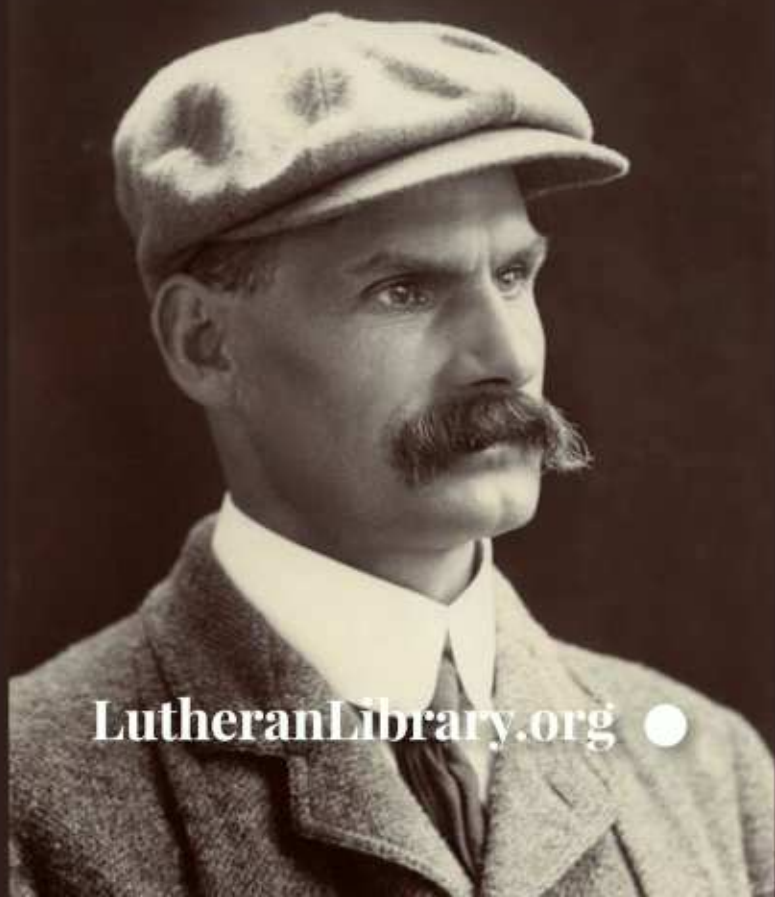


# Joseph Hocking

## The Man Who Was Sure



LutheranLibrary.org ●

**Joseph Hocking** (1860-1937), was a Cornish writer and United Methodist Free Church minister. His novels were immensely popular in his lifetime. [Many of his 100 books](#) are available at no charge from the Lutheran Library.

The Lutheran Library Publishing Ministry finds, restores and republishes good, readable books from Lutheran authors and those of other sound Christian traditions. All titles are available at little to no cost in proofread and freshly typeset editions. Many free e-books are available at our website [LutheranLibrary.org](http://LutheranLibrary.org). Please enjoy this book and let others know about this completely volunteer service to God's people. May the Lord bless you and bring you peace.

# THE MAN WHO WAS SURE

---

BY  
JOSEPH HOCKING

---

---

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED LONDON

NOVELS AND STORIES BY  
JOSEPH HOCKING

*The Man who was Sure*  
*The Constant Enemy*  
*Felicity Treverbyn*  
*The Man who Almost Lost*  
*The Eternal Challenge*  
*Bevil Granville's Handicap*  
*What Shall it Profit a Man?*  
*The Wagon and the Star*  
*Rosemary Carew*  
*The All-Conquering Power*  
*Prodigal Parents*  
*The Game and the Candle*  
*The Case of Miss Dunstable*  
*In the Sweat of Thy Brow*  
*The Everlasting Arms*  
*Follow the Gleam*  
*The Soul of Dominic Wildthorne*  
*The Madness of David Baring*  
*The Trampled Cross*  
*The Man who Rose Again*  
*Facing Fearful Odds*  
*Rosaleen O'Hara*  
*O'er Moor and Fen*  
*The Wilderness*



HODDER AND  
STOUGHTON  
LTD., LONDON



*Made and Printed in Great Britain for Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., by  
Wyman & Sons Ltd., London, Reading and Fakenham*

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
THE MINISTER'S THUNDERBOLT - - - - -	7
CHAPTER II	
JUDITH PENDLE'S DILEMMA - - - - -	17
CHAPTER III	
THE DEACONS' MEETING - - - - -	31
CHAPTER IV	
PAUL TREGASKIS - - - - -	44
CHAPTER V	
THE FIRST SUNDAY - - - - -	55
CHAPTER VI	
THE FIRST SUNDAY ( <i>continued</i> ) - - - - -	67
CHAPTER VII	
PAUL AND JUDITH - - - - -	79
CHAPTER VIII	
THE INVITATION - - - - -	91
CHAPTER IX	
PAUL'S QUESTION - - - - -	101
CHAPTER X	
THE MYSTERY OF PAUL'S BIRTH - - - - -	114
CHAPTER XI	
PAUL'S DECISION - - - - -	124
CHAPTER XII	
PAUL'S PROMISE TO JUDITH PENDLE - - - - -	137
CHAPTER XIII	
JACK RIDLEY'S COMPLIMENT - - - - -	150
CHAPTER XIV	
THE MINISTER'S FRATERNAL - - - - -	160
CHAPTER XV	
MR. ALEXANDER BOLSOVER - - - - -	173

	PAGE
A STRANGE STORY - - - - -	187
CHAPTER XVI	
PAUL AND JUDITH - - - - -	195
CHAPTER XVII	
PAUL HEARS GREAT NEWS - - - - -	207
CHAPTER XVIII	
LORD ST. ELWYN - - - - -	222
CHAPTER XIX	
PAUL'S MOTHER - - - - -	232
CHAPTER XX	
PAUL'S TEMPTATION - - - - -	245
CHAPTER XXI	
PAUL RETURNS TO CLIVIGER - - - - -	256
CHAPTER XXII	
THE GREAT MISSION - - - - -	267
CHAPTER XXIII	
AFTER THE GREAT MISSION - - - - -	279
CHAPTER XXIV	
THE HEART OF THE MATTER - - - - -	291
CHAPTER XXV	
PENTECOST! - - - - -	304
CHAPTER XXVI	
BEGINNINGS - - - - -	316
CHAPTER XXVII	
THE GREAT REVIVAL - - - - -	326
CHAPTER XXVIII	
THE MAN WHO WAS SURE - - - - -	335
CHAPTER XXIX	

SIR JOSHUA PENDLE sat at the breakfast table alone. It was half-past nine on a Sunday morning in March, and Sir Joshua was in a thoughtful frame of mind.

There were reasons for this. For one thing he felt rather lonely. It was several years since he had bought Cliviger Hall, the house in which he now resided, and as it was three miles away from the town of Cliviger he missed the companionship of the neighbours he had when he had lived in the town itself. Years before he had resided in a comparatively humble street near the heart of Cliviger, but having made money rapidly he had felt justified in, as he termed it, living "in a bigger way." It was not without some heart-searching that Sir Joshua had decided to buy Cliviger Hall, especially as his wife, who was then alive, had no desire to change her manner of living; but as he argued it out to himself, circumstances compelled him. As I have before stated, he had made money rapidly and, being a public-spirited man, had given large sums to various institutions in which he was interested. Indeed the new hospital of which the town boasted was largely Sir Joshua's gift; and when it was decided that "Royalty" should, if possible, be persuaded to be present at the opening, he felt that he must do something worthy of the occasion.

He was only plain Joshua Pendle at the time, but the Great War had not long come to an end, and titles were distributed freely. Be that as it may, Joshua, being assured that a baronetcy would come his way, had bought Cliviger Hall, and had moved into it early in the year 1920.

The title had quickly followed, and plain Joshua

Pendle had become Sir Joshua Pendle, Bart., but, as he frequently declared, his changed mode of life had brought him but little happiness. Not long after he had moved into his new and stately residence his wife had died, and as he had loved her very dearly there had for the last few years been an aching void in his heart.

It is true he had become proud of Cliviger Hall ; proud, too, of the respect which he believed his townspeople had paid to him as a consequence ; and yet he was not satisfied. Not only was there a sense of bereavement through the loss of his wife, and not only did he long for the neighbourly chats with the people who lived near him in the old days, but he felt that his two children, concerning whom he had hoped so much years before, had become somewhat estranged from him. When he had lived in Todmorden Street those same children were not only among the great joys of his life, but one of the great hopes of the future. He had pictured them growing up to be not only his comfort in old age, but his confidants and close companions.

But they had not. Ever since he had sent them to fashionable and expensive schools they had seemed to drift away from him, and to care less and less for him. Not that they were bad children. Mark, his only son, called Mark because Joshua's father bore that name, was in many respects an exemplary young man. But he was not what his father hoped he would be. His life at Eton and Oxford, instead of fitting him for the sphere which he, Sir Joshua, had destined for him, and making him a friend and confidant of his father, had removed him far from him. Judith, too, his other child, who had also been educated at one of the best known schools for girls in the country, was not at all like the daughter he hoped and expected she would be.

Therefore, as I have said, Sir Joshua was in a thoughtful mood as he sat alone at breakfast on that Sunday morning in March.

" I shall have to start for chapel soon," he reflected as he looked at his watch ; and then he reflected how in the old days his wife and his two children went with him,

while Mark and Judith had eagerly discussed the children's sermon on their return home.

But those days were over now. It was years since Mark had been to chapel with him, for that matter it was years since he had entered a place of worship of whatsoever nature. As for Judith, she was modern to the finger-tips, and gave a wide berth to the habits and customs which had been characteristic of her mother.

"They were out dancing until nearly three o'clock this morning," reflected Sir Joshua, "so if they get up before noon I expect they will go off for a motor drive somewhere. Aye, and I did hope they would stick to the old chapel!"

At that moment he heard the sound of quick footsteps, and turning towards the door saw a young girl enter.

"Hallo, dad!" she exclaimed. "The top of the morning to you! I meant to have been in time to have poured out your coffee for you, but I overslept myself."

"Hallo, Judy, my dear," cried Sir Joshua, his eyes brightening as the girl kissed him. "This is better than I hoped for. I expected you would stay in bed all the morning."

"Well, you see, I am better than your expectations," and the girl laughed gaily.

"You don't seem tired," and Sir Joshua watched his daughter while she went to the sideboard and helped herself to a liberal breakfast.

"Why should I be tired?" was her reply.

"You didn't get in till nearly three this morning," replied her father. "I was awake, and heard you."

"Well, what if I didn't? I had six hours' sleep, and that's enough for me. You are not going to chapel this morning, are you?" and there was a suggestion of anxiety in her voice.

"Why, my dear?"

"Because I wanted a chat with you."

"A chat with me?" queried Sir Joshua. "That's something new for you, isn't it? It is a long time since you wanted a chat with me."

"Well, I do, anyhow," was her reply, and she looked a little anxiously at her father.

"I am afraid it will have to wait until afternoon," he replied. "I must soon start for chapel."

"But why should you?" asked the girl.

"For one thing your mother would like it," replied Sir Joshua, with a sigh. "She never missed when she was alive, and besides that, the congregation has been growing thinner and thinner of late years, and every one counts. I can't make it out," he went on; "when I was a young man, Ebenezer was nearly full at every service, while now only a handful of people attend. People seem to have lost their taste for chapel going."

"What wonder?" laughed the girl. "No one gets any good by going."

"I like to keep up the good old custom," replied Sir Joshua. "My father and my grandfather went to Ebenezer before me, and I hope to go as long as I live."

"But it means nothing," and there was a touch of impatience in Judith Pendle's voice.

"It used to mean something," replied Sir Joshua, "and although the old chapel has got emptier and emptier it has somehow a link with your mother. Yes, I mean it. I heard you and Mark talking with those Ridleys the other day, and I heard you saying that there was nothing in Religion; but it would be terrible to think that I should never see your mother again."

There was a silence for nearly a minute after this; perhaps the girl, not wanting to hurt her father's feelings, gave no reply to his statements.

"What do you want to talk to me about?" asked Sir Joshua presently.

But Judith made no response. Possibly she thought that the occasion was not suitable to broach the subject she had in her mind.

"There, that's the car!" exclaimed Sir Joshua, a little later. "I must be out of the house in five minutes. Aye, I do wish you would come to chapel with me, Judy. It's a bit lonely to sit in our great pew alone."

For a few seconds a look of amused indifference shone

from the girl's eyes, then she started to her feet with a changed look on her face. "All right, dad," she said, "I will go with you."

"Will you really, my dear?" cried Sir Joshua eagerly.

"Yes, if you want me to. Mind, that kind of thing means nothing to me, but if you would like me to go——"

"Of course I would like you to go. I shall be as proud as a king to have my Judy sitting beside me in her mother's place. There now, get your things on at once."

A quarter of an hour later Sir Joshua's car drew up before a huge square building which suggested a Greek temple. It was approached by a flight of stone steps, and divided from the street by a heavy iron palisading. Close to the palisading was a big notice board on which the words "Ebenezer Chapel" were printed.

Ebenezer Chapel was, with the exception of the parish church, the oldest place of worship in the town; it was also the largest. Indeed it was the boast among its adherents that at the Sunday School sermons, or as it was commonly called "Charity Sermons," more than two thousand people had in the past congregated there. It was not an ecclesiastical looking structure, and was built rather as an auditorium than a church. It was tastefully decorated, however, and there was an air of quiet restfulness about the place which was soothing to tired people.

Not long after Sir Joshua and Judith entered, the organist took his seat in the gallery behind the pulpit, and began to play a voluntary. The girl, who had often heard it in childhood, could not help being impressed by the fine mellow tones of the instrument, especially as the organist had the soul of a musician, and played with understanding and feeling. Then she watched while the various members of the choir found their way to their seats.

Punctually at half-past ten the minister found his way into the rostrum, and after bowing devotionally for more than a minute looked around the great building.



His eyes swept not only over the area of the church, but around the spacious galleries.

He was an elderly man, fast approaching seventy. Nevertheless he looked strong and vigorous, and according to all appearances was good for years of hard work yet.

Evidently, however, the sight which met his gaze depressed him. Pew after pew, both in the body of the church and in the gallery, were empty. Young people, save a few children in the end gallery, were conspicuous by their absence; while an air of listlessness and lack of interest characterised the few who had gathered.

There was nothing particular to record about the service. The singing was hearty and good, and well maintained the standard for which Ebenezer Chapel was renowned. The congregation, although small, was evidently up to the average, while the minister did his best to interest his hearers. Nevertheless, no vital note seemed to be struck, and there was an air almost amounting to unreality that characterised the proceedings.

When the minister, the Rev. Thomas Ackroyd by name, had finished his sermon, however, a feeling of expectancy was evidently realised. For one thing Mr. Ackroyd stood hesitating instead of giving out the closing hymn as was his custom, and for another there was evidently something on his mind which he wished to say, and yet was uncertain about.

This riveted the attention of the congregation. Even Judith Pendle, who had apparently been bored by the proceedings so far, looked eagerly towards the minister; while Sir Joshua appeared to be puzzled by the old divine's unusual behaviour.

"My dear friends," said Mr. Ackroyd after standing in silence for more than a minute. "I have something of importance to say to you. I had prepared a letter which I had intended to read to you, but on consideration I am sure it does not express what is in my heart."

This was followed by another long silence, a silence which was almost painful.

"I have been minister of this church for over twenty years," he went on presently, "and after much thought and prayer I have decided that it is time for me to leave you.

"You ask why ?

"My answer is that the size of this congregation, and the spirit manifested is sufficient reason. I know that good work is being done by the church, and that there are many activities which exist for the betterment of the lives of the people ; but the church as a church is losing ground. The congregations are decreasing ; the Sunday school is becoming smaller—while our hold upon the young life of the town is growing less.

"You will reply that this is practically true of all the churches, whether Conformist or Nonconformist, and I am afraid you are right.

"Not long ago I read a statement by an eminent divine to the effect that if our church life continues to lose ground during the next twenty-five years as it had done during the last twenty-five years, organised Christianity would have practically ceased to count. Whether that is true or not it has given me furiously to think, and to consider my whereabouts. I, at all events, have done my best, and I have been a failure."

There was a movement in the congregation at this which evidently expressed dissent, but the minister, unheeding, went on speaking.

"Are the churches doomed to die out ? Is organised Christianity destined to cease ? That, it seems to me, will depend on the churches. If we go on in the old way, and if there is no breath of a new life, no new power, no new emphasis, the churches may as well close their doors. . . . But I am certain that this need not be, and ought not to be."

Again the minister was silent, and seemed to be struggling to find utterance for thoughts difficult to express. Then he burst out like a man in wrath :

"Friends, Christ is not dead, and He is the great need of the world ! Without Him the world will drift to materialism, to anarchy, to despair, to devilry, to hell ;

and, as it seems to me, there is no better medium for giving Christ to the world than through the churches. But the churches are not giving Christ to the world; instead they are only giving utterance to worn-out platitudes; there is only an empty insistence upon forms and ceremonies which have long since lost their meaning.

“I do not speak lightly, and as I have said I have given much thought and prayer before coming to the decision to which I have come. As it seems to me, too, I have had a vision of the future of Cliviger, and of this church in particular. Cliviger is a town of more than a hundred thousand people, while Ebenezer Church has been looked upon as in a way representative of our Free Church life. Can Cliviger be inspired by the Christ spirit and the Christ ideal? I believe it can.

“You will perhaps tell me that I am running away from my duty by resigning. I, on the other hand, have felt it my duty to resign. I have, therefore, written a letter to the church secretary placing my resignation in his hands. This will, in the natural course of events, come before the deacons and the members of the church, but I felt called upon to speak to you as a congregation so that I might express to you something of what I feel. I am getting to be an old man. I shall soon be seventy, and as a consequence I have not the strength to try to translate my dreams into reality. But I can do this. I can pray that you may be guided in your selection of a new minister, who I trust will be able to do what I have failed to do.”

Upon this Mr. Ackroyd gave out the closing hymn, and shortly afterwards the congregation dispersed.

But all felt it was not an ordinary occasion. Mr. Ackroyd, although neither a great preacher nor an outstanding personality, was nevertheless much respected in the town. As the minister of Ebenezer Chapel he had endeared himself to many homes; therefore his resignation was not something which could be regarded lightly.

But more than this he had struck a deep note, and his message would be discussed by many people who

were not connected with Ebenezer Chapel. Even Judith Pendle was interested. Indeed she was glad she had come to chapel with her father that morning, and in a way she had not felt for years she realised something of what the life of the church was to the community.

"Did he say anything to you about it, Sir Joshua?" asked the church secretary, who rushed to what was called the "Pendle pew" directly after the service was over.

Sir Joshua shook his head. "It came as much as a surprise to me as it did to anyone else," he replied.

"You might have knocked me down with a feather," exclaimed the secretary, "when I received his letter last night. I never thought of such a thing. Of course Mr Ackroyd is getting on in life, but he looks so strong and vigorous that I thought he was good for another ten years. However, there it is. It will be an awful upset for us all."

"Happen," replied Sir Joshua, who sometimes lapsed into the Lancashire vernacular.

"It must," replied Richard Dodgeon, the church secretary. "We shall have to have a lot of men down here to preach, and then pick out the best man we can among them."

"Happen," repeated Sir Joshua.

"What do you mean by that, Sir Joshua?"

"I hardly know," replied the baronet.

"He wants to finish next Sunday week," the secretary informed him, "so we had better have a deacons' meeting right away. What night will be most convenient to you?"

"I will make any night this week convenient," replied Sir Joshua, "if you will give me two days' notice." He was evidently thinking deeply.

"Won't you go into the minister's vestry and speak to Mr. Ackroyd? You are the senior deacon, and he will expect it of you."

"Not this morning," replied the baronet. "I'm—I'm a bit upset."

"It was a bit of a thunderbolt, wasn't it?"

"I don't know what to call it," replied the other.

When he reached the vestibule, he found Judith awaiting him.

"You seem worried, dad?" ventured the girl.

"Do I, lass?" asked Sir Joshua. "Well, perhaps I am a bit."

At least a dozen people came to speak to him, and to ask him his opinion concerning what had taken place. But Sir Joshua's replies were very non-committal, and his attention seemed to be drawn towards the people who wellnigh filled the street outside the chapel rather than to his questioners. Yet there were two who interested him. One was a young girl who stood by the huge iron gate waiting for him to pass out; the other was a young man who stood by the door of his motor-car. The girl was much excited, and seemed to be talking as much to Judith Pendle as to her father.

"What he said was true," cried the girl; "but it was only half the truth. Neither ministers nor churches seem to know or to care what the young people of the town are thinking about. Many of us are living in a world unknown either to the ministers or to the old-fashioned people who still go to church. That's why we are not interested; and why churches of any sort fail to touch us. Oh, Sir Joshua, try to get a minister who will really make an endeavour to realise what our hopes are, what our struggles are, what our thoughts are!"

She did not wait for an answer, but passing through the gateway rushed down the street.

"Who's that lass?" asked the baronet of his daughter.

"I don't know," replied Judith. "She is a stranger to me."

"I ought to know her," he said; "her face seems familiar to me, and yet I don't know who she is. She seems an intelligent girl, anyhow."

A minute later Judith got into the waiting car, while Sir Joshua climbed in after her. Before Riley, the chauffeur, had set the machine in motion, however,

the young man who had evidently been waiting for the baronet gained his attention.

"Ebenezer is dead, Sir Joshua!" cried the young fellow. "All the churches in the town are dead, and nothing but a miracle will arouse them to life! But as sure as God is God that miracle is needed!" and before the other had time to reply, he too had rushed away.

"That chap works in one of my mills," ventured the baronet to his daughter as the car wended its way up the hill. "He is one of my foremen, George Chadwick is his name."

"He is a fierce looking individual, anyhow," laughed the girl.

Judith Pendle was more than ordinarily excited, although she could not have told why. As far as she was concerned nothing of importance had happened. An old minister, nearly seventy years of age, had resigned his charge, and that seemed all. Nevertheless, what had taken place was destined to affect the lives of a great many people.

## CHAPTER II

JUDITH PENDLE'S  
DILEMMA

"HALLO, Judy, where have you been?"

"Been to chapel," laughed the girl.

"Aren't you well, old thing?"

"Of course I'm well. Why do you ask?"

Mark Pendle, who had been standing on the steps in front of Cliviger Hall, laughed meaningly. "Fancy your going to chapel!" he said.

There was a strong family likeness between the two young people, although, as many declared, there was a difference in their colouring. Mark took after his mother who, in her young days, had been regarded as the handsomest girl in Cliviger. She had been noted for her large black eyes, clear olive complexion, and raven hair, all of which had descended to Mark. Judith, on the other hand, was fair-haired and blue-eyed. Many

said she had been wrongly named. The name Judith, some said, suggested stateliness and a statuesque appearance ; while the girl was anything but statuesque. Rather she was lissom, and quick in all her movements.

Still, as we have said, there was a strong family likeness between the two, and there had never been any hesitation in pronouncing them brother and sister.

Mark Pendle was a handsome, well set up, young fellow. He was taller than his father by several inches, and had, as some declared, the marks of Eton and Oxford stamped upon him.

"But fancy you going to chapel," the young man repeated. "Such a thing hasn't happened for years."

"Well, I've been, anyhow, and I was awfully interested, too."

"What was there to interest you ?"

"You would have been interested too if you had been there," retorted the girl.

"Why should I ?" asked the young man curiously.

"You used to be rather fond of Mr. Ackroyd, didn't you ?" queried the girl without giving a direct reply.

"Well, what if I was ?"

"He delivered a thunderbolt this morning."

"Old Ackroyd delivered a thunderbolt!" laughed Mark. "That won't do. He is incapable of such a thing."

"But he did. He made us all sit up and take notice, I can tell you. He told us he was going to leave Cliviger."

"Going to leave Cliviger ! Why ?"

A few minutes later Judith Pendle had given her brother a description of what had taken place at Ebenezer Chapel that morning, while Mark, strange to say, seemed quite interested.

"I almost wish I had been there," he said at length, while his father who by this time was seated at the dining-room table, and had been giving his attention to a huge joint of beef, looked at his son inquiringly.

It may be well to explain here that while Sir Joshua in coming to Cliviger Hall had altered his mode of living, he had not altogether departed from the customs

which prevailed in Todmorden Street. On weekdays he had yielded to the desires of his two children, and dined in the evening; but on Sundays the principal meal of the day was always at midday.

"I shouldn't think Sunday was Sunday unless we had roast beef and Yorkshire pudding at one o'clock," he had more than once observed; "while in my opinion nothing beats the old custom of cold meat and pickles for supper."

Neither Mark nor Judith liked this arrangement. Nevertheless it was faithfully observed, and both the young people had perforce to fall in with their father's wishes.

"I wish you had been there, Mark," observed Sir Joshua, "and I am sorry to think that the old Pendle tradition is likely to die out."

"What tradition is that?" asked Mark.

"My grandfather was a deacon at Ebenezer," replied Sir Joshua; "so was my father, and when he died I took his place. When you were born," he went on after a few seconds' silence, "I prayed that you, in your turn, would take my place; but it doesn't seem likely. That's what I mean."

Judith laughed gaily. "Fancy Mark being a deacon at Ebenezer Chapel!" she cried, after which there was another long silence.

"Do you think Mr. Ackroyd rightly described the situation, father?" asked Mark at length.

"In what way?"

"Well, do you think that the people have given up going to church? I never go myself, so I don't know, but I was wondering."

"No, they have not altogether given up the custom," replied Sir Joshua, "but I am afraid that the present generation are giving it up. How many among your friends go either to church or to chapel?" he asked.

Mark did not reply, but sat looking out of the window as though the question interested him.

After this the conversation drifted into other channels, although Sir Joshua seemed to be more interested in



what he had heard that morning than in the talk of his children.

"Now then, father," exclaimed Judith when they had finished their meal, "I claim your company for half an hour." Sir Joshua looked at his daughter in astonishment; it was long since such a request had been made to him.

"Certainly, my dear," he replied. "Is Mark to go with us?"

"No, I don't want Mark; I want you."

Again there was astonishment in Sir Joshua's eyes as he looked at his daughter, for Judith had invariably made a confidant of Mark, while he himself had been often worried by the fact that his daughter told him nothing.

"Then we will go to my study," he said. "We shall be quiet there," and accordingly he led the way into a large gaunt-looking room.

Although for courtesy's sake Sir Joshua had called the room "the study," there was little in it that suggested the name. It was true there was a large, glass-fronted bookcase in which a number of books had been placed, but this bookcase was securely locked, and gave no signs that it was ever opened. Beyond this there was scarcely a sign of a book in the room with the exception of a few volumes which were placed on the top of a business-looking writing desk, all of which appertained to Sir Joshua's business of weaver and spinner.

"Now then, what do you want to speak to me about, my dear?" he asked as he threw himself into a large leather covered arm-chair. "Is it about what you had in your mind when you came down to breakfast this morning?"

The girl nodded. "I feel bothered," she said.

"Why, my dear?" asked Sir Joshua kindly.

Judith did not reply immediately, and her father could not help being struck by the fact that his daughter looked uncomfortable.

"Has anything happened?" he asked. "Is something troubling you?"

Again she nodded her head, but still continued silent.

"Is it about money?" asked Sir Joshua kindly. "Have you been running up bills or anything of that sort?"

"No, it isn't that at all," replied Judith a little impatiently. "Dad, I wish mother was alive."

"You are not the only one who wishes that," replied Sir Joshua with a sigh. "But why do you especially wish it now?"

"Because she might understand; she might tell me what I ought to do."

"My dear," said Sir Joshua affectionately, the tears starting to his eyes, "it does me good to hear you speak like this, and if there is anything I can do to help you I will only be too glad to do it. It has been an awful pain to me," he went on presently, "to think that you didn't care for me."

"Perhaps I care more than you think," she replied, and for the first time for years she placed her arms around her father's neck, and hugged him affectionately.

"Dad," she managed to say presently, "do you think I ought to get married?"

"Married, my dear! Whoever put such a thought into your head? How old are you, Judith?"

"Twenty-three last birthday."

"My word, how the years fly! Twenty-three last birthday were you, and I married your mother when she was only nineteen," and again Sir Joshua sighed. "But why do you ask, my dear?"

"Jack Ridley is coming to see you this afternoon, and—and I can't make up my mind."

"Has he been asking you?"

The girl nodded. "He asked me for the fifth time last night," she replied, "and in a way there seems no reason why I shouldn't say yes."

"And did you say yes?"

"No, I couldn't."

"Then why is he coming to see me?"

"He said he was coming, and I didn't tell him he

mustn't. I think he has taken my consent for granted, and yet——”

“ Yet what ? Don't you like him ? ”

“ I like him all right, but not in that way.”

“ He is a good chance,” asseverated Sir Joshua ; “ one of the best chances for miles around. I have known old Amos Ridley ever since I was a boy, and he is worth a long way up in the six figures ; for that matter I shouldn't wonder if it didn't run into seven, and Jack will come in for the bulk of it. I hate the thought of losing you, my dear, but you might do worse.”

“ Then do you advise me to have him ? ”

“ Not if you don't like him,” replied Sir Joshua.

“ But I am afraid,” cried Judith after a long, awkward silence.

“ Afraid of what ? ”

“ I have heard things about him—awful things.”

“ What have you heard, my dear ? ”

The girl walked to the window like one impatient, and then coming back to her father began to talk rapidly.

“ I don't think I am finicking, dad,” she said, “ and I hate the thought of being called a prude. No girl can live with her eyes open without knowing what young men are, but——” Then she burst out sobbing.

“ Whatever is the matter, my dear ? ”

“ Don't take any notice of me, dad, I shall be better presently.”

“ But something is troubling you, Judy, and I want to know what it is.”

“ Well then,” and she spoke like one in desperation, “ I think I like Jack Ridley better than anyone else, and he tells me that he is in love with me. As I said just now, he has asked me several times, and I believe I want to say yes ; and yet I can't. He admitted to me last night that he had ‘ gone the pace ’ as he called it—for that matter I don't believe he has any morals at all, and I am sure he hasn't any religion. He drinks,

too, some say he drinks too much. . . . Dad, ought I to marry him ? ”

Sir Joshua was in somewhat of a dilemma. On the one hand his Puritan training and his association with Ebenezer Chapel still had a strong hold upon him. It was true that during the last few years, especially since the war, his mind had been so occupied with other things, that his convictions, as a young man, had less and less hold upon him. More than that, trade ever since what was called “the slump,” had been bad ; and while Sir Joshua’s credit was still good, he had many anxious hours concerning the outlook of the industrial world. This fact made him hesitate. Whatever might be said of young Jack Ridley his financial position was impregnable. Old Amos Ridley, his father, had been spoken of as one of the richest men in Lancashire, and Jack, as his only son, would, he knew, be heir to the bulk of old Amos’s wealth. For that reason, therefore, he favoured the idea of Judith marrying him. Not only would her future be assured, but even he himself would have a great advantage by being associated with the Ridley family.

All this made him want to persuade his daughter to fall in with the young man’s wishes. Nevertheless he hesitated. He was still a deacon at Ebenezer Chapel. More than that, his upbringing and his early ideals were still a strong factor in his life ; and before he realised that the words had passed his lips, he found himself quoting words which he had once regarded as divinely inspired.

“ Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” he said solemnly.

A startled look came into the girl’s eyes. Evidently the words affected her. “ But I have no belief in anything, myself, dad,” she said.

“ Do you mean that, Judy ? ”

“ I do—Oh yes, I know. I hate the stories I have heard circulated about Jack Ridley, and yet I am certain of nothing. I think if mother had lived I might have been a different girl, but as you know, you have

never troubled much about me, and I have drifted. All the same——”

“I love, dear, to hear you talk about mother,” broke in Sir Joshua——“and——and——”

“Dad, are you sure there is anything in it?” asked Judith.

“Anything in what, my dear?”

“In Christianity; in what mother used to believe?”

Sir Joshua felt self-condemned. His daughter, while not complaining of him, had wounded him sorely. She made him feel that he had not done his duty.

“Yes, there is *everything* in it!” he almost shouted. “And Judy, my dear, your mother was the best woman that ever lived, and I am sure she would not have you marry that fellow.”

Unconsciously Sir Joshua had struck the right note, and although, as he had often declared, Judy was not an easy girl to manage, he had helped her to make up her mind.

“Then I’ll say ‘no’ when he comes,” she cried, “and mind, dad, you must back me up.”

“All right, my dear,” assented Sir Joshua, and then calling to mind his business relations with Amos Ridley, he hesitated. “Of course you’ll know how to deal with him,” he said. “There will be no need for you to anger him or to send him away in despair; let him down gently. Perhaps,” he added, “he is not as black as he is painted.”

But Judith Pendle scarcely heeded her father’s words. He had helped her to make up her mind, and she felt as though a great burden had been rolled from her. Evidently, however, she had not finished with her father yet.

“Dad,” she went on, “I was awfully interested in what Mr. Ackroyd said this morning.”

“Anyhow he has placed us in an awkward fix,” exclaimed Sir Joshua, glad to change the subject.

“In what way?” asked the girl.

“Because we shall have to find a successor. You heard what Dodgeon said to me this morning, didn’t

you ? It will be awfully hard to get the right man for Ebenezer. The finances are in a bad way, and the revenues from the pew rents are nothing like what they were. I seldom go of a Sunday night, but from what I can hear, while the evening congregations are better than those of a morning, they are very depressing."

"You haven't been to hear Mr. Arnold, the Vicar of St. Jude's, have you ?" Judith asked suddenly.

"No, my dear. As you know I always go to Ebenezer of a morning, and I seldom go out of a night."

"I went last Sunday night," Judith said with a far away look in her eyes. "Indeed, I have been several times."

"You have been several times to St. Jude's ?" exclaimed Sir Joshua.

"Yes. Sunday evenings are a good deal of a bore. Mark generally goes off by himself somewhere, and when we haven't had company I've been lonely ; so for want of something better to do I have gone to St. Jude's. Do you think you are on the right lines at Ebenezer, dad ?"

"What do you mean, my dear ?"

"I have been wondering, that's all. As you know, I don't as a rule take much interest in religious matters, but Mr. Arnold set me thinking."

"In what way, my dear ?"

"Well, if he is right, and his idea of the Church is right, you Nonconformists are nothing but interlopers. You don't belong to the true Church at all, and are only a hindrance to the great dream of all true lovers of the Church."

"Is that what Mr. Arnold said ?"

"Perhaps not in so many words, but I could see that that was what he meant. The whole thing seems such nonsense to me, but Mr. Arnold is awfully in earnest ; and while I was listening to him he quite impressed me. He as good as said that Nonconformist ministers, while usurping sacred offices, did not belong to the true priesthood at all."

Sir Joshua laughed good-humouredly. "I suppose

Mr. Arnold is one of those extreme fellows," he said.

"Were there many people at the church?"

"No, not many," replied Judith, "but then, as you know, St. Jude's is only a village."

"I have never met Mr. Arnold yet," Sir Joshua said after a pause, "And I don't know anything about him. Perhaps," he added, "as St. Jude's vicarage is only just opposite our gates I will ask him up to meet our new minister—when we get one."

At that moment there was a knock at the door, and Mark's voice was heard.

"I say, be quick and finish your talk, Jack Ridley's car is coming up the drive," exclaimed the young man. "He will be here in a minute."

"Now, remember what I said, dad," whispered Judith. "You must back me up."

"Of course I will if there is any need; but take my advice, my dear, and let him down lightly."

A minute later they heard Mark's voice in the hall, evidently answering a question.

"Yes, both my father and Judith are in the study together. Which do you want to see, father or Judith?"

"I want to see them both," was the reply.

"Come this way then," and a minute later a tall, powerfully built young man was ushered into the room.

"My word!" exclaimed Mark Pendle to himself as he found his way towards some outbuildings at the rear of the house, "but Jack Ridley does look pale. I wonder what's the matter with him, and why he wants to see father and Judith?—Surely she can't be thinking of——"

He did not finish the sentence, even in his own mind, but the look on his face suggested something unpleasant.

A minute later he was examining a car which he had lately bought, and it was not until half-past four when the tea bell rang that he returned to the house again.

"Isn't Jack Ridley here?" Mark asked of his sister as she poured out his tea.

"No," replied the girl. "He is gone."

"How long since he went?"

"Perhaps half an hour ago."

Mark was on the point of asking further questions, but noting the look on his father's face, and seeing the flushed appearance of his sister, he thought it wise to be silent.

At half-past five that evening Mark Pendle left Cliviger Hall, and walked towards the town.

"I haven't seen dad look so worried for a long time," reflected Mark as at length he reached the main road. "Old Ackroyd's resignation has fairly cut him up."

During his walk to Cliviger Mark met several acquaintances who seemed quite ready for gossip, but the young man was evidently in a thoughtful mood, and being somewhat reserved by nature, he did not tell his thoughts to those he met. By the time he reached the town it was after six o'clock, and thus the "chapel folks" had found their way to their various places of worship. The church bells, on the other hand, were still ringing. Church people congregated half an hour later than chapel people.

For nearly two hours Mark Pendle acted in a somewhat strange manner. He visited nearly every important church and chapel in the town. He did not stay long at either of them, but after having entered the vestibules and giving a hasty glance at the various congregations, he seemed to be thinking deeply. As he went from church to church and from chapel to chapel he noticed that the streets were thronged by a vast concourse of people; especially young people. Most of these were walking aimlessly up and down the streets, while others were laughing and flirting. Mark watched and listened attentively.

By eight o'clock he found his way to the Market Square, which was evidently a popular place of meeting on Sunday nights. Anyhow, a large crowd had gathered.

Still Mark watched and listened attentively. On the whole the people seemed in a good humour. Although winter had not yet gone the weather was warm and



fine, and as a nearly full moon sailed in a clear sky overhead, there was every inducement for the people to stay out of doors. On this particular Sunday night Cliviger Market Square was reminiscent of Hyde Park on a fine Sunday afternoon. No less than four fairly large groups of people had gathered together, and were listening to stump orators, each of whom was advocating his views on life generally, and what the world most needed.

Mark visited each one in turn, and listened attentively to what the orators had to say. The first to whom he listened was advocating the necessity of English people following the example of Russia.

"What did Lenin say?" shouted the orator. "He said that before there could be any progress in the country they would have to kill religion; and they have done it, friends. The priest no longer rules there, and the people are enjoying a freedom which they never dreamt of before. That is what we shall have to do here."

After Mark had listened for a few minutes he went on to another group. There a man, evidently well known in the town, was advising a general strike. It was evident that there had been, or was, a quarrel between employers and employees on the question of wages; and the orator was assuring them that the only way that the people could obtain their rights was to "down tools, and tell the blood suckers to do their worst."

The last group which he visited was of a different nature from the others. Here a Salvation Army captain was urging upon his hearers the necessity of having their sins washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ, and thus make certain of a blissful future.

"Good evening, Mr. Mark."

Mark turned and found himself standing close to the young man whom Judy had called a fierce-looking individual at the close of the morning service at Ebenezer.

"Ah, George, is this how you spend your Sunday evenings?"

"Sometimes, Mr. Mark. What do you think of it?" he added.

"Think of what?"

"All this," and George Chadwick nodded towards the groups in the Market Square.

"I hardly know, except that it seems a strange commentary on what I have been seeing and hearing earlier in the evening."

George Chadwick looked at him questioningly.

"I have visited at least a dozen churches and chapels to-night," went on Mark.

"Why, that's what I've been doing!" exclaimed the other. "As you know, I belong to Ebenezer, and after what I heard this morning I thought I would just see for myself how Cliviger people spent their Sunday evenings. You have heard that Mr. Ackroyd is resigning Ebenezer?" he added.

"Yes, father told me after he had been to the service this morning. He was considerably disturbed," he added.

"I could see he was," replied Chadwick. "Sir Joshua has been a good friend to Ebenezer. Did he tell you what Mr. Ackroyd said?"

"Yes," replied Mark. "I wonder whether it's true? Is Christianity dying out, and will organised religion become a dead letter in another decade or two? From what I could see of the congregations at the churches to which I went to-night, not one in ten of the people of the town attend."

