prodigal" announced another meeting before the crowd dispersed. This meeting, so unexpectedly begun, continued night after night, first on the street, and then in an old vacant building that was secured for that purpose, until more than five hundred workmen, together with the wives and children of most of them, were saved. More than a thousand persons experienced regenerating grace and a strong mission church was established.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE GREAT LESSON—THE IDENTITY OF "THE PRODIGAL"—THE END.

Those were wondrous days for Brighton—true pentecostal days, when the people were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with power. Through the instrumentality of Hedges, "The Prodigal" was led to see the presence and nature of inbred sin and to seek and obtain the blessing of perfect love, and then these great Bible doctrines, Pardon, Regeneration and Sanctification, were preached in the upper part of the city by Henry Ludwig, with a learning and eloquence that led multitudes into the experience, and in the lower part of the city the same doctrines were preached to the working men by "The Prodigal," with scarcely less of eloquence and with convincing logic of hard



facts that were known by bitter experience to all his hearers, and there, too, multitudes were regenerated and sanctified to God. I cannot take time to follow in detail the developments and happy results of this great and glorious revival in Brighton—the book of the recording angel and the unfolding years of eternity alone can tell the good that was done. But I must not close the story until I have told of the happy death of “The Prodigal.” It seemed that his dissipated life had undermined his constitution. For months before he was converted he had only been able to do enough work to pay for his miserable board and lodgings and meet the expense of the meanest drinks and the poorest tobacco. He was still in the prime of life, but sin had robbed him of character and hope and health and was hurrying him on headlong to death. After he was converted and had given up his wicked habits, his health seemed to improve, but it was only for a little while. He had a work to do and God lent him strength to do it, but strong drink had attacked every vital organ and his whole body was full of disease. He spoke with a strange force and eloquence, when he had scarcely strength to stand upon his feet. His fame spread throughout the whole city and to adjoining cities, but it was only the transient gleam of a meteor that was soon to be hidden in the night of death. The great mission church was built and paid for, but on the very day it was to have been dedicated and “The Prodigal” was to have preached his first sermon in it, he was carried a corpse from its altar and laid away among the countless dead, to await the resurrection call. One evening, just before he died, he sent for Hedges, and said: “Brother, you have been a loyal friend, a mighty helper to me, and now before

I die I want to ask one last favor. Offer one more of your good, honest, earnest prayers by my bedside; make it mostly thanksgiving, for God is so wondrous good; then sit by my pillow while I preach a sermon and tell you a secret." Hedges prayed and he said he had never been so awed before, with a consciousness that unseen beings were all about him. The angels had come to the dingy room and were waiting to bear "The Prodigal" home. When the prayer was over "The Prodigal" began. "You remember the night when I was converted. What a night it was. The power of God shook the whole congregation. Well, you remember that on that occasion Mr. Ludwig preached on a parable of the prodigal son. It was a good sermon, a great sermon, full of burning words and attended with a holy unction, but after all it seems to me the general impression created by the sermon was an erroneous one. I have heard many sermons from that parable and the general effect of them all was the same, and, as I believe, radically wrong. I wish I could live to preach a sermon on that parable. I would like to tell my experience as a prodigal and portray the sad and lasting results of my sinful life. I think it might not only deter some from following in the paths of sin, but it might show the vast merit and the infinite advantage of doing right from one's youth. You see, Hedges, the effect of all the popular sermons on this parable is to excite sympathy for the prodigal. We pity the prodigal. We are told that he was a young man of many noble and generous impulses; that he was large-hearted, easily persuaded, and, in fact, that his sins were those of a hot-headed, impulsive youth, and having repented and having been restored, the evil of his course was all cured

and that henceforth he was the favorite son in the family. And then these sermons almost always close with some bitter reflections on the elder brother and he is held up to ridicule and contempt. I would like to tell the people that so far as the evidence goes, the younger son had no more generous impulses, no larger heart, no more temptations than the elder. They were both sharing alike the father's bounty and the father's love, but being tempted, as we all are, the elder brother resisted and the younger gave way. Reversing their ages, it is only another example of the effects of wrong and right choosing like that in the case of Cain and Abel. Abel was the obedient, Cain the disobedient son, the prodigal. I would like to tell them, and hold myself up before them as an object lesson, that when the prodigal does at last return, barely alive and almost starved, he brings all the natural effects of his sins with him, and though he may be forgiven and even sanctified, many of those effects of sin will remain with him till death. Look at me today. I am saved and the wondrous grace of God has purged all sin from my soul, yet I have the eyes, the nose, the cheeks of a drunkard; the lungs, the liver, the stomach, the brain of a drunkard; I have the body of a libertine, and here I am dying thirty years before my time because I was a prodigal son. But this is not all. My sins, like all other sins, have had their effect on others, and while I am pardoned and saved, many whom I have led astray may be lost forever. Ah, Hedges, this is the hardest part of it all. I count not my sufferings anything. I could die a thousand deaths if I could but undo the effects of my sins. I can scarcely see how I can be happy in heaven when those whom I have led into the downward



