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A SOLDIER'S MEMORIAL OF M.— H.—

LATE SERGEANT IN THE 18TH ROYAL IRISH REGT.

THE subject of the following narrative was a soldier in one of Queen Victoria's regiments of foot ; and the narrative is written by a Christian soldier, who was the instrument in the Lord's hands for bringing him to the knowledge of the truth, and who saw him the day he entered into his rest.

I first became acquainted with M— H— in the year 1854, when on leave of absence, after his return from India, and previously to his departure with his regiment to the seat of war. I then recommended to him the gospel of the grace of God, as the only source of present happiness, and final victory: but, like most young men in the army, he cared for none of these things. He was then about twenty-two years of age, nearly six feet in height, and full of health and vigor. In due time he sailed for the Crimea, and I heard no more of him for about three years.

In September 1857, we met again for the first time. A great change had taken place in his appearance. He looked pale and emaciated; so much so, that I did not know him for some time. He informed me that his health became impaired in the Crimea, and that, upon his return home, he was discharged, from the service with a small pension. I then conversed with him on the all important subject of the gospel of Christ, pointing out its suitableness to the wants of a sinner. He appeared to have read the Bible only to cavil at its truths and its inspiration. I endeavored to answer his objections. I brought before him man's fallen state by nature in the sight of a holy and sin-hating God, and pointed out the absolute necessity of a change of heart, and the

teaching of the Holy Spirit. I then read part of Luke xv., and other suitable portions of God's word. His temper manifested itself more than once during our conversation; so that he astonished those who heard his opposition to the plain declarations of God's word. I pointed out the folly and wickedness of fighting against the Scriptures, and recommended him to read them with reverence, assuring him that, when blessed by the Holy Spirit, the passages which he now cavilled at would be made plain to him. I remained upwards of an hour with him, and went away much pained by the spirit which he manifested. I prayed that the Lord would subdue the enmity of his heart by his almighty power.

On September 12th, shortly after our first interview, I had another opportunity of conversing with him. He did not exhibit the same unsubdued spirit as before, but listened with attention to the Scriptures, and asked several questions, particularly with reference to the "new birth." He said, "I heard a sermon on Sunday last, in which the preacher declared that we were made the children of God by baptism. I referred to Simon the sorcerer, who, although baptized, remained in the "gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." I then explained to him that regeneration, or the new birth, is the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, making us new creatures in Christ Jesus. I further referred to James i. 18, and 1 Peter i. 23, as showing that the word of God is the great instrument which he is pleased to use in regeneration; concluding my observations on this subject by reading John iii. 1—16, and Titus iii. 3—7. Our conversation then turned on God's way of justifying sinners, namely, through faith in the glorious person and finished redemption of Christ Jesus; and after a long and interesting visit we parted.

I called afterwards on several occasions, but did not find him. On the 29th of December, I went to a hospital in the town where I was staying, for the purpose of visiting a patient. As I was leaving, I learned that my friend M— H— was then a patient in the hospital, and I asked to see him. He received me most kindly. Observing a Bible on his pillow, I read Ps. xxxii. 1, 2., and compared it with Rom. iv. 3—8, pointing out the blessedness of being justified freely and fully by grace, through faith. He listened with anxious attention, and for the first time we knelt together at the throne of grace.

Nearly three months passed, and I had only one short conversation with him. On the 23rd of March, we met

again. He gave me a hearty welcome. His health was much impaired, but his countenance indicated joy and peace within. He then told me fully concerning the work of God in his soul, stating that the doctrine of free and sovereign grace, which he at first rejected, was now the sure foundation of his hope. It cheered my heart to hear him make the following statement, "I am a poor wretched sinner, without any power to help myself, but trusting to Jesus who kills and makes alive—makes poor, and then makes rich—who, in a moment of time, can call the sinner to himself, working his own will." Such were the scriptural views he entertained of himself, and of the power of the God of all grace.