"That was my conclusion. By God, it's terrible!"

"Why is it so terrible? Suppose religion became a dead letter, would the people be any worse?"

"I have asked myself that more than once," replied George Chadwick; "in fact for more than a year I was pretty nearly an atheist. I am afraid I haven't got much religion now, but I am certain of one thing."

"What's that?"

"That the great need of Cliviger, and the whole country in fact, is Jesus Christ. Did you hear that Bolshevik fellow over there?" and he nodded towards the man to whom Mark had first listened.

“ Yes, I heard him.”

“ Think if what he said were to come true,” said George Chadwick. “ Think of what the state of the country would be if religion died out. Things are bad enough as they are, but what if what the churches stand for were entirely a dead letter ! The devil would walk unchecked ; hell would be let loose. During that year when I was nearly an atheist, Mr. Mark, I read hard, and as far as my brain would let me, I read deep ; and I came to this conclusion : All that’s good in England, all that’s good in Europe for that matter, we owe to Jesus Christ, and if we had never heard of Him life would be a cess-pit.”

“ Yes, but isn’t Jesus Christ becoming a dead letter ? ” urged Mark. “ What are the people caring about Him in these days ? The churches and chapels, as you saw to-night, are nearly empty, while the people who go to them didn’t seem to half believe what they heard.”

“ Tom Dodgeon told me that he was calling a deacons’ meeting for next Saturday night,” ventured Chadwick with seeming irrelevance.

“ A deacons’ meeting ? What for ? ”

“ To get a new minister for Ebenezer. Look here, Mr. Mark, I don’t know why, but I have a feeling that if a real minister of Jesus Christ would come to Ebenezer—yes, I mean it—if a real minister of Jesus Christ would come to Ebenezer—the town might be reborn, and all this crowd of people might have something worth living for. As it is——”

“ Do you mean to say then that there are no real ministers of Jesus Christ in the town now ? ”

“ Did Sir Joshua tell you what Mr. Ackroyd said this morning ? ”

“ He told me a good deal, but what are you referring to ? ”

“ He said if we go on in the old way, and if there is no breath of a new life, no new power, no new emphasis, the churches may as well close their doors. The whole lot on us, Mr. Mark,” and he lapsed into the Lancashire vernacular, “ need convertin’ . In the main

the ministers are parrots, just going on repeatin' what they have repeated for years ; while the churches are dead, *dead*, DEAD ! We want a miracle i' Cliviger ! ”

“ I wonder,” reflected Mark as he made his way home that night, “ I wonder if Christianity is doomed to die as many other religions have died ? I wonder, too, if we should be any the worse if it did ? ”

He stopped suddenly, and laughed aloud. “ Why am I bothering ? ” he said. “ It has nothing to do with me.”

All the same, he was interested in the fact that a deacons' meeting was to be held on the following Saturday night, and he wondered what the result of it would be.

### CHAPTER III THE DEACONS' MEETING

ON the following Saturday night ten men had gathered together in what was known as number seven vestry of Ebenezer Chapel, and it was evident by the look on each of their faces that their meeting was of more than ordinary importance.

Only five of them had been present at the service on the previous Sunday morning, but by this time Mr. Ackroyd's announcement had become known throughout the town ; and, as a consequence, all sorts of conjectures had been made as to what would happen in the future. For several years past deacons' meetings had not been of a very exciting nature. There had been the usual routine of business to go through, and when this had been done the deacons had returned home and thought very little more about it.

But to-night all was different. Mr. Ackroyd had persisted in his resignation, and as he had been minister of Ebenezer for more than twenty years, the thought of electing his successor gave an interest to the meeting which, to say the least of it, was not ordinary.

Perhaps this was natural. Although the interest in

the church was not as keen and vivid as it had been twenty years before, and even although some of the deacons took far less interest in the place than they had in the past, the thought of a new personality being at the head of the church, and a new voice being heard in the pulpit aroused even the most indifferent.

Sir Joshua Pendle was voted to the chair. Not only had he been associated with Ebenezer from his childhood, but he was looked upon as the "leading man" in the church. Time was when several other manufacturers had been members of the diaconate, but as the years had passed away the employers of labour had become less and less interested in church matters, and, as a consequence, the diaconate was almost entirely comprised either of working men or mill managers. But Sir Joshua had remained loyal to the old chapel, and was looked upon as the most important Nonconformist layman in the town.

"You all know why we have met," began Sir Joshua after one of the brethren had been called upon to offer prayer, "and I am glad to see a full attendance. Last Sunday Mr. Ackroyd announced his intention of leaving us, and, as Mr. Dodgeon, the secretary, has since informed us, he wants to close his ministry to-morrow week. This is rather sudden, but we must do our best. The question, as I see it, is first to realise the kind of man we want, and then to decide as to the best method of getting him."

"What kind of a man do we want, Sir Joshua?" asked one of the members. "Have we made up our minds about that?"

Before anyone had time to answer this query one of the oldest deacons asked whether it would not be possible to persuade Mr. Ackroyd to reconsider his resignation. "I am an old man, Mr. Chairman," he said, "and I don't like newvangs. Mr. Ackroyd has been with us for over twenty years, and I was hopin' as 'ow he would see out my time. I know that Ebenezer is not what it was once, but as far as I can see Mr. Ackroyd will do for us as well as anyone else. He has at least

five years of work in him yet, and as far as I know everyone likes him."

"I think I can answer Mr. Amos Whalebone at once," replied Tom Dodgeon, the secretary. "Mr. Ackroyd is most emphatic as to his resignation, and he told me that nothing would persuade him to stay. He says that, as far as he can see, the church is dying from indifference, and that a new personality is essential."

"For my part," said another member, "I don't think that Mr. Ackroyd was wise in saying what he did last Sunday morning. We may be in a bad way, but the Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists are just as bad, while as for the Baptists, from what I can hear they are a good deal worse. I have got this to say, too. It doesn't do us any good, and it doesn't do the cause of religion any good to have it cried down. Let's cry it up a bit."

"What is there to cry up?" asked another.

"Mr. Chairman," and it was Mr. Dodgeon, the secretary, who rose to speak. "I don't think it is any good talking in this way at all. The fact is that our minister, Mr. Ackroyd, has resigned, and we have got to get a successor. Now then, we must approach this question in a business-like way, and I have done my best to anticipate what we ought to do. I have got to know a number of ministers who are, what you might call, movable. To be exact I have got seven names before me. I suggest that we invite each of these seven men here to preach, and then select the man we think most likely to suit us."

"The church would have to be consulted before we select a man," objected someone.

"Of course the church will have to be consulted as the final court of appeal," replied Dodgeon, "but the church will be largely guided by what we say. Don't you think so, Sir Joshua?"

But Sir Joshua did not reply, instead he sat looking at the agenda which was placed before him, and toyed with a pencil with which he had been making some notes.

"Can anyone suggest a better plan than this?"

persisted Dodgeon. "The fact is that we shall have to select a new minister, and although Ebenezer is not what it was once, we are still in a position to pay as good a salary as any other church in Lancashire, excepting, of course, one or two big places in Manchester and Liverpool. I know several men, good men too, who will be glad to come to Ebenezer, and I propose that we ask some of them here to preach on approval. What do you say, Mr. Chairman?"

Still Sir Joshua was silent. Evidently there were thoughts in his mind which he found difficult to express.

Evidently the chairman's silence influenced the meeting, for no one seconded the secretary's resolution, although several spoke of the necessity of getting the right man.

Then suddenly a new atmosphere was felt in the vestry, and a new interest manifested.

"Please forgive my speaking, Mr. Chairman," and it was George Chadwick's voice which was heard. "Being the youngest member of the diaconate I scarcely feel that I have a right to speak, but I can't help myself. Aren't we going the wrong way to work? Before coming here to-night I read the earlier chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and I have been wonderfully impressed. I find that after Christ's resurrection the little church that then existed met in an upper room and prayed, and that they continued in prayer. May I ask, Mr. Chairman, with all respect to my brethren, how much time we have spent in prayer before coming here? Indeed, I feel like proposing that we cease being a deacons' meeting and become a prayer meeting. As it seems to me, we are in a very critical time in our church's history, and although I cannot explain why, it seems to me that we are in a very critical time in the life of our town. What are the facts of the case? I would be the last to say that attendance at church is the only criterion of the religious and the moral life of the community, but it stands for something. Broadly speaking, when young people especially, cease to have any interest in church life, their interest in the ethical

and spiritual life is tremendously affected. And what are the facts of the case? Cliviger is ceasing to be a church and chapel-going town. For the moment I have nothing to do with other towns in the country, but Cliviger seems to be ceasing to care for anything except the doctrine of the old Greeks: 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry.' Last Sunday night, instead of coming to the service I looked in at at least a dozen of our largest churches and chapels in the town. What did I find? While the streets were crowded, mainly with young people, only a fraction of them went to church or chapel. Moreover, as far as I could see, the fragment of the population which had gathered for evening service were, in the main, indifferent as to what was going on."

"Come, Brother Chadwick, aren't you going a little too far?" more than one protested.

"If I am wrong, correct me," replied Chadwick. "I am trying, as far as I am able, to understand what faces us. There is something else, too," he went on. "Think of the hundreds of young men and women who ostensibly belong to Ebenezer. Their fathers and mothers belonged to the church before them. Many of these young people Mr. Ackroyd christened as babies, and for years they attended our Sunday School. Where are they now? Do they ever put foot inside the chapel? Some of them may when we have some famous preacher come to visit us, but, in the main, they are never seen inside the place."

At this there was some murmuring. Some appeared to be protesting at what was said, while others evidently assented.

"Why, take your own son and daughter, Mr. Chairman," went on Chadwick. "Haven't they altogether ceased being interested in Ebenezer? Nothing surprised me more than to see Miss Judith sitting in the Pendle pew on Sunday morning; as for Mr. Mark, it is years since he darkened the church's doors, except for a wedding or something of that sort. And what is true of them is true of hundreds of others.



In the old days some of the principal people of the town belonged to Ebenezer. Amos Ridley, Hezekiah Accrington, Thomas Guttridge, Barnabas Brierly, and a number of others who are the chief employers in Cliviger were associated with Ebenezer. Some of them taught in the Sunday school in the days gone by, and used to pray in the prayer meetings. Where are they now? Some of them, perhaps nearly all of them, would say they still belonged to Ebenezer, although they are seldom seen inside its doors. But what of their children? Many of them don't care a straw about the work done here. Are they ever seen inside our doors? And what is true of our church is true of nearly every church in the town."

"Mr. Chairman," protested old Amos Whalebone, "there may be a lot of truth in what Brother Chadwick said, but is it a thing to make public?"

"Yes, and I would like to ask this," exclaimed another. "It is all very well to cry 'stinking fish,' but what would Brother Chadwick do to make things better?"

"That's what I am wanting to get at," cried George Chadwick. "Mind you, I am not saying that there aren't a lot of fine young people in the town, and, according to my belief, that is largely because they were reared in Christian homes. The Church has done grand work in the past, and has made Lancashire what it is; but we are drifting, Mr. Chairman, drifting. As Mr. Ackroyd said last Sunday morning, the church seems to be dying; to many of us it is dead; and what I want to know is, what will become of Cliviger, what will become of Lancashire if the churches die out?"

"Stop croaking, and give us summat positive," exclaimed one old man.

"Yes," cried another. "Look here, years ago I wur vary poorly, and I got in a doctor, and 'ee told me I wur vary bad. 'Ee said I suffered from all sorts of things which he called by long names, but 'ee did nowt for me. I got worse and worse all the time, and

then I got in a fellow, what the doctors call a 'quack,' and 'ee put me right. Now, it seems to me, that Brother Chadwick is like that doctor. He is telling us what we suffer from, but 'ee is doin' nowt to get us right."

"I dare say there is a great deal of truth in what I am accused of," replied Chadwick, "and so I would like to say this. It has been urged by more than one that a great deal depends upon the kind of minister we get. No doubt that's right, and, in my opinion, as much will depend upon the kind of men *we* are. Therefore I suggest that this meeting be adjourned until a week to-night, and that meanwhile every one of us pray continually for light and guidance so that we may be led to select the right man. I don't care tuppence as to how we get him; but I tell you this: I have no faith in getting men here to preach on approval, who will do their best to preach crack sermons in the hope of being invited. That may be the ordinary means of getting a minister, but I don't believe in it. We profess to believe in prayer; we profess to believe that God will guide those who earnestly seek Him. Let us seek that guidance, not in a perfunctory way, but faithfully and fervently."

"I submit, Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Dodgeon, the secretary, "that Brother Chadwick's suggestion is altogether impractical. We have been summoned here to-night to consider the means whereby we can get a successor to Mr. Ackroyd; and while, of course, I believe in prayer, I don't believe that God Almighty is going to work a special miracle on behalf of Ebenezer. We are business men, or at least some of us are, and we must approach this matter in a business-like way. We must be practical, too, and not be carried away by impractical ideas. I must, therefore, persist in my resolution. Mr. Ackroyd wants to finish with us to-morrow week; I therefore propose that I be instructed to communicate with the seven men whose names I will now read out."

He thereupon read the names of seven ministers,

some of whom were known to those present, and who had churches in the neighbouring towns.

"These gentlemen," he went on, "are all duly accredited ministers in our denomination, and I have taken pains to assure myself that they are all movable. Many of them are well known, and for the greater part they are known to be able men, and I believe that every one of them would consider favourably a call from Ebenezer. At any rate, what I suggest is practical, and on business lines; and when the church has heard them it will be in a position to select the man they like best."

"Does anyone second that?" asked Sir Joshua.

Whether there was anything in the tone of the chairman's voice that influenced the meeting, or whether they did not like being rushed into action so hurriedly, I will not say; but no one seconded the proposal.

"Does anyone second Mr. Chadwick's proposal, that this meeting be adjourned until next Saturday night?" asked the chairman.

Again there was silence.

"Perhaps," suggested Sir Joshua at length, "we are a little premature in our actions. It may seem discourteous to Mr. Ackroyd to take steps to select his successor before he is gone. Naturally, moreover, we shall want to arrange for a farewell meeting. I think, too, that we shall want to give him a fairly handsome cheque as well as an illuminated address to assure him of our appreciation of his services for more than twenty years."

There was general assent to this, and steps were immediately taken to carry Sir Joshua's suggestion into effect.

"But I want to know where we are, Mr. Chairman," protested the secretary after this had been done. "I am secretary of Ebenezer Chapel, and I am, therefore, responsible for supplying the pulpit when it falls vacant; and, in spite of the fact that my resolution has not been seconded, we shall have to take steps to get the pulpit permanently supplied. I am a practical man,

and I believe in doing things in a practical way. Will this meeting tell me what I am to do ? ”

“ It will be easy to get students from the various colleges to take the pulpit for the next few Sundays,” someone replied.

“ I object to that,” retorted the secretary. “ I am not going to be responsible for getting young whipper-snappers from the colleges who may be utterly unfitted to take the Ebenezer pulpit ; and I maintain that unless we can give established ministers an idea that they are preaching on approval it will be difficult to persuade them to leave their own pulpits.”

Mr. Dodgeon spoke with some heat. It was evident that his *amour propre* was wounded, and that he regarded the action of the meeting as a slight to himself.

“ But if we instruct you to supply the pulpit from the colleges for a few weeks you will have no responsibility as to who is sent,” someone urged.

“ I refuse to do things in such a slipshod fashion,” retorted Mr. Dodgeon in a heightened voice. “ If you want things done in that way you must do them yourself. I won't.”

At this juncture the feelings of the meeting were much strained. Indeed, as someone remarked afterwards, they were on the brink of a row, and but for Sir Joshua's tact the meeting might have broken up in an unpleasant way.

“ I can quite understand Mr. Dodgeon's feelings,” said the chairman. “ I have known him many years, and I don't think there is a more capable or more methodical man in Cliviger, but as the meeting is unsettled as to the course it should take, perhaps you wouldn't mind my making a suggestion. If you will allow me, I will be responsible for Ebenezer pulpit until we elect a successor to Mr. Ackroyd, and I will do my best to give satisfaction to all.”

There was general assent to this. Sir Joshua was, as we have said, greatly respected, not only in the church, but in the town, and as old Amos Whalebone said afterwards : “ I wur sure as 'ow Sir Joshua would noan let us down.”

“But I do want to insist on this,” went on Sir Joshua after his proposal had been accepted, “and I urge it most sincerely and fervently. “We are all deacons of Ebenezer Church, and, say what we will, the church does largely take its cue from the deacons. In spite of the fact that some of you regret Mr. Ackroyd having spoken so plainly last Sunday, we are in a bad way. Perhaps we are no better and no worse than other churches in the town, but there is no doubt about it, while the population is increasing, our congregations are getting smaller and smaller. Young people especially are caring less and less about coming to the services; picture palaces attract them; theatres attract them; dances attract them; but the House of God has no charm for them; and I don’t like to think what will become of us as a town if our young people grow up godless. What Mr. Chadwick said about my own children hurt me sorely, nevertheless he spoke the truth. Thousands of young people in these days laugh at the idea of going to a place of worship, and I ask myself this question: *Is it because there is something wrong with them, or is it because there is something wrong with us?* Do they get any good when they come to chapel? Are the services of such a nature as to inspire a longing for the highest and best things in life? Haven’t the churches become worldly and dead? Are they calculated to lead men to God? I will not dare to answer these questions, but I do ask you to fall in with Mr. Chadwick’s suggestion, and pray earnestly that we may be guided in the selection of our new minister.”

Sir Joshua had doubtless struck a right note, and when at length the meeting broke up the last vestige of ill-feeling, or even of chagrin, had departed.

“I don’t know why it is,” remarked old Amos Whalebone to Chadwick as they made their way out of the vestry, “but I feel reight glad that things ’ave taken the turn they ’ave. I said at the beginnin’ of the meetin’, as ’ow I wished Mester Ackroyd ’ad seen his way to stay on until I wur deead, but now I feel

different. While the meetin' wur goin' on I thowt of the vision which Ezekiel had of the Valley of Dry Bones, and I seemed to 'ear a voice sayin', 'Can these dry bones live?' I felt, George, as though Ebenezer wur a valley of dry bones, and I asked myself whether the dry bones could live. I am beginnin' to feel as though they can. Aye, but that was a grand proposal of thine that we should pray that we might geet the right man!"

When Sir Joshua arrived home that night Oliviger Hall lay in silence. Neither Mark nor Judy were to be seen, and as the servants usually went to bed early, Sir Joshua sat alone in the great house.

"I wonder where those young people are gone?" he reflected. "They didn't tell me; in fact, they seldom tell me anything," and when at length he made his way to his bedroom he remembered with sadness the dreams he had had about his two children, and how they had failed to come true.

On the following morning he made his way to Ebenezer Chapel, but Judy did not accompany him. For that matter, neither she nor Mark appeared, and when after the service they refused to tell him where they had been on the previous night, except that they had motored to Manchester, Sir Joshua felt much depressed.

During the following week the baronet visited Manchester twice and Bradford once. He also, although he gave no reason for doing so, took a journey to Oxford, and was there closeted for a considerable time with the principal of one of the colleges. On his return from Oxford Sir Joshua threw off a good deal of the depression which had possessed him during the earlier part of the week, and became quite cheerful.

When the next Sunday came large congregations met in Ebenezer Chapel, especially in the evening. It was Mr. Ackroyd's last Sunday, and there was a general desire among the large number of people present to give him what they termed "a good finish." Great interest was also manifested when an announcement was made concerning the following Saturday night,

when a farewell meeting was to be held, and when Mr. Ackroyd would take leave of the church with which he had been so long associated.

It is not my purpose to give anything like a detailed account of the farewell meeting of Mr. Ackroyd. Such gatherings are generally rather doleful affairs, and this was no exception to the rule. It was true that a very large number of people had met in the spacious schoolroom underneath the chapel, and much sorrow was professed because of Mr. Ackroyd's decision. Representatives of the various departments of the church spoke of his ability and faithfulness, while the presentations that were made, both to the minister and to his wife, evoked great enthusiasm. When Mr. Ackroyd gave his farewell address, however, there was a general feeling of depression. Many felt that they were losing an old friend, and that whoever they got in his place no one would serve them as faithfully and as loyally as he.

"Nothing but the strongest sense of duty would have induced me to leave you," he protested. "In a way I have been very happy here. You have been generous to my faults; you have been the soul of kindness, and you have given me your friendship. There are no kinder or more loving people in the world than the Lancashire people, and you have given me your love. That is why, in a way, I have been so happy here, and why it grieves me so much to leave.

"But I have been a failure."

"No, no!" many shouted.

"Yes, I have," persisted Mr. Ackroyd. "Twenty years ago the congregations were much larger than they are now; the Sunday school was larger; the various societies more prosperous and flourishing. I have done my best, but I have failed to grip the life of the town; I have failed to interest the young people. It is true that, as many have told me, other churches are no more prosperous than we are, but that gives me no comfort, rather it gives me pain. I will not enlarge upon the reasons why the churches have failed

to hold the people, and why organised religion seems to be dying out. Nevertheless, the fact is patent to all who have eyes to see.

“And yet, as I have said before, there is a great work to be done at Ebenezer, and I believe it can be done. I believe that the cause of religion can be revived in Cliviger, and I pray that I may live to see it. It is the great need of the town, as it is the vital need of the country. May the spirit of the living God guide you in the selection of a minister who will do for the church and the town what I have failed to do.”

As I have said, this address greatly depressed the audience, so much so that somewhat scant attention was paid to the first part of Sir Joshua Pendle's closing remarks. Still, he was the senior deacon, as well as one of the most important laymen in the town. Thus, while he was listened to respectfully, especially when he affirmed the great loss of the town in the departure of Mr. Ackroyd, he evoked little or no enthusiasm.

When he turned from the past to the future, however, interest began to be aroused, and eager eyes were turned towards him.

“You will have noticed,” he said, “that no one was announced last Sunday as to who our preacher would be to-morrow. For that matter, no one knew. I, who have become responsible for pulpit supplies until we elect a new minister, did not know; and I may tell you that up to Wednesday of this week I was very anxious. Anyhow, I have secured a preacher whom I am anxious that you shall all come to hear. Mind, he is not coming to preach on approval, neither does he, in any sense, regard himself as a candidate. It is true that, in addition to taking a first class honours degree in one of our great universities, he has spent several years in one of our theological colleges; but, as yet, he has not been ordained a minister. For that matter, as I learned from an authoritative source, he has been offered a Chair in History at one of our ancient universities. He has also been made a Fellow of one of the most renowned colleges in the University of



Oxford. Be that as it may, I have, after much difficulty, secured him as our preacher for the next two Sundays, and I want you all to come to hear him.

"His name," he added as if in afterthought, "is Paul Tregaskis."

## CHAPTER IV

## PAUL TREGASKIS

"Who is he, Sir Joshua?" inquired at least a dozen people after the meeting had broken up.

"I have told you all I know," was the baronet's laughing reply.

"Aye, but where is he now?"

"I expect he is at Cliviger Hall. I arranged for a car to meet the last train, by which he told me he would come. I expect he will be home by the time I get there."

"He's young, I suppose?"

"Yes. He can't be more than six or seven and twenty."

These and similar questions were repeated in different ways as at length Sir Joshua found his way out of the schoolroom, and went up the steps toward the gate where Riley, his chauffeur, was waiting him.

"But what sort of a chap is he, Sir Joshua? What does he look like?" asked one who had followed him to the door of the car.

"I don't know."

"What, 'aven't yo' seen him?"

"No, I haven't seen him."

"Well, I never!"

This exclamation of surprise expressed the feelings of a number who had heard Sir Joshua's replies, and aroused a certain amount of curiosity concerning the preacher of the following day. Hitherto, when a student from one of the colleges was expected to take the Ebenezer pulpit little or no interest was manifested. A student was, as a rule, regarded as a last resource of

a church secretary, and as many of them had proved commonplace, the congregations which gathered to hear them were unusually small. But Sir Joshua's announcement had piqued the curiosity of his listeners. It was true he had not told them much that they could fasten on, but he had made them feel that this Paul Tregaskis, whoever he might be, was something out of the ordinary. He had evidently had a brilliant university career, and the fact that he had been offered a professor's chair at the Oxford University, singled him out as of more than ordinary importance. But there was more than this. Sir Joshua's manner, and the tones of his voice when he had advised the people to come to Ebenezer on the morrow, had aroused an unusual interest, and many of the people who, as a rule, never thought of coming to chapel on a Sunday morning, determined to be present the next day.

"I hope I have done right in getting him," reflected Sir Joshua as the car made its way towards Cliviger Hall. "In spite of what Dr. Granby said, he may be an utter failure. Perhaps, too, I have done wrong in fixing him up for two Sundays, but, like George Chadwick, I utterly abhor inviting ministers who are movable to come and preach on approval. There is something so unnatural, so sordid about it. Anyhow," and Sir Joshua switched on the light in the roof of the car and looked at his watch, "he will be home by now. I wonder what he will be like ?"

"Has Mr. Tregaskis come ?" he asked almost anxiously of the servant who helped him off with his overcoat.

"Yes, Sir Joshua, he came a few minutes ago."

"Where is he ?"

"I showed him into the snuggerly, Sir Joshua. You told me to, you know."

"Oh, yes, I remember now. Is either Mr. Mark or Miss Judith at home ?"

"No, Sir Joshua, they went out immediately after dinner; they didn't say where they were going. Mr. Mark drove his own car," the servant added.

Sir Joshua sighed. For one thing, he was sorry that neither of his children were home to welcome their visitor, and for another he was anxious as to what Paul Tregaskis would be like.

A little later he entered what was called the "snuggery" of Cliviger Hall. It was not a large room, but it was certainly one of the most comfortable in the house. Panelled from the floor nearly to the ceiling with rich brown oak, and fitted up with huge leather-covered arm-chairs, and well-filled bookcases, it looked different from almost any in the house. If the truth must be told, the furnishing of this room had been largely Mark's work. As he had told his father more than once, he hated what was called the Study, and wanted a room which expressed his own tastes. Thus, as this room had in the past been practically unused, Sir Joshua had yielded to his son's wishes, and had allowed him to do as he wished with it. Strange as it may seem, moreover, although Sir Joshua had at first entirely disapproved of Mark's taste, he now felt that his son was right. Anyhow, he had given instructions for his visitor to be shown there on his arrival.

"Mr. Tregaskis?" queried Sir Joshua as he moved quickly towards a young man who had risen from a large arm-chair.

"Yes. It is awfully good of you to put up with me. You *are* Sir Joshua Pendle, aren't you?" for the older man gave the other a look difficult to describe.

"Yes," replied his host, giving him a second look. "I'm—I'm awfully glad to see you. I hope you have had a good journey," and the baronet spoke almost nervously. He could not tell why.

Certainly, at first glance, there was nothing out of the ordinary about the new-comer, and yet he aroused his host's curiosity. He looked very young, and could not have been more than seven or eight and twenty; although at times he suggested a more mature age. He was more than ordinarily tall, indeed he must have been six feet high, and although his quick, decided

movements spoke of perfect health, his lithe, almost slim figure might mean that he was delicate. Why it was the owner of Cliviger Hall could not tell, but he had imagined that Paul Tregaskis would have sloping shoulders, a stooping figure, and would wear powerful spectacles. But there was nothing of this in his visitor's appearance. Although slight of build, his shoulders were square, and his figure perfectly upright.

A minute later Sir Joshua, who had a habit of summing up anyone whom he might meet, felt that there were two things which differentiated Paul Tregaskis from the ordinary young men who came as supplies for the Ebenezer pulpit.

One was that the young man who stood before him looked radiantly happy. Never in all his life had he seen such a light as shone from his visitor's eyes. Large, dark and brilliant, they spoke at once of a keen, quick brain; but they told of something else. The light which shone from his eyes spoke not only of intellectuality, but told of a wondrous joy, of a sublime contentment which he had never seen before. The face, too, while not handsome or perhaps even good looking, in the ordinary sense of the word, was the face of a happy man. For that matter, "happy" was not the right word; it was something more than happiness; something bigger than happiness. The look on his face, lit up as it was with the wondrous light from his eyes, and the smile which wreathed his lips, suggested something which he could not find words to express, and which singled him out as one who possessed some wondrous secret which gave radiance to his whole being.

The other thing was that this Paul Tregaskis was an aristocrat. Why he fastened upon this word he could scarcely tell; nevertheless, it, more than any other, conveyed the thought which had been born in his brain. There was not even a far-off suggestion of the young man about town in his attire, and yet his clothes fitted him to perfection; clothes which he wore with perfect ease and comfort.

Someone has said that there is no greater test whether

a man is a gentleman or not than the way in which he looks in evening clothes. Paul Tregaskis would have stood that test to perfection. The stamp of birth and breeding was upon him, and had he been introduced to Sir Joshua as the scion of an ancient race he would not have been surprised. And yet he was simple and boy-like in his behaviour. There was nothing of the scholar, or the Oxford don in his appearance, and one could have imagined him throwing himself with zest not only into the gaieties of a ball-room, but into athletic exercises. For that matter, Paul Tregaskis was a keen tennis player, and while he did not shine in the football field, he was one of the most brilliant batsmen in the 'Varsity team, while his handicap at golf was two.

"I wonder if he can preach?" thought Sir Joshua, "because, after all, that's the great test."

But he did not speak. He could not tell why, but there seemed something in his visitor's presence which made conversation difficult; and yet, as he afterwards confessed, there seemed no reason for this. Paul Tregaskis looked at him in a happy, boyish way, and appeared to expect his host to ask him questions.

"You will be hungry, I expect?" blurted out Sir Joshua at length. "It must have taken you several hours to get from Oxford here, and, as far as I know, there is no dining car on the train."

"I *am* a bit hungry," confessed Paul Tregaskis with a laugh. "My train from Oxford to Manchester was a little late, and there was only just time to catch the last train here, so there was no time for refreshments at Manchester."

"Dear, dear!" cried his host, who was the soul of hospitality, "that must be remedied at once," and forthwith he ordered food.

"You feel better now?" cried Sir Joshua, after his visitor had partaken of a hearty meal.

"Miles," replied the other.

"Do you feel like going to bed?"

"Not a bit; but please don't let me interfere with your usual habits. I will gladly go to my room."

"No, no," interposed the other. "I am glad you feel like staying up. My son and daughter are not home yet, and although I do not always wait up for them, it is generally late before I get to bed. I feel a bit upset, too."

"Do you? I am sorry for that," and Paul Tregaskis looked at his host questioningly.

"Yes. You see, I have just come from a farewell meeting to our minister. He has been with us over twenty years, and we have only lately learned that he wanted to go. We didn't want him to go," added Sir Joshua.

"I am afraid I don't know much about Lancashire churches," volunteered Tregaskis, "but I have heard that Mr. Ackroyd is a very good man."

"A very good man," assented Sir Joshua. "Not by any means brilliant, but a good, sound, common-sense man."

"Why did he determine to leave you?"

"Oh, he felt what I suppose all parsons are feeling to-day. He said he was losing his grip on the town; that his congregations were decreasing, and that he felt himself a failure."

"And has he been a failure?"

Sir Joshua was silent for some seconds. "I am afraid that most ministers have to confess themselves failures in these days," he replied at length. "Don't you find it so in those parts of the country which you know?"

But Paul Tregaskis did not give a direct reply. "Doesn't it depend on what one means by 'failure'?" he asked. "Anyhow, I suppose the fact that your minister is leaving you has led to the arrangement that I should supply your pulpit for a couple of Sundays?"

"Yes," replied the older man, who had been taking stock of his visitor ever since he had been in the house. "I have become responsible for pulpit supplies until we find Mr. Ackroyd's successor, and having a slight acquaintance with Dr. Granby, I asked him to help me. Getting a minister for a church like Ebenezer," he added,

“ is a very important matter, and we don't want to choose the wrong man. Perhaps you will be able to tell us after to-morrow night's service whether you know of a man who might suit us. You will then have seen the town, and have got something of an idea as to what Ebenezer Church is like.”

Sir Joshua had a purpose in saying this. So far, while he was favourably impressed with his visitor, he could not think of him as a successor to Mr. Ackroyd. He did not seem serious enough, and his general demeanour was altogether out of accord with his ideas as to what a minister should be.

“ Of course I will if I can,” replied the other heartily ; “ but unfortunately my knowledge of ministers is not large.”

“ And yet you went through one of our colleges, didn't you ? ”

“ Yes. At one time I expected to be a minister.”

“ And don't you now ? ”

“ Doesn't it depend on what you mean by being a minister ? ” replied Tregaskis. “ Think of Glover, of Cambridge. He is not a minister in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term, and yet isn't he as much a minister as any man who has accepted a call from a church ? ”

“ It is not quite the same thing, though,” objected Sir Joshua. “ I heard through Dr. Granby that you had been offered a Chair in the Oxford University. Are you going to accept it ? ”

“ My thoughts go in that direction at present,” replied Tregaskis. “ You see, as Professor of New Testament History there is a magnificent opening for work among young men. You have some very interesting books there,” he added, nodding towards one of the cases. “ It is not often that one comes across them in private houses.”

“ I know nothing about them,” replied Sir Joshua. “ In the main they belong to my son Mark.”

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed the other, and there was a new interest in his voice. “ How old is your son ? ”

"Somewhere about your own age, I should think," replied Sir Joshua.

"And is he interested in Ebenezer Chapel?"

"I am afraid he isn't. It is years since he has been there. I think the fact that he had lost grip on such young men as my son caused Mr. Ackroyd to resign. But it is not only the young men, it is the young women, too. The great bulk of them seem to have lost interest in the churches."

"Does your son live at home?" asked Tregaskis.

"Oh, yes, both my children live at home. You see, they are young and unmarried. I had hopes that they would both have been here to meet you to-night, but they are gone off somewhere. Mark and his sister are great pals," he added.

"Lucky dog!" laughed Tregaskis.

"Lucky dog! What do you mean?"

"To have a sister for a pal," replied the other. "It is one of the things in life I have missed. I never had a sister. Shall I be seeing your son and daughter to-morrow?"

"I hope so; but you mustn't expect to see them at Ebenezer. Have you any brothers, Mr. Tregaskis?"

"No, I have neither brothers nor sisters."

"Tregaskis is a West Country name, isn't it?"

"Pure Cornish."

"Are you a Cornishman?"

"I suppose so. Anyhow, I was reared in Cornwall."

"Are your father and mother still alive?" Sir Joshua felt more at home in asking these questions, even although he was not sure that he was doing right in asking, on such short acquaintance, about his visitor's family.

For a moment a far-away look came into Paul Tregaskis' eyes, and he appeared to be in doubt as to what reply he should make.

"Yes," he said at length, "my father and mother are both alive. My father is a farmer," he added.

"Cornwall is a wonderfully interesting county," ventured Sir Joshua. "I was down there last summer



for a holiday; I stayed at the Headland Hotel at Newquay, and had a glorious time touring around the county. I was told while I was there," he added, and he looked at his visitor as if for information, "that the farms in Cornwall are all very small."

"In the main they are. I suppose there are not a dozen big farms in the county. My father has just a hundred acres."

"And can he manage to live on a hundred acres?" queried Sir Joshua. "Perhaps he is a business man as well?"

"Oh, no," laughed the other; "he does nothing beyond farming. Ah, I see," and there was a merry twinkle in his eyes, "you are wondering how a man farming only a hundred acres could afford to send his son to a University. Well, I'll tell you. I happened to be fortunate. I went from an elementary school to a county school, where I got a scholarship; in fact I got my education through scholarships."

"Then you took your degree before you went to the theological college?"

"Yes. Just before I sat for my finals I got to know Dr. Granby, and it was largely through him that I decided to become a parson."

"And you also decided to become a Free Church minister?" queried Sir Joshua.

"Yes. The truth is that while I was an undergraduate—indeed, up to a year before I met Dr. Granby—I had theological measles very badly."

"Theological measles?" queried Sir Joshua.

"Yes, for that matter I pretty nearly gave up faith altogether. All the churches, indeed all religion, seemed to me, at one time, to be merely a relic of past ages; and I had almost decided upon a scholastic life. Presently, however, a new bent was given to my thoughts, and—and, well, I began to change. I became enveloped in the wonder of the Christian religion—but I won't bother you with that now. Anyhow, there was such a change in my whole outlook that I decided to devote my life to telling the world about Jesus Christ; and

I studied for the Free Church ministry because I couldn't accept the sacerdotal aspect of the Established Church. I couldn't believe in Apostolical Succession, as it is ordinarily understood; I did not believe in Baptismal Regeneration, and I could not accept the Anglican idea of the Church. Don't mistake me, I hope I am not a bigot, and I know some jolly good fellows who are in the Church of England ministry; but I don't believe in the priesthood as a caste, and, as for the acceptance of the Thirty-nine Articles, my soul revolted against it. Of course I know many fellows whose views are similar to my own (perhaps some of them made a host of mental reservations), who have been ordained in the orthodox fashion in the Church of England. But I couldn't do it—I simply couldn't."

At that moment an old eight-day clock in the room began to strike twelve, whereupon the young man started to his feet. "By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I am awfully interested in this conversation, but I think I had better go to bed. I remember that I have two services to conduct to-morrow, and I am always like a bit of limp rag if I lose my sleep. You don't mind, do you?"

Without a word Sir Joshua led the way to his guest's room, and after seeing that he lacked for nothing, he returned to the snuggery.

"That last few minutes altered my conception of him," he reflected as he poked the fire. "He is a wonderful young chap after all. It is true he said nothing out of the ordinary, but there is a look in his eyes which seems to say that he has learnt a wonderful secret. I wonder whether he mightn't do after all? But even if he would, would he be likely to accept a call from Ebenezer? Why should a young fellow like that give up the chance of being a professor in one of the old Oxford colleges to become the minister of a church in a dirty Lancashire manufacturing town? Anyhow, the people will have a chance of sampling him to-morrow."

When Paul Tregaskis entered the breakfast-room on the following morning he found his host sitting there alone.

"I hope you slept well, Mr. Tregaskis?" Sir Joshua greeted him.

"Like a top," was the laughing reply. "Generally I lie awake for some time on the night before I conduct services, but either your air was conducive to sleep, or I must have been more than ordinarily tired."

"And how do you feel to-day?"

"'In the pink'—to quote Tommy Atkins," was the laughing reply.

"You don't feel nervous, then?"

"Not yet. My nervous time will come in the vestry. Will your son and daughter join us at breakfast?"

"I am afraid not," sighed Sir Joshua. "I generally have breakfast alone on a Sunday morning. They didn't get home until more than an hour after you went to bed last night. Did you hear them?"

"No, I fell asleep almost as soon as my head touched the pillow."

"I waited up for them. They had been to a dance at a friend's house, and, as I didn't feel like sleeping, I sat in the snugery till they came. I don't expect they will be down till lunch-time. I suppose you don't believe in dancing, do you, Mr. Tregaskis?"

"Why shouldn't I? It is a very harmless amusement."

"My father used to tell us it was a wile of the devil," asserted Sir Joshua.

"Why should it be? I am afraid I am very bad at it, but I must confess that I love to foot the merry music."

"No, he won't do for Ebenezer at all," reflected Sir Joshua. "Still, I like the chap; he looks so happy, and he is so frank and outspoken. I wonder if Mark and he will hit it off?"

A little later Paul Tregaskis and his host entered Ebenezer Chapel by the minister's vestry door. As yet it was only quarter-past ten, and only a few people had entered the sanctuary; but as his car entered the town Sir Joshua had noted a number of Ebenezer people making their way towards the chapel.

"I wish I had only invited him for one Sunday," reflected Sir Joshua as, after having introduced his visitor to the choir-master, he found his way to the Pendle pew.

Evidently his announcement on the previous night had aroused considerable interest, for he noticed that a number of people who seldom appeared at chapel on a Sunday morning were finding their way to their pews, until as the hands of the clock were approaching half-past ten there was quite a respectable congregation in the body of the chapel. He noticed, too, that there was a look of curiosity on many faces, and he wondered whether the thoughts which had been passing through his own mind were repeated in the minds of others; for he had been looking forward with great anticipation to the coming of Paul Tregaskis, and had been hoping with a great hope that he might "do for Ebenezer."

