

**SOULS IN ACTION, IN THE
CRUCIBLE OF THE NEW LIFE;
EXPANDING THE NARRATIVE
OF TWICE-BORN MEN. [1911]**

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Souls in Action, in the Crucible of the New Life; Expanding the Narrative of Twice-Born Men.
[1911] by Harold Begbie

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HAROLD BEGBIE

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SOULS IN ACTION

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In the Crucible of the New Life

EXPANDING THE NARRATIVE OF
TWICE-BORN MEN

By

HAROLD BEGBIE

Author of "Twice-Born Men," "The Vigil," etc.



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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
MRS. HUGH PRICE HUGHES
AND
SISTER MILDRED
OF THE WEST LONDON MISSION

Surely there are in every man's Life certain rubs, doublings, and wrenches, which pass a while under the effects of chance, but at the last well examined, prove the meer hand of God.—*Religio Medici*.

Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the *want* of it; rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge of his *need* of it; and you may safely trust it to its own Evidence.—*Aids to Reflection*.

It was to this Change of Nature, of Life and Spirit, to this certain, immediate Deliverance from the Power of Sin . . . that Men were then called to, as true Christianity. And the Preachers of it bore Witness, not to a Thing that they had heard, but to a Power of Salvation, a Renewal of Nature, a Birth of Heaven, a Sanctification of the Spirit, which they themselves had received.—*The Way to Divine Life*.

If a man is not rising upwards to be an angel, depend upon it, he is sinking downwards to be a devil. He cannot stop at the beast. The most savage men are not beasts; they are worse, a great deal worse.—Coleridge's *Table Talk*.

It is the plague of manie, that they are not plagued: even this is their punishment, the want of punishment; . . . an insensible Heart is the Devil's Anvil, he fashioneth all sins on it, and the blowes are not felt.—*The Gallant's Burden*.

They have drawn on forces which exist, and on a soul which answers.—*Human Personality*.

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PREFACE

IN two chief respects the narratives composing this book differ from those in *Twice-Born Men*. They are instances of conversion, but not of sudden, violent, and passionate conversion. Even so profound a thinker and so far-seeing an observer as Frederic Myers appears to have regarded conversion only in this manner, whereas the most interesting, the most striking, and the most conclusive cases of the miracle are those in which a gradual and quite tranquil change of heart leads to the new birth. ✓

Professor Granger, in *The Soul of a Christian*, tells of a revivalist preacher who condemned a Scotch congregation for not responding to his appeal for sudden change: "A woman rebuked him by saying that her mother had been praying in the hills for five years before she was converted: how was she to be converted in five minutes?" There could be no narrower view of conversion than that which shuts out of count and regards only as cases of natural development, those fundamental changes in the soul which are gradually produced; so long as there is a culminating point, a place at which the spirit com-

pletely turns about and becomes definitely conscious of a new life, however quietly, privately, and dispassionately, these are true cases of the miracle.

The second respect in which this book differs from *Twice-Born Men* is in the character of the people whose stories it attempts to tell. In *Twice-Born Men* the testators were all men, and of the humblest classes in the community, some of them the very lees and dregs of society. In the present book most of the stories concern women, and in all cases the strata of society is above the depths.