path are languishing in hell." The poor fellow's eyes filled with tears and his utterance was choked. "O, God," he gasped, "pity a poor dying man and, so far as possible, counteract the effects of my wicked life. Now," continued The Prodigal, "think how much nobler, how much better the life of the elder brother who continued obedient. He escaped all these sad effects of sin, but instead has built up a noble character, which can only be acquired by years of right living. He has the fruits of righteousness in health, wealth and a good name, and all that makes life desirable. The life of the elder brother has tended to make the world better. He has inspired the people with honesty, piety and a love of justice. The elder brothers of the land are the strong pillars that hold society together; the prodigals make jails and prisons and alms houses necessary. The elder brothers sustain agriculture, commerce and the schools and the churches; the prodigals support the saloons, the brothels and the gambling houses. O, that the people would see that while it is right to work for the reclaiming of prodigals, it is far more important to labor to prevent them from becoming prodigals. The most important thing is to fill the earth with elder brothers. Extol the character of the obedient and show the people that 'all that the Father hath is theirs.' And let it be perfectly understood that all the time spent in sinning is doubly lost; it is lost as far as all privileges of good are concerned, and it is lost because the evil that is done can never be recalled. The prodigals may come home. God grant they may all come home and be saved in heaven, but so far as this world is concerned, their wrecked and shattered lives can be of little use. To show you that all I have said is true

and to make the truth doubly impressive by an illustration in point, I will tell you my secret." Hedges had been deeply interested in the new and yet thoroughly sensible and practical comments of his dying friend on the parable of the prodigal son, but bent forward with double interest now to learn the secret of the man whose character seemed so marvelous and yet was such a mystery.

"You have known me as 'The Prodigal,'" said the dying man, "for that was the name I assumed when I was converted, but previous that that time I was living here under another assumed name, as I had lived in a dozen other cities under as many different names. I have been a wanderer, a very vagabond, for the last twelve years, homeless, friendless and miserable, until that night when Jesus found me and saved me. But I have a name, the name which my father gave me, and which through all those sad, sinful years I never spoke above a whisper—a name which will surprise you and many others in this city. My name is Ludwig—James Ludwig—the long-lost brother of the pastor of the First M. E. church of Brighton. I am the prodigal; he is "The Elder Brother." "What," cried Hedges, springing to his feet, "are you James Ludwig? are you the erring brother of my beloved pastor? Can it be possible? But I must hasten to tell him, for he sought you long and with tears, and to find you even here will lift an awful burden from his soul." "No, no," said the dying man, "do not go now, but sit down a moment till I tell you my wish. For a few days past it has seemed to me that I had a kind of fore-knowledge; some coming events have seemed as plain and definite to me as anything in the past. You know the awful attack I had yesterday; that dreadful

convulsion that almost took my life. Well, I knew for more than a day beforehand that it was coming and that by the hardest I should get through with it. But tomorrow, between 10 and 11 o'clock, I shall have another convulsion of the same kind, attended with a dreadful hemorrhage—I see the blood running down my pillow—and in that convulsion I shall die. Now, I want you to bring my brother here at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. I want him to see me alive and talk with me of a few things that happened in our early life before I became so bad. We had a happy, innocent boyhood together, but I must not speak of the dark days since I left the college with the mark of Cain branded in my soul. God has kindly forgiven and blotted out my sin and by His help I shall never refer to it again. Now, Hedges, you dear, blessed brother, you may go, but observe closely what I have said and leave me alone till the appointed hour. God has promised me a restful night and I shall spend all my waking moments in communing with Him and getting ready for the final hour. My soul is at peace and I am happy in the fact that very soon father and mother will welcome their prodigal boy into the home above." The next morning at 8 o'clock the door of the sick room opened and Henry Ludwig entered. He was breathless with haste; he was shaking with excitement; he hurried to the bed where the sick man lay, and instantly recognizing him, threw his arms about his neck and sobbed, "O, James, my brother, my long-lost brother." Then for a little while not a word was spoken, but the brothers wept in each other's arms. Hedges had followed to the door, but felt that he had no right to intrude on a meeting so solemn and so sad. He closed the door gently and waited, wonder-



ing whether the prediction of "The Prodigal" would prove true. An hour passed and then Hedges heard the voice of Henry Ludwig reading the twenty-third psalm and offering prayer. Hedges fell upon his knees by the door. He could not hear the words of the prayer, but he felt that he was waiting in the outer court while these two men were talking to God in the Holy of Holies. When the prayer ended he heard James say "Amen," and he, too, said "Amen," and arose from his knees. Almost immediately after this he heard a deep groan and a hurried and confused noise. He rushed into the room and found poor James in the midst of another convulsion and Henry supporting him in his arms. The muscles of the dying man became rigid, his face became black and his teeth ground together. This lasted for a few momenth and then there seemed to be a little relaxation and the dying man gasped, "Good-bye, The Prodigal—has—reached—home." Then followed another convulsion and in the midst of it the blood came streaming from his mouth and as the paroxysm relaxed his spirit departed to be with God.





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