Just before half-past ten the organist found his way to his seat, and began to play the usual voluntary, soon after which the choir trooped into the seats allotted to them. But it was not towards these that the eyes of the congregation were directed; each and all were looking steadfastly towards the rostrum, and when presently a slight, boyish figure made his way up the steps a little sigh was heard as though of repressed excitement.

## CHAPTER V

## THE FIRST SUNDAY

"WHY, he's nowt but a lad," Amos Whalebone whispered to his wife. "Surely they don't make college professors of young whipper-snappers like yon?"

But Mrs. Whalebone did not reply; she was eagerly watching the young man who, instead of bowing in a perfunctory way over the Bible-board as was sometimes the case with ministers, knelt reverently for what seemed a long time. Then when presently he rose from his knees and looked for a few seconds over the congregation, many were struck with what had appealed to Sir Joshua

on the previous night. They saw the wondrous light of his eyes ; realised the joyful confidence expressed in his face.

“ Let us pray,” he said. Then he waited until the congregation became silent.

This slight innovation was not appreciated by many. There was a printed order of service at Ebenezer Chapel which informed all and sundry that after the organist had played his voluntary the minister's duty was to announce the first hymn. Thus, the call to prayer at the very beginning of the service seemed to many a violation of the custom of the church. Nevertheless, all bowed their heads, for in a way the people could not understand they realised that there was an atmosphere pervading the whole building which, to say the least of it, was not common. As old Amos Whalebone said after the service when giving his views on Paul Tregaskis, “ It was not that 'e said anything varry clever, but there wur summat about everything which I couldn't understand, and I felt as I think Moses must have felt when he stood alone with God, and heard the words : ‘ Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’ ”

After this first slight innovation, the service proceeded in the usual way. Hymn followed hymn, and scripture followed scripture, but it was not these things which differentiated the service from a hundred others. Indeed, as Mr. Dodgeon, the church secretary, declared, he thought that the preacher “ made a very poor fist of giving out the hymns, while his reading of the scriptures showed that he had never studied elocution.”

Perhaps it was his prayers that so moved the people ; for they were moved. As it was frequently declared, prayer-time was often the most boring part of the service, especially was this the case during the “ long prayer ” when ministers seemed to think that the Almighty needed information concerning His own attributes, and required to be persuaded, with difficulty, to give what was “ requisite and necessary as well for the body as for the soul.” Indeed, some said that Paul

Tregaskis did not seem to be praying at all ; rather he was talking with God. What was more, he was talking with God, not as some Great Being Who was far away, but as One Who was very present ; Whom he felt, Whom he knew, and Who was gladly listening to the cry of His children.

In spite of this, however, up to sermon time opinion was greatly divided about the minister for the day. All agreed that there was an interest in the service such as was seldom realised, but as men after the Mr. Dodgeon order declared, the test of a preacher was his sermon. Perhaps, too, with the exception of the Cornish, there are no greater sermon tasters in the country than in Lancashire. In past years men had been known to walk more than a dozen miles in order to hear a great preacher, and then back again along lonely roads and waste places, thinking themselves well repaid by hearing some great feat of oratory. It is true that those days are gone now ; nevertheless, especially among Nonconformists, the sermon is regarded as the centre and circumference of a service.

Here again while Paul Tregaskis was listened to, sometimes with almost painful attention, he disappointed many. His address was neither a masterpiece of exposition and homiletics, nor was it a feat of oratory. For that matter it did not seem like a sermon at all, neither did he appear to be preaching. Except that he raised his voice somewhat so that everyone in the huge building could hear him, he might have been talking to students in a class-room.

“What think ye of Christ ? ” was his text, and after referring to the circumstances under which the words were spoken, he left New Testament times, and evidently thought only of those in which he lived.

“After all,” he said, “a great space of time has elapsed since Jesus was said to have lived and moved in that little tract of land on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. Since then men’s thoughts have changed ; kingdoms have risen and fallen, and the world has, in many respects, become new. Jesus,

according to the best testimony that we can get, was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem, and was buried in a tomb near by. Afterwards it was published that He had risen from the dead, and as a consequence a sect called Christians was founded, and has since become what we call the Christian Church.

“What think ye of Christ ?

“Before we can think anything *about* Christ we must be sure that He *is*. Back in the last century a poet who by some has been called great wrote these words :

“ ‘Far hence He lies  
In the lorn Syrian town ;  
While on His grave with shining eyes  
The Syrian stars look down.’

“Matthew Arnold did not believe that Jesus rose from the tomb.

“To many people to-day Jesus is dead ; He has no existence ; He was crucified between two thieves, and died.

“Is He dead, or is He alive ? We have met here to-day on the assumption that He is alive, but are we *sure* of it ? Are you who sit in the pews of this sanctuary sure that Jesus is alive ? Everything depends on that. If He is dead our faith is useless, our hopes an empty dream, and all this great fabric of Christianity is, to a large extent, meaningless.

“There is a growing belief to-day that He is dead. Perhaps that is why our churches are losing their hold on the people ; perhaps that is why not one in ten of the people in England are in any way associated with the churches ; perhaps, too, that is why even many of those who go to church go in doubt and indifference ; and I think, too, that is why there is no sense of triumph to-day at the thought of death.

“If Christ is dead, we have met in vain, our faith is in vain, our hope is in vain ; but if Christ is alive, if He is what this New Testament says He is, and if we are *sure* of it, then all fear is gone ; all thought of despair is gone ; all thought of failure is impossible ; and the light of joy and triumph shines everywhere. . . .

"But *are* we sure? . . .

"Let me tell you something. While I was an undergraduate I lost all faith; I had been cast among a number of men to whom Christianity was merely a legend; to whom Christ was simply someone who might have lived nearly two thousand years before, but Who was dead, and around Whose name a host of unbelievable things had been gathered. Perhaps I was not quite an atheist, but I was an agnostic. And yet I was not satisfied, so I determined to read every book that I could get hold of that bore upon the question, and to acquaint myself with the thoughts of the best thinkers and scholars. I need not enter into details about this, except to say that I at length came to see that Christianity might be historically true. It took me nearly two years to arrive at this conclusion, but still I was not certain of anything. I recognised the sublime ethics of Jesus, but I realised nothing of the great essential realities.

"Then one day, I will not tell you the details of how it came to me, but it did come to me, that Jesus Christ was alive; that He was what the New Testament claims for Him; that He was in the room with me, a Friend, a Saviour, a risen Lord. From that moment everything became new; my life became possessed of a new meaning; I saw that He was the secret of everything, and that in Him and through Him all life was glorified.

"Since then I have tested what came to me by every test that I could devise. You see, I wanted to be sure. *And I am sure.* I am as sure that Christ is here to-day as I am that you are here; and because of that I am sure that what we call Christianity is not merely a respectable myth, not merely an old-time story, but the greatest thing in the world."

Paul Tregaskis paused a moment at this point, and gave a quick glance around the building, while the congregation, who had been listening almost breathlessly, heaved a deep, quivering sigh. As many said afterwards, his sermon didn't seem like a sermon at all; it was a transcript from life.



I will not try to describe what followed, for I should only fail to give even a suggestion of the thoughts and emotions which possessed those who were present. Except to say this: everyone felt that here was a man who had not come to preach a sermon in the ordinary way, but to tell of something which he actually knew; to proclaim the greatest fact in the world. When presently the preacher gave out the closing hymn no one looked at the clock to see how long he had been preaching, but all were filled with wonder at the great truth which he had told them, and when at length the service was over no one thought of going to Paul Tregaskis and telling him whether they had enjoyed the service or not, but a great sense of wonder filled the hearts of the people, and many thought of Christianity as they had never thought of it before.

"We won't go home by the road we came by, if you don't mind," Sir Joshua said to Tregaskis as, after the service, the two left Ebenezer Chapel. "I should like you to get a glimpse of Cliviger on a Sunday morning."

Thereupon he gave Riley instructions to drive through the town and approach Cliviger Hall from another direction.

"It's a big place," exclaimed Tregaskis after they had driven some distance.

"Aye, it's a big town," replied Sir Joshua. "There was over a hundred and twenty thousand people living here at the last census, and it has grown since then."

"There seem to be a lot of churches and chapels," remarked the stranger again after they had driven through several of the main streets.

"Yes, we have some of the finest churches and chapels in Lancashire. There are five belonging to the Established Church, four Wesleyans, several others belonging to the smaller Methodist bodies, three Congregational, three Baptists; while the Spiritualists, the Christadelphians, and two or three other small sects are represented."

"There seem to be enough places of worship to accommodate the whole town." And as they had now

reached the point from which nearly the whole of Oliviger was visible, Paul Tregaskis requested that the car might stop a minute so that he might see it in its entirety.

"Nothing like it," replied Sir Joshua. "Church-building has nowhere kept pace with the growth of the population."

"And are the churches well attended?"

"I wish they were," replied the baronet significantly. "Church-going has largely gone out of fashion."

"Why aren't they?" asked Tregaskis.

"I will not try to answer that," declared Sir Joshua after a long silence. "Perhaps you gave us part of the reason in your address this morning. There is a grand view from here, isn't there? Away yonder is Pendle Hill; it is a good many miles from here, but you can see it plainly. There is very little smoke this morning," he added. "To-morrow, when the mills are working, you will be able to see nothing."

"I remember reading about Pendle Hill when I was a boy," laughed Tregaskis. "It was in a novel called 'The Lancashire Witches,' by Harrison Ainsworth. I little thought then that I should ever see it. I remember, too, that the story made a wonderful impression on me, but when a few weeks ago I picked up the book I was awfully sorry I had done so."

"Why?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Because it seemed so silly and trivial. One's thoughts change in the course of years, and what seemed powerful and convincing when I was a boy had become mere foolishness to me after my critical faculties had been aroused."

"Aye, I have often thought of that," replied the baronet. "Do you think that's why people have given up going to church and chapel?"

"Perhaps it is," replied the other after a long silence. "Perhaps the churches have been content to go on expressing truth as it was expressed a hundred years ago."

"But truth never changes," asserted Sir Joshua quickly.

"No, truth never changes, but there are many ways of expressing truth."

"Yes, there are," replied Sir Joshua. He was thinking of the service at Ebenezer that morning. "But tell me exactly what you mean."

"I was thinking of my native county," replied Tregaskis. "My father and mother are Methodists, and I, as a boy, attended a Methodist chapel. As you may know, there is in almost every village and hamlet in Cornwall a Methodist chapel of some sort; sometimes there are two or three."

"Yes, I noticed that last summer."

"When John Wesley and his followers began their work in Cornwall two centuries ago, the people were unbelieving, law-breaking, and evil living; but Methodism changed the whole life of the county. It largely became a Methodist county," he added; "in a way it is still, and yet it is a significant fact that the preaching which so influenced Cornwall a hundred and fifty years ago wouldn't be listened to to-day."

"That's what I am trying to get at," interposed Sir Joshua. "By your own admission what converted the people two centuries ago is laughed at to-day. People have become educated; they have travelled widely, and they have read the popular literature which abounds. Now Methodism seems to be dying out. Doesn't that suggest that what the old Methodist preachers proclaimed was false, and that Christianity itself was false?"

"Is that the true interpretation?" asked Tregaskis. "If I read Methodist history aright, John Wesley made converts through preaching salvation from a horrible, material hell. People have given up their belief in that material hell now, and hence the old dogmas have lost their power; but there was a soul of truth in Methodist preaching, all the same. It only needs a new emphasis. Salvation through Jesus Christ is the greatest fact in the world. It's an eternal truth, and, therefore, it can never die. Only the word salvation has come to have a new meaning, or at least it should

have. Salvation should mean salvation to a larger and more glorious life; salvation from sin and everything that degrades. Salvation means Eternal Life. That has not ceased to be true, Sir Joshua, and never will cease to be true."

Sir Joshua was silent. He was becoming more and more convinced that Paul Tregaskis was the right man for Ebenezer, and he was wondering by what means he could persuade him that it was his duty to come to Ebenezer.

A few minutes later the car turned into a road which led to Cliviger Hall, and when at length they arrived there Paul Tregaskis saw a young man standing at the entrance as if awaiting them.

"That's my son," exclaimed Sir Joshua, and there was a touch of pride in his voice.

Paul Tregaskis gave Mark a quick, searching glance as the car stopped. He was wondering if he was the collector of some of the books he had seen in the snugery on the previous night.

"This is my son Mark," announced Sir Joshua as the two young men met. "I wish you would call him over the coals for not being at chapel this morning."

"Why should I?" laughed Paul after greetings had taken place.

"Isn't it his duty to go to a place of worship on a Sunday?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Doesn't that depend upon whether he gets any good when he goes to a place of worship?" asked Tregaskis.

Mark Pendle looked at their visitor with a new interest. He was struck, even as his father had been on the previous night, with his tall, well-knit form and his general appearance. There was no suggestion of clerical attire, and yet he noticed, as his father had noticed, that Paul Tregaskis knew the value of a good tailor.

"Where's Judy?" asked Sir Joshua irrelevantly.

"Somewhere around the house," replied Mark.

"Did you enjoy yourself last night?"

"Yes, fairly."

"Who was there ?"

"The usual gang," replied Mark. "One doesn't expect anything uncommon at Levi Whitcombe's. Jack Ridley was there," he added. "He and Judy spent a good deal of time together."

Sir Joshua looked at his son significantly. He half hoped, yet half feared, that his daughter's interest in young Ridley had not ceased.

"Had a good congregation this morning, father ?" asked Mark. Remembering that their visitor was the preacher at Ebenezer Chapel that morning he wanted to be polite.

"A great many more than usual," he replied, and then added : "You see, it is a very fine morning."

"Had a good service ?"

"Wonderful," replied Sir Joshua, and Mark could not help noting the tone in which his father spoke. "You ought to go to-night," he added.

"I think I will," assented the young man. In spite of himself he had been impressed with the light in Paul Tregaskis's eyes.

The three men had by this time entered the house, and had found their way into the snugery, and the preacher for the day was again examining the books which had impressed him on the previous night.

"I like that young fellow," reflected Paul Tregaskis as he noted the name of Mark Pendle written on the fly-leaf of several of the volumes. "He should prove interesting. But why does he look so bored, I wonder ?"

This thought had scarcely passed through his mind when all heard the sound of a girl's voice in the hall outside.

"Dad, where are you ?" and Paul thought he detected eagerness in her voice.

"Here, Judy, my dear," and Sir Joshua went quickly to the door, and opened it.

"May I come in ?"

"Certainly you may. What makes you ask such a question ?"

"I thought I might be in the way," replied Judith Pendle as she entered the snugery.

"This is Mr. Paul Tregaskis," Sir Joshua introduced their visitor, "and this is my daughter, Judy."

Paul held out his hand, but the girl did not appear to notice it; instead she was looking at their visitor with a strange expression in her eyes. She, too, had noted the look of radiant happiness which shone from the young Cornishman's eyes, and realised that he was altogether different from the usual run of "Ebenezer supplies."

Judith Pendle was very fair to look upon that day. As I have before stated, her mother had, years before, been spoken of as the most beautiful girl in Cliviger, and Judith had inherited her mother's good looks. She was not more than ordinarily tall, but her form was finely moulded, and there was a lissom gracefulness in her movements which would appeal to any beauty-loving young man. But there was more than this which caused Judith Pendle to be sought after by half the eligible young men in Cliviger. Perhaps an artist would not have singled her out as a type of English beauty, nevertheless, her well-chiselled chin, her laughing yet firmly set mouth, her clear, healthful complexion, and her finely formed face were all vastly attractive. But this was not all, neither was it the chief among the things which made Paul Tregaskis look at her with such avidity. It was her eyes, dark, large and compelling, that held him like one spellbound. They were wonderful eyes, eyes which told of a quick brain, and of an eager, inquiring mind. But they told of more than that, they proclaimed that their owner had longings and hopes of which she seldom spoke. There was laughter in them, too, laughter and mischief, together with the love of fun and merriment.

Paul Tregaskis had met many girls in his time. His life as an undergraduate, and his reputation as a student of more than ordinary brilliance, had thrown him into contact with some of the most fascinating girls in Oxford; but he had never met with one who appealed to him as Judith Pendle did.

“ Well, what do you think of us all ? ”

Paul Tregaskis caught her humour. He saw that she was an impulsive girl who uttered the first thought that came into her mind. He thought, too, that she was a little excited, and, therefore, thought less than usual of what was the correct thing to say.

“ I haven't made up my mind yet,” was his laughing reply.

“ Riley told me just now that you had driven all through Cliviger. How did you like it ? ” and there was laughter in the girl's voice.

“ In the main I thought it consisted of long lines of dark, smoky ugliness,” was Paul's reply.

He had not meant to say this, but he, too, found himself uttering the first thoughts that came into his mind.

“ You are honest, anyhow,” she replied with a laugh.

“ But you shouldn't say things like that.”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because we Cliviger people look upon the town as the very Mecca of Lancashire. We regard our Town Hall as the finest specimen of architecture in England. As for the hospital—did father show you the hospital ? ”

“ No, I didn't see the hospital.”

“ You will know all about it soon. And Ebenezer!—What did you think of Ebenezer ? ”

“ I thought it was a fine, spacious auditorium.”

“ That's better. If you can keep up that you will have a call.”

“ Now, Judy ! ” protested Sir Joshua, “ what are you saying ? ”

“ Oh, I forgot, but I am sure, Mr. Tregaskis, that you know the purpose for which you are invited here, don't you ? ”

“ I am afraid I don't understand you,” replied Paul.

“ Then you ought to. Wouldn't you like to come to Ebenezer as the minister ? ”

“ I never thought of it— No, I don't think I should.”

“ I am going to hear you to-night, anyhow,” announced the girl.

"Why should you?"

"Because—— Oh, I hardly know. You are utterly different from what I expected," and she laughed saucily. "Father has told us a lot about you since Thursday, but I can see he didn't know you a bit. I think I rather like you," she added as if in afterthought.

"Why should you?" asked the young man.

"Because you seem so—so honest."

Just then the lunch gong sounded, and as Paul Tregaskis followed his host into the dining-room he realised that the thought of coming to Oliviger to live was not unpleasant.

## CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST SUNDAY  
(continued)

JUDITH PENDLE had aroused Paul Tregaskis's curiosity. For one thing she, while perhaps desiring to appear somewhat *outré*, struck him as a girl of far more than ordinary originality and beauty. He discovered that her father had sent her to one of the largest and best schools for girls in the country, and that, as a consequence, she had received what might be termed a liberal education. She had all a public school boy's outlook on life, and, while essentially feminine, had a proper scorn for the distinguishing features of a "young lady."

He was interested, too, in her outlook on life, and while far from agreeing with many of her views, he could not help admitting that she had put her case with originality and force. Judith Pendle believed, or said she believed, in unrestrained freedom, and thought it was a negation of human nature to be trammelled by conventional morality, or by spending her life in the service of others. Neither, so she said, did she believe in the fifth Commandment, and pertinently asked what right parents had, simply because they were parents, to expect honour and obedience from their children.



Parents, she asserted, had a duty to children because they brought them into the world, but she would not admit that children had any duty to their parents.

Whether she really believed in this or not I will not say, but in the conversation which took place during lunch, conversation which was largely light badinage, she expressed her views with considerable freedom.

During the afternoon a visitor arrived at Cliviger Hall, and Paul was not slow in realising that this visitor had not come to see Sir Joshua or Mark, but because he was more than ordinarily interested in Judith. He noticed, too, that this young Jack Ridley, who was introduced to him as the son of one of the oldest residents in Cliviger, was a tall, powerfully-built young man who possessed not only a strong personality, but was evidently regarded as one who "set the pace" for other young men of his class in the town.

"Yes," reflected Paul as he continued to watch young Ridley. "He is evidently in love with Miss Pendle, but whether she is in love with him is another matter."

Then he remembered the conversation between Sir Joshua and Mark on their return from Ebenezer that morning. He also called to mind Sir Joshua's significant look when his son told him that Judy had spent a good deal of time with Jack Ridley on the night before.

He was not particularly interested, however. After all, Judith Pendle, while in many respects an attractive girl, was nothing to him, and never could be. Still, he rather hoped that Ridley would not be Judith's accepted suitor. The truth was he didn't altogether like him. "He hasn't a good face," reflected Paul, "and he looks as though he might drink hard. It would seem like sacrilege for such a girl to become the property of a man like that.

"What!" he heard Ridley say just after they had finished tea, "you don't mean to tell me that you are going to Ebenezer Chapel to-night?"

"That is my intention," replied Judith.

"But you are not serious?"

"I certainly am. Mark is going as well," she added.

"Mark going too! I don't believe it!" and he laughed incredulously.

"You had better go as well," Mark said with a laugh. "You often used to go as a boy."

"No, thank you," was the reply. "The war knocked all that nonsense out of me."

"What nonsense?" asked Sir Joshua, who had been quietly listening to the conversation.

"All that nonsense which I believed as a boy," replied Ridley. "Even my father, who I suppose used to be a great man at Ebenezer, never goes near the place now. As for me, I'm like Mark, I have given all that sort of thing up, lock, stock and barrel."

"You haven't proved that it is nonsense though," retorted Sir Joshua; "and if you had been to chapel this morning you wouldn't have said it was nonsense."

"I had a fair dose of chapel in my youth," replied Ridley; "perhaps too much. Look here, Sir Joshua, will you tell me how much the preachers really believe in what they preach? Years ago, after I gave up going to chapel, I, for a time, went to church, and, in a way, I fancied I was impressed; but I soon found out the emptiness of the whole business."

"Come and hear Mr. Tregaskis. I don't think you will say that if you do," and then Sir Joshua went on to speak earnestly to his visitor.

Paul Tregaskis, who during this conversation had been sitting in the snugery while the others were standing in the hall outside, went to the door and closed it. He realised that the conversation was becoming personal, and he no longer desired to listen to it. Closed though the door was, however, he could not help hearing young Ridley's remark a minute or so later.

"Well, I'm dashed if I won't go then! On condition that you invite me up here to supper afterwards, I will make one of the congregation at Ebenezer to-night! By Jove! Won't the people stare when they see me! Fancy Jack Ridley going to chapel, except for a wedding or a funeral!"

Ridley's words came true. When just before six o'clock that night Mark Pendle drew up at Ebenezer Chapel, and the young manufacturer accompanied Judith Pendle into the Pendle pew, there was much nodding and whispering; and when a few minutes later Mark, having housed his car, took his seat by his sister's side, astonishment was rife.

For the Pendle pew was generally empty of a Sunday night. Even Sir Joshua, deacon though he was, seldom appeared at the evening service. In this he followed the example of what was often referred to as the "upper crust" of the town. What church-going there was among the important families of Cliviger was nearly always confined to the morning service. Thus to see not only Sir Joshua present, but Judith and Mark accompanied by young Jack Ridley, seemed almost phenomenal.

The congregation at Ebenezer that night was more than ordinarily large. It is true that the great building was by no means full, for that matter many of the pews, both in the body of the church as well as in the gallery, were entirely empty. Nevertheless, twice the usual congregation had gathered. Doubtless this was owing to the impression which Paul Tregaskis had made at the morning service. It was true, as many declared, that he had not preached a great sermon; indeed, according to Dodgeon's standards, he had not preached a sermon at all. Nevertheless, his message was so vital, and the atmosphere of the whole service was so out of the ordinary, that the people who attended not only came again in the evening, but persuaded others to come. More than this, while Sir Joshua had said nothing definite on the previous night, many looked on Paul Tregaskis as a candidate for Ebenezer pulpit, and thus were more than ordinarily interested.

There were but few late-comers. Lancashire congregations are in the habit of being punctual, thus when the Town Hall clock struck six nearly every worshipper was in his or her place. As was the case in the morning, a spirit of expectancy was manifest. Many eager eyes

were turned toward the rostrum, while numbers of people who had come to regard church going as "a bore," were really interested, and when presently the young preacher entered the rostrum and knelt reverently in prayer, a solemn hush pervaded the building. As old Amos Whalebone said to George Chadwick after the service: "The spirit of God seemed to be brooding over the place."

Of course this was not felt by all; indeed, some were more than ordinarily critical, and regarded Paul's morning message as being made for effect rather than because it was really felt. Jack Ridley, who had made no pretence of being a worshipper, asked Judith whether she knew what salary the Chair of a Professor of New Testament History at Oxford carried with it. "Anyhow," he remarked, "the fellow will be an idiot if he gives up the chance of such a job to become a dissenting parson in a dirty hole like Cliviger."

And yet Jack Ridley could not help being impressed. Doubtless he was influenced by the fact that the young preacher held an honourable place in a great University; but there was more than that. As the service proceeded a sense of reality was felt everywhere. Whatever Christianity had become to the great world outside, it was to Paul Tregaskis the greatest thing in the world. It was the solution of all difficulties, intellectual, personal, industrial, political.

As was the case in the morning, up to sermon time the great thing that had impressed the congregation was the preacher's prayers. All felt that they were not a mere repetition of words, but a real communion with One Whom the preacher felt was in truth present; and many who had thought of God only as a vague abstraction, for the moment, at all events, realised Him as the great Light of Life, as a real, personal God of love.

I am not going to try to reproduce at length Paul Tregaskis's sermon that night. I remember that this is a story, and not a polemic; and yet if I am going to tell the story truly, I must give some idea of what he

said, especially as it had its influence upon some whose history will be revealed in these pages.

"This morning," he said, "I tried to make you understand the reality of Jesus." Then, in a few graphic sentences, he recapitulated the gist of the address he had given. When he had finished something of the tensivity which had been felt a few hours before was again realised.

"Jesus is here," he said quietly, and yet so distinctly that those in the farthest galleries heard him plainly. "He is here as truly as He was with His disciples by the side of the Galilean Lake. He is here now. I am sure of it, *sure of it*, and the question for you to answer is the question which Pilate asked in the Judgment Hall at Jerusalem more than nineteen hundred years ago, and whose words I have taken for a text: 'What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?'

"But before I ask you definitely to answer it, I want to tell you what Jesus can really mean to you. First of all He can translate all the possibilities of your life into realities. I look out on this congregation, and as I look I think of the splendid powers, of the glorious possibilities there are lying dormant in you all."

Paul Tregaskis turned aside from the few scanty notes which lay before him at this, and began to enlarge on the words he had just uttered. He drew graphic pictures of men and women who, he imagined, were in the church, and the lives they were living. He described especially the case of a young man about town who lived for the gratification of his senses, whose main idea in life was to have "a good time," a mere worldling striving after the pleasure of a few fleeting moments. Then he spoke of the latent and dormant possibilities of that same young man; of the possible greatness and grandeur of his life and character; of his possible power to say to the devil, the devil of lust, of paltry pride, of poor ambitions, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Whether he unconsciously portrayed Jack Ridley or not I will not say, but the picture he drew was the picture of Jack Ridley; and when he had drawn the

picture, he told how Christ could make those possibilities realities, how He could take those dormant powers and vivify them, glorify them and translate them into realities.

He painted another picture, the picture of a man who had scorned his manhood, degraded his powers, and wallowed in the mire of vice and sensuality. Evidently, too, the picture he drew became vivid to him, for his every word and every movement portrayed what he saw so graphically that the man he described was seen by the whole congregation.

Then something happened.

A wild, rough, black-haired, gipsy-looking vagrant occupied a pew by himself just below the pulpit who, for reasons only known to himself, had found his way into Ebenezer Chapel that night, and had listened almost breathlessly to Paul. Evidently the man, whoever he might be, felt that the picture drawn was a picture of himself, for, rising in his pew, he cried: "My God, he means me!" and then before the preacher could utter another word he rushed out of the building.

Strange as it may seem, there was no confusion. None, save the man, moved from their seats.

"Of course I do not know who that was," said Paul quietly a minute later, "neither did I mean him in the literal sense of the words; yet I did mean him, and all like him, for in that man, in spite of the fact that he may be drink-sodden, sin-sodden and devil-possessed, there are possibilities of a glorious manhood, of heroism sublime, and Jesus can make those possibilities realities. That is salvation."

Presently he went on to speak of something else. "What is God to you?" he asked: "a vague abstraction, an unthinkable and unknowable force, only that and nothing more?"

Then he went on to describe what God had come to mean to millions in the present age, and told how through Christ that same God could become to each man and woman what He really was; a great, living, loving, personal friend.

When he reached this point Paul Tregaskis looked at his watch. "I have been talking too long," he said. "I have tired you." But, as if in contradiction of his words, a whispered protest went around the building:

"No, no," he heard on all hands.

"Very well then," he said, and he seemed to be talking as a man might talk to his fellow men rather than as a preacher preaching in a great building. "There is just one thing more I want to say. What is death to you? To many, I am afraid, it has become what it was to Tom Paine, a well-known atheist of the last century, a mere leap in the dark. Death has become to millions an eternal silence, the end of all things."

A great hush fell upon the congregation as he spoke of this, and as he described how even to nominal Christians death, in these days, meant only a long farewell to everything they loved, a going out into the darkness.

"This morning," he concluded, "I told you that there came a time in my life when I made up my mind to give myself to the work of telling the world about Jesus Christ.

"Why should I do this?"

"Because through Jesus Christ, and through learning to be sure of Him, death has no terrors for me. Nay, rather through Him I have learnt that there is no death; that what we call death is only an entrance into the larger life of God.

"Now will you think over what I have said, and then answer the question which Pilate asked nearly two thousand years ago? 'What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?'"

A few minutes later Ebenezer Chapel was empty. The congregation had left the building, and were, in the main, wending their way homeward. Only a few were talking about the service or the impressions that were made, although many appeared to be interested as to who the wild, rough-looking vagrant was. Paul Tregaskis himself wondered. To say the least of it, it was strange that a man should behave himself in such an extraordinary manner.

“Do you know who he was, Sir Joshua ?” he asked his host when the latter came into the minister’s vestry to him.

Sir Joshua shook his head. “I never saw him before,” he replied. “People of that sort seldom come to a place of worship. Are you tired, Mr. Tregaskis ?”

“Just a bit,” replied Paul.

“No wonder,” was his host’s response, and that was the only remark he, at that time, made about the service.

But several of the deacons remained behind, George Chadwick among the number. They had met in the deacons’ vestry, and were helping those whose business it was to count the collection.

“What do you think of him ?” asked Chadwick. “Will he do ?”

“I don’t call that a sermon at all,” replied Dodgeon.

“He made us all listen, anyhow.”

“Yes, he made us all listen, but I don’t call him a preacher.”

“No, perhaps not,” replied Chadwick, “but, by gosh, he got hold of us ! Where is he now ?” he added.

“He is in the minister’s vestry. Sir Joshua Pendle is just gone in to him.”

“I should like to do something, with your consent,” urged Chadwick.

“What’s that ?” asked Amos Whalebone.

“I should like to ask Sir Joshua to get him to promise not to accept that professorship for a couple of weeks,” replied Chadwick.

“Why ?” queried several.

“You can guess why.”

There was general acquiescence around the room.

“Yes, George,” more than one said, “I think you may do that.”

“Ay, that’s right,” asseverated old Amos Whalebone ; “and look here, George, tell Sir Joshua not to let him go back to Oxford to-morrow till he *has* promised.”

When Paul Tregaskis reached Cliviger Hall after the service he found that not only had Mark and Judith



returned, but that Jack Ridley had accompanied them. He noticed, too, that Ridley did not speak of the service in the flippant tones which characterised his remarks after tea; rather he seemed somewhat subdued, and discussed, with some interest, the strange behaviour of the tramp-like looking man who had been to chapel.

"Do you know who he was, Sir Joshua?" he asked as they sat down to supper.

"No, I never saw him before."

"I think I know who he is," asserted Mark.

"Who, then?"

"A gipsy fellow whose caravan is pitched up by the side of Cliviger Hill. I gathered that he is a stranger to Cliviger," he added.

"Who told you?"

"Two lads who work at our mill, and who helped me to get out the car, told me that they had seen him by the side of his caravan yesterday afternoon," Mark replied.

"You don't know his name or anything of that sort?"

"Haven't the slightest idea, neither had the boys who told me. Indeed, they were sure of nothing. But Tommy Warburton who came up just as I got the car into the street, said he saw him last night standing outside Ebenezer Chapel. He said he was drunk," he added, "or, at any rate, the worse for drink."

"Tommy Warburton is an awful gossip," declared Judith. "Perhaps the man wasn't drunk at all."

"His reason for thinking so," replied Mark, "was that the man was standing outside the chapel staring at it like one fascinated, and when Tommy came up he asked him who was the parson there. Whereupon Tommy informed him that Mr. Ackroyd's farewell meeting had been held that very night, and that the preacher for to-day was a young fellow named Paul Tregaskis. It appears that he was very much interested at the mention of Mr. Tregaskis's name, and went away muttering."

"That's all you know about him?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Isn't that a good deal?" laughed Mark. "Reuben and Benjamin Dixon both say they saw him outside the gipsy tent yesterday afternoon, while Tommy Warburton declared that he spoke to him late last night outside Ebenezer Chapel."

"He seemed tremendously impressed anyhow," interposed Judith. "As he passed our pew I thought he looked like a man on his way to the scaffold."

At that moment a servant entered and informed Sir Joshua that a man called George Chadwick had called, and had asked to see him."

"George Chadwick?" repeated Sir Joshua. "Why, I spoke to him not an hour since at Ebenezer. What can he want to see me for? Show him in here, Perkins, will you?"

"Excuse me for calling so late, Sir Joshua," said George Chadwick on entering the room," but I found out something which I thought you might like to know."

"Sit down and have a bit of supper with us, George?" invited the baronet eagerly.

"No, thank you, I must be getting home," replied Chadwick, "but as you seemed so interested in that gipsy man who behaved so strangely to-night, I thought I would come and tell you."

"We were just talking about him," Sir Joshua informed him. "Well, what have you found out?"

"As you know, Sir Joshua, I live up Cliviger Hill way which is on this side of the town, and isn't a mile from here. Well, just as I was nearing my house a man came up and spoke to me, and apologised for behaving as he did at chapel."

"Yes; what then?"

"He said that he hadn't been in a place of worship for many years," went on Chadwick, "and then he told how Mr. Tregaskis had described him as if he knew his history."

"But why did he leave the chapel in such a way?" asked Sir Joshua.

"He didn't tell me why, except that he couldn't

help himself ; that something told him he ought to get out, because he wasn't fit to be in such a place. He said that he had been a worse man even than the preacher described, and that he was so frightened that he couldn't stay any longer."

"Did he tell you his name?" asked Mark.

"Ay, he did," said Chadwick, lapsing for the first time into the Lancashire dialect. "He said he wur called Luke Galilee, and that he wur staying at the gipsy encampment close by."

"Galilee, Galilee," repeated Sir Joshua. "That's a funny name."

"Ay," went on Chadwick, "but that wur'nt all. 'Look here,' he said to me, 'will you be seeing that young Paul Tregaskis, the preacher, again?' I told him I could if there was any necessity. 'Well then,' he said, 'you give him this for me,' and he put a pound note into my hand. Here it is," and Chadwick laid the note near Paul Tregaskis's plate.

Under some circumstances those present might have felt like laughing as Paul took the note and carefully placed it in his pocket-book. Nevertheless, no one even smiled, for his action seemed perfectly natural. "I wouldn't lose that note for a great deal," asserted Paul. "Perhaps there is a breaking heart behind the gift, and some day I may see Luke Galilee again. At any rate, I am going first thing to-morrow morning to Cliviger Hill, and shall try to find him. I must be up early," he added, "because I want to catch the ten o'clock train at Manchester."

"Oh," protested Mark, "but I had planned to have a round of golf with you to-morrow morning."

"I am afraid I can't manage it," replied Paul. "I must get to Oxford to-morrow night, and the trains are not over good."

"I can manage it for you," cried Mark eagerly. "We'll have our round of golf, then I'll motor you to Manchester in time for you to catch a train which will take you to Oxford before nine o'clock. I have a spare set of clubs which you can have," he added.

"It is awfully good of you," replied Paul, "and I should like to manage it if I could; but I will go to bed now, Sir Joshua, if you don't mind. I am pretty well tired out."

Two minutes later as Paul Tregaskis stood at the foot of the stairs which led to his bedroom he felt a light touch upon his arm, and turning he saw Judith Pendle.

"Must you go back to Oxford to-morrow?" she asked.

"I am afraid I must," he replied. "I have an engagement there early on Tuesday morning."

"Then I should like a few minutes' talk with you before you go. We'll have an early lunch, and Mark can drive you to Manchester in little more than an hour. You will spare me ten minutes, won't you?"

"Of course I will," replied Paul a little eagerly, "even if I have to curtail the golf."

"There will be no need of that," replied the girl, "and I shall find my way into the snugery directly after lunch, and you must come to me. You will, won't you?"

"Of course I will," replied Paul. "Good night," and then he wended his way slowly towards his bedroom.

## CHAPTER VII

## PAUL AND JUDITH

BOTH Sir Joshua Pendle and his son Mark breakfasted at half-past seven on weekdays. They made it a rule to be at their offices and get through their correspondence early in the day so as to be free for what might happen later. Before the breakfast gong sounded, however, Paul Tregaskis was in the breakfast-room to meet them.

"You *are* early, Tregaskis," Mark almost shouted as he saw him.

It will be noted that Mark dropped the "mister," which was somewhat strange with him on such short acquaintance, but as he declared on the previous

evening, Tregaskis was a splendid fellow, and he hoped to make a friend of him.

"Yes, I told you I was going to try and find that gipsy fellow this morning," he replied.

"You are not going to return that pound note, are you?" queried Sir Joshua. "I don't think it would be wise to do that."

"I wouldn't think of such a thing," replied Paul. "I am going to guard it carefully, but I want to see him; want a talk with him. I couldn't help looking at him last night. He has a wonderful face."

"I thought he had the look of a devil as he passed our pew," Mark ejaculated.

"Yes, he had, and it was the face of a man who is capable of any devilish thing. But there are wonderful possibilities in it, too. I couldn't help looking at him while I was talking. His eyes burnt red, while under his great black moustache I saw his mouth quivering. When I saw him leave the chapel I was on the point of calling to him to stop; I hardly know why I didn't. Anyhow, I am going to try and have a chat with him this morning."

"Well, don't be later than ten o'clock in arriving at my office," Mark warned him. "I have told Riley to have the car in readiness at twenty minutes to ten, and remember that golf is a most serious business."

"I am frightfully out of practice," replied Paul, "but I will do my best to give you a game."

When less than half an hour later he arrived at the open space on Cliviger Hill where there had been a gipsy encampment on the previous night, he found it unoccupied; and on making inquiries he was told that "th' gipsies had flitted away afore dayleet."

"Why did they leave so soon?" asked Paul.

"Aw knaw nowt 'bout that," replied the woman of whom he inquired. "Wur yo' th' praicher at Ebenezer yesterday?"

"Yes, I was," replied Paul with a laugh.

"Aw've bin tow'd as 'ow a gipsy felly disturbed th' sarvice?" queried the woman, "but I knaw nowt 'bout the felly."

"Do you know when he came?" asked Paul.

"Ay, I do," replied the woman. "'Ee came a' Frida' neet."

"Did he come alone, or were there others with him?"

"Ther wur only one caravan, and ther wur a wumman an' siveral childer; but aw knaw nowt 'bout 'em."

The woman spoke in broad Lancashire, so broad that Paul found it difficult to understand her. But he did understand her, and although there seemed no reason for him doing so, he wondered why Luke Galilee should leave the town so hurriedly; wondered, too, why the man should think of leaving a pound note for him.

"Do you know which way he went?" he asked.

"Not for sure," replied the woman, "but aw wur towd as 'ow th' caravan went Yorkshire way."

The woman, who evidently thought Paul's interest in the man was because he had created a disturbance at Ebenezer Chapel on the previous night, and that he wanted to discover his whereabouts in order to punish him, informed him that it would be no use for him to try and find him. She added that Yorkshire was a heathen county where people couldn't speak proper English.

When Paul again reached Cliviger Hall it was fast approaching ten o'clock, and he found that Riley, the chauffeur, was there in readiness to take him to Mark's office.

