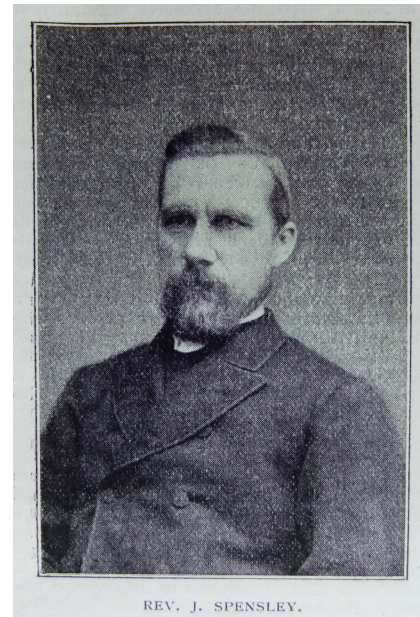


My Conversion – Rev. J Spensley

Transcription of an Article in the Christian Messenger

IT always gives me joy to relate the story of my conversion. Indeed, to tell with meekest humility to others what God has done for us is only a proper thing to do. It was the practice of both Old Testament saints and New Testament believers. David said, 'come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.' Jesus said to the man out of whom He cast the legion of devils, 'Go to thy house, unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.' And Peter and John said, 'We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' And this at once reminds us of Wesley's lines:—

'What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell;
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.'



It was one dark November night in the year 1854 when I sought and found the Lord. It was a *memorable* night. I remember it now as if it were only yesterday. I shall never forget it. The joy that filled my soul that night no tongue can tell, no pen describe. It was 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Though only fifteen years of age I experienced a clear and blessed sense of sins forgiven, consciously received the witness of the Holy Spirit, and was there and then adopted into the family of God. The change was real, radical, divine. It was neither 'a whim in the head, nor a fancy in the brain,' but a glorious reality in the heart, producing a marvellous transformation in the character and life. The November-like darkness which for many weeks had filled my soul was scattered, and light from Calvary's uplifted Cross shone within me and all around me.

It was indeed a change 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' I had been for many long months under deep conviction, and was often afraid to go to bed at night to sleep, lest I should awake in hell. Filled with an awful and overwhelming sense of sinfulness and guilt, I was in a wretched state of mind, and longed and sighed to find relief and rest for my sin-burdened soul, but understood not the plan of salvation, and had no one to show me the way. Being the child of ungodly parents I lacked the advantages of early religious training, and had but faint conceptions of spiritual things. Living, as I did, near three miles from any place of worship or Sunday School, it was not surprising that I had grown up in almost total ignorance of religion, and without any serious regard for the Lord's Day, which was too often spent in the fields and woods near to my home. Sent also to work in the coal mines when only ten years of age, and long before Board Schools were established in this country, I got but little education, and had really to learn to read and write after I was converted.

I had much bitter and determined opposition to endure in my early Christian life. The lads in the pit laughed at me; my work-mates persecuted me; and my home associations were anything but helpful to me in my many soul-struggles. But the Lord was on my side, and by His help and grace I was enabled to bear the ridicule, endure the persecution, and hold fast the beginning of my confidence. One thing that helped me marvellously in the midst of it all was secret communion with God. I made a practice of retiring into the fields and woods near to my home for secret prayer, and always found the promise true, 'They that wait upon the-Lord, shall renew their strength.' My conversion was nothing less than a *miracle* — a marvellous miracle of grace. For I was indeed 'a brand plucked out of the fire.' And how I was saved from falling from grace is almost as marvellous to me as my conversion. I was not converted in a *red-hot* revival, when many others were being swept into the kingdom of God amid the *glorious confusion* of an after-meeting, but in a quiet ordinary week-night prayer meeting at Thurgoland, in the Barnsley circuit. The Rev. H. Cooke, then a young man preparing for the local preachers' plan, knelt by my side, and pointed me the way to the Cross. That was how I found Christ.

References

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