In consequence of his change of residence, I lost sight of him for some weeks, but was most anxious to see him. On the 26th of April I received a note from a friend of his, stating his address, and requesting me to call upon him. On the following day I went to his lodgings, and found him in a lonely upper room, under the care of an aged widow with whom he lodged. He was confined to bed, and in a very delicate state, suffering much pain from a severe and constant cough. We conversed freely for about an hour. There was great earnestness of spirit in his conversation, and a deep feeling of love for souls. He observed: "S— W— called to see me. I spoke to him of Jesus with all the earnestness of a dying man. Oh! I could desire that every poor sinner knew Jesus. In the adjoining room I hear the poor Roman Catholics daily crying to the virgin Mary. I pray for them that they may be brought to trust in Jesus." I reminded him of Ezekiel xxxiv. 11: "I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out." I then dwelt on the love, grace, faithfulness and power of Jesus, as the 'Good Shepherd;' the perfect redemption he has accomplished for us; the full and present justification we now receive through him; and our privilege of rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. He replied, "Christ is all and in all to me. All that I can want or desire for time and eternity is in him. Oh, the goodness of the Lord to me a sinner!" I referred to Eph. iv. 14—16, and spoke of the Lord Jesus as the head of his body, the church, every member being vitally united to him by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, and receiving daily supplies of grace and spiritual nourishment out of his fulness. From the latter part of Rom. viii. I pointed out the blessed security of God's people.

He enjoyed these comforting Scriptures, and, notwithstanding the severity of his cough, gave utterance to the

happy state of his soul in the following words, spoken with his eyes raised heavenward: "I want *realization*—I want to realize more of the Lord's loving kindness to me. I have no anxiety about temporal matters; I believe he will never leave nor forsake me; but I want to know more of his boundless love towards me." I replied, "My dear friend, he will grant you your heart's desire. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus, and comfort the hearts of his people. The Lord Jesus, in speaking of the Holy Ghost, said, 'He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you;' Let us be much in prayer that the Holy Spirit may take of Christ's righteousness, atonement, and all-prevailing intercession, and reveal them fully to our souls. The promise is sure: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." We then conversed on our "inheritance," and our title to it. He rejoined, "Yes, Christ is our title—Christ is our all." We concluded our meeting with the following lines, and prayer:—

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

On May 4th I visited him again. A manifest change in his appearance had taken place since I last saw him. He lay pale and weak, but calm and resigned to his Heavenly Father's will. I did not hear a single murmur from him during his illness. He observed, "Dr. W. was here this morning; he is a Christian man; I asked him to give me his opinion candidly. He said, 'I won't deceive you: both your lungs are gone, you cannot rally more than a month or two.'" He received this answer with much calmness, and observed with a smile, "The Lord Jesus Christ is better to me than my two lungs; blessed be his holy name, I shall shortly be with him." Thus he was enabled to view his dissolution, not only with a tranquil, peaceful mind, but also with a holy joy, in hope of being present with the Lord. He was too weak to bear much reading. I quoted, however, some of the comforting promises of God's word, and joined with him in prayer.

On May 11th I found him much weaker in body, but strong in the Lord. As the outward man perished, the inward man was strengthened and renewed. He took hold of my hand, and said, "I am very weak to-day, I cannot speak or hear much—I have to write what I want on this slate, as it pains me to speak. But I have no fear of death, for, blessed be the

name of the Lord, all is well—I have peace through Christ.” Seeing his weakness, I only repeated a few verses of the latter part of Hebrews vi., and reminded him of the exceed great and precious promises of the gospel, and that Jesus, as our “forerunner,” has entered within the veil, and will come and receive us unto himself. My reference to this passage gave him much comfort.

May the 20th was the last time I saw him. Nature was almost exhausted, but grace had triumphed. His entrance upon death’s dark valley was at hand, but he was safe in the keeping of the Lord his shepherd. His nurse observed, “You need not speak to him, he cannot understand what you say now, he is drawing near his end.” I sat sometime at his bed-side. He seemed, however, to take no notice of me. After a little time, I drew near, and said, “M— do you know me?” I received no answer. I then said, “Do you know the Lord Jesus?” He looked at me, and replied, with a smile, “Ah! yes, my heart and soul are continually upon him.” It was enough, and I said no more. The name of Jesus had touched a chord in his soul, when every other name was heard in silence:—

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear.”

I went to another part of the room to speak with the nurse. I heard him distinctly repeat the name of Christ several times, Having for the last time commended my dear departing friend to our covenant-keeping God, I left, thankful for what I had witnessed of the power of the grace of God.

Shortly after I had left him, he was visited by a Christian lady, who had ministered to his wants during his illness. During her visit, he entered into his rest, and joined the “great multitude,” which stand before the throne, ascribing “salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

And now will the careless or worldly man call all this blessed reality a dream? Was M— H— in 1854 the same man as M— H— in 1858? Would his former comrades have said so? They would not, they could not have understood the nature of the change; but they would have acknowledged that their fine, manly comrade of 1854 was one of themselves, careless, ungodly, profane; and that the poor, weak, exhausted sufferer of 1858, full of peace, and hope and joy, was not one like themselves, but a changed man. Yes;

religion in such cases as this is a reality, which even the ignorant and worldly will rarely question.