"Did you find Luke Galilee?" asked Mark, as they started for the golf links.

"No," replied Paul, whereupon he described, as well as he was able, his conversation with the woman.

"Ay, Tregaskis," laughed Mark when he had finished his story, "but you are noan Lancashire. Your description of the woman's talk is no more like the Lancashire dialect than it's like French."

"I know I ought not to have tried to reproduce it," apologised Paul, "although I pride myself that I am rather quick at picking up dialects."

"None but Lancashire people can reproduce the Lancashire dialect," Mark replied. "Even Yorkshire people can't do it."

"As far as I can see there is no difference in the dialect of the two counties," retorted Paul.

"Ay, but there is," protested Mark. "For example, if a Lancashire man wanted to say 'the road' he would say 'th' rooad,' while a Yorkshire man would say 't' roid'; but it is no use explaining these things to an outsider like you. Besides, here we are at the links."

A few minutes later they stood on the first tee, and Mark pointed out to Paul the geography of the links. "Do you want me to give you any strokes?" he asked presently. "I am supposed to be scratch here, although I have to be content with a handicap of four at St. Ann's and Lytham."

"As I told you, I am frightfully out of practice," replied Paul. "For that matter, I haven't touched a club for two months, and I am always like a bit of chewed string on a Monday when I have been taking services on a Sunday. Still, we'll play level for a bit until you see how I get on."

I will not attempt to describe, at length, the varying fortunes of the two men, suffice to say that although Mark won the first two holes they drew level at the ninth.

"By George!" exclaimed the young Lancashire man at this point of the game, "if you play like this when you are *out* of practice, what would happen to me if you were *in*? I am considered pretty hot stuff in the club, but I can see that I am in for a licking. I hope our game won't be spoiled," he added.

"Why should it be?" asked Paul.

"Don't you see? That's Jack Ridley coming towards us, and he looks as though he wants to join us."

At that moment Ridley came up to the tee where the young men stood. "Do you mind if I butt in, Mark?" he asked. "I have just time for nine holes."

"If Mr. Tregaskis doesn't mind," replied Mark.

"You won't mind, will you, Mr. Tregaskis?" asked Ridley. He had greeted Paul with a curt nod as he came up, and seemed to regard him as of no importance whatever.

Ridley looked upon himself as the founder of the Cliviger Golf Club, and as he was captain that year, and called himself a scratch man, he seemed to think that the real match would lie between himself and Mark.

"Certainly I don't mind," replied Paul. "Will you take the honour?" he added.

Without a word of protest Ridley did as he was invited, and told his caddy to tee up his ball. As we have said, Ridley was a tall, powerful man, and a minute later had struck his ball true and straight down the fairway. Paul, although it was his honour, nodded to Mark to play next, who sent his ball a few yards short of Ridley's. "Jolly good drive, Mark," Ridley said, and then looked patronisingly towards Paul.

"Mr. Tregaskis is playing with an old set of my clubs, and is, therefore, at a disadvantage," explained Mark before the young Cornishman drove.

Ridley did not reply, but looked at him superciliously as though he fully expected him to fozzle his drive. Much to his astonishment, however, he saw that Paul's ball not only cleared the difficult hazard but pitched at least twenty yards beyond the rough; and then, owing to the spin which he had put on the ball, it ran not only past Mark's, but at least twenty yards beyond his own.

"This is our long hole," Mark explained as they walked down the course. "It is five hundred yards long, and although the green is seldom reached in two, our professional does it sometimes."

Ridley did not speak, but he was evidently not only surprised, but chagrined that he had been outdriven. Mark, whose ball was not too well placed, had to play before the others, and had to content himself with an iron shot which landed him about a hundred yards from the green. Ridley, on the other hand, took a wooden club, being determined that although Paul had outdriven him he would have his revenge by reaching the green in his second, and perhaps win the hole.

Whether it was because he was angry or not I will



not say, but in order to accomplish his purpose he had to use every ounce of strength he possessed, and, therefore, to use a technical phrase, he pressed. The result of this was, as is often the case under such circumstances, he missed his ball badly, and sent it away into the rough, uttering an angry oath as he did so.

"There are two bad bunkers guarding that green, Tregaskis," Mark informed him, "but if you play dead straight you can reach the green from where you are. Try to, old chap," he added. "He looks upon you as a muff, and I hope you will knock some of the stuffing out of him."

Whether Paul entered into Mark's spirit or not I will not say, but certainly he cleared the dangerous bunkers, and laid his second shot only a few yards from the hole. The consequence was that Paul won the hole in four, while Ridley made a bad third.

Whether Judith's suitor was demoralised by his bad beginning or not I will not say. Certain it was, however, that when the second nine holes were completed he was no less than four down to Paul and two down to Mark; while on the eighteen holes, Paul, with borrowed clubs, had won a clear victory over his host.

"I have been jolly lucky this morning," he explained, as they made their way toward the club-house. "Nearly everything seemed to go right for me."

"While everything went wrong for me," snarled Ridley with an oath. "Perhaps some time you and I will have a full round together." Then perhaps realising that he had not been too polite to a guest, he added: "You play a jolly good little game."

"Thank you. Of course *little* is the word," Paul replied. "Compared with some of our chaps at Oxford, I am very small beer."

"Anyhow, you wiped the floor with us," laughed Mark. "You must have played quite up to bogey, and we call our bogey a stiff one."

"Are you lunching at Dixon's?" Ridley asked Mark, as a few minutes later Riley brought out the car.

"No, I promised to go home to lunch. Besides, I

am going to drive Tregaskis to Manchester this afternoon."

"Where is Sir Joshua lunching?"

"He is lunching at home, too."

"I want to have a talk with him," Ridley said. "Should I be in the way, I wonder, if I went back to Cliviger Hall with you?"

"I daren't say," replied Mark, "but I know that father wishes to have a few minutes alone with Mr. Tregaskis, and there will be none too much time."

"Then I had better fix up an appointment with him for some other time," said Ridley, who could not help noting Mark's somewhat cold reply.

"He is sweet on Judy," Mark informed Paul presently, "and—and——" Then he lapsed into silence.

"He seems to be in a bad temper," Paul ventured as, leaving the town on their left, they made their way towards Cliviger Hall.

"What Judy sees in him I don't know," Mark muttered like one talking to himself. "Men don't like him," he added, "but he seems to have the power to make fools of women. Perhaps it is because he did so well during the war, and was one of the youngest colonels in the army. Of course he is older than I by several years."

They found Sir Joshua waiting on their arrival, while, true to her promise, Judith had arranged for lunch to be punctual. Thus it came about that Paul had nearly an hour to spare before starting for Manchester.

"Can you give me a few minutes alone, Mr. Tregaskis?" asked Sir Joshua directly lunch was over.

"Certainly I can," replied Paul.

"But not before you've fulfilled your promise to me!" exclaimed Judith. "You know what you said last night."

"What! Have you been making secret assignments with my daughter?" laughed Sir Joshua. "But, there, it is no use my objecting; a woman has always to be attended to first. Still, I must have a few minutes alone with you before you go."

"This way," cried Judith to Paul, as she led the way to the snuggery.

Arrived there, however, she did not seem in a hurry to speak. For that matter, she was evidently much excited, and appeared to find a difficulty in expressing her thoughts. And Paul did not help her; he, too, was a little excited, and seemed to be wondering as to what she wanted to say.

"You are not a bit like I imagined you would be," she stammered at length. "When father told us last week that a young Oxford don was coming to preach at Ebenezer, and that he was going to stay here, I conjured up a thin, emaciated creature in spectacles, half a bookworm, and half—oh, I don't know how to put it! You see," she went on, "the pulpit supplies who have stayed here have not been very interesting."

"Is that an implied compliment?" asked Paul.

"I don't think so, and I don't want to pay compliments. Are you anxious that I should?"

"Not particularly. Of course, everyone likes to be thought interesting," he added.

"Well then, I'll be frank with you. I rather like you; I like you because you appear to be honest, and to say only what you mean. That's what makes you interesting."

Paul waited for her to continue; so far there seemed no reason why she should want to be alone with him.

"I expect you've learnt by this time that I am a good deal of a heathen," she went on. "I left school five years ago, and although father is a deacon at Ebenezer Chapel I have scarcely entered it during those five years."

Still Paul was silent, although the girl hesitated and seemed to be in difficulty as to what to say next.

"I was awfully interested last night," she went on presently. "You see, you seemed to mean everything you said. Did you?"

"I wouldn't have said anything else," he replied.

"Oh," cried the girl impatiently, "you are not

helping me a bit, and what I have to say to you is really important ; at least, I think so."

"If you will tell me how I can help you," Paul said, "I will do my utmost ; but until I know what is in your mind I don't see how I can."

"There, you *have* helped me !" cried the girl. "You are not laughing at me, and you are not pretending an interest which you don't feel. What I want to say is this ; You seemed downright *sure* of everything last night. Are you ?"

"I am sure of everything I have said," he replied. "But what are you thinking of ?"

"This," replied the girl. "You told us of the wonderful possibilities which lie dormant within us all ; you described a young *roué* about town who lived not only a useless but a godless, evil life ; and then you said that in that *roué* were possibilities of nobility, of grandeur of character, of power whereby he could say to the devil of temptation and lust : 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Then you went on to tell us how Christ can make those possibilities realities. That's true, isn't it ?"

"Yes, that's true," replied Paul.

"Are you *sure* of it ?"

"Yes, I am sure of it."

"Of course, in a way, it's grand if it is true," went on the girl, "and yet I don't see much use in it after all."

"I don't understand."

"What if the young *roué* doesn't want to be better ?" cried the girl impatiently. "What if he is contented to be a useless, aimless, purposeless, sensual animal ? Have you any message for him then ?"

There were tears in her eyes as she spoke, and Paul knew by the quiver of her voice that she was deeply interested.

"Take that gipsy vagrant as an example," she went on ; "evidently he felt the truth of what you said, and yet there was the look of a devil in his eyes as he went out of the chapel. Evidently he didn't want to be a

better man. Do you know of anything that will create in him a desire to translate into realities the possibilities which you say lie dormant within him ? If not, all your fine talk is so much hot air, as the Americans call it."

Paul was silent, he felt that the girl had touched a vital issue, and that he was unable to give a satisfactory answer.

"Don't mistake me," went on Judith ; " what you said was, in a way, splendid ; it was wonderful ? And you yourself looked so radiantly happy at what you seem to regard as the great discovery of life that I couldn't help envying you. But is your certainty about Jesus Christ enough ? I know it is a great deal, especially as no one seems certain about anything of that nature in these days. It must be grand to be sure that Jesus Christ is not a mere myth ; it must be lovely beyond words to be sure that the great Something, which we call God, is not a mere abstraction, which only adds mystery to mystery. But is it enough, while we are contented to be what we are ? "

"Are any of us content to be what we are ? " Paul evaded.

"Thousands are," replied the girl. "Thousands in Cliviger are, for that matter. That young *roué* whom you described so graphically last night is quite content to be what he is ; that gipsy vagrant whom you drove out of the chapel last night is content to be what he is."

"I don't believe it," replied Paul.

"Then why didn't he remain through the service, and why didn't he ask you afterwards how he could find this Jesus Who you say would transform him into a good man ? "

"I don't know," replied Paul humbly.

"Thank you," said the girl, "that's all I want to say about that. You have been very good to be so patient with me."

"I haven't been good," he replied. "I have been humiliated because of my impotence. Perhaps I will be able to answer you when I come again," he added.

"Oh, I forgot! You are coming again next Saturday, aren't you? That's splendid!"

"Look here, Miss Pendle," said Paul, "you had a purpose in asking me those questions, hadn't you?"

"Yes," replied the girl after hesitating a few seconds.

"What was that purpose?—No, forgive me, I had no right to ask such a question, so please don't try to answer it."

Judith Pendle seemed, for more than a minute, to be under the influence of a strong emotion, then she burst out: "You did have a right to ask; my own questions to you gave you that right; but I can't answer you, I don't know you well enough. If I did, I would tell you."

Paul looked puzzled, especially as the girl drew near to him, and laid her hand on his.

"Father wants to ask you something," she said. "You won't say no to him, will you? Promise you won't."

Paul hesitated before replying. "Has it anything to do with next Sunday?" he asked, although why he asked this question he did not know.

"In a way I think it has," replied the girl. "But what then?"

"I am not sure if I shall come again next Sunday," he replied. "After what you have said I am not sure I ought to. At present I feel I shall never come to Cliviger again."

"Oh, but you must, you *must*!" Judith cried eagerly. "I am building so much on it; it is something tremendous to hear a preacher who is sure. There, father is come. You must promise to do what he asks you, Mr. Tregaskis," and without another word Judith left him, while Sir Joshua entered the room.

"You and Judy have been a long time together," laughed Sir Joshua. "Still, there is a good quarter of an hour before you need to go, and I can easily say what I have to say in five minutes. What do you think of Cliviger, Mr. Tregaskis?"

"As I looked down on it from the golf links this

morning, and saw hundreds of mill chimneys belching out black smoke, it looked like the mouth of hell," replied Paul.

"Yes, I know it looks pretty black," replied the baronet. "It's better a thousand times than it used to be before the authorities dealt with the smoke nuisance; still, it is black. All the same," he went on, "it's a grand place, one of the grandest in th' world. And how did you like Ebenezer?"

"It's a fine auditorium," replied the young man.

"Mr. Tregaskis, I have something to ask you. I want you to make me a promise."

Paul looked at him expectantly.

"While you and I were in the minister's vestry last night," went on Sir Joshua, "several of the deacons were in the deacons' vestry counting the collection; and George Chadwick, on behalf of those deacons, came to me in the hope that I should be able to get you to promise something."

"What was that something?" asked Paul.

"You told me on Saturday night that you are considering an offer of a Professorship in Oxford. That's so, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied Paul.

"Well, then, I want you to promise that you won't make up your mind for a fortnight. I don't think I need say any more just now, but we all want you to promise that."

Paul did not reply for nearly a minute. "Sir Joshua," he said at length, "I am not sure that I shall be able to come to Cliviger next Sunday."

"Not come! In heaven's name why?"

"Because I have been led to see that my preaching yesterday was a failure."

"Failure! Good lord, man, you can't be in your right senses! Why—why——" then before he could conclude the sentence the door opened and Judith rushed into the room.

"I have been listening!" she laughed nervously. "I have heard every word you and father said to each

other. You will promise, Mr. Tregaskis, won't you ? You *will* say yes to what father has asked you ? ”

“ All right,” he replied, “ I'll not fix anything up for a fortnight.”

He did not know why, but every nerve in his body tingled as he spoke the words. He felt as though there was something like destiny in them.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE INVITATION

I WILL not attempt to describe Paul's second visit to Cliviger at anything like length. He again made his home for the week-end at Cliviger Hall ; but although Sir Joshua seemed to be deeply interested in his coming, no further reference was made to the promise he had given, and Paul was almost led to believe that no particular significance was attached to it. The Sunday, moreover, happened to be wet and stormy, and although the congregations were somewhat larger than those which had gathered on his first Sunday, Sir Joshua seemed disappointed. Altogether there was an air of depression in the town, and Paul, susceptible as he was to such influences, felt it keenly.

But this was not all. Neither Mark nor Judith were in evidence. Immediately on his arrival Sir Joshua informed him that his son and daughter had accepted an invitation from a relative in Yorkshire, and were gone to spend the week-end there. As a consequence, the interest, an interest almost amounting to excitement, which had characterised his first visit, was largely absent during the second. Thus he felt when in the course of the Sunday services, it was announced that on the following Sabbath the Ebenezer pulpit would be occupied by a minister from a neighbouring town, Paul felt when leaving on the following morning that he would say good-bye to Cliviger for ever.

And yet had he known what had taken place in that dirty, cotton manufacturing town his feelings



would have been far different. Throughout the morning when Paul had been on the golf links with Mark, Sir Joshua had been discussing the services of the previous day with various members of Ebenezer, practically all of whom had been enthusiastic about their visitor. It was true that Mr. Dodgeon, the church secretary, as well as others of his way of thinking, had declared that Paul was no preacher, but all had agreed that there was something in his services which had differentiated them from the most of those which they remembered. George Chadwick and old Amos Whalebone were especially emphatic.

"I'll tell you what, Sir Joshua," protested the old man, "the coming of yon chap is an answer to prayer. When after our last deacons' meeting you said you would be responsible for the pulpit for a few Sundays, I went home and prayed about it, and I know that several others of us did, too. We prayed that you might be rightly guided, and that you might be led to find someone quick; and yon chap is an answer to prayer."

"But don't let's make fools of ourselves," exclaimed Dodgeon, who had joined the group of Ebenezer people, and who were discussing the situation. "I will admit that Mr. Tregaskis made a good impression yesterday, but, after all, we know nothing about him, and yesterday may be only a flash in the pan."

"There's nothing of the flash in the pan about yon chap," cried old Amos, "and he's the very man we want. If I had my way I'd call a church meeting right off, and propose that he be invited."

"What! After only one Sunday?" cried Dodgeon. "That would be absurd. Before we ought even to think about inviting him we ought to make full inquiries about him, and to have him preaching here for at least half a dozen Sundays."

"Yes, and then you would lose him," cried Sir Joshua.

"Better lose him," cried the church secretary, "and a dozen more like him than to act foolishly. After all, what was there so particular about him?"

"Everything," shouted old Amos. "Think of the way he prayed I never knawed anything like it afore; and although I've attended Ebenezer for more than forty years I never felt God so near. As for his sermons—well, they may not have been great, but I was never so sure of Jesus Christ as I was yesterday. It comes to this," and the old man spoke solemnly, "do we believe in prayer or don't we? We all promised to ask God to select the right man, and I believe He sent him."

"What do you propose that we do then?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Call a deacons' meeting for next Monday night," was heard on all hands. "Dodgeon here, and the people who think like him, will have had a chance of hearing him a second time by then, and by that time the whole church will have learnt what we are thinking about. Then if we think about him like we do now we can call a church meeting right away, and settle up the matter."

"What if he won't come?" asked Dodgeon. "Remember, he didn't preach yesterday as a candidate for the pulpit, he only came because Sir Joshua made a special appeal to Doctor Granby; and as Sir Joshua told us, he is considering the offer of a Professorship at Oxford."

"Did you ask him not to promise anything for a fortnight?" asked George Chadwick.

"Nay, not yet, but I shall ask him before he leaves us this afternoon."

"Make him promise, Sir Joshua, make him promise," asseverated George Chadwick earnestly.

Of course, it was altogether irregular, and many of the church secretary's way of thinking protested most strongly. As they urged, none in Cliviger knew anything about Paul Tregaskis; more than that, they were by no means certain that he would come to Ebenezer even if he had a call. Was it not madness to act so precipitately? Would the church ever forgive them if they recommended a minister with so little precaution, especially if that minister turned out a failure?

Nevertheless, all felt drawn to take quick action. As it was urged upon the deacons, if he accepted a Professor's Chair they would lose him for ever, and this, in the eyes of many, would be a disaster.

"Of course I'll call a deacons' meeting for next Monday night if you wish it," Dodgeon had assented, "but I shall do it under protest. I'm a business man, and I believe in acting like one. Let everything be done decently and orderly."

"Shall we be tied down by red tape, or shall we act according to the dictates of our own hearts? Isn't that the question?" cried old Amos Whalebone. "Anyhow, we shall hear him again next Sunday, and then on Monday night we shall learn what we ought to do. What's more, call all the deacons by post, Richard. Ay, and if the deacons decide to recommend Tregaskis to the church, call the church members by post, too."

Thus it came about that when Paul came to Cliviger for his second Sunday, the whole of the diaconate, as well as many of the church members, looked upon him as a possible minister of the Ebenezer Church. As we have said, the day was wet and gloomy. Indeed, the rain came down in torrents at church time, and Paul, sensitive as he was to his physical surroundings, felt almost depressed by the dark skies and the streaming streets. And yet as he looked at the people who had gathered, and noted the look of expectancy in their eyes, he knew that more than ordinary influences were present. The fact, too, that in spite of the deluge of rain, the congregations were larger than on the previous Sunday, had its effect upon him.

I will not attempt to describe his sermons; for no true preacher's sermons can be adequately described. But this I know. When at length the day came to an end many prayed that Paul might be led to come to Cliviger.

And yet not a word, not a hint had been given to him of the thoughts which were entertained about him. This was largely through old Amos Whalebone's

influence. "Don't let th' felly feel as 'ow he's here on trial," the old man had protested, "it may ruin everything. Fancy a preacher of the Gospel preaching with the thought of an invitation in his mind! And don't you, Sir Joshua, when he comes to stay with you next week-end, say owt to him about what we've been thinking. For that matter, don't let him know we are going to have a deacons' meeting."

This was, after a great deal of discussion, agreed to, and when on the morning following his second Sunday at Cliviger Paul made his way back to Oxford, he had given up all thought of ever coming to the town again. And yet, in a way, his second visit had impressed him even more than the first. It was true the town itself appeared under its worst aspects, for nothing can be more dreary and depressing than a Lancashire manufacturing town on a wet day. But he could not help being interested in the people, especially on the Sunday night. As he saw perhaps three hundred young men and women congregated in the gallery, and realised that they were typical of many thousands more, his heart went out to them in a way he could not understand.

"Supposing Jesus Christ was here, and had to speak to them," he asked himself, "what would He say, and what does He want me to say? Well, He is here, and He will be listening to my message."

Perhaps it was because he had this in his mind that those young people were impressed so deeply, and wondered at the strange power that was manifested. But as I have said, he had given up all idea of going to Cliviger again, and on the Monday night when he reached Oxford he had not the slightest thought of what was taking place in the deacons' vestry at Ebenezer Chapel.

Sir Joshua was again voted to the chair, and after the usual preliminaries had taken place he rose to his feet with a set, determined look in his eyes.

"Brethren," he said. "I am not going to try to make a speech, this is not a time for speechifying. You all know why we have met together, and so, without

wasting any of your time, I propose that we recommend to a church meeting, which shall be immediately called, that we give a unanimous invitation to Paul Tregaskis to be minister of this church."

"I second it," said old Amos Whalebone, "and, like Sir Joshua, I am noan bound to make a speech, but I second it with all my heart. And why? Because I believe we have been led by the Holy Ghost."

"I support it," exclaimed George Chadwick, after which there was a chorus of voices who said practically the same thing.

Indeed, so unanimous was the evident feeling, that Dodgeon, the church secretary, felt that it would be unwise to deliver the speech he had prepared. For he had prepared one, and he had come there with a determination to protest most strongly against such steps as they were taking. This was not because he did not think the church was acting wisely, but because they were not acting according to the usages of their denomination. To Dodgeon usage had become a kind of law, and thus he felt that however wise a thing might be, it could not be right if it did not accord with custom. Still, as I have said, he did not deliver the speech he had prepared, and when presently Sir Joshua's resolution was put to the vote it was carried unanimously.

He did protest, however, against their acting so precipitately. "Why, we don't know," he exclaimed, "even although this resolution is carried, whether Mr. Tregaskis will accept. At any rate, we ought to feel his pulse about it before we go to the church."

"Either this is God Almighty's work, or it isn't," cried old Amos Whalebone. "I may be no good at reading character, but I am sure that if yon felly is axed whether he'll have his name submitted to a Church meeting to be voted upon, he'll say no. No, Mr. Chairman, let the Church send him an invitation; a real, hearty invitation; and then if he seems to have any doubt about it, let's go to him in a body, and tell him what we feel. I tell you, God Almighty is in this business. Cliviger wants a living man in its midst; a real

man, a man who is sure ; and that's what Mr. Tregaskis is."

And old Amos Whalebone had his way. Every member of the Ebenezer Church had a circular sent by post, urging attendance at a Church meeting for the purpose of inviting Paul Tregaskis to be its minister.

Again Dodgeon was disturbed, and felt like protesting. It is true there was a good attendance of Church members, while everyone seemed deeply interested ; but the matter for which they met, was disposed of in a few minutes. To Dodgeon, and men of his order, the inviting of a minister was such an important matter that he felt a long meeting would be necessary ; that the history of the Church would be fairly considered ; the needs of the people enlarged on ; while the qualities of the minister invited would be thoroughly gone into. In this, however, he was disappointed. The people had evidently made up their minds before they came. As old Amos Whalebone declared, the invitation to Paul Tregaskis was an answer to prayer. They had asked God Almighty to help them to select the right man, and he believed that He had led them to Tregaskis. " Let's take God Almighty at His word," he exclaimed, " and act upon it."

Thus it came about that the Church meeting was over in a few minutes. The Church secretary was instructed to write to Paul Tregaskis telling him of what had taken place, while Sir Joshua was also asked to send him a letter in support of the Church's formal invitation.

" You will write first thing to-morrow morning, won't you, Mr. Dodgeon ? " said Sir Joshua to the Church secretary when the meeting was over.

" Yes, I'll write to-morrow," replied Dodgeon, who even yet was not altogether satisfied with what had taken place. " I hope we are acting wisely, Sir Joshua, although I have my doubts about it."

Again Dodgeon had failed to give the speech he had prepared, and, as a consequence, felt that many things that ought to have been said were left unsaid. " You will write also, I suppose ? " he added.

"Yes, I'll drop him a line," remarked Sir Joshua casually, and then as he was leaving the building he felt a hand laid upon his arm.

"Sir Joshua," said a voice—it was a girl's voice—  
"may I speak to you a minute?"

"Certainly you may," he replied courteously.  
"Haven't I seen you before?" he added.

"Yes, but you don't know me," was the reply. "Perhaps you will remember that I spoke to you on the Sunday morning when Mr. Ackroyd declared his intention of resigning. I asked you then to see to it that you got a minister who would understand the life of the young people."

"Yes, I remember." Then he looked at the girl curiously. She was altogether different from the ordinary Cliviger girl, and certainly did not belong to the class so common in a large manufacturing town. He saw at a glance that although her clothes were plain and well worn, she had the stamp of a lady. Her manner of speech, also, was entirely different from the ordinary Lancashire girl belonging to what was called "the working classes." He could not place her.

"I really have no business to be here," went on the girl, somewhat nervously. "I am not a member of the Church, and although I did not, of course, vote, I made my way to the meeting. I was so interested," she added.

"May I have the pleasure of knowing your name?" asked Sir Joshua, looking at her curiously.

"My name would mean nothing to you," she replied.  
"For that matter it is practically unknown in the town. I am called Mary Trevethoe, and I am a teacher of languages in a school here."

"What school?" asked Sir Joshua quickly.

"The Lancaster School," replied the girl.

"Oh, yes, I remember. It belongs to the Quakers, doesn't it? It is what is called a co-educational school, I believe."

"That is so," replied the girl. "I have been there for nearly a year. I am afraid I have made but few

friends in Cliviger, but I've been to nearly every church in the town. I think I've got to know, too, something of the life of the people," she added. "That is why I dared to speak to you on the morning Mr. Ackroyd made his announcement. Oh, Sir Joshua, I am sure you have done a splendid thing in inviting Mr. Tregaskis! I do hope he will come!"

"I hope so, too. Have you any doubts about it?"

"Why should he come?" asked the girl. "He is one of the most brilliant young men who have ever passed through the Oxford University. Why should he want to come and live in a pagan town like Cliviger?"

"Pagan, do you call it?"

"Isn't it?" she queried. "Are not its ideals pagan?—if it has any ideals. What do the people care for except eating and drinking and mere animalism? Even now it seems on the brink of an industrial revolution. Bolshevism is rampant, while Jesus Christ seems only a name. What are its amusements? What are the things which the town is striving after? Have we any faith?"

"Doesn't this meeting to-night show that we have a great deal of faith?" queried the baronet.

"How many people were there?" asked the girl almost angrily. "Just a hundred or so out of a population of more than a hundred thousand! Oh, I know I ought not to be talking like this when I have practically no faith of my own, but I can see the drift of the town. That is why I think you have done a splendid thing in determining to ask that man, Paul Tregaskis, to come here as the minister. But do you think he'll accept?"

"Why shouldn't he?" protested Sir Joshua.

"He won't if he only gets a formal invitation sent by the Church secretary," she said eagerly. "That man is altogether out of sympathy with his coming."

"I am going to write also," Sir Joshua explained. "You heard that announced?"

"Yes, yes, but is that enough? Why don't you go to him, Sir Joshua? I feel sure that a letter won't be enough. He ought to be made to feel that Cliviger



needs him—needs him terribly! You will, won't you? And please forgive me for speaking. Good night."

He had it in his heart to ask her a good many questions, and to know the reason why she, a stranger to the town, should be so anxious about the welfare of the Church; but she was gone before he could say what he wanted to say.

"Well, Dad," Judith greeted her father on his return to Cliviger Hall, "what happened at the Church meeting?"

"Fancy you being interested in what happened at Ebenezer," retorted her father.

"I am afraid I don't care much about Ebenezer," laughed Judith, "but I *am* interested in Paul Tregaskis."

Thereupon Sir Joshua told her what had taken place, and reported that the Church secretary would write to him on the following day. He was silent about what Mary Trevethoe had said to him.

"Of course he won't come," interposed Mark, who had been quietly listening. "A fellow of Tregaskis's calibre wouldn't come here. Not but what I should be jolly glad if he did."

"If we get him will you come to chapel sometimes?" asked his father.

But Mark did not reply, except by a strange look which the other could not understand.

On the following afternoon Sir Joshua was passing up Manchester Road when he saw Dodgeon.

"Have you written that letter to Mr. Tregaskis yet?" he asked.

"It's here in my pocket," replied Dodgeon. "I was just on my way to the General Post Office. Would you like to read it?"

"He'll not get it to-morrow morning," said Sir Joshua, looking at the town clock.

"Perhaps not, but he will get it some time through the day," replied Dodgeon casually.

Sir Joshua read the letter. It was carefully and courteously worded, but he wondered whether it was

of a nature to impress Paul Tregaskis. Then he remembered that he himself had not written to him.

"I'll go back to my office now, and write it at once," he reflected. Then he remembered what Mary Trevelthoe had said to him on the previous day.

On his return home early in the evening he announced to Judith that he would be away from Cliviger on the following day. It was possible, he added, that he might be away for two days.

The girl looked at him curiously. "Business, I suppose?" she said.

"Yes, business of a sort. I am going to Oxford. I am going to see Tregaskis, and tell him what took place at the Church meeting."

"Are you going by train?" Judith asked after a long silence.

"No," he replied, "I am going to motor. Oxford is only about two hundred miles away, and as the weather is fine it will be a pleasant drive."

"I am going with you," announced Judith.

"We shall have to start early," was all the reply Sir Joshua made.

## CHAPTER IX

## PAUL'S QUESTION

PAUL TREGASKIS had just returned to his lodgings. Throughout the greater part of the morning he had been engaged in some work connected with his old college, and had afterwards dropped in at the Union where he had met with some men of his acquaintance who had persuaded him to join them at lunch at a restaurant to which they usually went. This lunch proved to be such a lengthy affair that he did not reach his lodgings until three o'clock.

On his arrival he found a letter awaiting him which had come by the midday post.

"Whom is this from, I wonder?" he asked himself, as he looked at the postmark. "Oh, I see; Cliviger.

I expect it's an invitation to supply the pulpit again."

He tore open the envelope, almost eagerly. He could scarcely tell why. He had had no expectations of ever seeing Cliviger again, neither, for that matter, did he want to. And yet the Cliviger postmark interested him, and set him wondering.

A minute later he was reading Dodgeon's letter. The first impression made upon him was that of pleasure, great pleasure. He was a young man, and to receive an invitation to be the minister of an old established Church like Ebenezer, was, to say the least of it, flattering. Moreover, as we have more than once said, he had not expected such a thing. He had been somewhat disappointed in his second Sunday's visit, and did not believe that the Church would want to see him again.

Yet here was Dodgeon's letter before him. It stated somewhat coldly, but still plainly, that the Church sent him a unanimous invitation to be its minister, and trusted that he would favourably consider it. Yes, it was a great mark of confidence. Less than a month before he had scarcely ever heard of Ebenezer Church, yet now—well, here was the invitation. He would have been more than human if he had not felt flattered. He knew the usages of such churches. Ordinarily much time passed, many interviews took place, and many preliminaries had to be complied with before such an invitation was sent. And yet here, after two seemingly ordinary visits, was an actual invitation.

And yet the letter left him cold. He did not want to go to Cliviger. The town was ugly and uninviting; more than that, it was, from what he had heard, a hard town to work in. The people, as far as he could judge, although kindly disposed, were sordid, materialistic, coarse, and, according to his standards, unpleasant. Of course Cliviger Hall, where he had stayed, was an inviting home; while Sir Joshua Pendle, as well as his son and daughter, had impressed him favourably. But the town on the whole almost frightened him.

He read the letter again. Yes, it was courteously

expressed, but it was cold, formal, unsympathetic ; and the thought of going to Cliviger to live caused a feeling of dismay to come into his heart. Looking out of his window he could see the spires of the old University town which he had come to love, and in which, in his heart of hearts, he had determined to stay. He loved the life there, enjoyed his meetings with men of similar tastes to his own ; revelled in the society which gladly welcomed him. Why in heaven's name then should he leave it all to go to a bleak, black, smoky, ugly, Lancashire town, and work among uncongenial people ?

Of course he thought of the invitation pleasantly, and he would write at once to Dodgeon acknowledging his letter ; he would also tell him that he would give the invitation his most careful consideration. Naturally, too, he would thank the Church in the warmest terms for the great honour which they wished to confer upon him. But he would not accept it. On that matter he had practically made up his mind.

He had scarcely determined on this course of action when a servant-maid entered the room.

" Yes, Beziza, what is it ? " and he could not help smiling to himself at the girl's parents giving her such a name.

" Please, sir, a gentleman and lady want to see you. They have come in a motor-car."

" A gentleman and lady ? " he repeated. " Who are they, Beziza ? "

" Sir Joshua something, I didn't catch his second name," replied the girl.

" Show them up at once," he cried eagerly, and a minute later Sir Joshua Pendle and Judith entered the room.

" We will have some tea at once," Paul exclaimed, after greeting his visitors. " You have come just at the right time."

" No, thank you," replied Sir Joshua, " at least, not yet. I have come on business, and I want to settle it before anything else takes place. Have you had a letter from our Church secretary ? "

"I have just been reading it. I got it less than an hour ago."

"I motored from Cliviger this morning," explained Sir Joshua. "We started early, and we have come fast. I was afraid, you see."

Paul looked at his visitor inquiringly.

"Yes, I was afraid Dodgeon's letter might impress you unfavourably. I read it yesterday afternoon, and—and—I made up my mind to come and see you. You expected an invitation from us, didn't you?"

"What, from the Church?" asked Paul. "No, I did not expect it."

"But I asked you not to accept the Professorship until——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Paul, "but I felt that the atmosphere was changed on the last Sunday I was with you, and I had given up all thought of ever seeing Cliviger again."

"Well, you *must* see Cliviger again, and you must be our minister," exclaimed Sir Joshua with a kind of bulldog ferocity. "Oh, I mean it. Let me tell you how things stand."

He thereupon told Paul of Mr. Ackroyd's announcement, and of the deacons' meeting which followed. "I don't know how it was," he said, "but that deacons' meeting was not like an ordinary deacons' meeting. Our Church secretary is one of the best fellows alive; he is careful, methodical, industrious and painstaking; but he is as conventional as they make 'em, and hasn't a spark of imagination. He wanted a number of men from various churches to come and preach to us on approval, but—well, the other deacons wouldn't have it. Something seemed to have got hold of us all; I don't know what it was; and when presently the meeting was over we each of us promised to pray about it, and then be guided by God's Spirit. I promised to get the pulpit supplied after Mr. Ackroyd left. You know what happened. You came. Look here, Mr. Tregaskis, I am afraid we at Ebenezer have got cold and callous; we have become materially minded, too, and—and—I

don't know how to express it! Anyhow, after your first visit there was a unanimous feeling that you were the man. Many of us didn't like coming to so sudden a decision, but we couldn't help ourselves. Everyone is convinced that it is God's Will that you should come. The Church needs you, the town needs you, and—it isn't so much our invitation as God's command, remember that!"

Sir Joshua enlarged upon this thought, and he spoke like one issuing orders rather than one making a plea. There was something impressive about the way in which he spoke, too, and there was a virile strength which emanated from his very presence which influenced Paul in spite of himself. "You haven't answered Dodgeon's letter yet, have you?" exclaimed Sir Joshua.

"No," replied Paul. "I was going to acknowledge it this evening, and thank the Church for the expression of its confidence."

"And what then? Have you made up your mind?" and he looked anxiously at the young man's face.

"Yes, I think I have," replied Paul.

"What to do?" demanded the other almost angrily.

"To decline."

"I was afraid of that," exclaimed Sir Joshua, and his voice sounded harsh. "I felt it last night. That's why I determined to come. I felt it as we were motor-ing here to-day, and I told Riley to drive like blazes, for I wanted to get here quickly. I was determined that you should know what we thought about the matter."

Paul was silent, while the other watched him keenly.

"Look here," cried Sir Joshua presently, "there was nothing said in Dodgeon's letter about salary. Does that influence you?"

"I never thought about it," replied Paul.

"Because that will be all right," replied the other.

"I don't know how it was, but we seemed to have forgotten it at the Church meeting. The great thing in our hearts was that we wanted you, and we didn't believe——"

"You needn't go any farther," exclaimed Paul

eagerly. "As I said, the thought of salary never entered my mind."

"Then you will come?" exclaimed the baronet.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you," replied Paul, "that this Professorship of which I spoke to you has developed since I saw you last, and it is generally expected that I shall take it. But that isn't all. Only two days ago I had a letter from a Church in London asking me whether I would consider an invitation. I have preached there several times, and if I thought of taking a Church I think my heart would lead me there."

"Then I can't make you feel that it is your duty to come to Cliviger?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Please don't misunderstand me," cried Paul. "I feel no end gratified at your invitation, but——"

He did not finish the sentence, for Judith, who had been eagerly listening, rose from a chair and rushed to his side.

"Mr. Tregaskis," she cried, "you *must* come to Cliviger, and there must be no buts. Of course it has nothing to do with me; I am practically a heathen, and yet I must speak. Mr. Tregaskis, the whole town of Cliviger is drifting to the devil; especially we young people of the so-called educated classes. We have given up faith; we have given up God; and our only gospel is the gospel of a good time. We don't believe anything because the Churches don't seem to really believe anything. I, personally, have given up going to church partly because I heard such unbelievable things there, and partly because no one seemed to have a faith that was worth having. No one seemed *sure* of anything. Is there a God? No one seems to be sure. Is there anything after death? No one seems to be sure. Is Jesus Christ what He is conventionally believed to be? No one seems to be sure. That's why the whole town is drifting to the devil. But when you came you struck a new note, the note of certainty. Christianity doesn't seem a perhaps with you; it doesn't seem even a faith; it's a certainty. You made us feel it that night I heard you, and—Oh, I know I seem to be talking foolishly,

but you *must* come! You will, won't you? Forgive me for saying all this, I did not mean when I came with father to speak a word, but something made me."

A look came into Paul's eyes which caused hope to flash from Sir Joshua's. Perhaps it was because Judith's words were a kind of revelation to him. She had not spoken a word during the whole of their journey concerning their mission in coming, neither, beyond what she had said on the previous evening, had she expressed a thought about Paul; and there came into his heart the feeling that he had not understood his children; that although they had said nothing to him, they had longings and aspirations of which he had never dreamed.

"You won't persist in saying no, will you?" Judith went on.

Paul started to his feet and went to the window, from which a large part of the town was visible. Oxford looked very fair that day. Winter was now over, and the suggestion of spring life was manifesting itself everywhere. He saw the numerous spires of the city; noted the spots where many of the colleges stood; watched the undergraduates as they strolled around. Yes, this was the life that appealed to him, and he thought of the work he had hoped to do. Then there came to him a vision of Cliviger as he had seen it last. Overhead the skies had been leaden; rain was coming down in torrents; the wind howled miserably around the smoke-begrimed houses; the people looked coarse, unattractive. He saw Ebenezer Chapel, a great, square, ponderous building, opposite the Town Hall; saw the inartistic, comfortless homes. He saw more, he saw the drift of the people; saw that they were hungering and thirsting for something of which they knew nothing.

