

HEART TALKS

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Heart talks by B. Carradine

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BY

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Sanctification—A Journey to Palestine—The Second Blessing in Symbol—The
Lottery Exposed—The Bottle—Church Entertainments—The Better
Way—The Old Man—Pastoral Sketches—The Sanctified
Life—And Revival Sermons.

M. W. KNAPP,

PUBLISHER OF GOSPEL LITERATURE.

REVIVALIST OFFICE, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

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Heart Talks.

L

MY CONVERSION.

THE first deep religious impression I can recall occurred in my boyhood. A protracted-meeting was being conducted in the town where I was raised. Several preachers were in attendance, and I, a lad of eight or ten years, was present a few times. At the close of the services, and on the departure of the ministers, I remember to have gone into a room alone, and, casting myself on the bed, wept a considerable while. At that time I felt a great softness of heart, and realized a decided drawing to, and preference for, the Christian life; but in the course of a few weeks it all passed away.

At the age of nineteen or twenty, on returning from college, I joined a fashionable Church of another denomination from that in which I had been raised. This step was brought about mainly through certain social influences, and in connecting myself with that branch of Christ's Church there was no

change of heart, nor indeed any proper spiritual impression.

At the age of twenty-six, with a young wife and two children, God found me. For years I had not been to church, avoided preachers, laughed at religion, and was on the broad road to ruin. I regarded not the Sabbath, was a great smoker of tobacco, had got to imbibing wine occasionally, and was very profane. My temper at this time had become ungovernable, and the devil undoubtedly had me.

In the place where the Savior found me there were no churches and no Christians. Instead of this, there was any amount of card-playing, horse-racing, and whisky-drinking. I did not take up with these last three things, but, nevertheless, spiritually I was in a lost condition.

The way my conversion took place has been an unceasing wonder to me, as well as source of endless gratitude.

Let the reader remember that there were no churches in miles of me, and no preachers or Christians around.

The business of the store in which I was employed as clerk and bookkeeper fell off greatly during the summer of 1874. I used to walk up and down the lonely building and meditate. Christ had got me at last to a place where I was quiet, and could think.

The thought which repeatedly arose to my mind, and with ever-increasing bitterness and sorrow, was that I was a failure; that at twenty-six years of age I had done nothing and was nothing.

I can see now that the Spirit was very busy with me; I could not recognize his work so readily then, but it is all clear now. He had no one to use in that part of the country to teach me, and so worked directly upon my mind and heart. Repeatedly, when alone in the store, I have buried my face in the piles of goods on the counter, and wept the saddest of tears. Then there would come longings to redeem my life, and be a true man. But I was profoundly ignorant as to what steps to take.

At this juncture I wrote two or three lines to my mother, saying, "I am determined to be a better man, and when I am a better man, I am going to pray."

The reply of my mother was all the help of a human character I obtained in my conversion. She wrote a hasty and brief answer, in these words:

"MY DEAR SON,—I am delighted to hear of your good resolutions. But you have made a great mistake. Do n't wait to be a better man before you pray, but pray, and you *will* be a better man.

"Affectionately, YOUR MOTHER."

This note brought a perfect flood of light to my mind. I saw I had been putting the cart before the

horse. Like the lightning illumines the whole landscape with a sudden flash, so God used the simple words of my mother to clear up the uncertainty and darkness, and I saw in an instant, and that most vividly, what I had to do. I must pray, and keep at it until something happened.

That Thursday night I knelt down to pray at my bedside for the first time since my boyhood. My young wife looked perfectly astounded at the act. I do not believe that if a wild animal had leaped through the window into the room, she could have been more amazed than she was at the spectacle of her kneeling husband; but I always possessed a goodly amount of will-power and what is commonly called backbone, and so prayed on. Still I did not believe God would have mercy on such a sinner as myself; and so He did not, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Friday night I was on my knees again before retiring; but it seemed to me that God was far away in heaven, and I was down here on earth, and I did not see how He could save me. And so He did not, for here was unbelief again.

On Saturday night I went again through the melancholy and apparently fruitless struggle. I arose with neither light nor comfort, but full of determination to press on and pray on until something happened.