

## Remarkable Conversion of the Samuel Tillotson

### Transcription of Article in the Christian Messenger

In the year 1815, the late Rev. Richard Knill, of famous memory, was ordained as a missionary at Mr. Eccles' Church, Leeds, previous to his departure for the scene of his labours in India. In 1849 – thirty-four years after the meeting in Leeds - Mr. Knill attended a public meeting at Ludlow, Shropshire, at which the Rev. Samuel Tillotson, one of the most talented, laborious, and successful of our early preachers, gave a speech. Like most of these pioneers, he liked to give an account of his own conversion, and on this occasion he began thus: "A great feeling of delight had been produced in my native town by a missionary being ordained there. I was a stout lad and a bold blasphemer. One of my uncles was a godly man, a deacon of Mr. Eccles' Church. He said to me, 'Samuel, there is a young man in town who is going abroad to preach to the black people, and he is to take leave this evening by preaching to the young; thou must go, lad.' The chapel was very much crowded; but being a strong fellow, I pushed my way and got where I thought I should have a full view of him. We were all expectation. At last he made his way to the pulpit stairs. I watched him up into the pulpit. He was a tall, thin, pale young man. I thought 'Is he going to the heathen? Then I shall never see him any more; I will listen.' He read and prayed and then gave out his text - "There is a lad here.' There. God met with my soul; I yielded myself to him. Next Sunday morning I went to a Sunday School and asked if they would have me for a teacher? They complied, and I soon began to pray in the school. Then I set up a prayer in my father's family; next they made me an exhorter, and God blessed me to the conversion of my own father and brother. I have now been a regular preacher in our body for thirty years, and God has smiled on my labours. I owe it all to that sermon. I have never seen the preacher since, and perhaps I may never see him; but I shall have a glorious tale to tell him when we meet in heaven."

Mr. Knill listened enraptured as Mr. Tillotson told of his conversion; and said afterwards, referring to this incident, "Little did Mr. Tillotson think that the once tall, pale, thin young man was sitting near while he was giving that narrative. Time had greatly changed my appearance. He had never seen me but on that occasion; and when I introduced myself to him in the midst of the meeting the shock was electrical. How strange, that, so far away from the original scene, and after both of us had been wandering and labouring for so many years, we should so providentially meet! It has often struck me since that ministers may expect strange greetings in heaven from those whom they never saw on earth, but who have received good from their labours.

H.W.

### References

*Christian Messenger* 1902/56

PDF