"I'll go as far as this, Miss Pendle," he said suddenly. "I'll not say no until I am sure I ought to say no. I will go into the whole matter again, and later I will let you know my decision."

"I had hoped," Sir Joshua said, "to carry back good news with me, but if that's all you can say I must be contented."



"My duty doesn't seem quite plain to me yet," answered Paul. "I must get away from here for a bit, I must talk with my father and mother. To-morrow I shall go down to Cornwall. I think my way will be made plain to me there."

"I shan't give up hoping," cried Sir Joshua, "for I can't believe that all that's happened at Cliviger has been for nothing. But still, we can go no further now. I don't mind having the tea you offered just now," he added, "for I am feeling rare and fagged."

"Yes," cried Judith, "and after tea you must show us around Oxford, Mr. Tregaskis. I have never seen it properly, even although Mark, during the three years he was at Baliol, wanted me to come. I was at school a great part of the time, and when once I was able to pay him a visit I seemed to have had no chance of seeing the old colleges."

"I would love to show you around, Miss Pendle," he said eagerly, looking out of the window. "Oxford is one of the most fascinating places in the world," he added.

"No doubt it's a grand place," assented Sir Joshua, "but I always feel like a fish out of water here. Even when I came to see Mark I never felt comfortable. I am a plain, old-fashioned man, Mr. Tregaskis, and I have lived in a plain, old-fashioned place all my life. Perhaps," he added, "Cliviger compares unfavourably with all this. All the same, Cliviger is a grand place, and but for such towns as Cliviger there would be no Oxford. By the way," he added, "I have engaged rooms at the 'Mitre' for to-night, and you must come and dine with us. Don't say you have another engagement, Mr. Tregaskis."

"I am afraid I have," he replied.

"Then you must put it off," cried Judith, who warmly seconded her father's proposal.

Paul did not reply to this, although he wanted very badly to accept the invitation. Judith Pendle's society seemed very attractive to him at that moment.

A few minutes later they were out in the town together,

and Paul found no little pleasure in showing his visitors the sights. Nevertheless, he could not speak as freely as he would have liked. He could not explain why, but he felt a weight upon his lips, and thoughts which were not pleasant kept surging up in his mind.

Presently, as they stood at the door of the "Mitre," that old hostelry which has been associated with some of the most important events in English history, Sir Joshua again urged that he should dine with them that night. "We shall be all alone, Mr. Tregaskis," he said, "and somehow, I can't tell why, but the thought of your spending the evening with us seems to give me hope that you will be the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. Say you will, Mr. Tregaskis."

"Yes, do," urged Judith, and Paul, noting not only the eager tones in the girl's voice, but the pleading look in her eyes, was unable to say no; even although, in a way he could scarcely understand, he felt that he was doing wrong in accepting.

"Now then," said Sir Joshua when some hours later Paul declared his intention of going back to his lodgings, "we shall expect a favourable answer in the course of a few days."

"I'll promise nothing," was Paul's reply. "It would be wrong of me if I did."

"You don't mean to say you don't feel like coming?" and there was real anxiety in the Lancashire man's eyes.

"I shall do what I am told to do," was Paul's reply.

"What you are told to do! Who tells you what to do?" asked Sir Joshua.

But Paul did not reply, and as the other saw the look in his eyes and remembered what he had said at the first service he conducted at Ebenezer Chapel, he did not press his question.

"I am going to see Mr. Tregaskis to the door," exclaimed Judith as he left the sitting-room which Sir Joshua had engaged. "No, you mustn't come, Dad," the girl added. "I have something to say to him which is quite private."

"What do you want to say to me?" asked Paul when

at length they had traversed the higgledy-piggledy entrance hall, which is a feature of the "Mitre," and stood at the entrance door.

The girl did not reply for more than a minute, then she burst out eagerly: "When you come to Cliviger as the minister of Ebenezer Church I am going to tell you the great secret of my heart, Mr. Tregaskis."

"I don't think I ever shall come to Cliviger as the minister of Ebenezer Church," he replied.

"Oh, but you must, you simply *must!*" cried the girl.

"Why do you say that? You have told me more than once to-night that Ebenezer Church is nothing to you."

"It isn't. All the same, you must come. I feel that everything in life worth living for will depend on your coming!"

"Tell me what you mean?" he asked.

"I dare not—now, but if you are the kind of man I think you are, I shall have to tell you later."

He looked into the girl's eyes wondering what she meant by this cryptic saying, and as he looked it came to him that the happiness of his own life would depend on his refusal to the call to be the minister of Ebenezer Chapel.

The next day Paul Tregaskis started for his old home, and towards evening he alighted at the little station three miles from Trelyon Farm. He had intended before embarking on the train at Oxford station to send a telegram to his father informing him of his visit, but on second thoughts had refrained from doing so. As a consequence there was no one to meet him at the station, and, having made arrangements about his luggage, he started on his lonely walk. For it was lonely. Paul's old home was situated in a thinly populated countryside, and was given over to agriculture. Neither mines nor clay works were near. The whole district was entirely rural. Here and there, nestling among clumps of trees, he saw quiet farmsteads, while in the fields around, cattle and sheep were grazing;

and those were almost the only signs of life which met his gaze.

Having walked about two miles along the lonely lane he stopped at a white gate on which the letters "Trenance" were painted. The gate stood at the entrance of a lane which led to a farm a good distance away. He stood still for more than a minute like one hesitating. "Shall I go down?" he asked himself, and there was a look of doubt in his eyes.

He stood irresolute for some time; evidently he was thinking deeply, and a passer-by would have judged that his thoughts were not altogether pleasant. Then a look of determination came into his eyes, and he turned resolutely away from the gate and made his way along the lonely road.

Half an hour later he stood at another gate on which the letters "Trelyon" were painted. This he opened, and walked quickly towards a farm-house in the near distance. He had not gone far when he saw a young fellow following behind a harrow to which two horses were attached, while in the corner of the field he saw a man standing by a cart tying up the mouth of a large sack.

Going into the field he walked quickly towards the man. "Barley or oats, Dad?" he questioned, and there was a laugh in his voice.

The man turned quickly, and as he did so his eyes lit up with a great joy. "Why, if it isn't Paul!" he cried aloud. "I am glad to see you, my dear! Why didn't you say you were coming?"

Before Paul had a chance to reply he heard the yelp of a dog near, followed by rushing feet, and a few seconds later a sheep dog greeted him with barks of affection, and whines of joy.

"My word, Paul," went on the man, "Shep was over with John Buddle, two fields away, a minute ago. He must have seen 'ee, my dear. Aw 'tis good to see 'ee!"

"It's good to be home, Dad," cried Paul, and the tears started to his eyes as he spoke.

"Come on to the house!" cried John Tregaskis eagerly. "Mother will be nearly off her head with joy when she sees you. There is nothing wrong, is there?" he added, and there was a suggestion of anxiety in his voice.

"No, nothing wrong," replied Paul, "but I wanted to come home, and I wanted to talk with you—and mother."

"That's beautiful! You'll be just in time for tea, too."

John Tregaskis was a tall, large-boned man over fifty years of age. He was a typical farmer, and, although by no means out of the ordinary, suggested refinement and a kindly nature. Paul was this man's only child, and anyone could see by the look in his eyes that he was very proud of his son.

"Paul ed'n no ordinary boy, Eliza," John had said to his wife years before when they were thinking of their son's future, "and we must do all we can for him."

"Yes, and we will, too," Eliza Tregaskis had replied, her motherly heart going out with a great love for this boy of theirs who, somehow, did not seem to accord with the life they were living. John Tregaskis was an ordinary working farmer, while Eliza Tregaskis was never so much at home as when she attended to her cows and her poultry. Paul, on the other hand, had never from his earliest boyhood taken much interest in farming. As a boy he had attended the village school, from which he had passed on to a local grammar school, and there had won such a valuable scholarship that, in the course of time, he gained an entrance to the Oxford University. Here, as we have seen, his life was one long series of successes, and although after taking his degree he had, owing to the influence of a renowned divine, passed through a theological college, he was now seriously deliberating the acceptance of an offer of a Professorship in one of Oxford's oldest colleges.

There was not the slightest family likeness between John Tregaskis and his son. The farmer was heavily built, moved somewhat slowly, and although a thoughtful man, never showed the slightest inclination towards

scholarship. Paul, on the other hand, was tall and slight, walked with a springy footstep, and proclaimed himself by every movement an athlete. No one would have taken them for father and son. John Tregaskis's face was placid, homely, contented; while Paul's was eager, finely chiselled, and suggested a scholar. His eyes, too, had that wonderful expression which was not even dimly visible in those of his father's, and they evidently lived in different worlds.

"Oh, Paul, my dear," repeated the farmer again and again as they walked towards the house, "mother will be fairly off her head with joy at seeing 'ee. We won't stop to go around to the front door; the back door is nearer. Mother," he shouted as he entered the house, "come down quick! I've got a surprise for 'ee!"

"What are 'ee talking 'bout, John?" cried a woman's voice from the upper portion of the house.

"Come down and you will see for yourself," laughed the farmer. "Here, Paul, my dear, come into the front kitchen."

A few seconds later Paul found himself embraced by a stout, matronly woman who kissed him again and again, uttering all kinds of endearments as she did so; and then after her first greetings were over held him at arms' length, only, as she declared, "to prepare the way for one more good hug."

"Did 'ee call in to see Lucy on your way home?" asked John Tregaskis presently.

They had finished tea by this time, a meal which was entirely different from any which Paul was accustomed to in Oxford. For a farmhouse tea in Cornwall is no make-believe, and Paul, even although he had been reared in a farm house, could not help wondering as his mother set dish after dish on the table. First of all there was a huge boiled ham to which the farmer had helped his son liberally. Added to this two huge beef and potato pasties had been provided, while a tremendous bowl containing several pounds of the most delicious cream in the world, stood at the end of the table. For Mrs. Tregaskis was old-fashioned in this

matter, and hated that filthy stuff which is called separated cream. Anyhow, these things, added to apple pie and other dishes galore, provided a meal such as Paul had not seen since his last visit to his old home.

"And now," said John Tregaskis, when later they had drawn up their chairs to the fire, "tell us what is bothering you, Paul, my dear."

Paul hesitated a second before replying. It was not only the call to Cliviger Church that was troubling him, it was an old question which had been haunting him for years, although he had never mentioned it either to his father or his mother. "Father," he said, "Mother, am I your son?—really your son?"

## CHAPTER X

## THE MYSTERY OF PAUL'S BIRTH

A LOOK of consternation came into John Tregaskis's eyes, while such a woebegone expression settled on Eliza Tregaskis's face, that it might seem to her as though the world was coming to an end.

"What is that, Paul?" John gasped.

Paul asked his question again, "Father, am I your son, really your son?"

"Whatever made 'ee ask such a question, my dear?"

"I didn't mean to ask it when I started from Oxford this morning," he replied, "but something—I do not know what it was—made me. I came about something entirely different. I have come to a crisis in my life. As I told you several weeks ago I had what was practically an offer of a Professor's Chair in Oxford. I have been very favourably disposed towards it and felt like accepting. Then something happened. I was invited to preach at the Ebenezer Church in Cliviger; a huge, dirty, manufacturing town in Lancashire. I knew that the Church was looking out for a minister, but I never imagined that they were thinking of me. Then yesterday I received a letter from the Church

secretary, containing an unanimous invitation. Not only that, but yesterday afternoon Sir Joshua Pendle, the chief man of the Church, came to Oxford and urged me to accept it. I didn't feel a bit like doing this; in fact, the Professorship appealed to me far more strongly. Still, I felt that it might be my duty to go, and I thought of you. I have always consulted you and mother before taking any important step in life, so I decided to come home right away. Then, why I don't know, but the question I asked you came to me. It has haunted me for years, and, although I have never asked you before, I felt I must."

John Tregaskis was silent for more than a minute, after which he turned to his wife, who still had the same woebegone expression on her face.

"Is there any need to talk about that now, Paul, my dear?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Paul, "I cannot explain why, but it seems to me as though the decision I take in regard to several matters depends on your answer to that."

"But what made 'ee think of such a thing? Have I or your mother ever acted as though you are not really our son?"

"No," replied Paul quickly, "and whether I am really your son or not makes no difference to my feelings towards you; but I want to know."

John Tregaskis's face became strained as if by pain, while, what at first had been a startled expression, became almost a look of agony.

"Paul, my dear," he said, "mother and I love 'ee with all our hearts, and everything we have is yours. Wouldn't it be best to leave things as they are?"

"That won't do, John," and Mrs. Tregaskis shook her head sadly. "Our Paul is a man now and it is right that he should know. I had hoped," she went on, "that he would never ask, but now that he has asked we can't keep the truth from him."

"Whatever made 'ee think of such a thing?" asked John Tregaskis again, after a long silence; "neither your mother nor I have ever breathed a whisper to 'ee."



"I know," replied Paul, "and you and mother will always be father and mother to me. But I have for years felt that I am not your son. I have never said anything to you about it because, well, I felt I couldn't; but to-day it came to me that I must. Tell me plainly whether my fancies have any foundation or not?"

Again John Tregaskis looked at his wife, then turning to Paul he said, "No, Paul, my dear, you are not our son."

"Then whose son am I?"

"I don't know," replied John, "and I don't want to know. For that matter I don't expect we shall ever know; I hope not, anyhow."

There was a look of wonder in Paul's eyes as he saw the expression on the two faces. Even although he had for a long time felt that this man and this woman were not his parents, he was startled by their admission.

"Mind!" cried Mrs. Tregaskis, "we have always loved 'ee as our own boy, Paul, my dear, and if you were a hundred times our son, we couldn't have cared for 'ee more, or been prouder of 'ee; but you asked us plain and we couldn't tell 'ee a lie."

"Tell me about myself," demanded Paul; "how did I come to be regarded as your son?"

"Shall us tell'n everything, my dear?" asked John Tregaskis.

"Yes, tell'n everything," replied his wife, "it can't make no difference now; besides, he ought to know."

"'Twas this way, Paul," said John after another long silence. "Perhaps you don't know it, but your mother and I don't belong to this parish. We were boy and girl together up in St. Mabyn, many miles away from here. We had loved each other ever since we were children. I was a farmer's son and she was a farmer's daughter. When I was twenty-three and she was twenty we made up our minds to get married. That's so, isn't it?" and John turned to his wife for affirmation.

Mrs. Tregaskis nodded her head.

"Neither her father nor my father were rich men, but they each gave us seventy-five pounds on the day we

were wedded. It wasn't much, but it seemed to us like a nice little nest egg on which to begin life. Well, we heard of a farm that was to be let between Bodmin and Altarnun. It wasn't much of a place, but the man who had had it—he was called Jack Buddle—had taken it in from the Moors. For a long time we were undecided as to whether we should take it, but as there seemed nothing better, we eventually did take it and went there to live."

"But what has all this to do with me, father?" asked Paul.

"Wait a minute, I will come to it directly. As I told you, the place had been taken in from the Moors, and was, as you may say, 'five miles from everywhere'; in fact, there was hardly a house near, and sometimes days passed without our seeing anybody from the outside world. You can guess therefore how lonely it was."

Again John was silent for a few seconds, and then went on, "We were very happy, and should have been contented but for one thing. God didn't send us any children. Both of us prayed about it and hoped we should have children, but none came. You're hearken-ing, aren't you, Paul?" for the young man seemed scarcely to be listening. A far-away look was in his eyes as though his mind was in another region.

"Yes, I am listening," he replied. "Go on."

"We had been on the Bodmin Moors for some time," John went on, "and, although there seemed no likelihood of our becoming wealthy, things prospered with us, and we saved a little money. We had several cows which yielded a lot of butter and which mother took to Bodmin market every week. She did very well with her fowls and pigs too, while, although the ground was poor, I did very well with my corn and cattle. So, as I said before, things prospered with us. Still there was an aching void in our hearts; we had no children, neither did there seem any likelihood of any, and, although we prayed, and prayed earnestly, God didn't answer our prayers.

"Then one night—it was Christmas Eve, I remember

it as if it were yesterday—a strange thing happened. I had been out in the stables and cowhouses and bedded the cattle and horses down for the night, when coming in, I found mother sitting beside the fire. ‘John,’ she said, ‘something is coming to us.’ ‘Coming to us! what do ’ee mean, my dear?’ I asked. ‘I don’t know,’ she replied, ‘but something.’ I couldn’t help laughing at what she said, and the way she said it. ‘It will be nothing but a woman’s megrims,’ I thought to myself. Then we went to bed, and in less than an hour we were both asleep.

“How long we slept I don’t know, but presently we were both awakened by the sound of knocking at the door. The knocking was repeated, and it became louder and louder. I got up and went down to the front door, but there was nobody there. Then I went to the back door, but there was nobody there. ‘This is terribly strange,’ I said to myself, ‘I am sure I heard knocking at the door.’ ‘Go and look at the front door again,’ shouted mother when I told her I could find nothing.

“It was very dark and cold—as I told you before, it was Christmas Eve—and when I opened the front door the second time, I looked out into the night, but could see nothing. Then, presently, when my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I thought I saw something near the doorstep, and sure ’nough there was something. It was a good-sized basket, not unlike the baskets which your mother used for taking her butter to market, only bigger. I brought it in and put it on the kitchen table; then I began to examine it. Good Lord! I was frightened! ‘Come down here quickly,’ and when mother came down she was as frightened as I. ‘It’s a baby, John!’ she exclaimed, ‘a beautiful baby! The Lord has answered our prayers after all,’ and taking it out of the basket, she began crooning and crying over it as though it was sent straight from heaven.”

“So it was,” exclaimed Mrs. Tregaskis, “it was you, Paul, and that was how we got to ’ave ’ee. A beautiful boy you was, and, as far as I could judge, you were about a year old.”

"And was that all?" asked Paul, after a long silence.

"That was all, Paul, my dear."

"But was there no letter or anything of that sort, to tell who I was, or where I came from?"

"Yes," replied his mother. "There was a piece of cardboard pinned on to your clothes, and on the piece of cardboard the word 'Paul' was written. I have got it upstairs. I will show it 'ee directly. I don't know why it was, but I felt I ought to keep it in a safe place."

"Was that all?" asked Paul.

"That was all, my dear."

"And did you keep the basket, as well as the paper?"

"Yes, I have got the basket still. I kept it as a sort of curiosity."

"May I see it?" asked the young man, who scarcely realised what he was saying.

"Yes, I will show 'ee it right away," was her reply, whereupon she rushed hastily upstairs.

"You see how it was, Paul, my son—" began John Tregaskis when she left them, but he did not finish the sentence.

"Please be quiet a minute, father," Paul interrupted him, "I want to think."

Never, in all his imaginings, had he ever thought of anything like this, and he was bewildered by the story concerning his own childhood before he was conscious of what took place.

"There, Paul, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Tregaskis, as she came back into the room again. "That was the basket in which we found you, and that was the card which was pinned on to your clothes."

There was nothing whatever remarkable about the former. It was simply a large wicker receptacle, such as was used by country women when taking goods to market. The handle was stout and strong, while the wicker of which it was made looked almost like new. Paul looked at it curiously, and tried to picture himself as he lay there more than a quarter of a century before.

Interested as he was in the basket, however, he was far more interested in the piece of cardboard which his

mother had brought, and he examined it with minute care, as if hoping to discover the secret of his birth. But there was nothing. The piece of cardboard was about four inches square, and the word PAUL was printed in capital letters. Evidently, too, the writer was unused to penmanship. Nearly every letter was badly formed and suggested illiteracy.

"You say this was pinned on to my clothes?" he asked.

"Yes, my dear."

"What kind of clothes were they? Tell me all about them."

"They were good, warm clothes, and I remember saying to John, at the time, that they were well made."

"Did you keep them?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I've lost them. They were the only ones you had to wear, till I went to Bodmin, a week after, and bought some more for you. They got worn out in time, and then I expect they were thrown away. I had no reason for keeping them," she added.

"But were there no marks on them? Nothing to suggest who they belonged to?"

John Tregaskis looked confused at this, while something like a guilty expression came on his wife's face.

"There was only one garment on which anything was to be seen," replied the latter at length.

"What was that?" asked Paul, quickly.

"There were three letters," replied the woman—"P S E—and over the letters was a strange-looking mark, which I couldn't understand."

"Can you describe it?" asked the young man.

"No, I can't, my dear."

"And you say that my clothes were of good material, and well made?"

"Yes, they were; at least, some of them were."

"Some of them were," repeated Paul. "I don't understand."

"Well, part of the clothes you wore were coarse and dirty, while others were made of beautiful material, especially the little gown which had the letters on it.

On the top of the basket," she added, "was a thick piece of drugget, almost like a rug. I expect it was put there to keep you warm."

Again there was a long silence between them, while John Tregaskis and his wife watched the young man's face closely. They seemed to be wondering what questions he would ask next, and perhaps fearing that he would upbraid them for what they had done.

"And was that all?" he asked at length.

"That was all, Paul, my dear."

"But surely," he protested, "some inquiries were made? To say the least of it, it was something out of the ordinary for a basket, containing a child, to be left on the doorstep of a lonely farmhouse, on a winter's night."

"We heard of no inquiries, Paul," replied the woman.

"But didn't you ask any questions? Didn't you make known the whole of the facts to the authorities?"

"Forgive us, my dear," cried his mother, placing her hand on Paul's knee. "As John has told you, we had both wanted children, and God didn't send us any; then, when we found you, it seemed to us as though God had answered our prayers, although not in the way we expected. But, more than that, both of us loved 'ee from the very hour we found 'ee, and we dreaded the thought of anyone coming to take 'ee away. I expect that was why we said nothing."

"But surely it must have become known in the district that you had a child in the house!" exclaimed Paul.

"Not for a long time," and his mother spoke almost triumphantly. "Try to understand, my dear. Penliggy Farm, which was the name Jack Buddle had given to the place, is one of the wildest spots on the Bodmin Moors. As John has told you, we had no neighbours, and sometimes weeks passed without anyone calling. I had no maidservant, and although John had a man to help him on the farm, he only came into the house for dinner, and I was careful to keep you out of sight when he came. As for making inquiries, there seemed

no use in doing so, even if we wanted to, but we didn't want to, so weeks and weeks passed away, without anyone knowing we had found you."

"And no one asked any questions?" persisted Paul.

"Not a single soul."

"And there were no advertisements about me, or anything of that sort?"

"We didn't see any," replied the woman. "You don't see any advertisements on the Bodmin Moors, except you take in a newspaper."

Paul sighed. He had hoped, at the commencement of the story which had been told him, that he would have gained some knowledge as to who he was. It was true he loved the farmer and his wife very dearly. They were the only father and mother he had ever known, and yet a strange longing possessed him to become cognisant as to who were his real father and mother.

"Perhaps we ought to have made inquiries about it, Paul, my dear," and John Tregaskis spoke apologetically. "but I expect it was because we didn't want to. Anyhow, we didn't. Besides, a few months after you were brought to us, we got to know that this farm was to let, and, as we only had a yearly tenancy of Jack Buddle's place we took this place, and we have been here ever since."

After that a long silence fell between them, while John and his wife looked at the only son they had ever known with love-lit eyes.

"You are not vexed with us, are 'ee, my dear?" asked his mother at length.

"Vexed!" cried Paul; "I owe everything to you. Why should I be vexed?"

"Perhaps we were wrong in not telling 'ee," she confessed. "We have often talked about it, and wondered if we were doing right in keeping quiet; but there seemed no reason why we should let the world know. You see, when we came here you were still a baby, and no one ever dreamed you were not our own son; besides, we did love 'ee so! You have

never given us an hour's trouble since you came to us, and when, as you began to grow up, and we saw what a beautiful boy you were, and how quick and clever you were, we couldn't bear the thought of your having anyone else for a father and mother. The only time we really doubted whether we ought to tell 'ee or not was when you began to walk out with Lucy Penhale."

A startled expression came to Paul's eyes. "Why should you doubt it then?" he asked quickly.

"We wondered if she was good enough," replied his mother. "As you know, you were always at the top of the class when you went to Church Town day school; then, when you went to the Grammar School, and took every prize that it was possible to take, we felt sure that you were something out of the ordinary. So presently, when you won those scholarships, and went on to Oxford, we were sorry you seemed to like Lucy."

"Why should you be?" asked Paul.

"We have nothing to say against Lucy," replied his mother quickly. "She is a well-behaved young woman and has kept herself respectable, but, after all, she is only a farmer's daughter, and was never very clever at school."

"What has that to do with it?" persisted the young man.

"Mother and me have talked hours and hours about it," interposed John Tregaskis. "'Supposing our Paul is a gentleman's son,' we have said. 'Suppose, besides being so clever, he turns out to be the son of some great man; would Lucy Penhale be the wife he ought to have? But there, we don't want to interfere in such a matter—every young man must follow his own heart.' You didn't call at Trenance on your way here, did you?"

"No, I didn't," replied Paul a little impatiently.

Both John and his wife were silent at this; perhaps they thought of their own courting days, when they were never happy unless they were together and when they were constantly finding excuses for being with each other.



"You are sure that what we have told you will make no difference in your feelings towards us, Paul, my dear?" exclaimed the woman anxiously, as she watched Paul's face.

"Yes, I am sure of that," he replied.

"And you don't want us to say anything about it?"

"No," he replied eagerly. "Don't breathe a word to anyone. To all intents and purposes I am your son, so let everybody think of me as your son."

"You don't wish we had told you before?"—and there was evident anxiety in John's tones as he asked the question.

Paul did not reply for nearly a minute. "No," he said slowly, "only—— But there, it is no use talking of that now. As I told you just now, I did not mean to ask you about this at all. I came about something entirely different."

"Yes, my son?" John queried, as he looked steadily at Paul's face.

"As I told you, I have come to a crisis in my life," the young man went on, "and what I decide on during the next few weeks will determine my whole future. As I have said, I have every reason to believe that I can have a Professor's Chair at Oxford, and I have also received an invitation to become the minister of the Ebenezer Church at Cliviger, in Lancashire. Father—mother, will you tell me what you think I should do?"

## CHAPTER XI

## PAUL'S DECISION

"TELL us more about it, Paul, my dear!" exclaimed his father presently. Whereupon Paul described, as fully as he was able, what a Professorship at the Oxford University meant, and also the life he would have to live as minister of the Ebenezer Church in Cliviger.

"Of course," he explained presently, "the Professorship appeals to me far more strongly. Oxford is a beautiful city, and I cannot conceive of a more delightful

place in which to live. More than that, the vacations are long, and I should have plenty of time, not only for study, but for travel."

"But you went to the Theological College for the purpose of being a minister, my dear," interposed Mary. "Would it be fair to have all the advantages of an education, such as you received there, and then not be a minister after all?"

"Of course I have thought of that," replied Paul, "and I have discussed the whole matter with the Principal. I should naturally pay back what my theological training cost if I decided on the Professorship," he added.

"But didn't you say that you had a *call* to be a minister?" asked John Tregaskis presently.

"Yes, I did," replied Paul. "That is why I went in for a course of theological training, but I shouldn't cease to be a minister because I became a Professor of Church History. All the same——" He stopped as though he didn't know how to finish the sentence.

"Yes, all the same—what?" asked his mother.

"I feel strangely drawn to go to Cliviger," he replied.

"Paul!" exclaimed John Tregaskis, "are you *sure* you ought to give up your life to preaching the Gospel? Everything depends on that. Do you feel you *must* be a preacher? If you don't, may God save you from blasphemy!"

"Tell me what you mean," demanded Paul.

"I mean this," replied the farmer after a long silence. "You must forgive me if I don't express myself well. You see, I am only a simple man, and have never had a college education; but I have thought a good deal about it, and, in my own way, I have made up my mind. I don't know what things are like in Lancashire, but I am afraid that down here the churches are in a bad way—— No, I hope I am not what is called a pessimist, but I can't help seeing what I do see. Take our own chapel. I have been going there for more than twenty years, and the congregations are getting smaller and smaller each year."

"Why?" asked Paul.

"Ah, that is the question," replied the farmer, almost excitedly. "I have listened to all the preachers—not only to what we call the 'travelling preachers,' but to the 'locals' as well, and, except now and then, I don't seem to be able to fasten on anything that's vital. As you know, my son, I am a Methodist, and have been a Methodist all my life. Both Mary and I were converted up at our little chapel in St. Mabyn, and the religion of Jesus Christ has been the mainstay of our lives ever since, but somehow——"

"Yes, somehow what?" asked Paul when his father lapsed into a silence.

"The life seems to be gone out of our churches," replied the farmer, "and as a consequence the rising generation are not being attracted."

"And why are they not being attracted?" Paul was anxious to look at the question in which he was vitally interested from the ordinary layman's standpoint.

"It's this way," replied the farmer. "Since, years ago, you went to that Theological College, and, as I understood it, made up your mind to be a minister, I have thought a good deal about it, and I have read a good deal about it too. Especially have I read the history of Methodism in Cornwall. Why!"—and John Tregaskis rose from his chair and moved excitedly around the room—"from all I can gather, not only from books written by Methodists, but from such historians as Lecky, Cornwall, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was, generally speaking, one of the worst counties in England. The people were degraded by the very worst forms of vice. Then John Wesley came with his preachers, and they preached a great salvation. . . ."

"Paul, my boy!" and the farmer's eyes flashed, "preaching meant something in those days! It meant a great salvation from a terrible hell. Those preachers went like a flaming fire throughout the whole county, and Cornwall became changed. Those preachers meant what they said! They were *sure* of what they preached,

and the people were convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. But what's our preaching to-day? What do the preachers talk about? They give us little moral essays; they talk about some book that they have read; they try to deal with what they call the problems of the age, while, all the time, the people are hungering and thirsting after the great truths of Christ! Paul, my son, I don't want to sit in judgment, but it seems to me sometimes as though preachers don't half mean what they say; and, more than that, it seems to me as though they have no real grip on the Gospel they pretend to proclaim. And what's the consequence? The young men and women of our time are ceasing to believe in religion altogether; certainly, they have, to a large extent, given up going to chapel. And what's the consequence? Because they have no anchorage, they are drifting, and many of them seem to be going straight to the devil!"

"You have painted a very dark picture, father," Paul could not help exclaiming.

"Would to God I could paint a brighter one!" replied the farmer; "but I can't help myself. I am not thinking about such people as your mother and myself, my dear. We know in Whom we have believed. It is the rising generation I am thinking about. Do you ever read our Western newspapers, Paul?"

"Only rarely. Why?"

"There has been a discussion going on in them lately about the morals of Cornwall, and, from what one gathers from reading the letters, Cornwall is drifting to Paganism. More than that, I was talking with a man not long since, who knows the life of the county from one end to the other, and he told me that as far as he could see, unless God intervened, rural Methodism would be practically dead in less than a quarter of a century."

A long silence ensued, while John Tregaskis tramped up and down the room, while the others watched him.

"You may be right or you may be wrong, father," Paul said at length, "but all this does not answer the

question which I asked of you some time ago. Ought I to go to Cliviger as the minister of Ebenezer, or ought I accept the Chair of Church History in Oxford ? ”

“ You must finally decide that yourself, my son,” replied the farmer, “ but this I do say : *for God’s sake don’t become a minister unless you are sure you ought to be one !* I may be wrong, but I believe that unless a minister is sure about the Gospel he preaches ; unless he is certain that Jesus Christ is the answer to all the questions that men are asking, he is committing a crime by being a minister. Christianity is the greatest thing in the world, my son, and, compared with it, there is nothing that will meet the needs of the people ; but unless you can say with the Apostle Paul, ‘ Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel ! ’ you are usurping a holy office by becoming a minister.”

“ And remember this, too, Paul, my dear,” interposed his mother, who had been sitting for a long time in silence. “ The ministry is not a *profession* ; it is a *calling*. If a man doesn’t feel that God *calls* him to be a minister, he had better to crack stones beside the road than to claim that he is an ambassador of Jesus Christ.”

“ Thank you,” Paul replied. “ You have helped me more than I can say.”

“ Have you decided what you are going to do ? ” asked his father.

“ Yes,” replied Paul. “ I think I had nearly made up my mind before I came ; now I know what I ought to do.”

“ And what are you going to do ? ”

“ I am going to Cliviger.”

“ Thank God ! ” cried his mother, while the tears welled up in her eyes. “ Paul, my son, I agree with every word your father has said ; but I would a hundred times rather see you a minister of Jesus Christ than Prime Minister of England ! Not but that I would rather see you a Methodist minister,” she added.

Paul could not help laughing. “ That question

doesn't bother me at all, mother," he replied. "It was only a matter of accident which led me to go to the College to which I went, but whether I am a Methodist minister, or a Congregational minister, or a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, does not affect the real question. For that matter, I don't think I would get wet feet for any denomination, as such. The great thing, after all, is whether a man is a true minister of Jesus Christ or not."

A few days later Paul wrote to both Sir Joshua Pendle and to Mr. Dodgeon, the secretary of the Ebenezer Church, telling them of his decision; but he did not go to Lancashire; neither, for that matter, did he return to Oxford. Instead, he stayed more than a month in his native county. During that time he visited a great many ministers, and asked them innumerable questions. He also visited many churches, both large and small; but he said nothing, either to his father or his mother, concerning the impressions which his visits made upon him.

Sir Joshua Pendle was more than ordinarily excited when he received Paul's letter. It came one morning as he was sitting at breakfast, and, early though it was, Judith had joined Mark and his father at their morning meal.

"What is it, father?" asked the girl. "You seem quite excited."

"I am," replied Sir Joshua. "Our visit to Oxford has not been in vain. Mr. Tregaskis says he will come to Ebenezer as our minister."

A curious look came into the girl's eyes as she heard the news. Judith, ever since she and her father had left Oxford after their conversation with Paul, had expressed grave doubts about his coming, and now that Sir Joshua had made known the contents of the letter, she sat for a long time staring into vacancy.

"When is he coming?" she asked at length.

"He suggests the first Sunday in June," was Sir Joshua's reply. "My word! I am excited."

"Why should you be excited?" asked the girl.

"I don't know," replied Sir Joshua; "but I am. I have a feeling that that young man is going to change the life of Cliviger."

"Nonsense!" replied Judith, with a laugh. "How can he change the life of Cliviger?" All the same the curious look in her eyes remained.

"He won't stay long," ventured Mark, who was silent during the reading of the letter, and had seemingly paid no heed to Judith's remarks.

"Why shouldn't he?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Personally, I hope he will," was Mark's rejoinder. "He is a fine fellow, and it is a long time since I have so taken to a man. But why, in Heaven's name, should he come to such a place as Cliviger? What, after all, is the position of a dissenting minister in a town like this? He will be a mere nobody. As a Professor in Oxford he might have been a great man, and he will soon find out his mistake in coming. What salary are you giving him?" he added. "Something decent, I hope."

"The matter of salary has never been discussed," replied Sir Joshua. "He told me when I was at Oxford that he had never even thought of that."

"By Jove! What a fool!" remarked Mark. Nevertheless, there was a look which suggested admiration in his eyes.

"Mr. Ackroyd took the pew rents," went on Sir Joshua presently. "Of course, they have fallen off during the last few years, and some of us had to make his salary up. Anyhow, I will see that Mr. Tregaskis doesn't suffer."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mark. "Fancy a man, who might be a Professor in Oxford, with a good house and a comfortable income, taking such a job. Still, it makes one believe that there may be something in it, after all."

"Something in what?" asked Judith.

"In Christianity. When a young fellow like that leaves such a city as Oxford, with all the possibilities it offers, in order to work among a lot of weavers and colliers, it shows, at any rate, that he believes in what he professes. Poor devil!" he added.

"What calls forth that elegant remark?" asked his father.

"Cliviger will break his heart," replied Mark. "Oh, yes, I have no doubt that, at the beginning, he will be made a great deal of. But I know what Cliviger is. For a month or two there may be an increase in the congregations; but presently the people will settle down to their old ways. When the spirit of the town fairly grips him, and when he sees what it really means, he will be heart-broken, or else——"

"Else what?" asked Sir Joshua, a little angrily.

"He will become a parrot, repeating a worn-out shibboleth, like most other parsons are"—and Mark spoke almost bitterly.

"That's unkind," remarked his father. "And not only is it unkind, but it's untrue. The ministers of Cliviger are, in the main, earnest and sincere."

Mark laughed cynically. "At any rate, they don't affect the life of the town," he replied. "For that matter, I don't see how it would affect us if the whole boiling of them were to clear out. Of course, a few of the old people would hold up their hands in dismay, but as far as any real difference to the life of the people is concerned what would it matter? Still, in a way, I am glad Tregaskis is coming. Although he will soon find out that Ebenezer Church is a hopeless proposition, he will be a great help to us as far as the town Literary Society is concerned, and I believe I shall like him immensely."

Sir Joshua had not been long in his office that morning before Dodgeon, the Ebenezer Church secretary, appeared. "I've got a letter from Tregaskis," he announced. "He's coming. I felt sure he would. Have you heard from him?"



"Yes, I had a letter from him this morning. He wrote from Cornwall."

"I knew he would jump at it," asserted Dodgeon again.

"How did you know?"

"Why, Sir Joshua," exclaimed Dodgeon, "Ebenezer is one of the most prominent churches in Cliviger. It is the oldest Free Church, too, and, although they seldom attend, many of the best families in the town belong to it. Isn't it natural, therefore, that a young fellow like Tregaskis would jump at it? I felt sure, when he was here, that he was just aching for an invitation. I hope we've done right," he added.

"Whether we have done right or not, I have but little doubt," replied Sir Joshua. "But I must tell you this, Richard; you are altogether wrong in saying that he was eager to come to Cliviger."

"What do you mean?" asked the other.

"I mean this," replied Sir Joshua. "When I read your letter to him containing the invitation to become minister at our Church, I was in such a fear that he would decline it that I motored to Oxford the next day. It was a good thing I did it, too."

"How?" asked Dodgeon.

"Because he told me that he had practically made up his mind that he wouldn't come; and, even after I had argued with him and pleaded with him, I wasn't a bit sure of him. As you see, he wrote from Cornwall. He went down there to ask his father's and mother's advice. What influenced him to accept I don't know. Mark thinks he is a fool for saying he will come," added Sir Joshua.

"A fool to come to Cliviger!" exclaimed Dodgeon excitedly. "A fool to come to Ebenezer! Why, in Heaven's name?" Dodgeon looked upon Cliviger as the centre of the Universe.

"Why?" exclaimed Sir Joshua, "there are but few people outside Lancashire who know that there is such a town as Cliviger, while Oxford has been a city of

learning for hundreds of years. And Paul Tregaskis might have held a very high place there."

"So *he* says," exclaimed Dodgeon sceptically. "Besides, after all, what is Oxford? We have money enough to buy up the whole city. For that matter, I suppose there is ten times more money in Cliviger than there is in Oxford."

"And you think," laughed Sir Joshua, "that money is the thing that makes a town great? But remember this," he added, "Mr. Tregaskis never told me that he might have had a fine position in Oxford. It was other people who told me that."

"Anyhow," retorted Dodgeon, "I hope we have done the right thing in asking him, although I have grave doubts. Personally I don't think he is the man for Cliviger."

"On the other hand," replied Sir Joshua, "I don't think that if we had searched England all through, we could have found a better one. Be that as it may, we must prepare for his coming."

"In what way?"

"We must give him a great welcome," replied Sir Joshua. "We must have a great meeting and invite all the ministers in the town to be there. We must, as our people call it, give him a 'good send off.'"

"Yes, I suppose we had better do that," assented Dodgeon, somewhat grudgingly. "But I must tell you frankly, I have no faith in his coming."

"On the other hand, I look forward to great things," replied Sir Joshua. "But what is your reason for saying what you said?"

"I believe in a practical, common-sense man," replied the other. "I believe that a minister should be a good business man as well as a good preacher, while Paul Tregaskis is only an idealist and a dreamer. Why, he hasn't even asked what salary we are going to give him!"

"Do you object to him because of that?" asked Sir Joshua.

