

The ministers and those who had made their confession of Christ were all standing in front of me. I was about to pray when the door burst open. Suddenly standing before us was a white-faced boy with blue eyes peeping out from under a shock of bright red hair. He had clogs on his feet and a thick scarf around his neck. He was breathing very heavily, for he'd been running as fast as his legs could carry him from the mill, which was nearly a mile away.

I knew it was Charlie, although I had never seen him before. His dramatic appearance arrested the attention of everyone. Although only a few of us knew the story behind this, everyone felt that something out of the ordinary was happening. The fact was that two of Charlie's friends had been in the service, and to their astonishment saw his father there. They later saw him go up to the front to acknowledge his sin and claim Christ as his Saviour. These two boys then left the church and burst into the mill with the astonishing news: "Charlie, your father's converted! Your father's converted!"

Charlie was too amazed to comprehend the truth of what was being said, so they repeated it, "Your father's converted! Run! Run! Go to him!"

"But I can't go to him," replied Charlie. "I have my work to do and can't leave the mill." But they insisted with all the enthusiasm of youth, and the joy of boys who loved their friend. "Run! Run! We'll do your work till you get back." And so Charlie jumped into his clogs, and putting a scarf around his neck, ran for dear life - while the two boys in their best clothes did his work in the mill.

In the silence I looked from the white face of the boy to the flushed face of the man, and I saw great tears splashing down both faces. Neither said a word, and then the boy's arms came out as if inviting an embrace. He seemed quite unconscious that anyone else was in the room but his father, and his eyes were devouring him. The man made a slight movement and with one jump Charlie was across the carpeted floor, flinging his arms around his father's neck. He kissed him and they wept together.

I was very close to them, and I saw Charlie's hand slip up to his father's face as he began to pat it, as if he were a man patting a child. I heard him say in his broad dialect, "Father, how I love you... How I love you."

When the manager of the mill heard the story, he changed Charlie's working hours for the rest of those meetings. And night after night those two sat side by side, looking as if the light of heaven had dawned on their faces. Jack soon picked up the choruses, and their two voices would reach me in the pulpit as they sang:

*"What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear,  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer."*

They were the last to say goodbye to me after the closing meeting, and I went away thanking God that I still believed and preached the Gospel of His redeeming love.

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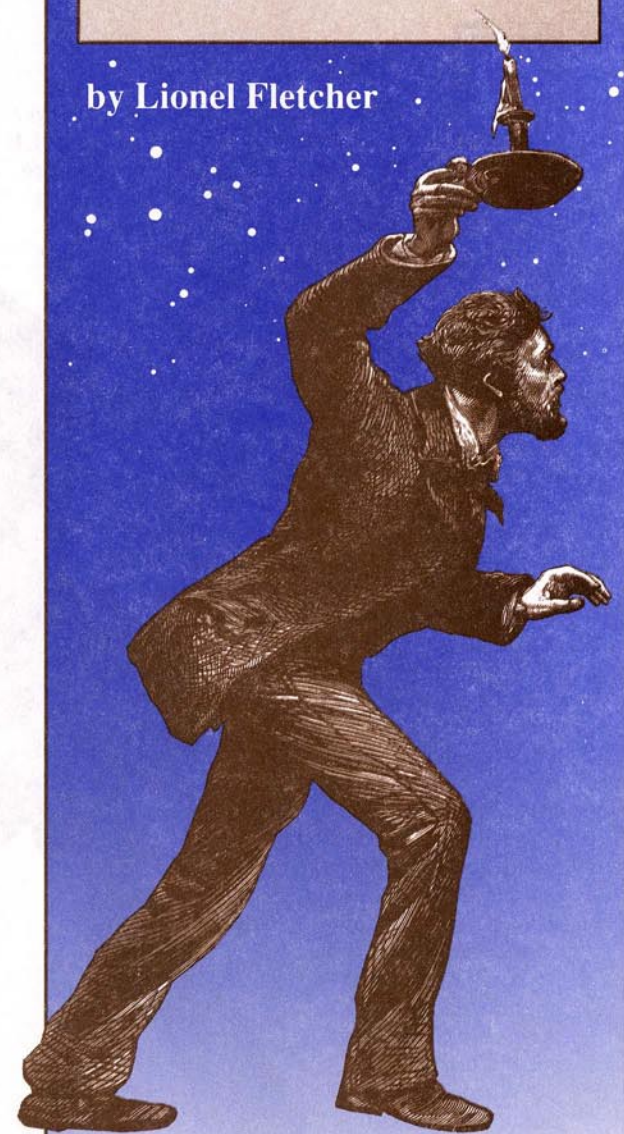
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# MIGHTY MOMENTS

by Lionel Fletcher





*The following story is a chapter from a book published in 1931 called "Mighty Moments." We were really encouraged by this touching story of a young man's faith and his determined love for God. We hope it will inspire you in a mighty way as well.*

**O**ne of the mightiest moments I've ever lived was during a series of meetings I was leading in the north of England many years ago. I can never speak about it – or even write about it – without feeling deep emotion.