Some, however, may say that it was the loss of his health which made him religious; that while he had his health and strength, he cared nothing about the Lord or his truth; and that it was only when he became sick, and weak, and afraid of death, that he became religious.

As a matter of fact, M—H— was not afraid of death. It is true many are brought to the Lord, when health, or riches, or honors fail, Manasseh was an instance of this. It is, however, not true that loss of health and strength, or of riches or honors, have ever of themselves brought a man to the Lord, or will ever do so. The subject of this memoir rejoiced in the thought, that the change in him was produced, not by the loss of health, but by the Spirit of God. And he rejoiced in it, because, though it humbled himself, it made him sure that the work was real. Many of his comrades lived without God, and, alas! died without God. Neither sickness, nor weakness brought them to the Lord. Many, on the contrary, in their full health and strength, were brought to God. They honored him in their lives, and he carried them triumphantly through death. The noble Havelock, the conqueror in a dozen successive battles, was as much the simple follower of Jesus—was as much relying upon his grace, and knew as well that his pardon was sealed by the blood of the Lamb, when, in full strength of mind and body, he was driving his enemies before him—as when, worn out with anxiety and fatigue, he gave up his spirit to his Lord in the Alumbagh Fort. The gallant and high-spirited Hedley Vicars had as thoroughly humbled himself to Christ—had as truly sought peace and pardon in Christ in the West Indies, when, in the full tide of youth and health, he laid his Bible open in his room, and (to use his own happy words) “nailed his colors to the mast”—as when, having received his death-wound in the trenches, he surrendered his spirit to God who gave it. But why do I speak of these? We have thank God, in the army a cloud of witnesses—officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates—who, in perfect health of mind and body, have confessed, and would confess, that they need Jesus—who cast themselves as entirely on his mercy, trust as simply to his precious blood, as they will ever do when weakness and disease lay them low on a bed of languishing and death.

Perhaps the reader of this tract is a soldier. Are you then among this cloud of witnesses? Has the grace that made Havelock and Hedley Vicars humble followers of Christ, the grace that converted M—H—, as yet converted you? God

grant that you may be numbered with the noble and happy band of godly soldiers! But seek Christ and his salvation. Go to him as a sinner, confessing your guilt, and imploring his free forgiveness. Believe in him; cleave to him with undivided heart. But do not delay. Life to all is uncertain; but to whom more so than to a soldier?

THE BIBLE IN THE FRONT.

IN our old company was a smart young fellow. He was unpretending, quiet and honest. He was but little impressed with piety, and religion had little or no hold on his heart. We noticed that he had a beautiful little Testament, that he always placed away with care on occasions of "packing the knapsack." At times he seemed to struggle with the evils which surrounded him in camp. His military duties were performed with alacrity; nor was he ever dissatisfied because things were not such as they might be. But we never saw him reading the Testament which he prized so highly. It was his mother's last and only gift, which he received, with her blessing, when he left home for the war. Alas! he was blind to his eternal wants. He perused it not; the Testament was his altar, without the worship or prayer to satisfy the soul's desires. In one of the terrific combats in which our regiment had the honor to participate, the enemy were favored with momentary success, and we were forced to fall back. As we crossed a small stream, the young soldier whispered in our ear, a tear trickled down his manly cheek, and his frame shook with emotion, "I'm going back for my Testament in the knapsack." "No, no; let us on to the next line of battle," we said, as a shower of bullets whistled around us, tearing up the ground, and felling more than one poor fellow. "I'll have it, or meet the worst; it is mother's," he quietly uttered, recrossing the stream, and dashing into a strip of woods towards the coming enemy. This was the last we saw of him till about

three weeks ago. He had reached his knapsack, took his Testament and placed it in his pocket, when he was wounded in the shoulder, and the next moment was surrounded and a prisoner.

Finally he was exchanged, and his wound healing, he was sent to his regiment. But what cheered him in his lonely hours in prison? Had he no words of comfort, no consolation in his weary, painful confinement? Ah, yes! He thought of what he had risked his life for a second time, How dearly he obtained the "lost Testament"—his mother's token—to lead him to the eternal city of joy! And *then* he read it; the oftener he read it, the more he saw he was a sinner. As he perused it, day after day, his imprisonment became light; the hours flew swiftly by. Then came his freedom, but before it the liberty of the soul to have an interest in Jesus. Before his exchange, came the glorious light of the everlasting Gospel, in place of being Satan's prisoner. Now he reads his Testament daily.

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