"In a way, I do. It shows that he isn't practical. A minister has got to live the same as other people have, and he ought to have demanded a right understanding about his salary."

"Richard," replied Sir Joshua solemnly, "hasn't the spirit of the age gone a long way to kill the spirit of Christ? Haven't we largely lost the meaning of Christ's Gospel? Did Jesus Christ say anything about salary when He began His ministry? Did He say anything about salary to Peter and John and Andrew and James when, standing by the Sea of Galilee, He told them to follow Him? The only thing He promised them was that He would make them fishers of men. Do you think that Christianity would be alive to-day if Paul and Barnabas and Timothy and Peter had made sure of a salary before they went to towns like Corinth and Ephesus?"

"That's all very well, Sir Joshua, but I am the Church secretary, and, in a way, I am responsible for the Church finances. What is more, I am a practical man, and I know that the great difficulty of half the churches in Cliviger is that their finances are in a bad way. What would Tregaskis say if, when his pay day comes, we have no money to give him?"

"Richard," countered Sir Joshua, "did you ever know a church, a real living church, a church that was alive to its real meaning, that was ever short of money? I never did. More than that, I am afraid it is because we have constantly been thinking about money that life has gone out of us. Whatever Paul Tregaskis has done for me, he has made me think on new lines, and I can't help remembering the words of our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount—'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.' We, on the other hand, almost gauge the condition of a church by the amount of money we can raise."

"Anyhow," retorted Dodgeon, "I wouldn't give a fig for a parson who doesn't keep his eye on the church

finance. I suppose I had better call a Deacons' Meeting right away, to make arrangements for his coming," he added.

"Yes, you had better do that, Richard, and, if we can, we will make his coming a big occasion."

But in this Sir Joshua was disappointed. When, at the request of the Deacons' Meeting, he wrote to Paul, telling him of what they proposed doing, and asking him whether he had any suggestions to make, the young Cornishman, as the old Lancashire man put it, "threw cold water on their schemes."

*Dear Sir Joshua, he wrote,*

*I greatly appreciate what you say about the public welcome you propose giving me when I come to Cliviger. But for Heaven's sake don't! If there is anything I should hate it would be a fanfare of trumpets when I begin my work. By all means, if you think it wise, let the people of the town know that I am going to commence my ministry on the first Sunday in June, and also let there be a meeting of the Church and Congregation, so that we can talk together of what I hope we shall do. But don't let us have anything like a vulgar display. You suggest getting the Principal of my old College, and a host of others whom you call "big guns," together with the ministers of the town to give me a "great send off." But please don't. I am going to do my level best in the town, and I am upheld by a great faith about the work that is going to be done. But I may be an absolute failure. I may not be the man that the town needs. So please let me come quietly and unostentatiously.*

*As to the other matter which you mentioned, I am, of course, greatly obliged to you, and am no end thankful for the hospitality you offer. But, if you don't mind, I would rather get into my permanent "digs" as soon as possible. I am tremendously intrigued by your description of that dear old soul, Mrs. Hemingway, who lives in a quaint, old-fashioned cottage, and is*

*prepared to let rooms to me. You mentioned other lodgings, but that is the place which appeals to me most. So, in all probability, I shall pay a flying visit to Cliviger before I come to the town to reside, and make arrangements to stay with Mrs. Hemingway. Still, it will be perhaps better for you to say nothing to her about it.*

*Remember me kindly to Mr. Mark and Miss Judith.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Paul Tregaskis.*

“A jolly sensible letter!” remarked Mark Pendle, when Sir Joshua had read it to his children. “He may not be what Dick Dodgeon calls a ‘practical man,’ but he has his head screwed on the right way, for all that.”

Judith, on the other hand, was greatly disappointed. She had hoped that Paul Tregaskis would have stayed at Cliviger Hall, at least two or three weeks, before settling down in his permanent lodgings. Indeed, she had gone so far as to make plans for his entertainment during that time, but his letter had, as she declared, “knocked them in the head.” As for Sir Joshua, he, too, was disappointed, especially in Paul’s refusing to have what he called a public welcome.

“That chap means to have his own way,” he reflected, “and I shouldn’t be surprised if he’ll make the whole lot of us sit up before he’s done with us. All the same, in my heart of hearts I can’t help agreeing with him, and, more than that, the more I know about him, the more I like him. But surely he’s not coming to Cliviger without letting any of us know. At any rate, I will write him at once, asking him to come here and stay while he is settling about his lodgings.”

Again Sir Joshua was disappointed. A little later he received a letter from Paul, saying that he could not accept his hospitality as he had, on the previous day, gone to Cliviger and had taken Mrs. Hemingway’s rooms.

Mark Pendle laughed heartily when his father read this letter. "He has done quite right," he exclaimed, "and has shown more worldly wisdom than I thought him capable of."

"How is that?" asked Sir Joshua, who was greatly chagrined at Paul's letter.

"If you think for a minute you will see, father," replied Mark. "As all the town knows, you are regarded as the big man of Ebenezer. You also live in the biggest house in the whole district. Therefore, if Tregaskis were to come here to stay, the Church, which is mainly made up of working people, would naturally accuse him of favouring a rich man rather than making friends with the poor. As he doesn't know any of the poor people, however, he has decided to go to his permanent 'digs' right away. A jolly wise move."

"Look here, father," Judith said later. "I want to have a talk with Mr. Tregaskis before he commences at Ebenezer next Sunday." For by this time the last week in May had arrived.

"Perhaps he won't come here," replied Sir Joshua, a little gloomily.

"Yes he will, if you go to work in the right way," replied the girl. "Write a letter to him, saying that I wish to see him particularly, and at once, and then ask him to dine here on Saturday night."

## CHAPTER XII

PAUL'S PROMISE TO  
JUDITH PENDLE

PAUL was delighted to have found such congenial lodgings. Not only were his rooms situated in an old-fashioned cottage just outside the town, but Mrs. Hemingway, a widowed lady of nearly sixty years of age, was a dear old soul. Her heart went out to Paul the moment she saw him. Her husband had been a small manufacturer in Cliviger, and, although not a

rich man, had left her enough to live on with some degree of comfort. From a money standpoint, therefore, she had no need to take in a lodger, but, feeling a little lonely, and having heard from Sir Joshua Pendle about Paul, she had been quite willing to take him into her house. When Paul had visited her, moreover, she, as we have said, felt warmly attracted by him. "His eyes have the light of stars in them," she reflected after he had gone, "and he will make the foggiest day seem sunshiny."

She, therefore, gave him a great welcome on the Friday night when he came, and made him, as he frequently declared afterwards, feel at home the minute he entered her doors.

"I have nobbut one servant, Mr. Tregaskis," she declared, "and she's noan a furst rate cook, but if you can put up wi' plain Lancashire meat, you will be all right."

"I *mean* to be all right," laughed Paul.

"Good!" exclaimed Mrs. Hemingway. "Now there is one thing I must tell you right away. I don't belong to Ebenezer Chapel."

"No," laughed Paul, "why should you?"

"My 'usband wur a Churchman, if he wur anything," Mrs. Hemingway explained. "But I have always been a member of th' owd Body, and you may as well know it furst as last."

"Exactly," replied Paul with a laugh. "All I care about is cleanliness, quietness, good plain homely food, together with a certain amount of comfort."

"Cleanliness!" and the old lady spoke a little angrily. "Cliviger may be a mucky town, but my house is clean! Amelia Ellen and I cleaned everything down yesterday, and there's no dirt here."

"Splendid!" cried Paul, "and we are going to get on like a house on fire."

"There are three letters here for you," Mrs. Hemingway informed him, as she led the way into his

sitting-room. "Perhaps you will want to read them before you have your supper."

"One of them is from Sir Joshua Pendle, and contains an invitation for me to dine there to-morrow night," he informed her a few minutes later.

"Ay, I can mind Sir Joshua when he wur plain Josh Pendle," remarked Mrs. Hemingway. "He didn't live at Cliviger Hall then. He wur in a house in Todmorden Street, which is noan so far from here. 'Appen," she went on, "he was as happy then as he is now! Look here, Mr. Tregaskis," she said, as though a new thought had struck her. "Ha' yo' got a young woman?"

"Why?" evaded Paul.

"Because you mus'n' get thinking about Judith Pendle. She's bespoke."

"Bespoke?" repeated Paul.

"Ay, Jack Ridley has been after her for more nor two year, and I heard only yesterday that they had made it up. I thought I ought to tell you," she added.

Paul remembered Judith's parting words when he left the Mitre Hotel some weeks before. "I am going to tell you the great secret of my life when you become the minister of Ebenezer," she had informed him. He was not certain at the time that he was going to be the minister of Ebenezer, but her words had remained in his memory, and he wondered what she wanted to speak to him about. Moreover, a strange feeling came into his heart when he heard Mrs. Hemingway's news. But the feeling was only for a moment. Judith Pendle was nothing to him; never would be.

When Paul awoke the next morning and looked out of his front bedroom window his heart became light. He had, in a way, dreaded coming to Cliviger. He remembered that it was a smoky manufacturing town, and consisted of what Ruskin used to call, "long lines of ugliness"; and as he was a lover of beauty, the thought of spending his days in such a grimy district brought him no pleasure. But, as we have said, Mrs. Hemingway's cottage was on the outskirts of the town,



while his bedroom window looked towards some fine rugged hills which, although they were somewhat bleak and barren, gave him a sense of freedom and space. "I shall be all right here," he exclaimed to himself. Then, going towards the other side of the room and looking out of the other window, he saw the great smoky town, he wondered what his future would be. He had no doubt he had done right in coming to Cliviger, nevertheless a sense of awe possessed him, as he reflected that packed together in the cottages, which stood amidst scores of tall smoky chimneys, there were over a hundred thousand people.

He spent most of the day in unpacking his books and placing them in the shelves he had arranged for when he had taken the lodgings, after which he prepared to go to Cliviger Hall, which was nearly four miles away. At first he thought of accomplishing most of the journey by means of the tramcars, which ran in almost every part of the town, but, reflecting that he had had no exercise that day, he determined to walk. More than that, he wanted to see what Cliviger was like on a Saturday evening, when the mills were all closed and the people were in holiday humour.

It was now nearly midsummer and, the weather being hot and sultry, he found the walk tiring. Nevertheless, he was glad he had taken it. Never before had he so realised the inwardness of the work he hoped to do. A cricket match having taken place not far from his lodgings that afternoon, the streets were now literally thronged with young men and women. Throughout the week they had, in the main, been standing amidst the whirr and roar of machinery, weaving or spinning, and now they evidently intended to enjoy themselves. Crowds of them were finding their way into picture houses, while, as far as he could judge, the one theatre in the town promised to be over full. He saw, too, that, although it was summer time, public dances had been arranged for, while apparently public houses were doing a roaring trade.

"Well, why not?" he reflected. "If I were a weaver, or a spinner, or a collier, and if I were situated as these people are situated, shouldn't I try to extract all the merriment I could out of life?" And then, as he listened to the coarse jokes that were bandied, and heard the senseless screams of laughter which, in the main, emanated from the girls, a feeling akin to wonder came into his heart. He saw nothing wrong, and heard nothing which could be pronounced evil, but, as far as he could judge, the lives of the vast majority of them were, in the main, empty and purposeless. He saw, too, as he had never seen before, the meaning of the words in the New Testament, "When Jesus saw the multitudes He had compassion on them, for they were as sheep having no shepherd."

No one seemed to recognise him, and, as he wore a grey hat and a light dust coat over his evening clothes, people probably took him for a theatrical manager or a professional musician rather than a minister.

He reached Cliviger Hall just after seven o'clock, and saw Judith standing at the entrance as if awaiting him.

"I thought you might come early," she exclaimed, "so I determined to be ready to receive you. Father and Mark are not down yet. Will you wait a minute?" she added. "I want to speak to them."

A minute later she was standing at her father's bedroom door. "Dad!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, my dear, what is it? Has Mr. Tregaskis come?"

"Yes, and you must put on your dress clothes."

"Why, you don't mean to say that he——"

"Be quick about it," laughed the girl. "You have only got a quarter of an hour."

"By gum!" exclaimed Sir Joshua, lapsing for the moment into broad Lancashire. "Who'd ever thought of th' Ebenezer minister wearing dress clothes? I don't believe that Mr. Ackroyd ever had a dress suit in his life. But there!"

Of course, there was nothing wrong in the Ebenezer minister appearing at dinner in evening clothes, but the thing was so unprecedented that he wondered whether Dodgeon was not justified in his doubts.

There were no other visitors at the Hall that night, and so Judith was the only lady present. Not that she seemed to mind; indeed, she evidently enjoyed Paul's society, and as, more than once, she glanced furtively at him, she realised how handsome he was. He looked no more like an ordinary dissenting minister than he looked like one of a troupe of nigger minstrels.

"Old Amos Whalebone wouldn't be so keen about him if he saw him now," she reflected, and yet she could not tell why. Nonconformist ministers were, in these days, educated men, why then should they not wear the ordinary garb of English gentlemen?

But Sir Joshua evidently thought differently. It seemed to him perfectly natural that any distinguished visitor at his house should appear at dinner in evening clothes, but it was utterly incongruous that a Nonconformist minister should dress in such a way.

"I am glad that none of the Ebenezer people are here," he said to himself, as he thought how handsome Paul looked. "It would create a wrong impression. It would draw a line of demarcation between him and the mill people among whom he has come to work."

The thought of clothes, however, evidently never entered Paul's mind. He was dining at a gentleman's house, and to him it was as natural for him to appear in fitting attire as it would be if he had been in Oxford. Moreover, even Sir Joshua couldn't help admitting, as Paul told of the impressions which had been made upon him as he found his way through the town that night, that, whatever clothes he might wear, the young man realised to the full the meaning of the work he had come to do.

"Why did you wish to see me?" Paul asked Judith, when at length they found themselves alone.

"Didn't you wish to come?" she retorted saucily. "I was hoping you might be pleased to see me."

"Of course, that goes without saying," was his reply. "But from what your father said in his letter, I gathered that you had a special reason for inviting me. I want to know what it is."

The girl gave him a quick, searching glance. "I don't think I will tell you," she replied. "I am afraid I have made a mistake."

"In what way?"

"You don't look a bit like the minister of Ebenezer Chapel ought to look," she replied after nearly a minute's silence. Her words came with difficulty, and she scarcely realised their significance.

"I am sorry for that," replied Paul. "But was that what you wished to say to me?"

Judith Pendle looked confused. She had, ever since their parting at the "Mitre" in Oxford, looked forward to making friends with him, but the words she longed to speak would not come. She felt, too, that she had been *gauche*, almost rude; and she was angry with herself.

"Miss Pendle," exclaimed Paul, "I have been wondering what you wished to say to me. Has it anything to do with what you told me on the night you were in Oxford?"

The light in his eyes and the tones in his voice gave her confidence in spite of herself. "Yes, I will tell you," she replied. "Mr. Tregaskis, you don't seem a bit like a minister, and yet, in a way I can't explain, you make me feel that I can confide in you."

"I am glad of that," he replied.

"I don't think of you at all as a father confessor," and she laughed a little nervously. "All the same, I am sure you will regard what I tell you as secret."

"I will, indeed," was his answer.

"It came to me," she went on, "that night when I heard you preach. You remember, don't you?"

"Yes, I remember."

"I shouldn't have gone to Oxford with father, but for that. What you said, and perhaps more the way you said it, gave me hope in spite of myself. Mr. Tregaskis, have you heard anything about me?"

"Yes, I have."

"What?" And her eyes shone with a new light as she asked the question.

"For one thing, I was told only last night, just after I came to Cliviger, that you were engaged to Mr. Jack Ridley. May I ask if it is true?"

"It isn't true," replied the girl. "But in a way I want it to be true. Father wants it to be true."

"Why isn't it true, then?" asked Paul.

"Because I am afraid," replied the girl. "I told you when I was in Oxford that if you became the minister of Ebenezer Chapel I should tell you the great secret of my life. That is the great secret of my life. Jack has for years wanted to marry me, and he has asked me again and again. More than that, I want to say yes. I want to say it for my own sake. I want to say it for father's sake, but I can't."

"Why can't you?"

She hesitated a few seconds before replying, then she spoke rapidly. "Mr. Tregaskis," she said, "I haven't a bit of belief in your religion. Like many other girls in Cliviger, I am a sceptic, if not a pagan. All the same, I can't forget my mother, and I can't help reverencing her as a woman. In spite of everything, too, I believe in many of the things she taught me. I don't know at all why I am saying this to you. All the time Mr. Ackroyd was here I never said a word to him about such things; but I feel as though you might be able to help me. Do you think you can?"

The girl was evidently excited, and seemed to speak at random; nevertheless, she was very much in earnest.

"Of course, I will help you if I can," replied Paul.

"But you have not yet told me how I can."

"I believe I have been in love with Jack Ridley for years," she confided presently; "while he has proposed

to me again and again. But I can't accept him, and I shall never marry him unless——"

She ceased speaking suddenly; evidently she found it hard to say what she wanted to say.

"Unless what?" asked Paul.

"As I told you," she went on, "I want to marry him. I want to for my father's sake; but I can't. He isn't a good man; for that matter, I believe he is a bad man. Please don't misunderstand me. He has the name in the town for being one whose word is to be depended upon, and who is honourable in business; but he isn't honourable with women. He has had lots of affairs with girls, girls who don't profess to be good. What is more, I don't believe he'd be faithful to me if he married me. Now, do you understand?"

"Perhaps I understand a little," replied Paul, "but not altogether. How can I help you?"

"How can you help me!" cried the girl passionately. "I have told you I want to marry him, but I can't, unless he becomes changed. If he were a good man I would gladly marry him; but while he is evil I can't. Mr. Tregaskis, is there any power in your Christianity to change Jack's nature and make him a good man?"

"Yes," replied Paul.

"You're sure of it?"

"Yes," he said again.

"Then, don't you see? I want you to work and think and pray for his conversion. You told us that Sunday night when I heard you preach that you were sure of Jesus Christ; that you were just as sure of Him as the disciples were sure of Him, when He walked by the Sea of Galilee. You told us, too, that all He did then He can do now! If that is so, Jesus Christ can save Jack! He can give him a new purpose in life, a new bent to his character, make him a new man. You meant what you said, didn't you?"

"Yes," replied Paul, "I meant what I said."

"That is it, then. I have told you the secret of my heart now, and I have told you what I have never told

anyone else. Why I have said all this to you I don't know, except that when I heard you at Ebenezer I felt that you were not like ordinary ministers ; that was why I wanted you to come, and now I want you to convert Jack."

"Do you love him ?" Paul could not help asking.

"Do you think I should talk like this if I didn't ?" replied the girl, almost angrily. "For that matter, he is the only man that I ever cared anything about. I don't want to seem like boasting, but heaps of fellows have proposed to me, and I never troubled about them ; but Jack—he is different. All the same, I can't marry him while he is—what he is. And I want to marry him. Will you try to convert him, Mr. Tregaskis ? I know it is a strange thing for a girl like I am to make such a request, but I am in deadly earnest. I feel that my life's happiness depends on the answer you make. Promise me, will you ?"

There was a look of strange yearning in the girl's eyes. An expression on her face which told how deeply she felt what she was saying.

"Of course, I will do everything in my power," was his reply ; "but you must remember——"

"No, no, there must be no buts ! And don't, for heaven's sake, try to qualify what you have said. Don't spoil your promise by raising objections. Do you know," she went on eagerly, "that he is coming to Ebenezer to-morrow night ? Yes, I have persuaded him ! For a long time he laughed at the idea of it, but at length he promised me he would come. I think, too, that, in a way, he likes you ; he admitted to me that he believes you are honest, and that you mean what you say."

"Will *you* be at chapel to-morrow night ?" asked Paul.

"Of course I shall. For that matter, I believe if you converted Jack you would make me believe in your religion. Mark is coming, too," she added ; "he believes in you tremendously, and has taken a great liking to you. But it is not of Mark I am thinking so

much ; it is Jack. You will do your utmost to convert him—you will, won't you ? ”

“ Yes, I will do my utmost,” replied Paul. “ But please remember, Miss Pendle, that you are making a strange request, and please don't expect impossibilities. Even God Himself cannot convert a man who doesn't want to be converted.”

“ But Jack *does* want to be. I am sure he does. I am as certain as that I am here that he longs to be different, only he doesn't believe in anything. Christianity to him is only an idle tale.”

“ And yet you say he went to Ebenezer Chapel as a boy ? ”

“ Yes. Years ago the whole family went. I suppose that in the old days Mr. Ridley, senior, was regarded as one of the prominent men of the chapel ; but things are altogether different now. Mr. Ridley hardly ever goes near the place ; as for his children—well, they are like a host of others—they have given that sort of thing the go-by. They are not atheists or anything of that sort, but religion doesn't count. They simply regard it with utter indifference.”

Paul looked thoughtful. He thought he knew the general drift of the country in regard to matters of religion, but somehow this girl made everything more real to him, and he saw the meaning of his work as he had never seen it before.

Then he looked at Judith Pendle again, and as he looked he wondered. As we have said earlier in these pages, Judith Pendle was no ordinary girl. On the surface she appeared like thousands of others ; pleasure-loving, flippant and superficial. Many believed that all she cared about was pretty dresses, unlimited means of pleasure, and the admiration of men. But there were depths in her nature which had never been plumbed, longings which had never found expression, hopes which she herself scarcely ever realised ; and as Paul looked steadfastly at her he saw something of her real nature.

“ Miss Pendle,” he said, “ do you think that Mr. Ridley would ever satisfy you ? ”



"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean this. You have come to me to-night with a strange request, and in a way I do not like it. You have seemed to imagine that conversion is a mechanical sort of thing, that can be brought about by ordinary means. That it is something that can be calculated upon, arranged for. I want to disabuse your mind as to that. It is one of the most tremendous things in the world, and means the revolution of a man's whole life. But supposing it could be done, supposing Mr. Ridley were changed and became a good man, would he satisfy you? Marriage is, in some respects, almost an awful thing. It would mean, as far as you are concerned, that you are giving yourself to a man; that you are promising to live your life with him. Are you sure of yourself?"

"Of course I am," replied the girl. "If I was not sure I would not have spoken to you in the way I have spoken."

"You want to marry him, then?"

"Of course I do. I have told you so again and again. I have told you, too, why I have repeatedly said no to him. Oh, Mr. Tregaskis, do try to understand me!"

"I am trying to understand you," replied Paul, "and it is because I think I am beginning to understand you that I asked these questions."

"Why are you looking at me like that?" asked Judith, for the girl could not understand the look in his eyes as he continued to gaze at her.

"You said you wanted to marry him for your father's sake," Paul urged.

"Yes, I know, but I can't discuss that. Have you got your sermons ready for to-morrow?" she added with a laugh. "I shall be awfully critical. I shall be wondering all the time what effect you will have upon Jack."

Paul did not reply. In a way he could not understand, he felt uncomfortable at the drift of their conversation, while into his heart came a feeling like pain.

"I am going to drive you back to your lodgings to-night," Mark Pendle informed him when, an hour later, he announced his determination to go.

"There really is no need," protested Paul. "I shall enjoy the walk."

For an answer Mark went to the garage for his car, while into Sir Joshua's eyes came a look of gratification, because of his son's evident liking for the young minister.

"I hope we shall see a lot of you here," exclaimed the baronet. "You have forbidden a public welcome, but you can't forbid a private one. God only knows how thankful I am that you have come to Cliviger, and I want you to feel that we are expecting great things from you."

He said a great deal more than this, while Judith Pendle stood with wide-open eyes, listening to her father's words. Sceptic though she was, she had an interest in the things which Paul stood for, such as she had never realised before.

"I hope we shall be great pals, Tregaskis," said Mark, when, half an hour later, his car stood at Mrs. Hemingway's cottage.

"I think we shall be," Paul replied. "If we are not I don't think it will be my fault."

"But don't expect me to become religious," was Mark's rejoinder. "I am not cast in that mould; neither, for that matter, is Judith. What were you and she talking about so seriously to-night?"

But Paul did not tell him, although, when presently he found his way into his bedroom, he recalled every word of their conversation.

"That girl believes in me," he reflected, "and she has a great hope that I shall influence Ridley! I wonder if I shall? Anyhow, I have promised her that I will do everything in my power to lead him to Jesus Christ."

He knelt down by his bedside, but he did not pray. He could not. Everything like prayer departed from him. The truth came to him like a flash of light, and

he knew that, for weal or for woe, Judith Pendle was the only woman in the world for him.

## CHAPTER XIII

JACK RIDLEY'S  
COMPLIMENT

PAUL did not sleep for several hours. The revelation that had come to him that night had banished it.

Although he had become interested in Judith Pendle, and had found great pleasure in the thought of being received in her home as a friend, he had never dreamt of caring for her save as the daughter of the principal man in the church where he had come to work. For that matter, he had for years been almost more than friendly with a farmer's daughter, who lived near his old Cornish home, and with whom he had been associated from childhood. Moreover, he was not sure that Lucy Penhale did not look upon him in the light of a lover. It was true that no promises of any sort had passed between them. All the same, his own parents, as well as those of Lucy, had looked upon them as sweethearts.

This fact introduces us to a phase of Paul's life which must not be overlooked, for it was destined to play its part in his career.

Years before, Lucy and Paul had, according to the habit so often indulged in by young people, "walked out" together. There was nothing, according to the beliefs of the people with whom he associated, binding in this. It was the commonest thing imaginable for a young man in Cornwall to "put a maid home," as it is often termed, without anything serious being thought about it. Nevertheless, these intimacies often grow serious, and marriage was the frequent result.

We must remember, too, that Paul was highly impressionable, and that when he left Cornwall for Oxford he fancied himself interested in Lucy. More than that,

he wrote to her frequently, while she answered his letters. These were not, in any sense, love letters ; nevertheless, Paul regarded them seriously, and he looked forward to the time when Lucy and he would be regarded as engaged.

But Lucy was not as ardent as Paul. Indeed, she laughed at anything in the nature of an engagement. She was pleased at the idea of being " taken out " by the handsome young student when he came home for his vacations, but resolutely denied anything serious. Especially was this the case when, at length, Paul went to the Theological College and began to study with the idea of becoming a minister.

William Penhale, her father, not only farmed Trenance, which was the biggest farm in the parish ; he also owned it. He also owned and farmed another place adjoining it, and thus was looked upon as a man of some importance. Thus the idea of marrying a minister was not smiled upon. Especially was this the case when Paul made it known that he was going to be a Congregational minister.

Congregationalism is a weak plant in Cornwall. For that matter, there are only a dozen or so Congregational churches in the county, while these have comparatively few adherents. Thus Lucy, whose knowledge of ecclesiastical matters was largely confined to her own county, regarded Paul as having taken a " step downward " in deciding to become a Congregational minister. If he had gone to a Wesleyan College she would not have been so disappointed. Wesleyanism, as she knew full well, was practically the Established Church of Cornwall, and the thought of being a superintendent minister's wife was not unpleasant to her. But the other—

Still, there had been no open rupture between them, and accordingly, when Paul had parted from Lucy, prior to his coming to Cliviger, it was with a feeling that she might one day become his wife. Indeed, while no engagement existed between them, Paul felt that he was pledged to her. And now it had come to

him suddenly, but with tremendous force, that he cared nothing for Lucy, while his love for Judith Pendle was the ruling passion of his life. Up to then, while he had thought of her as one of the most attractive girls he had ever seen, she had been nothing to him save the daughter of Sir Joshua Pendle. Now his whole being went out to her, and he felt that all earthly happiness was, as far as he was concerned, centred in her. But his love was hopeless. She was, on her own confession, in love with Jack Ridley, while he had solemnly promised to do all that was in his power to make marriage possible between them.

Thus he lay for hours sleepless. Even the thought of the work he had come to Cliviger to do was submerged in the hopeless love which he had so suddenly realised.

This, as may be imagined, was a bad preparation for the work he was to begin on the morrow. Indeed, for some hours he felt that he had no message to give to the people and that his ministry would be nothing short of a mockery.

Presently, however, reason began to assert itself, and not only reason, but experience. For Paul had not been talking at random when at his first service at Ebenezer Church he had declared that he was sure of Christ. He had given expression to the dearest and most vivid thought of his life when he had said that Christ was as real to him as were the people whom he met in the flesh day by day. More than that, he knew that he spoke the truth when he declared that Christ was with him, and was his constant companion and comfort. He could not explain why this hopeless love had been born in his heart, and why everything in life should mock him; but he was not afraid. Thus it came about that when the time arrived for him to make his way to the great building, which, for some time at least, would be the centre of his labours, his heart was tranquil and his faith triumphant.

“ He could not have come at a worse time o’ th’

year," exclaimed old Amos Whalebone to George Chadwick, as the two met outside the Ebenezer vestry door that morning.

"Why do you say that?" asked Chadwick.

"Because all the chapels slack off during th' summer," replied old Amos. "For the next three months from now people will be up to the neck in holidays. As I wur sayin' to Richard Dodgeon only last night, he would have a fifty per cent. bigger congregation for his first Sunday if he began at the beginning of the winter instead of right now at the height of summer."

"Well, we must hope for the best, Amos," replied Chadwick. "But what did Dodgeon say?"

"He predicts that Tregaskis will be a failure," replied Amos; "he says as 'ow he is noan the man for Ebenezer, and that before six months are over we shall be sorry we invited him."

"And what did you say?"

"George," replied the old man, "I can't help feeling that we have done the right thing. I know Dodgeon says that Tregaskis is not the right man, and is not a bit the kind of minister some thought Ebenezer ought to have. All the same, we have gone on the right lines, and if ever a minister's coming was the result of prayer, it has been so in the case of Tregaskis. I don't b'lieve that, in spite of everything, the Lord will disappoint us. What do yo' say?"

"Things can't be much worse than they have been, anyhow," replied Chadwick. "The congregations for the last three Sundays have been fair heart-breaking."

Evidently the bills which had been placarded around the town, announcing that Paul would commence his ministry at the Ebenezer Chapel that day, were not without effect. More than twice the usual Sunday morning congregation had gathered, and from the look of expectancy in the people's eyes, it was evident that Paul's advent in the town was regarded as of some importance.

And yet he did not receive anything in the shape of a

special welcome as he went to the minister's vestry. It was true that the Church secretary was there to meet him, as he was there to receive all ministers, whoever they might be, at a quarter-past ten on a Sunday morning. But, as we have seen, Dodgeon was not in favour of Paul's coming to Ebenezer, and his welcome was not of the warmest. Besides, it is not a habit with Lancashire people to show their feelings. Thus, much as several of the deacons would have liked to have given Paul a special welcome that morning, they refrained from doing so. "Let's begin as we can hold out," they had said, and thus scarcely a word of welcome was given to him as he entered the great building.

More than this, his experience through the night had had a bad effect on him. It was true, that like Tennyson's hero,

"He had fought his doubts and gathered strength,"

nevertheless, from a physical standpoint, he was utterly unfit for the work of the day, and when, at length, as the town clock was chiming half-past ten, he made his way into the rostrum, many of the people gave almost a start of dismay, as they noticed the pallor of his cheeks and the apparent unsteadiness of his footsteps.

"That young chap is in a bad way," more than one whispered. "He will noan stand the strain of Ebenezer."

A minute later, however, those same people were led to modify their thoughts. There was, in spite of his experience through the night, such a look of radiant triumph in his eyes, such a thrill of confidence in his voice, that even the most unobservant could not help being sure that he possessed some great secret, something which illumined his being and made doubt impossible.

As was the case on the first Sunday morning he visited the chapel, he began the service by asking the people to pray with him, and, although he only uttered a few simple words, all felt that he was living at the very heart of Life and Power.

He did not immediately give out the usual opening hymn, however; instead he stood looking at the congregation for a few seconds in silence. His eyes travelled from pew to pew, as though he were noting who was present and who was absent, while the people waited in deadly silence, as if wondering what he would do or say next.

"My dear friends," he said presently, "as you know, I am to-day beginning my work as the minister of this church, and, as a consequence, I am overwhelmed with emotions which are to me peculiar. This is my first church, and I am altogether without experience as to what is usual, and also as to what is right and what is wrong for me to say or do, therefore, I hope you will forgive me if I make mistakes.

"First of all I want to thank you for praying for me. For I know you have been. Prayer is in the very air we breathe, and it is filling me with a joy unspeakable. Again I say, thank you.

"There is another thing I want to say. I know you are expecting great things from me. You ought to. I have come here because I believe it to be the Will of God that I should. I wouldn't have come else. And because I have come here in accordance with the Will of God you have a right to expect great things. More than that, great things will be done, if we really believe in God. I am one of those who believe that the success or failure of a church depends upon the minister. I believe that if the churches throughout the land are, as some people declare, losing power and failing to lay hold of the people, it is because of the ministers.

"The Gospel we have to preach is the greatest thing in the world. It is the only thing which will meet the needs of the age in which we live, and if God has called men to the ministry, really called them, and if they really preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there can be no failure."

He paused for a few seconds as if in doubt how to proceed; then he said slowly, "I am saying these



things because this is my first service with you as minister of this church, and because I desire a perfect understanding between us. I am, I repeat, perfectly sure that God has willed me to come here as your minister. I am perfectly sure, too, that the Gospel I have to proclaim is the one great need of our age, and that it is all powerful. You have therefore a right to expect great things from me. If the church is a failure under my ministry it will be my own fault.

“And yet, not altogether so. We read that our Lord Himself could not do many mighty works in a certain place because of the unbelief of the people, and if His power was limited because of certain conditions, what of us? We are a thousand times more dependent on our environment than He was. That is why I am looking to you to help me, and that, too, is why I feel so thankful to you for praying for me. For please remember that while the success of this church will depend upon my ministry, upon my devotion, and upon the power with which I preach the Gospel, I shall largely depend upon your earnestness, upon your faith, and upon your devotion.”

Again he paused, and it seemed to many of his listeners that he had finished the message he wanted to give as an introduction of the work he had come there to do. After another short silence, however, he went on again.

“I had no intention of saying these things when I came to the church this morning, and the feeling that I must say them came upon me suddenly, and I had to obey. Brothers and sisters, pray for me, and continue praying for me. Last night, while walking from my lodgings to the house of the senior deacon of this church, I passed through the heart of the town, which was filled with a great multitude of people. There were literally thousands of young men and women, for whom Jesus died. As I watched them, and listened to what they were saying, I was reminded of those words in the New Testament, ‘And when Jesus saw the multitudes He had

compassion on them, for they were as sheep having no shepherd.'

"Whether this great building will be filled every Sunday or not," he went on after another silence, "I don't know, but there came into my heart then, as there is in my heart now, an infinite longing to lead the multitudes in this town, who do not know Christ, to learn to know Him, and to believe in Him as their Saviour."

He then gave out the opening hymn, and the service proceeded after the usual order.

When evening came Ebenezer Chapel was practically filled to the doors. Even the far-off pews in the corners of the end gallery were crowded with expectant people. As many declared, it was like Charity sermons when Ebenezer was in its palmy days, and there was a great hush of expectancy and earnestness throughout the whole service, which even caused Dodgeon to admit that he might have been mistaken.

"Mind you," he said to Sir Joshua, after the service was over, "I am not convinced even yet that Tregaskis is the right man for us. It is true that we have had a big congregation; true, too, that there was a fine feeling in the service, but it may be only a flash in the pan. We must remember the old adage that 'a new broom sweeps clean.' The time to test the young chap will be a year ahead. If twelve months from now the congregations are as big as they are to-day, then, I'll admit I am wrong, but I am not one to be carried away by the success of a first Sunday. Why, think of the Wesleyans; they change their ministers every three years, and there is always a big crowd when a new parson comes into the circuit, but the big crowd doesn't continue to come. After a few weeks things settle down to the old groove."

Strange as it may seem, Paul did not seem affected by the great multitude that had gathered, and when afterwards he learnt that many of the strangers came from other churches in the town he expressed regret that they should be there. One fact, however, interested

him—he saw that the Pendle pew was full ; not only was Sir Joshua there, but Mark and Judith were also present ; while Jack Ridley and two of his sisters were evidently interested in the service.

“ You will come home with us for a bit of supper ? ” said Sir Joshua, when presently Paul found his way into the minister’s vestry.

“ Thank you, but I don’t think I will, Sir Joshua,” replied Paul. “ This has been a trying day, and I am very tired.”

“ Judith will be terribly disappointed if you don’t,” urged the baronet. “ As a matter of fact, she is waiting for you in the car outside. We will not keep you long if you don’t wish to stay, and I will see to it that you are driven home afterwards ; so please come. Judith, especially, is very anxious that you should.”

When a few minutes later he reached Cliviger Hall, however, he was almost sorry he had accepted. It was true that Judith expressed great gratification at his coming, but when he saw not only Jack Ridley but his two sisters there, his heart became heavy. The young manufacturer’s presence reminded him, in a painful way, what Judith had, only the previous night, said concerning him.

“ Well, Mr. Tregaskis,” exclaimed Ridley, when at length Paul was shown into a room where several people had gathered, “ you preached a jolly good sermon.”

Ridley’s voice was hearty, and he spoke as if he was desirous of pleasing, but the young minister felt as though a cold hand was placed upon his heart.

“ I mean it ! ” went on the young manufacturer. “ As you know, it is not often that I go to church or chapel, but when a thing pleases me I like to say so. It was a dashed good sermon, and I was almost sorry when it was over. If you can keep that kind of thing up I shall come again. In fact, if I may say so, I thought the whole service was a great success. Didn’t you feel it was ? ”

“ No,” replied Paul, “ I thought it was a great failure.”

"Failure! Why, dash it all, man, where were your eyes? The chapel was full to the doors, and I'll warrant there hasn't been such a collection for many a long month. Isn't that so, Sir Joshua?"

Sir Joshua looked uncomfortable, nevertheless he could not help supporting what Ridley had said.

"Didn't you think it was a jolly good sermon?" persisted Ridley, turning to Mark; but Mark was silent. Watching Paul's face, he saw something of what the young man felt. "I believe Ridley has been drinking," he reflected, "else he would surely know that it was bad taste to speak of such a sermon in such a way."

"I was at Manchester on Friday night," went on Ridley, "and there was a revival of that play, 'The Young Woman Who Dared.' It was a jolly good show, too, and, although it wouldn't suit any Puritans who might have been there, it wasn't more interesting than Mr. Tre-gaskis's sermon to-night. I tell you what," and he turned to Paul again, "if you can keep that kind of thing up, religion will be popular in the town again."

Paul looked towards Judith Pendle as the man spoke. "Surely," he reflected, "such a fellow can have no attraction for her." As he watched her face, however, he could not help noticing that there was a look of satisfaction in her eyes, and that she seemed pleased at her suitor's evident interest in what he had heard.

"Talk about casting pearls before swine," reflected the young minister, as soon after supper he was driven back to his lodgings, "the service to-night seemed to be an example of it. Never in my life did I try harder to make Christ a great reality to the people, and yet the fellow compared my sermon to that filthy play, which is an outrage to the feelings of decent people!"

Then he thought of his promise to Judith Pendle. He had told her on the previous night that he would do his utmost to make it possible for her to marry him. But how could he make it possible? There was nothing to which he could appeal. Nothing in the young man's

heart which responded to the message he had come to deliver.

The service at Ebenezer Chapel was discussed throughout the whole of Cliviger that night. Never, many declared, had such influences been felt in the church, while golden opinions were expressed about Paul himself. But the young man was utterly wretched. He had carefully prepared his messages for that day, and especially did he believe that his evening's discourse would be productive of good. Now he felt the mockery of it all. To hear his sermon on Christ compared with a filthy play was to him like crucifying the Lord again.

He did not see Jack Ridley again for a long time, however. Their ways of life were utterly different, and bearing in mind the revelation which had come to him concerning Judith Pendle, he thought it wise to avoid Cliviger Hall. Nevertheless, his promise remained with him. He remembered what Judith expected of him, and the thought of it brought untold misery to his life. How could he endeavour to make a marriage possible between Jack Ridley and Judith Pendle while each day his heart went out more and more towards her ?

But he had promised.