I was the guest of my brothers in the ministry. They were anxious for me to be God's harvester in their fields which were ready for reaping – especially among the youth. Although very careful plans had been laid and serious and determined prayer offered, I wasn't expecting anything sensational.

However, early in this series of meetings I noticed an older, very rough-looking man sitting in a pew near the front of the church. He arrested my attention because his face showed such obvious signs of the ravages of sin. I also noticed that he did not sing, and he did not look at the hymn sheet which had been given to him.

Sitting all around him were people from pleasant and comfortable backgrounds, mostly young men and women from good homes. Although surrounded by others this man was alone. I could feel that, and I was conscious that he could feel it too. I was glad that he'd come, and I hoped that if he was unconverted, he might open his heart to the music of the Gospel of Christ.

When I invited those who wanted to accept and confess Christ as their

Saviour to come forward, he was the first to grip my hand! Soon he was at the center of a line of people who were standing in front of me making their commitments to God. I could now see more clearly that he was dressed poorly, and that his face was lined with deep furrows. I was glad he had come, and yet sad because there was a gloom resting on him which affected me strangely.

At the end of the service I invited those who had made commitments to Christ to join me in a side room so I could instruct them in the first steps of the Christian life. But as we walked through the door, one of the ministers took me by the arm, and at the same time grasped this poorly dressed man's arm, and led us both into another room.

I was not very pleased at this delay because I wanted to be with the new Christians to be sure they received the attention they needed. But I soon discovered that the minister wanted to tell me this other man's history before I gave him any spiritual advice. And what a history it was! This man's name was Jack, and I ended up listening to a cold recital of drunkenness and cruelty, among other things. Nothing was veiled. But what broke this poor man's heart was the story which was told to me about how he had treated his son – who we'll call "Charlie" for the purpose of this story.

Some considerable time before, Charlie had received the Lord in this minister's church. He was only 16 years old, and small for his age. When he returned home that night, he bravely announced that he was going to live his life for Christ. His father, who was drunk, instantly seized him by the neck and beat him with his leather belt. He told him that he intended to beat him every time he dared go to that church again.

The next Sunday Charlie went to church. When he got home, he was beaten again – but this time with such severity that his back was bruised and bleeding because the brass buckle on his father's belt bit into his flesh.

Undaunted, the brave young man continued to serve Christ and go to church until his father became a raging madman and nearly carried out his threat to kill him. One bitter winter

night, after a most terrible beating, Charlie was thrown out of the house. He ended up in the sty with the family pig, and was grateful to find a heap of straw to lie upon.

Charlie's father then ordered his wife to bed. After lying there in silence for some time, he demanded, "Where is Charlie?" She told him she didn't know, but he'd seen her creeping out of the house just before coming upstairs and knew she was lying. Jack knelt over her, gripped her throat and swore he would choke her to death unless she told him where the boy had gone. Trembling with fright, she told him he was in the pigsty, and pleaded with him to let the boy sleep in his bed. His only answer was to get out of bed and throw on some clothes. Arming himself with that dreadful belt, he went downstairs and out into the night.

It wasn't long before Jack had dragged the battered little boy from his straw pile. He threw him into a cold cellar where the coal was stored saying, "Try to find some warmth there!" But all through that weary night the young Christian suffered for his Master, and prayed for his father's salvation.

For months this unequal contest went on. Then a week before I began my meetings, the minister who was telling me the story met Jack face to face in the street. Full of guilt, Jack hurried out of the minister's way shouting, "He's beaten me! He's beaten me!" The minister thought Jack was drunk, but now in this room, he realized what he'd meant. The minister looked at Charlie's father and said, "Jack, did you mean that Charlie had won the contest, and that he's brought you to Christ to ask forgiveness for your sins?"

The penitent man, who was now sobbing like a child, just nodded his head. We knew that we were faced with a mighty miracle of grace which proved the truth of the Gospel: Christ died that sinful men might find the salvation of God. I took Jack's arm and shared some words of comfort with him, and then the three of us went into the room where the others were waiting for us.

Then came the climax of that wonderful night.