#### CHAPTER XIV

#### THE MINISTERS' FRATERNAL

PAUL TREGASKIS' ministry at Ebenezer was regarded in the town as a great success. The congregations which gathered there were at least trebled, and, summer time though it was, large numbers thronged the doors of the old sanctuary. Even Dodgeon, who had predicted that his ministry would be a failure, could not help admitting that a great change had taken place, while some went so far as to assert that never within the memory of anyone in the town had such sermons been

delivered in Ebenezer Chapel as were listened to Sunday by Sunday.

And yet many felt that Paul Tregaskis was not satisfied. Men like Amos Whalebone declared that the light of joy which had so appealed to him on his first Sunday there was no longer in his eyes; while the look of confidence which had made him appear so attractive seemed to have largely died away.

"What can he want more?" the old man asked. "A good many fresh sittings have been let, the collections are wellnigh doubled, while the congregations are multiplied by three."

Nevertheless, Paul was bitterly disappointed.

There were several reasons for this. One was that the ministers in the town did not appear to look upon him with a friendly eye. For that matter, many of them seemed to shun him altogether, while some spoke of him as an upstart, and one who was not a friend to his own class.

Of course Paul's sermons were freely discussed, and especially the statement he made on the first Sunday he had become minister of Ebenezer Chapel called forth a great deal of comment. He had then declared that the success of the churches depended upon the ministers, and that if the people in the town refrained from coming to the various places of worship it was the ministers' own fault.

At least that was the interpretation given to his introductory speech, and it rankled greatly.

"It is *not* our fault," ministers declared vehemently. "We know that the churches are in a bad way: we know right well that our congregations are becoming smaller and smaller, and that the people are giving the churches the go-by. But the blame can't be attached to us, and although Tregaskis may get good congregations for the first few Sundays, he will soon be found out to be a windbag."

This was not long in reaching Paul's ears, and, in spite of everything, it made him miserable beyond words.

Then there was another thing. He was not long in discovering that the increase in the congregations at Ebenezer was not altogether because he was laying hold of the non-church goers, but because he was robbing other churches. This naturally made the clergymen and other ministers of the town angry towards him, and it made Paul utterly wretched. It was not people from other churches that he wanted to reach, but those who had given up going to church altogether.

There was another fact, too, which he could not help recognising. Never since his first Sunday at Ebenezer had Jack Ridley come near the place. It was true that both Mark and Judith had, on more than one occasion, been seen in the Pendle pew. Nevertheless, Paul was conscious that, as he termed it, he had not in any way gripped them. They had been interested while he was preaching, but had seemed to forget what he had said immediately afterwards. Even Sir Joshua, who professed great delight in his ministry, felt this; and when after a few Sundays both Mark and Judith ceased altogether from going to Ebenezer, his disappointment was evidently very great.

All this caused Paul much heart-searching. He remembered what both his father and mother had said to him during his last visit to his home. They had told him that unless like the Apostle Paul he could say "Woe with me if I preach not the gospel," he had better crack stones by the roadside than be a minister. Was he sure that he was called to be a minister? Was he sure of the gospel he preached?

Yes, he was sure. He knew he had done right in accepting the call of the Church; he knew that the message he had come to Cliviger to deliver was true.

And yet he felt himself to be a failure.

Each Saturday night he left his lodgings and wandered around the streets of the great manufacturing town. He watched the thousands of young men and women who, as far as he could judge, had no thought beyond the enjoyment of the present hour; no realisation of

the great possibilities of the life which God had given to them. Why could he not reach them? Why was it that his ministry had so little effect upon the life of the town? Thousands of these young men and women who now aimlessly wandered around the streets, and who filled the theatres, the picture houses and the dancing halls of Cliviger, were at one time scholars of the various Sunday schools, and had been reared according to Nonconformist traditions. But they seemed to have no use for him; no use for any of the churches.

Not that the Ebenezer Church as a whole was disappointed. Many of them expressed their delight because the Ebenezer pews were full of people who in the past, if they went anywhere, had gone to other churches in the town. They rejoiced in the popularity of their young minister, and boasted of his scholarship, of his eloquence, and of the congregations which Sunday by Sunday came to hear him. Many of them even went so far as to condole with ministers whose churches were comparatively empty, and to take pride in the fact that their own minister was what they called "a cut above" the other men in the town.

"We knaw nowt 'bout failure," one old man declared to a well-known clergyman in the town who had been bemoaning the fact that the church was losing its hold upon the people.

"To what do you attribute your success?" asked this clergyman.

"To the fact that we've got a rare good chap in the pulpit," was the reply. "He's a scholar and he's an orator, that's what our parson is, and that's why the people from other churches come to hear him."

"But only comparatively few of us are scholars," replied the clergyman, "while even less have the gift of oratory. Surely these things do not lie at the heart of a successful ministry?"

"I knaw nowt 'bout that," was the reply. "All I knaw is that Ebenezer is nearly full, and that Mr.



Tregaskis is the grandest preacher i' Cliviger. Why, sometimes I seem to see our Lord Himself standing by him in the pulpit, and telling him what to say ! ”

This was during the first few months of Paul's ministry at Ebenezer. Then what was called “ the inevitable slump ” came. Even before August came to an end there was a marked diminution in the congregations, and as September passed away, even although many who had been away for their holidays returned to the town, the old sanctuary which had been nearly full during the first weeks of his ministry, became sparsely attended.

Not that the church was anything like it had been in Mr. Ackroyd's day. Even on their worst Sundays the congregations were double what they had been for several years previous. Not only that, but practically all the institutions and organisations in connection with the church had nearly doubled their strength.

But Paul was not satisfied with this. He had not given up the possibility of a Professor's Chair in Oxford, and of a high place in that great seat of learning for this. As on that Saturday night, before he had commenced his ministry, he had walked through the town and seen great crowds of people who, as far as he could judge, knew nothing of God and nothing of Christ, he had had a vision of their being inspired by the Saviour of the world ; and he had determined that, God helping him, he would lead these people to that Christ.

But he was not doing this. What to him was the value of attracting people from other churches while the real work he had come to do was left undone ? The Jack Ridleys of the town remained godless and sinning ; the Mark Pendles who everywhere abounded were just as sceptical, just as hopeless as they had been before ; while the drift of the whole town was still towards paganism and godlessness.

Yes, his ministry was a failure, and he could not help realising it. He remembered the great words

which the Lord had uttered not long before His crucifixion: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." But there was no sign of that; rather, as far as he could see, both young and old were going farther away from Christ instead of being drawn closer.

And yet he did not lose faith. Never once during the weeks of his heart-searching had any essential truth of the gospel become less real to him. He called to mind what he had said at Ebenezer on the first Sunday he had visited the town. "I am sure of Jesus Christ," he had said. "I am as sure that He is here as I am sure that you are here. I am *sure* of Him; sure that He's the light of men; sure that He is the Saviour of the world."

He had constantly insisted on this; constantly proclaimed it as the central fact of his teaching, and, as far as he could judge, whatever success had attended his ministry was because of that.

Indeed he was spoken of in Cliviger as "The Man Who Was Sure."

As we have said earlier, his brother ministers had, during the first few months of his stay, been somewhat antagonistic towards him. His success had been something like a rebuke to them, and his statements that if a church was a failure it was the minister's own fault had made them angry. But as the months passed by that feeling began to die down. They saw something of his real nature; saw too the light of faith, and more than faith, in his eyes; saw that he was no supercilious critic of other men, or one who boasted that he succeeded where others failed, but one who was truly a man of God.

Cliviger possessed, as nearly all Lancashire towns possess, a ministers' fraternal. During the summer months the members of this fraternal seldom met, but as the winter came on arrangements were made for several meetings to take place. Generally these meetings took place at the house of one of the ministers, or if

the minister whose turn it was to be host had not sufficient accommodation in his own house, it was held in a vestry of his chapel. A more or less sumptuous tea was provided, after which they generally, as they termed it, "talked shop." Sometimes one of the little fraternity would read a paper on some new book he had read, after which there would be a general discussion; but more often the afternoon was given over to a pleasant conversation on matters of general interest.

For the first few months after Paul came to Cliviger he had not been to any of these gatherings. During June and July, although an invitation had been sent to him, he had not been able to attend. During August and September the meetings were suspended, but late in October he received an invitation from the superintendent Wesleyan minister in the town to attend a meeting of the fraternal at the Wesley Manse. This letter also announced that the Rev. John Crayshaw, a Methodist minister who had lately come to Cliviger, would introduce a subject of *vital importance*. "Vital importance" was underlined.

Paul accepted this invitation with alacrity, and with a certain amount of curiosity. As yet he knew but little of his brother ministers. As it happened, nearly all the Methodist churches had made a change in their ministers that year, and as a consequence, no less than seven "new men" had come into the town in August; and as Paul had been, as we have said, looked upon with a certain amount of dislike, he had seen little or nothing of them. As a consequence, even although he had been in Cliviger nearly five months, he, as far as his "brethren" were concerned, felt almost like a stranger. It was true he had met some of the Anglican clergy, but they being in the main Anglo-Catholics, there was little sympathy between them. Indeed, these Anglicans, although regarding him, owing to his brilliant university career, as different from the rank and file of other Free Church ministers, were not disposed

to accept him as one of themselves. He, according to them, was, in spite of everything, a dissenter; and therefore, in their sense of the word, scarcely a minister at all. Certainly he was not one of the priesthood.

Be that as it may, he made his way to the Wesley Manse on the last Friday in October not only with a desire to be friendly, but eager to know what the Rev. John Crayshaw had to say.

When he arrived at the Wesley Manse he found that a number of men had congregated. The Wesley Manse lay on the Cliviger Hall side of the town, and the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, who occupied it, was looked upon, as far as the Free Churches were concerned, as a man of considerable importance. Cliviger had always been regarded as a stronghold of Methodism, and the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, being the superintendent minister, looked upon himself as a kind of representative of that body.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Tregaskis," Mr. Brighthouse greeted him. "Come into my study, will you? I think most of the brethren are here, and I hope you will make yourself quite at home."

A minute later Paul found himself in a large and fairly well furnished room, where a number of men had gathered. On the whole they greeted him kindly, although he could not help noticing that some of them looked somewhat askance at him. On the whole, too, they were very fair representatives of their class. Most of them had passed through the colleges of the denominations to which they belonged, and were certainly far removed from the Dickensian descriptions of Nonconformist ministers. In the main they favoured clerical attire, and nearly all wore what are commonly called "dog-collars."

"I think we are all here now, brethren," announced Mr. Brighthouse presently, who, as host for the afternoon, acted as chairman, "and as it is now only half-past three we have an hour and a half before Mrs.

Brighthouse will be ready for tea. I suggest, therefore, that we hear Mr. Crayshaw's paper right away ; then, having fed our minds, there will be time for a little discussion before we feed our bodies."

There was a little laughter at this, and one man, who was regarded as a wag, suggested that this was the right course of procedure.

As far as Paul could see general good feeling prevailed. From the laughter which he heard on all sides, too, it seemed to him that, on the whole, there was no great anxiety about the work of the churches in the town. This however might be natural. It was only on stated occasions that they met in a social way, and thus the meeting appeared to them rather as a time for merriment than deep thought.

"Mr. Crayshaw," the Rev. Judah Brighthouse announced when silence was at length obtained, "has told me that he wishes to introduce the subject of the position of our Free Churches, and has given his paper the title of 'Thoughts on our Free Church Life.' As you will at once see, this title, while allowing him plenty of room to move about in, also gives him opportunity of dealing with vital matters. As most of you know, Mr. Crayshaw has only lately come to Cliviger, and does not profess to have an intimate acquaintance with the Free Church life in this town ; but having travelled in several circuits throughout England, he has an intimate knowledge of the general Free Church life of the country. I therefore call upon him to address you."

Mr. Crayshaw might be termed a man of later middle age. Perhaps he was between fifty and fifty-five. Tall, largely built, he looked what he was—a strong, robust Yorkshireman. His face did not suggest sensitiveness, and there were no marks of the scholar upon him. Nevertheless Mr. Crayshaw was no fool. On the whole he was a man of keen observation, and while certainly not an ascetic, he appeared very earnest.

Most of what he said was read from a fairly bulky manuscript which he held in his hand, although at times

he allowed himself to speak freely on various matters he introduced.

On the whole Mr. Crayshaw took a pessimistic view of the situation. He could not help admitting, he said, that the churches were losing ground. In spite of the fact that the population had largely increased during the last fifty years, the actual attendance at the churches were far less than they had been half a century before. It was also true that the general drift of the times was towards paganism. People cared far less about religion to-day than they had cared when he was a boy. He attributed this partly to the War, which had not only revolutionised the industrial life of the country, but had revolutionised thoughts about religion.

Still, things were not altogether bad. He thought that on the whole, although churchgoing had decreased, there was quite as much religion to-day as there was when the pews were better filled; and he laid considerable stress upon what he regarded as the hopeful signs of the times.

But this optimism did not last long. A minute or so later he was again bewailing the fact that the churches were losing their hold on the young people, and that therefore the future looked very black indeed.

Referring to biblical criticism, he said that it was largely responsible for the uncertainty and the unrest which prevailed. "People in these days," he asserted vigorously, "were sure of nothing, except the things which they could see and hear and touch. There is no certainty anywhere, and if you ask me why people are no longer certain of anything, I should say it is because the so-called scholarship of the age has killed it.

"And now," he exclaimed at length, "what is the cure for all this? How can the paganism of the age be arrested? Brethren, I am an old-fashioned man. As you know, I am a Methodist, I was reared on Methodist traditions, and I assert most strongly that the great need of our times is that we return to old-fashioned beliefs and old-fashioned ways. The great need of

our times to-day, as was the great need at the beginning of the eighteenth century, is a great sweeping revival."

He went on to enlarge on this, and so vehement did he become, and such stories did he tell concerning what was done in John Wesley's time, that he largely carried the gathering with him.

"And now what do I propose, brethren?" he concluded. "I propose that we make preparations for a mighty revival here in Cliviger, and to this end I propose that a united mission be held in this town. I have in my mind a man whose work has been wonderfully blessed. A few years ago he was one of the worst men in Yorkshire, and by means which I can only regard as miraculous, he was converted. Soon after he began to tell what God had done for him, and the results of his preaching were marvellous. Since then he has been engaged by the Connexion as a special missionary, and I would suggest that we first of all obtain the use of the largest chapel in this town as the scene of operations, and then invite brother Daniel Priestley, of whom I am sure you have all heard, to hold a fortnight's mission in Cliviger."

The applause which greeted Mr. Crayshaw when he sat down, if hearty, was not universal, and especially was Paul Tregaskis disappointed by what he had heard. Before coming to the meeting he had been hoping with a great hope that he would hear something which might bring about a realisation of his dreams. "Vital importance," he repeated to himself as he recalled the terms of Mr. Brighthouse's invitation, and he trusted that Mr. Crayshaw, a new-comer to the town, might touch upon something crucial, something which might give a new bent to their thoughts.

"What does it all amount to?" he reflected. "A mere statement of the obvious, a number of time-worn platitudes, and very little else. Great God! What does that man know about scholarship? The scholars of the last century have been earnestly seeking after the

truth, and if truth kills certainty, then it ought to be killed. But it isn't that."

For nearly an hour there was a vigorous discussion on the paper which had been given, but very little light was thrown upon the questions at issue. It is true there was a certain amount of disagreement concerning some of the views which Mr. Crayshaw had advanced, but no conclusions were arrived at, save one. On this one thing, however, all seemed to be agreed. Something ought to be done, and after a good deal of talk it was decided that each minister should bring before his church or churches the necessity for holding a great united mission. It was also agreed, although the brethren were not quite unanimous, that the man Priestley, the converted Yorkshireman, should be invited to conduct it.

"Before I put this to the vote," said the chairman presently, "I should like to hear another voice. The Rev. Paul Tregaskis has up to now remained silent. I am sure we should like to hear what he has to say. Moreover, as Ebenezer Chapel is the largest in the town, and as it is also situated in the very heart of the town, it is pre-eminently fitted for the mission. A great deal, therefore, will depend upon Mr. Tregaskis's attitude towards Mr. Crayshaw's suggestion. Is he in sympathy with what has been advanced, and will he consent to Ebenezer Chapel being used for the mission?"

This put Paul in a dilemma. While he could not help agreeing with many of the things Mr. Crayshaw had said, his own thoughts were altogether divergent from those which had been advocated as the best means of dealing with the problems which had been set forth. He knew, too, that if he said what he thought he would cause an uproar in the meeting, and destroy what unanimity there was. Before he had time to rise, however, there was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Brighthouse announced that tea was ready.

"Shall we extend this meeting a few minutes longer, or shall we go to tea?" asked the chairman.



“ Let’s go to tea ! ” was the almost universal response. “ We can hear Mr. Tregaskis afterwards. At present we are hungry, and we shall be far better able to appreciate what he has to say when our hunger is appeased.”

Accordingly they adjourned to the dining-room, where the minister’s wife gave evidence of unusual generosity. A large boiled ham was placed at the end of the table, while other attractive eatables were displayed in abundance. It may be added that what is called “ high tea ” is still a feature in Lancashire houses.

To all appearances Mr. Crayshaw’s paper was immediately forgotten. General merriment became the order of the day, while the brethren evidently enjoyed the hospitality that was provided to the full. I would not for a moment suggest that interest in the subject which had been brought before them a few minutes before had ceased to be of interest, but certainly it did not form a topic of conversation during tea-time. Instead many good stories were told, and much laughter prevailed. Certainly, too, as far as Paul could judge, nearly all the brethren were blessed with good appetites.

As for himself, he was anything but happy. In spite of seeming friendliness, he could not help feeling that he was regarded as something of a pariah. More than that, he remembered that he was expected to give his opinion of Mr. Crayshaw’s paper when the meal was over, and if the united mission of which they spoke became an actuality he would, after what their host had said, be also expected to offer the use of Ebenezer Chapel.

Could he do this, and would he be able to tell what his real feelings concerning the paper were without increasing the antagonism which he was sure existed towards him ?

As it happened, however, he was spared the necessity of saying anything on that occasion. Scarcely had he been served with the good things which Mrs. Brighthouse had provided than the maidservant appeared and went straight towards the host, and spoke to him very

earnestly. For a moment conversation became subdued, and all seemed anxious to know whether the maid had brought evil news.

"I am sorry to disturb this gathering," said Mr. Brighthouse, "but a messenger has been here to say that Mr. Tregaskis is urgently requested to return to his lodgings at once."

Paul, who had not been expecting anything of the sort, looked anxiously towards Mr. Brighthouse. He had made no other arrangements for that afternoon, and knew no reason why he should be so urgently summoned to his lodgings. "I hope Mrs. Hemingway is not ill," he said as he was preparing to leave the table.

"Of course I know nothing but what the messenger told our maid," was the reply. "She simply said that someone had called on very urgent business, and must see Mr. Tregaskis at once. No one can be more disappointed than I am," added Mr. Brighthouse.

Paul left the Wesley Manse immediately. Naturally he wondered who this visitor was who made such an urgent demand. He did not know, he never dreamed that during the next hour he would hear things which would cause him to forget what had taken place that afternoon, and possibly alter the whole course of his life.

## CHAPTER XV

MR. ALEXANDER  
BOLSOVER

"It must be something out of the ordinary," reflected the young man as he wended his way towards his lodgings. "Mrs. Hemingway is a level-headed old dear, and being a member of 'th'owd body,' as she terms it, regarded my visit to Mr. Brighthouse's house with great solemnity. Therefore, she would not have sent for me without some particular reason."

Mrs. Hemingway awaited him at the door as he approached the house.

"You must forgive me if I have done wrong, Mr. Tregaskis," apologised the old lady, "but he said he had come a long way to see you, and that he must catch the night train back."

"Who has come a long way to see me?" queried Paul.

"He's in your study," was the reply. "He's noan Lancashire either—at least he doesn't speak as if he wur. He seemed in a mighty hurry, and was terribly cut up when I told him you were out. When I said where you had gone, he sort of commanded me like to fetch you."

"Did he give you his name?" asked Paul.

"Nay, but he gave me this," and Mrs. Hemingway took a man's visiting card from the hat-stand in the passage, and gave it to Paul.

The name was altogether unfamiliar to him.

"*Mr. Alexander Bolsover*," he read. Then in smaller type he saw in the corner of the card: "*Turpin, Penrose and Bolsover, Lincoln's Inn, London.*"

"What in the name of the seven champions of Christendom can Mr. Bolsover, of the firm of Turpin, Penrose and Bolsover want to see me about?" he asked himself.

During his journey from the Wesley Manse to Mrs. Hemingway's house he had wondered whether his father had come to see him, or whether someone from his old home had come to tell him that something had happened either to his father or mother. He was relieved, therefore, to find the name of a stranger on the card, and felt nothing but curiosity when he opened the door of his sitting-room.

A tall and somewhat cadaverous-looking man rose from his chair as he entered.

"Mr. Bolsover?" queried Paul as he moved towards his visitor.

The stranger looked at him with keen, searching eyes before replying. He seemed like one trying to appraise the young man before deciding to speak to him.

Mr. Bolsover, as we have said, was tall and somewhat

cadaverous in appearance. But he was more than that. He possessed the power of impressing his personality upon any whom he might meet. He had a large head covered with a great mass of iron-grey hair. His forehead was square and prominent, while thick, black, heavy eyebrows overhung his deep-set, piercing eyes. His face was clean-shaven, and, although not suggesting ill-health, spoke of a sedentary life. His lips were somewhat thin and firmly compressed, while his square jaw told of a man who, having made up his mind to a thing, was determined to have his own way.

He was carefully dressed, and evidently had the advantage of a skilled tailor. What he was, or what he might have come about, Paul could form no estimate, but he judged that he was a professional man, and possibly a scholar. During the few seconds they stood looking at each other Paul's mind flashed back to his Oxford days, and he tried to remember if he had ever seen him before.

But no, his visitor was a stranger to him. He had never seen him before, while the name was utterly unfamiliar.

"Mr. Bolsover?" again queried the young man as he looked at the card which Mrs. Hemingway had given him.

Still the stranger did not speak, although it was evident that he had something of importance to say. His piercing eyes seemed to be looking into Paul's very soul as though he were trying to form an estimate of the man he had come to see.

"I have just come from a ministers' meeting," Paul said a little nervously, "but, as you see, I have obeyed your summons."

"Yes, yes," the stranger said. "Certainly. A ministers' meeting. How do you like this black, smoky town, may I ask?"

"You mean Cliviger?"

"Yes, of course I mean Cliviger."

"Have my impressions about Cliviger anything to do with your visit?" Paul could not help asking.

Mr. Bolsover smiled a little grimly. "I suppose all thought is related," was his reply, "and even although I may be personally indifferent as to what you think of Cliviger, it is in some way connected with my visit."

Paul waited for him to continue. He was sure that Mr. Bolsover had come to see him on a matter which he regarded as important, yet for the life of him he could not guess what it was.

"I was greatly disappointed at not finding you here when I came," remarked Mr. Bolsover, as though he were trying to pave the way for a conversation. "You see, I came from London this morning, and hadn't time to ascertain whether you were in the town or not. I should have been frightfully disappointed if you had gone to, say Liverpool, or Manchester, or some other Lancashire town."

"I am afraid I scarcely understand you," replied Paul, who was more than a little puzzled at the stranger's manner. "I have but few acquaintances in London, and certainly I do not know any sufficient reason why anyone should have come from London to see me."

"I gather that you are a clergyman?" remarked the stranger after a rather awkward silence.

"I am the minister of Ebenezer Chapel," replied Paul.

"And before that you were in Oxford?"

"Yes, I was in Oxford."

"From what I gather you were practically offered a professorship in that seat of learning?" and although he made this as a statement, there was a question in his voice.

"Pardon me," replied Paul, "but have my Oxford days anything to do with the visit with which you have honoured me?"

"Perhaps it has," conceded the stranger. "As I said just now, all thought is related, and thus your career at Oxford may have something to do with my coming here. At the moment I don't see in what way; still, I couldn't help asking the question."

Mr. Bolsover spoke in a dreamy, abstracted manner, as though he were considering a philosophical problem rather than one which interested the young man before him.

"You must excuse me," Paul said after another awkward silence, "but I do not yet know who you are, or why you have come to see me. This card tells me that your name is Alexander Bolsover, but of anything else I am in entire ignorance."

"Of course you are," assented Mr. Bolsover, "and I heartily apologise for approaching you in such an abrupt manner. You see, we are entire strangers to each other, and when one has a difficult subject to broach one is somewhat at a disadvantage."

The man's manner, as well as his words, puzzled Paul more than ever. In one way he seemed a man of the world, in another, however, he was hesitant and apologetic, and appeared in doubt as to how to proceed.

"If you will forgive my saying so," said Paul, after another long silence during which Mr. Bolsover continued to scrutinise him, "I have come here at some inconvenience, and up to the present you have given me no suggestion as to what you want to see me about. Will you kindly tell me who you are, and what your business is? I know I am brutally frank, but naturally I want to know."

"Of course you do," replied the other. "Nothing could be more natural. As I hinted just now, the business upon which I have come is rather delicate, and I do not want to make mistakes."

"Mistakes!" repeated Paul in a tone of wonderment.

"Yes, mistakes. On the one hand I do not wish to be impertinent and, on the other, I am anxious not to rouse hopes which may never be realised. Until nine o'clock this morning I am not aware that I ever heard of you, but as my client was very anxious that I should investigate the matter without delay, I caught the first possible train in London, and made my way here."

"Still I do not understand you," urged the young man. "The question with me is why should you want to come here at all? You say you never heard of me until nine o'clock this morning, and—and—— Who are you, and what do you want?"

"I may surprise you," replied the stranger, "but although I am a lawyer, my interests are rather philosophical than legal. Personally I would have preferred that Mr. Penrose, the other acting partner in the firm, should have come to see you instead of myself. Mr. Turpin," he added, "retired five years ago, and his son, who has only just joined the firm, had not arrived when the telephone message came."

"What telephone message?" asked Paul.

"The telephone message from my client."

"I am still in the dark," replied the young man. "You say you are a lawyer, and I gather that you have come from London to-day on behalf of some client. But who is your client? And to be again brutally frank, what has he to do with me?"

"That is what I don't want to tell you," replied Mr. Bolsover. "At least, not yet. Suffice to say that early this morning, he received information which caused him to telephone to my house. As it happened, however, I had just left home, as I make it a point to be always at the office punctually at nine o'clock. It sets a good example to the staff," he added. "If a principal is late the clerks have a way of being careless about time. But that is not the point at issue. No sooner had I seated myself in my office this morning than my telephone bell rang, and I was informed that it was a trunk call. That call led to a strange conversation, and that is why I am here."

"And that conversation was about me?"

Mr. Bolsover smiled. "It might be," he replied cautiously. "I told you that my business with you was delicate, and that every precaution must be taken before divulging it. Possibly, probably, I have approached you in a very awkward manner. You

see, although I am a solicitor by profession I am not one by nature, and I do not possess that happy knack of approaching a difficult question in an easy and assured way. My firm," he added, "has nothing to do with litigation, and my own tastes are those of a recluse. I wish, therefore, that Mr. Turpin could have undertaken this business; but, as I told you, he retired some five years ago. As for Mr. Penrose, he could not come."

Paul was more puzzled than ever. He had, by this time, formed an estimate of the man with whom he was dealing. He had announced that he was a lawyer, but evidently, although a man of considerable personality, he was not an up-to-date lawyer. His manner was tentative, apologetic, and uncertain. All the same, the quick-minded young man saw that there was method in his apparent irrelevancies.

"I have made some inquiries about you since I came to this exceedingly smoky and unpleasant town," went on Mr. Bolsover, "and I learnt that you were first known here in March last, and that in June you became the clergyman, or minister, or whatever you call it, of that huge Greek temple-like-looking building called Ebenezer Chapel. I was told, too, that you had had a successful University career, and that you might at this time, if you had so willed, have occupied a professor's chair in that ancient seat of learning. I assume that I was informed correctly. Was I?"

Paul could not help smiling at the stilted and precise way in which Mr. Bolsover spoke. He could not help imagining this immaculately dressed gentleman asking questions possibly of some surly old weaver whom he might have met.

"In the main you are right," he replied. "But may I ask why you are so interested in me?"

"Perhaps you may later on," replied the older man, "but not for the moment. You admit that I have been correctly informed as to what has happened since March of this year, but I know little or nothing of what



happened before. Where did you live prior to your going to Oxford? You are known in this town as the Rev. Paul Tregaskis. Have you always been called Paul Tregaskis? Where, I ask again, did you live before you went to Oxford? Who are your father and mother, and what do you know about yourself?"

During the last few seconds the colour had receded from Paul's face, and he found his heart beating wildly. He could not help recalling the conversation he had had with his father and mother when, after Sir Joshua Pendle's visit to Oxford, he had gone to his old home to consult with his parents concerning the invitation he had received from Ebenezer Chapel.

"Naturally I bear my father's name," he said at length.

"Is he alive?" asked Mr. Bolsover.

"Both my father and mother are alive," replied Paul.

"What is your father?" And Paul could not help noticing that Mr. Bolsover's manner had changed in an almost miraculous way. He was no longer hesitant and uncertain, but quick and decided.

"My father is a farmer," he replied.

"Excuse my asking you," went on the lawyer, "but are you on good terms with your father and mother? I have a reason for asking."

"What reason?"

"This," replied Mr. Bolsover. "If you are on good terms with them they will have had no secrets from you."

Paul was silent. He knew by this time what Mr. Bolsover had in his mind, and why he had approached him so awkwardly.

"Have you any reason for believing," the lawyer went on, "that Tregaskis is not your real name?"

"Before answering that," retorted the other, "I want to know your reason for asking."

"Do you know what your real name is?" went on the lawyer.

"Again," he replied, "before answering your question I want to know why you ask it."

Mr. Bolsover again looked at him scrutinisingly and questioningly. "I think I may go further," he said. "The look on your face when I asked you whether Tregaskis was your real name or not has told me much. Has your father or has your mother ever told you that you are not their real son? Have they ever told you of your early infancy? Ah! I see they have!"

"Excuse me," replied Paul, who was by this time a little indignant at the lawyer's personal questions, "but I see no reason for taking you into my confidence. What my father has told me concerning myself is surely my own affair, and has nothing whatever to do with any stranger whatsoever!"

"Don't be so sure of that," and the lawyer's tones were quick and decided. "I am not an old man, but I hate railway journeys, and I would not have come from London to this ugly, smoky town in Lancashire on a day like this without a serious reason. I told you some time ago that I could not then speak plainly for fear of raising hopes which may never be realised; since then, however, you have told me much."

"Excuse me, I have told you nothing."

"You have told me much," persisted the lawyer. "Words are not the only medium for conveying the truth. A little while ago I saw you start and turn pale when I asked a certain question; I also saw the look in your eyes when I asked you whether your so-called parents had told you anything about your infancy. Why not be frank with me, and tell me all you know? Why not go further and tell me of your dreams, your hopes, your fancies?" And there was a strange look in the lawyer's eyes.

Paul by this time had mastered himself, and was able to speak quietly. "Because I see no reason why I should," was his reply. "As I have before said, I see no reason for taking you into my confidence. You

have come to me, a stranger ; you have asked me many questions, and told me nothing."

"What age are you ?"

"I was twenty-eight last Christmas Eve," replied Paul.

"Are you sure about the date of your birthday ?"

"Why do you ask ?"

"Because it has to do with my reasons for coming here, and because I was told to take every precaution before confiding in you. A trunk line telephone," he added, "is not a good medium for discussing private affairs. Still, I heard enough to be able to tell you a strange story ; a story which may affect you very closely ; a story which will possibly break up the foundations of your whole life. But I shall tell you nothing ; I *dare* not tell you anything, until I am *certain* of what I want to know."

"Well, what *do* you want to know ?"

"I want to know everything about your early life, your boyhood, and what your father has told you about yourself."

"And if I refuse to tell you ?"

"Of course there are many means of finding out. There are in London, as you may know, private inquiry agencies by means of which I could learn the things I have asked you. But I am an old-fashioned man, and my firm has never been associated with such means of discovering the truth. Besides, it would mean much delay, and my client is impatient."

"Who is your client ?" asked Paul again.

"That I do not feel disposed to tell you ; at least, not at the present juncture. I may say this, however, it would possibly, probably, be to your advantage for you to give me your confidence. I told you just now that your looks and your actions had, as I believed, conveyed much truth to me. But I dare not trust to looks and actions. Until you can assure me with your own lips that you are not their son I can tell you nothing, I dare not."

Paul looked at his visitor steadily, and saw that he was in deadly earnest. The somewhat uncertain manner had altogether gone. Mr. Bolsover, although he had disclaimed the idea that he was a lawyer at heart, was certainly acting with much caution.

"I can tell you this much, at all events," replied Paul, who had by this time become almost feverish in his anxiety to learn the truth. "Last March both John Tregaskis and his wife, the only parents I have ever known, told me that I was not their real son."

"What did they tell you besides?" asked the lawyer.

"They told me that some time after they married they were living on a lonely farm on the Bodmin Moors in Cornwall, and that twenty-seven years ago last Christmas Eve they went to bed as usual, and fell asleep. Presently—neither of them know the exact hour—they were awakened by a loud knocking at the door and John Tregaskis went downstairs to discover what it meant."

"And what was it?" asked the lawyer excitedly.

"For a long time he could discover nothing, but at length he saw on opening the front door a second time, a large wicker basket."

"And then?" queried the other.

"He brought the basket into the house, and on calling his wife they found a sleeping child. They had, ever since their marriage, longed and prayed for a child, but none had come to them; and they, simple folk that they were, believing that God had answered their prayers, had a sort of feeling that this child was Heaven-sent."

After this question followed question in quick succession. Especially did Mr. Bolsover seem interested in the card which was pinned to the basket on which the word "PAUL" was traced in capital letters; and in one of the child's garments on which they had deciphered the letters "P. S. E."

"That is all I know," stated Paul at length. "For

that matter, that was all my father or mother could tell me."

"And your supposed father and mother heard nothing about you afterwards?"

"Nothing."

After this another long silence fell between the two men, during which Mr. Bolsover continued to gaze steadfastly at the young minister.

"Yes," said the lawyer presently, "I will speak to you a little more freely, and I will tell you why I have come here to-day."

Paul waited for him to continue.

"I am glad you are young," remarked Mr. Bolsover.

"Why?"

"Because being young, your moral and intellectual muscles are not fixed, and you will probably be able to adapt yourself to an entirely new set of circumstances."

"Will you explain what you mean?"

"I mean this. Mind, I make no promises, neither can I vouch that what I have to tell you will prove true as far as you are concerned. Still, I think it will. Of course," he added, "nothing is certain, and all that we have been talking about, all that I have in my mind, may prove to be a mere chimera of the imagination. But I do not think so, and if my surmises are correct, everything in your life will become changed, and the very foundations of your being will be broken up."

Paul looked at his visitor in wonderment. Even yet he was unable to grasp the full significance of what he was saying.

"I mean this," continued Mr. Bolsover. "Of course as I said, I have promised nothing, but if my suspicions are true you will soon have to leave this town; you will cease to be the minister of Ebenezer Chapel; your present occupation will have no interest for you, and in a few months you will remember this region as you might remember a nightmare. May I ask you another question?" added Mr. Bolsover as if a new thought

had struck him. "I gather that you are unmarried? May I ask whether you have made any matrimonial arrangements?"

"Why?"

"Because they will have to be given up. You will live in a new world. But there! I am forgetting myself, and perhaps I am saying too much. When I have told you what I have to tell you, you will be able to form your own judgments."

As may be imagined, Paul was so bewildered that he was unable to grasp the full significance of this, and looked at Mr. Bolsover as if for explanation. Before that gentleman could continue, however, the door opened, and Mrs. Hemingway appeared.

"Will you come here a minute, Mr. Tregaskis?" she whispered.

Paul, like a man in a dream, went into the passage where Mrs. Hemingway awaited him.

"Have yo finished with yon felly?" she asked in broad Lancashire. Mrs. Hemingway was evidently much excited, and had lapsed into the manner of speech common to her girlhood.

"Not yet," replied Paul. "Why?"

"Because Mr. Brighthouse is in the next room, and wants to see you particular. He says he won't keep you more than a minute," she added.

Paul followed Mrs. Hemingway into her other sitting-room where the Rev. Judah Brighthouse stood holding his clerical hat in his hand.

"I must ask you to pardon my intrusion, Brother Tregaskis," remarked Mr. Brighthouse, "but you know the circumstances under which you left our fraternal. Anyhow, shortly after you had gone we felt it incumbent upon us to decide immediately whether we could accept Mr. Crayshaw's suggestion, and take immediate steps to prepare for a United Mission. Winter will soon be upon us," he added, "and some of us feel that what is to be done should be done quickly. Anyhow, it was thought by some of the brethren that you did not

agree with Mr. Crayshaw's suggestions, and I was deputed to ask you whether you would consent, if a mission was decided upon, that it should be held in Ebenezer Chapel."

As may be imagined, Paul was not in a fit condition at that moment to consider the pros and cons of the situation. He was eager to get back to his study in order to hear what Mr. Bolsover had further to tell him. He therefore acted upon the impulse of the moment. Had the question come to him when he was more calm and collected, it is probable that his answer would have been different. As it was, however, he spoke according to the impressions which had been made on him at the Ministers' Meeting.

"No," he said, "I, personally, could not give my vote for Ebenezer Chapel to be used for that purpose. Whatever the deacons or trustees may feel about the matter I do not know, but, personally, I do not feel disposed to have anything to do with such a mission."

"May I ask your reasons why?" asked Mr. Brighthouse a little peremptorily, who was somewhat angered at Paul's tones.

"I could not give them to you just now," he replied, "but I shall be willing to do so at the next Ministers' Meeting, or, if you decide to go on with it, and if the brethren are called to make arrangements, I will willingly tell you why I can have no lot or part in the matter."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Brighthouse somewhat stiffly. "I think I understand. I am sorry to have interrupted your conversation with your visitor."

A minute later Paul had returned to his study, eager to know what Mr. Bolsover had to tell him.

"I HOPE you will pardon my leaving you so abruptly," Paul excused himself, "but, as I told you, I have been to a Ministers' Meeting this afternoon, and the question which was discussed was closely associated with my work. Mr. Brighthouse, the chairman of the meeting, was anxious to know my views about a certain matter."

Mr. Bolsover gave him an indulgent smile. "I think if I were in your place," he remarked, "I should forget all about your Ministers' Meeting."

"I am waiting to hear what you promised to tell me," replied the young man, ignoring the other's words.

Mr. Bolsover hesitated before speaking, and seemed to be trying to arrange his thoughts. "For the moment," he said presently, "I will give you no names. Perhaps you will soon understand why, but at present I am disposed to think that names should not be mentioned."

Again he lapsed into silence, and again he watched the other's face closely.

"Thirty years ago," he continued at length, "what was regarded as a great event took place in a certain county in England. I will not, at the moment, tell you the name of that county. I will only say that it is a county of great traditions; a county in which, in spite of modern democratic feelings, the word aristocracy stood for something. May I ask, Mr. Tregaskis, your own feelings with regard to that word?"

"Go on," replied Paul, regardless of his question.

"I only ask it," went on Mr. Bolsover, "because in this topsy-turvy age, when Jack is as good as his master, and thinks himself a great deal better, I am curious to know your feelings with regard to the position of a man bearing a very old name and owning a historic house."

"I have not considered it," replied Paul, "and I am waiting to hear what you have to tell me."



“At any rate,” went on the lawyer, “what I have to tell you is connected with my question. In this proud county, and to this historic house of which I have spoken, a young aristocrat, somewhere about thirty years ago, brought his young patrician wife. They had been wedded some weeks before, and, after spending their honeymoon in Italy, returned to the man’s ancestral home. The man’s father had died two years previously, and he, being the only son, found himself the complete owner of this old house, as well as a fine estate. As a consequence, he was a man of high position, and held posts of great importance in the county. Among the subsidiary offices which fell to his lot he was Chairman of the local Bench of Magistrates, and it was this fact that, as far as I can judge, led to the events I have to relate.”

At this juncture Mr. Bolsover walked towards the window, and looked out on the wide waste of sterile moors which met his gaze; he seemed to be comparing it with softer and, to him, more attractive regions. Then, turning towards Paul again, he went on:

“As a hereditary landlord, and the possessor of lands which had been in his family for hundreds of years, he was very hard on poachers, and, even as a younger man, before he was made Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates, he was known to be very bitter towards scamps of that class. It came about, therefore, that when a young vagrant, who had been discovered poaching by his own gamekeepers on his own land, was brought into the court, he determined to have no mercy on him. The vagrant admitted his guilt; he confessed that he had poached more than once on the estate, and had secured a number of rabbits and one or two pheasants. As to who this vagrant was, no one knew. He was a young, strong, dare-devil looking fellow, and showed not the slightest respect for the magistrates who sat in judgment upon him. The end of the business was that when this young aristocrat asked him if he had anything to say for himself, he

made no apology for what he had done, but declared that if he, the young magistrate, dared to punish him, he would rue it to the last day of his life. This, of course, roused the ire of the Bench, and a severe sentence was pronounced upon him.

“ ‘All right,’ exclaimed the vagrant, ‘you,’ and he gave a look of hatred towards the Chairman, ‘shall suffer hell for this. I mean it. I shall bide my time, but the time will surely come when I will pay you out. What have I done, after all? I just took three of your lousy little rabbits that you would never have missed, and because of it you have sentenced me to quod. But you wait, mister. I shall come out of quod presently, and then I’ll give you hell!’

“ Months passed away, years passed away, and the vagrant, who had evidently given a false name, was never seen near the place.

“ In the meanwhile a son was born in the great house. Naturally there was much rejoicing. Indeed, a feast was given to the country-side to commemorate the event. The child who had been born, was the heir not only of one of the proudest names in the country, but would, in time, be the owner of valuable estates.

“ He was christened Paul. Ah! I see you start! I will not tell you the remainder of the name, because, even in spite of my own conclusions, I may have made a mistake. This boy was christened Paul because it was, in a sense, a hereditary name, just as much as his surname was. For many generations the head of the house had been called Paul.

“ Of course every care was bestowed upon the child, and no precaution was left untaken for his safety. Nevertheless, something terrible happened. When the child was nearly a year old, he was taken out by his nurse into the park for an airing. The nurse was a trustworthy woman who had nursed his father before him, and had lived in the great house for more than thirty years. She had taken out the child between

two and three o'clock in the afternoon, and when four o'clock came and she did not return, great anxiety was manifested. You can, of course, understand this when I tell you that she was ordered to bring back the child within an hour, and was told not to take him beyond the park gates. It was now winter-time, and darkness fell upon the country-side not long after four o'clock in the afternoon. Before five o'clock, therefore, a vigorous search was being made, but nowhere could the nurse or child be found, neither were any traces of them to be seen. The search continued hour after hour, and, as you may imagine, both the father and the mother were in a state of frenzy.

"After many hours—it was past midnight now—two of the searchers heard the sound of someone moaning in a wood not far from one of the park gates, and following up the sound they presently came upon the prostrate form of the nurse, who was lying amidst some undergrowth. But there were no signs of the child. Of course every endeavour was made to find it, but in vain.

"When the nurse had sufficiently recovered to tell her story, she declared that while walking in the copse near which she had been found, someone, she did not know who, neither had she had the chance of seeing him, suddenly sprang upon her and placed something upon her mouth and nostrils. She could not tell what it was, but she thought it had a sickly smell. Soon after she became unconscious and, therefore, did not know what happened to her or the child.

"On the doctor being sent for, it was declared that she had been cholofomed, and not only chloroformed but that she had suffered from a nasty blow in the head, which, while it did not fracture her skull, left her unconscious for several hours.

"Of course the search for the child continued all through the night, and for many days after, but all in vain. Whoever had attacked the nurse was neither seen nor heard of, and although the frenzied father

employed the best detectives which money could pay for, what had been a mystery remained a mystery still, except for one thing."

"What was that one thing?" asked Paul, who had listened like one spellbound to Mr. Bolsover's story.

"A piece of paper which had been pinned to the nurse's gown," was his reply, "and on that paper was written the word, *VENDETTA*. Of course the distracted father connected this with the poacher to whom he had given such a severe sentence, but he had no proof of anything. Be that as it may, however, England was searched from end to end, and every place or person which promised to give a clue whereby the child could be traced was examined, but all in vain."

Paul could not repress a quivering sigh. Strange as Mr. Bolsover's story was, he felt that it was vitally connected with himself. "But why have you come to me?" he could not help asking.

"Wait, I have not finished yet," replied Mr. Bolsover. "Yesterday my client and his lady left their house and motored to see a friend who lived some thirty miles away. They did not return home until late, and failed to notice a letter which had been delivered while they had been away. Early this morning, however, when the servant went to wake him, he brought him the letter which had been lying on the library desk on the previous night. As it was marked *Urgent*, my client opened it at once and read its contents."

"And what were the contents?" asked Paul eagerly.

"It was a strange letter," went on the lawyer, "and contained but few words. Roughly it ran like this:

*I think I have paid you out now. Your son isn't dead, so I have not got that on my conscience. He was brought up by a Cornish farmer called Tregaskis, and is now the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, Cliviger, Lancashire.*

"There was no signature to this," went on the lawyer, "neither was there any date or address."

“ Well, what then ? ” and the words had escaped Paul’s lips almost before he was aware he had spoken them.

“ Naturally my client was much excited, and believed that this letter gave him information about his son who had been stolen from him nearly thirty years ago. From what I can gather, he rushed to the bedroom of his lady and told her what had come to him. Had he yielded to her entreaties he would have set out for Lancashire at once, but, having during the years been much imposed upon, he determined to be careful. More than that, he is a very proud man, and as, if he visited Lancashire in the way his lady desired the matter might become public property, he did not yield to her entreaties. So, fearing that the letter might be intended to deceive him, and yet being eager to know the truth, he rang me up in London and told me to investigate the matter without delay.”

“ And what steps do you propose taking now ? ” asked Paul.

“ That is a matter which I think I will keep to myself for the present,” replied the lawyer cautiously.

Paul felt that there were hundreds of questions he would have liked to have asked, but he did not ask them. In spite of his excitement, and in spite of the mystery which still remained, there was a strange lassitude in his heart. He had, for several years now, felt doubtful as to whether he was the son of the man and woman he had called father and mother. Ever since he had entered into manhood he had felt that the world he lived in was different from the world in which they lived. Not that he did not love them dearly. He did. And yet he did not feel towards them as he imagined a young man should feel towards his parents. Moreover, although he could not fasten upon any single statement they had ever made, yet from words they had let fall unheedingly and perhaps unconsciously, the feeling had grown that he was not their child. That was why, months before, he had asked the question

which so startled them, and which led to the revelations described earlier in these pages.

But they had led to no difference in his outlook on life. He had become the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, and was absorbed in his work. Thus, although he was excited beyond measure by the story which Mr. Bolsover had told him, he felt strangely indifferent to the aristocratic client of whom the lawyer spoke, neither was he as eager to see him as might have been expected.

"Of course," he said at length, "what you have told me is exceedingly interesting, and naturally I cannot help sympathising with your client in his anxiety. But, very possibly, it has nothing to do with me."

"I do not want to raise any false hopes," replied the lawyer, "but I feel sure it has."

"Why?"

"Well, for one thing, there is this letter which my client received, and in which your name was definitely mentioned. I thought a good deal about it while I was waiting for your coming some time ago, and I do not see how it could possibly refer to anyone else. Your age tallies very nearly with the age of the lost child, while the name you bear was the name given in baptism to that child. But I have a stronger reason even than those I have mentioned for believing that you are the son for whom my client has been seeking so many years."

"What is that?"

"As it happens," replied Mr. Bolsover, "I know my client personally, and I know him well. I have, more than once, had the honour of staying at his house. This, after all, is only natural, seeing that the firm to which I belong have been solicitors for my client's family for several generations. Of course I had to be careful, and to take every precaution against mistakes, but I have told you far more than I intended to tell you when I entered this room."

"Why?" asked Paul.

"Because you are almost the image of what my

client was thirty years ago," replied the lawyer. "Indeed, so strong is the likeness between you that, but for the warnings I received by telephone this morning, I should congratulate you on your good fortune. As it is, while acting upon my client's instructions to tell you as little as possible, I think I may promise you that before many days are over you will see not only your real father and mother, but a new era will begin in your life."

Under ordinary circumstances Paul would not have been able to keep from laughing at the stilted and precise manner in which the lawyer continued to speak; yet so earnest were his tones, and so convinced did he seem, that he could not help feeling the truth of his words. In one sense everything seemed unreal, but in another he felt that a new life would soon be offered to him; a life so different from that which he was now leading that a feeling like fear crept into his heart.

"I will go now," continued the lawyer. "I have just time to catch the train which will enable me to catch the late express from Manchester. I shall lose no time in going to my client," he added, "and telling him of the result of my visit."

"You are sure you cannot tell me his name now, and the part of the country in which he lives?"

"I think I must not, much as I would like to. Perhaps some day soon I shall be able to speak more freely. No one will be more happy than I, if I can," he added. "Meanwhile—good night, Mr. Tregaskis."

For a long time after Mr. Bolsover had gone Paul felt like a man in a dream. The room in which he had lived for the past five months, the books, most of which he had brought from Oxford, and which had had so much to do in shaping his intellectual life, were unreal to him. Even the years of his boyhood and of his after life in Oxford seemed to have nothing to do with the man who had listened to Mr. Bolsover's strange story. Indeed, for the moment he felt as though he were two men. One, Paul Tregaskis, the minister of Ebenezer

Chapel, and the other the son of a man whose name he did not even know.

Presently he started to his feet, and a far-away look came into his eyes. "I will go and see her to-night," he said aloud as he walked around the room.

A little later Mrs. Hemingway brought in his simple evening meal, and then, after having eaten it in silence, he put on his hat and overcoat and left the house.

An hour later he was nearing Cliviger Hall.

## CHAPTER XVII

## PAUL AND JUDITH

No sooner had Paul entered the Cliviger Hall grounds than in some unaccountable way the experiences of the last few hours were practically forgotten. He was again Paul Tregaskis, the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, while the story of Mr. Bolsover of his belief that he, Paul, was the child who had been stolen from an old and historic house, was shadowy and unreal.

He was not a great novel reader, but he had devoured sufficient fiction to estimate stories concerning missing heirs at their true worth; and thus, in spite of Mr. Bolsover's evident convictions, his whole narrative was, as far as he was concerned, little more than an idle tale. Perhaps the town through which he had been walking had much to do with this. Anything less romantic than Cliviger, with its slimy streets, its smoke-begrimed houses, and its great, gaunt mills, would be difficult to find. Be that as it may, the thought uppermost in his mind as he made his way towards the great square stone building called Cliviger Hall was that the woman he loved lived behind those walls, and that his love for her was hopeless. At the back of his mind, too, was the fact that his ministry in Cliviger had been a failure. He was not doing the work he had hoped to do, neither was his influence in the town what he had believed it would be.



He remembered the night when Judith Pendle had told him what she said was the great secret of her life. She had confessed to him that Jack Ridley had repeatedly asked her to be his wife, and that she longed to consent to his pleadings, but could not. Something within her rose up and revolted against the thought of marrying him while she knew him to be what he was. She had also begged him to use his every endeavour to change Ridley's mode of life so that she could do what he had asked. And he had promised to do this, even although he was like a man signing his own death warrant in doing so. Soon after making the promise he had felt that Judith Pendle was the only woman in the world to him; and he would have given his heart's blood to win her for his wife.

But in any case he had failed. Never since that first Sunday after he had become the minister of Ebenezer Chapel had Ridley been there, and although he had met him on several occasions Ridley had treated him as a kind of outsider with whom such as he could have nothing to do. But more than that, he had failed also with Judith and Mark. Of late neither of them had been near Ebenezer, while his influence with people of that class had been comparatively *nil*.

What was the reason for it? Did the Gospel he preached only make an appeal to the uneducated and the unintelligent? If not, why was it that the Jack Ridleys and the Mark Pendles of the town gave him a wide berth? Was Christianity, as so many people asserted, only a worn out legend, and had churchgoers to leave their intelligence behind them when they entered a place of worship? Did Christianity consist of a lot of unbelievable dogmas against which the best thought of the age revolted?

Both his heart and intellect answered this in a moment. The great fact to which he had given expression on his first visit to Cliviger remained the fundamental truth of his life. He cared little or nothing for creeds and dogmas; he cared less about ecclesiastical pretensions

and distinctions. They were as valueless as thistle-down. But he was sure of Jesus Christ; sure that He was a living reality; sure that He satisfied man's highest cravings, both intellectual and moral.

Why, then, had he been a failure? Why had he not been able to make Christ real to the crowds who surged Cliviger streets?

"Is Sir Joshua in?"

"No, sir," replied the servant who met him at the door. "Sir Joshua will not be in until ten o'clock, but Miss Pendle is in. Will you come inside?"

A minute later he found himself shaking Judith Pendle's hand, and looking into the depths of her great dark eyes.

"You have avoided us lately," cried the girl. "You haven't been here for ages! Why?"

He could not tell her why, although he longed to do so. "I am told Sir Joshua will not be in until ten o'clock," he evaded. "Is Mark in?"

"No; I expect he will be later than father. Can't you put up with me for an hour or two?" she added, and there was a look in her eyes which set Paul's heart beating violently.

"Are you sure you want me to stay until your father comes home?" he asked.

"Of course I am sure," laughed the girl. "Draw up your chair by the fire; it is awfully cold, and you look 'fair clemmed,' as we Lancashire people say. Is anything the matter, Mr. Tregaskis?"

"Yes," replied Paul.

"What?"

"I am a failure," was his answer.

"A failure!" cried the girl in astonishment. "How?"

"You haven't been to Ebenezer Chapel for months," he declared. "Neither has Mark. Why?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "As I told you before you came, I am a little heathen," she laughed. "Oh, yes, it is quite true! Religion of any sort makes

no appeal to me. Of course I respect the sanctities of life, or at least some of them ; but churchgoing, as it is generally understood, cuts no ice with me, as the Americans say. I expect the same is true of Mark, although he never says anything about it. But you can't mean what you said, Mr. Tregaskis ! A failure ! Why, father was talking with George Chadwick in this very room only last night, and I heard him say that Ebenezer had not been so prosperous for fifty years as it is now ! ”

Paul sighed.

“ Come, what is that sigh about ? ” laughed the girl. “ Why do you look so woebegone ? ”

“ Do you mind my talking frankly with you, Miss Pendle ? ”

“ Of course you may talk frankly. ”

“ Is the reason you have not been to Ebenezer lately because I have had no influence with the man you love ? ”

The girl flushed crimson, and for a moment Paul thought she was angry. “ And if it is ? ” she asked.

“ Will you tell me why you think I have failed with him ? ” he asked. “ Mind you, I am not fishing for compliments, neither do I want you to say empty nothings to me. I have been to a ministers' meeting this afternoon, and I am worried. ”

“ Why are you worried ? ” persisted the girl.

“ Because the man who read a paper there reiterated a fact which I am tired of hearing. He told us that the churches are losing the people, and I know, as far as Cliviger is concerned, that only a fraction of the population darken our church doors, or are in any way associated with us ; and I ask you, who represent a large number of the intelligent and educated young people of the town, why you think it is. You have been brought up in a religious home, your father is a religious man, and yet you declare that Christianity has no attraction for you ! ”

“No,” replied the girl frankly. “It hasn’t.”

“Why ?”

She seemed to be thinking seriously for a few seconds, then went on : “I can hardly tell you why. It is this way, Mr. Tregaskis. I don’t think I *want* to be religious. Let me be absolutely frank. I was very anxious for you to come to Cliviger ; I was, really. I felt that you struck a new note ; a note of certainty, and, in a way, although I am irreligious, I was attracted. I was tremendously impressed, too, when you said you were sure of Christ, and that you were sure of the God He revealed. More than that, in a way I cannot express, I was kind of comforted when you declared that God had a purpose in our lives, and that death was not a going away into nothingness. You made me believe this, too, and for two or three weeks I was tremendously keen about what you stood for.”

“And now ?” asked Paul.

The girl shrugged her shoulders. “Let’s talk no more about it,” she said with a laugh. “Shall I play and sing for you ?”

“I should love to hear you,” replied Paul, “but not for a few minutes. I am bothered, Miss Pendle, I really am. When I came to Cliviger I felt that I was going to do great things, but I haven’t done what I had hoped. Did I insult your intelligence when you came to Ebenezer ? Did I preach a lot of things which seemed to you unbelievable ?”

“No,” replied the girl. “For that matter you largely convinced my mind. You never insisted upon unbelievable things, and you never seemed to trouble about non-essentials. But all the time, even although I knew you were convinced yourself, and while, in a way, you preached great things, I felt something was wanting.”

“Yes,” replied Paul. “What ?”

“Oh, please do forgive me ! I know it is awfully presumptuous of me to talk in this way to such a clever and cultured man as you, but you have asked me to speak frankly. This is what seems wanting in your

preaching, Mr. Tregaskis. While many of your sermons were very fine and even convincing, and while I felt certain that you were sure of everything you said, you left me cold. You didn't make me *want* to believe in God, you didn't make me *want* to be sure of Christ; and I could not help saying to myself that until you possessed something which you don't possess now, you will never make a man such as he to whom you referred—and remember he represents thousands in the town—believe what you believe, accept what you accept, and become the man you want him to be. Why," went on the girl, "there are hundreds of us in Cliviger—I mean girls like myself—who have had a certain amount of education, who not only don't care about that sort of thing, but we have no desire to be different from what we are. All we want is a good time." Then she paused a second. "Perhaps, after all," she went on, "I have not spoken the truth. We *do* want to be different from what we are, only there is a need of something—something to which I can't give a name, which will bring us up on our haunches, so to speak, and arouse us in spite of ourselves."

"Have you given up all thought of marrying Jack Ridley?" asked Paul suddenly, after a long silence.

Again the girl blushed a fiery red, while Paul thought he saw a flash of anger emitted from her eyes. Then she said slowly: "I shall never marry him while he is—what he is now. Do you think you will ever convert him, Mr. Tregaskis?"

Paul did not reply. For some time he sat staring into vacancy. Then suddenly he turned to the girl. "Play to me, sing to me," he said like one giving an order.

Thus it came about that when Sir Joshua returned home Paul had seemingly forgotten all about what he had called his failure at Ebenezer, and thought only of the fascinating, dark-eyed girl who sat at the piano singing a love-song.

Sir Joshua was very glad to see Paul. In a way, he

felt responsible for bringing him to Cliviger. It was through him that Paul first visited the town, and it was largely through his influence that the young man was now the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. More than that, he liked him, and, as he had more than once declared, was a better man because of him.

It was true his influence over Mark and Judith was not what he had hoped it would be, but, as he frequently argued with himself, he had not been there long, and had scarcely had a chance to make his personality felt.

"I am in somewhat of a dilemma, Sir Joshua," Paul asserted when at length the two men were alone together.

"Why?" asked the older man.

Whereupon Paul told him of the paper which Mr. Crayshaw had read at the Wesley Manse that afternoon, and the result of the conversation which had taken place.

"I told Mr. Brighthouse," he declared, "that, as far as I was concerned, Ebenezer Chapel would not be used for the mission that was advocated, and that, while the deacons or the trustees, or whoever might deal with such a matter, might give their consent, I, personally, could have nothing to do with it."

Sir Joshua looked grave. "Do you think you were wise, Mr. Tregaskis?" he asked.

"Why not?" asked the young man.

"Because I am afraid you have not done yourself any good. Rightly or wrongly, I gather that nearly all the ministers in the town think, to use a slang phrase, that you put on side, and regard yourself as superior to them. You see," he went on, "we must admit that Ebenezer Chapel is the most suitable place in the town for such a mission. It is the largest chapel we have, and everything of that nature has always been held there. Thus, when it is spread abroad that you, the minister, are against the chapel being used for such a purpose, it will confirm the impression already made."

"But I do not believe in such a mission," Paul asserted.

Sir Joshua looked at him in astonishment. "Not

believe in it! Why—why, Mr. Tregaskis, you can't be serious?"

"But I am," replied the young man.

"Why do you not believe in the mission?" asked the baronet in astonishment.

"Because I am afraid it will do more harm than good."

"More harm than good!" repeated the baronet.

"That's a very serious statement to make. Why, such missions have been a feature of the religious life of the town; and what you say makes me very grave. To tell you the truth, Mr. Tregaskis, if you had not come here to-night I should have made it my duty to see you to-morrow. Less than an hour ago I saw Mr. Brighthouse, who told me what had taken place. He spoke most highly of Mr. Crayshaw's paper, and described the discussion which took place afterwards. He also told me of his interview with you. I could not help feeling grieved," he added. "Mr. Ackroyd was the heart and soul of such movements while he was here. Indeed, as far as I can remember, no less than four United Missions were held at Ebenezer during the time he was with us. Thus, when you took the attitude you did take, Mr. Brighthouse was not only startled, he was grieved. Naturally, too, a number of people have been talking about it since."

"Sir Joshua," Paul said quietly, "you have just told me that a number of such missions were held in the town during Mr. Ackroyd's ministry. May I ask you something?"

"Certainly you may."

"What good did they do?"

"Large numbers came," replied Sir Joshua. "Ebenezer Chapel was filled, and many conversions took place."

Paul looked distressed. "I am awfully sorry to take an attitude of which you disapprove, Sir Joshua," he said, "but one must speak. Perhaps half a century and more ago such missions were beneficial. In those days the people, as a whole, were not educated, and the

whole thought and life of the community were different. But we live in a new world ; everything has become revolutionised, and methods which might have been good in those days are now obsolete. This is what I want to ask you. Did those missions have any effect on the life of the town ? Did they alter the thinking of the town ? During my first visit to this house you told me that Cliviger had ceased being a godly town, and was now drifting to godlessness and paganism. You said that the industrial life of the community—and, mind you, the industrial life of a community is closely linked with its religious life—was seething with discontent. You said that Bolshevism was rampant, and that, in many ways, it seemed near revolution. You also told me that places of worship were becoming emptier and emptier, and that, with you, it was a problem whether organised Christianity would not cease to exist in a few years. Did your missions affect this state of things ? Look here, supposing you hold another mission such as was advocated this afternoon ; supposing you obtain the services of this converted Yorkshire stonemason, will he have any influence on your son and daughter and thousands of other educated young men and women like them ? I have not a word to say against this converted stonemason : from what I heard this afternoon he is a good, earnest man. I gathered also that his addresses are redolent of the wit and humour of his county ; but it was admitted also that he knew nothing of Biblical criticism, that he was unaware of the thoughts which were seething in millions of minds. Is such a man likely to attract and impress such young men and women as your son and daughter ? And what is more, would he be likely to grip the interest of the thousands who throng your streets ? Sir Joshua, it has become common talk with a large section of the community that if you go to church you must leave your intelligence outside the door. I do not believe in that, but I must admit that Lancashire people are hard-headed, and, in a way, clever. A great mass of them



possess the rudiments of education, too, and they are quick to see fallacy in an argument. Would this converted Yorkshire stonemason be likely to reach these people? Remember, coarse witticisms and illogical statements do not, as the Americans say, cut any ice in these days. Would, I repeat, such a mission as has been advocated affect the town for good?"

Sir Joshua looked grave. Perhaps he had not considered this side of the question. "But ought not something to be done?" he asked almost angrily. "Would you allow things to drift as they are drifting now?"

"Yes, something ought to be done. God knows something ought to be done," replied Paul earnestly.

"But what?" asked Sir Joshua.

Paul was silent. He remembered the conversation which had just taken place between Judith and himself, and thought, too, how helpless he was.

"I don't know," he said presently. "I thought when I came to Cliviger a few months ago that I had an answer to such a question as you have just asked, but now I am afraid I haven't. . . . Sir Joshua!" he cried out after another long silence, "do not mistake me! I believe in every word I have said in Ebenezer pulpit. I believe in Christ, and more than believe in Him. I am *sure* of Him. I am sure of this, too. Christianity is the greatest thing in the world."

His eyes flashed as he spoke, and for a moment he seemed to have forgotten Sir Joshua's presence. "Yes," he went on, "*Christianity is the greatest thing in the world!* It is the answer to every question; it is the solution of every difficulty. Of that I am convinced. I am more sure of it than ever before. . . . *But I lack something!* We all of us lack something. For the first time since I came to Cliviger I begin to have doubts."

"Doubts of what?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Whether I ought to have come here. I am wondering whether it is not my duty to resign the church right away."

"Great heavens, don't say that!" gasped the other.  
"You don't realise what you are saying."

"I do realise it," replied Paul, "and it is because I realise it that I cannot help speaking. Don't mistake me, Sir Joshua. I am glad, in many ways, that I came here. My work in Cliviger has brought me face to face with facts of which I was largely ignorant. I knew nothing of the life of such towns as this. I was brought up in a quiet country home, and when afterwards I went on to Oxford, I lived in an atmosphere of ideas. Scholarship seemed to me the only thing worth striving after, and when at length, after much struggling and fighting, I became sure of Christ, and went to a theological college, I was still in ignorance of the real work of a minister. But since I came here my eyes have been opened as they were never opened before. I have learnt to look at things through the eyes of the thousands of the toiling, moiling masses which are all around us, and the revelation has been wonderful. But I have been a comparative failure."

"Failure! You a failure!" cried Sir Joshua. "You are the greatest success that has been in Cliviger during the last half a century."

"I have been a comparative failure," repeated the young man. "For while Jesus Christ has been real to me, and while I am sure that He is the solution of every difficulty of this age, I have been unable to make Him real to others."

The young man spoke so earnestly and so humbly that hard-headed and unemotional as Sir Joshua was, he felt the tears starting to his eyes.

"Nay, nay, lad," he said, "you have not been a failure, and you have made Christ real to others. As for your talk about resigning, it would be nothing short of a crime."

"You believe that?" cried Paul anxiously.

"I am sure of it," replied Sir Joshua, "and, in spite of everything I said just now, the whole town would say so too."

Paul did not reply to this, instead he started to his feet and began pacing up and down the room. "Great God!" he cried presently, like a man in a passion, "just think of it! There are in England to-day getting on for forty thousand ministers of all denominations and churches who are set apart for the work of Christ's ministry, besides nearly as large a number of lay preachers of various sorts; and yet we are told that England is drifting to paganism! Just think of it! It is one of the ghastliest tragedies in the world! Something like forty thousand men set apart to preach Christ's gospel! And yet what are we after all? Don't the great mass of us utter a time-worn shibboleth out of which all meaning is gone? During the month I spent in Cornwall before coming here I went to dozens of churches and chapels in the county, and I listened to ministers, established and non-established. I went to every religious meeting within miles of my old home. I had promised to come here, promised to be the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, and I wanted to prepare the way for my work. And what did I hear? I heard what seems to me now like so many echoes. There was no great overwhelming reality in anything! In the main it was platitudes, platitudes, platitudes. Great heavens! Supposing there were forty thousand Jesus Christs in England to-day! Would the country be drifting to godlessness and heathenism? Or supposing there were even forty thousand Apostle Pauls. What would be the result? . . . Good night, Sir Joshua," and without another word Paul left the house.

When Paul returned to his lodging that night he found a letter which had come by the last post. It was from Lucy Penhale, and informed him that she had just become engaged to a neighbouring farmer and expected to be married before Christmas.

Paul sat in silence a long time after he had read it. "Of course, it can make no difference to me now," he reflected, "but I *am* glad!"

It had been a great day.

FOR the next few days nothing out of the ordinary took place in Paul's life. Although he had expressed doubts to Sir Joshua as to whether he ought not to resign his position in the Ebenezer Church, he took no steps in that direction. Rather, he devoted himself, if possible, more than ever assiduously and energetically to his duties. Afternoon after afternoon he visited the Ebenezer people, and there was not a single organisation in the church in which he did not take an active interest.

On the whole, too, he seemed to be gladly received everywhere. It was true that he found himself much criticised because of what he had said to Mr. Brighthouse—for this was soon known, together with many embellishments, to most of the chapel-going people of the town—but his frank, boyish ways and gracious personality won for him a welcome everywhere. He found, too, that many sympathised with the attitude he had taken with regard to the United Mission.

"The days have gone for that kind of thing, Mester Tregaskis," more than one said to him. "I've bin to mony of them, and, in the main, they are nowt but gas."

"Still, something ought to be done," Paul had replied, remembering Sir Joshua's statement.

"Aye, summat ought to be done. There is no doubt we are in a bad way. But what, Mester Tregaskis?"

More than a week passed, and he heard not a word further from Mr. Bolsover. He could not understand this, because, as it seemed to him, no responsible lawyer could say what Mr. Bolsover had said, and then take no further action. Still, he did not trouble himself. Naturally he kept his own counsel, and had never uttered a word concerning the purport of the lawyer's visit; neither was he intensely interested. Of course, after what John Tregaskis had told him months before, he

could not help being curious to know who his real father and mother were. Nevertheless, he could not, in spite of the revelations made, believe that the wealthy aristocrat of whom he had heard was the father of whom he had dreamed.

A little more than a week after Mr. Bolsover's visit, however, something happened. A letter came to him from his father which told him that the lawyer had been active.

*Dear Paul, it ran :*

*You will, of course, remember the conversation we had when you were home last. You asked your mother and me whether we were your real parents or not, and we, although it was very hard for us to do so, told you what we knew. It is about this that I am writing, for this, as you will see, is an extra letter.*

*A man whom I had never seen before, and who is evidently a stranger to these parts, paid me a visit this morning. A hawk-eyed man he was whom I did not much take to. All the same, he had a sort of way with him which kind of captivated both your mother and myself. He seemed to be specially interested in you, and asked all sorts of questions about you. He said that happening to be in Cliviger last week-end he went to Ebenezer Chapel, and heard you preach ; and, what is more, was very much impressed by your sermon. As a consequence, being in the neighbourhood where he was told you had been brought up, he felt he would like to see me and know more about you.*

*At first I didn't understand what he meant by all this, but when he began asking questions about your early life and about the time your mother and I lived on the Bodmin Moors, I saw what he was after. He didn't get much out of me, but he was that clever that I am afraid both your mother and I told him more than you would care for a stranger to know. I think I have met several clever men in my life, but I never met one who put questions in the way he did. He reminded me*

of old Lawyer Hendy who, people used to say, could get information out of a spar stone. In fact, your mother, as I told her afterwards, nearly made a fool of herself.

As you will remember when we were talking about the matter together, you asked mother if she had kept any of the fine clothes in which you were wrapped when we found you that Christmas Eve, particularly the garment with the three letters P. S. E. on it, together with a kind of smudge over the letters which we could not make out. You will remember, too, that your mother told you that she had lost it. Well, that was not exactly true. After you had gone she started to hunt up a lot of the things you had worn when you were a baby, and presently she came across that very garment. It was, as she told you, much worn, but the part of it where the three letters were was, as you might say, quite good. Anyhow, when the man asked questions about it (what his name was I don't know, and I couldn't find out) your mother not only told him about it, but actually showed it to him.

He didn't make any remarks about it, but I saw that he was very much interested, and seemed to become more anxious than ever to know everything about you. Naturally I asked him to tell us why he wanted to know these things, but we could get nothing out of him, and when he left we were no wiser than when he came as to who he was. Of course your mother and I have been talking a great deal about it, and we can't help wondering whether he knew who your real father and mother were. Anyhow, Paul, my dear, I thought I ought to tell you what had taken place; and although, as you know, I am very bad at telling things on paper, I have done my best. The man who came was not what I should call a real gentleman, but from the way he talked I should think he had plenty of money to spend; so it may be that a change will soon come in your life, and you will find yourself the son of rich people. But don't let that make any difference to you. Money

*isn't everything as far as real life is concerned, and I am sure you will remember that you were called of God to preach the Gospel.*

*I hope that things are going well with you in the chapel, and that you have many conversions. I hope, too, that day by day you will realise the promise made in the scriptures, "He shall make His ministers a flame of fire."*

*Both your mother and I send our dearest love.*

*Your affectionate father (for such I shall always consider myself),*

*John Tregaskis.*

This letter, as may be imagined, made Paul very thoughtful. There could be no doubt about it, Mr. Bolsover still took an active interest in him, and had sent this man, whoever he might be, to make inquiries about him. Nevertheless he could not help feeling disappointed. There was something cold and calculating about this method of procedure. If he were the son of the client of whom Mr. Bolsover spoke that client ought, after what Mr. Bolsover had doubtless told him, to rush to Cliviger and discover for himself whether he was really his son or not. He was sure that was what John Tregaskis would have done under similar circumstances, but instead of that a paid emissary, for such the man undoubtedly was, had been sent to the only father he had ever known to find out the truth.

To Paul, warm-hearted and impulsive as he was, this seemed an unnatural course of procedure, and he could not help feeling depressed, although even yet, so he frequently told himself, he had no feeling stronger than curiosity as to who he really was. But this was not altogether true. Although Paul loved John Tregaskis and his wife very dearly, he had, as we have said, for years felt that they were not his real father and mother. There was, in a way he could not describe, an invisible barrier between them. They lived in different worlds, and spoke a different language. More

than this, Paul longed for parents with whom he had real affinity, and to whom he could go in times of doubt and difficulty. This was doubtless why he had questioned John Tregaskis and his wife many months before, and thus, although he told himself that he had no stronger feeling than curiosity about the client of whom the lawyer spoke, it was not true. He wanted, in a way he could not understand, to know the meaning of Mr. Bolsover's story, and, in his heart of hearts, there was a great yearning to know who his real parents were.

Three days later another letter reached him which, while it did not take away from his disappointment, caused him to be excited beyond measure. It was from Mr. Bolsover, and evidently written by the lawyer's own hand. This was what he read :

*Dear Sir,*

*Matters appertaining to my visit to you on the 23rd ultimo having sufficiently developed, I write to say that my client, of whom I spoke to you, will be pleased to receive a visit from you at your earliest convenience. I suggest, therefore, that immediately on receipt of this letter you come to London. If you will send a telegram informing me of the train by which you will travel I will meet you at the London terminus, from which we can proceed, with as little delay as possible, to my client's residence.*

*Yours faithfully,  
Alexander Bolsover.*

Paul angrily threw the letter from him. "Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "The man might be writing about measuring me for a new suit of clothes instead of about going to see my father!"

He started from the breakfast table at which he had been sitting, and began to pace the room.

"*Will be pleased to see me, indeed!*" reflected the young man. "Evidently he has convinced himself, or



the man Bolsover has convinced him, that I am really his son, and now he will be *pleased to see me!* Good heavens! he must for days have known where I lived, and yet—this! Instead of rushing here he has instructed this cold-blooded lawyer to write to me as though it were a lawsuit that was pending.”

He paced the room several times, while indignation shone from his eyes. “Of course I won’t go!” he exclaimed. “Even if I would I couldn’t. It is now Saturday morning, and I am announced to preach at Ebenezer to-morrow. Besides, I promised to go to Cliviger Hall for supper after the service to-morrow night.”

Thereupon he went to the telephone which he had had installed since he came to Cliviger, and rung up the exchange.

“Telegram,” he announced, and when the connection had been made he continued to speak excitedly. “This is the message,” he said, after giving the address. “Impossible to come. Have engagements here to-morrow. Writing. Tregaskis.”

He felt better when he had done this. It seemed to be an outlet for the angry feeling which surged in his heart.

Presently, however, he became more calm, and wondered if he should not have sent a different message. After all, Mr. Bolsover’s client, whom he, Paul, had in spite of himself, been led to believe was probably his father, might not be responsible for the curt letter. Perhaps, acting upon the lawyer’s advice, he had allowed the matter to be managed by his legal advisers rather than by himself. He remembered, too, how, according to Mr. Bolsover, this proud aristocrat had, when he received the letter telling him where his son was, rushed to his wife’s room who was, with difficulty, kept from coming direct to him. Perhaps—perhaps—But no, he could not have done other than he had, whoever were his parents. He must keep his faith with the public, and he would be in the Ebenezer pulpit on the following day.

Presently he was sufficiently calm to turn to the other letters which had arrived by that morning's post. One of these was from the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, who told him that the United Mission discussed at the ministers' fraternal had found such favour with the heads of all the churches in the town that they had decided to proceed with it forthwith, and that a meeting to discuss ways and means would be held on the following Monday night at the church parlour at the back of the Wesley Chapel. The letter also suggested that although Paul had not been in favour of the mission, his presence at the meeting would be welcomed.

"Yes, I'll go," reflected the young man presently. "Sir Joshua seems to think that I have acted in a not altogether brotherly way while I have been in the town, and I will do my best to remove such an impression."

A little later he was reading Mr. Bolsover's letter again, and, in spite of everything, he found himself to be much excited. He remembered that the lawyer had told him about an old historic house and widespreading parklands. It was evident also that, in spite of his own doubts about the matter, the lawyer had been led to the conclusion that he was the son of this historic house. He did not yet know in what part of the country it was situated, but he felt sure that it was far removed from the manufacturing district of Lancashire in which he now lived; and Paul, who was a beauty lover, had a great longing to get away from the smoke-begrimed town of Cliviger.

Seizing his diary, he examined it eagerly. Yes, he could be free for nearly the whole of the following week, and, calling to mind that he had, in his telegram, promised Mr. Bolsover to write, he took pen and paper and told the lawyer that unless he heard from him to the contrary, he would be in London soon after noon on the following Tuesday.

Only one thing of outstanding importance took place during the following week-end. Although Paul had refused to obey Mr. Bolsover's behest, he was constantly

thinking of the visit he had paid him, and of the information he had imparted. Especially did he remember the lawyer's words concerning his own future. "If my suspicions are true," he had said, "you will soon have to leave this town; you will cease to be the minister of Ebenezer Chapel; your present occupation will have no interest for you, and in a few months you will remember this region only as you might remember a nightmare."

Paul had rebelled against this at the time, yet probably it influenced the sermon he preached in Ebenezer Chapel on the following Sunday night. In the course of that sermon he had referred to his feeling that he regarded himself as a failure.

"Why is it so?" he asked. "I do not know, but I have failed to influence the town as I had hoped and expected, and I have come to the conclusion that it is because I lack something, although I do not yet know what it is. It is not because I have any doubts about the gospel I have preached to you. I am as certain of Christ as ever I was; certain, too, that He is the only solution of your difficulties; the only cure for whatever troubles you may have, industrial or personal, certain that He is the Life of the world. But, seemingly, my words have no effect on you; I might be telling you an idle tale. You do not accept the Christ I preach. The town, as a whole, goes on as if Christ did not exist. Unless I am altogether wrongly informed, you are, as a town, on the brink of an industrial revolution. Unless I am wrongly informed, too, the godlessness of the town does not decrease, while, from what I can gather, the churches are having less and less influence. Why is it? I am not thinking of others now, I am thinking of myself. I feel I am a failure, and, as a consequence, I have been wondering whether it is not my duty to place my resignation in the hands of the deacons forthwith.

"I do not regard the ministry as a profession. If I have not been *called of God* to preach, and to give up

my whole life to the work of the ministry, then I am a mere echo and not a living voice at all. To a real minister it is not enough to uphold a respectable institution.

"A few days ago I had a letter from my father in Cornwall, and he told me of his hope that I was a fulfilment of those great words in the Epistle to the Hebrews 'that God would make His ministers a flame of fire.' If I am not that," and his voice resounded through the great church, "it seems to me that I am nothing, and, certainly, have no right to occupy the position I do."

As it happened there was a larger congregation than usual at Ebenezer that night. Although November had come, the winter weather had not yet set in; and the skies being comparatively clear, a larger number of people than usual found themselves in the Ebenezer pews.

"What more can you want than you've got, Mr. Tregaskis?" a number of people asked him when the service was over. "Why, we've had a grand congregation! *Just grand!* If you were to leave Ebenezer it would be nothing short of a calamity."

"Aye," others protested, "but you mustn't expect to convert the town in a day."

"I've just been talking to George Chadwick, and 'e says there has been a bigger collection to-night than there has been since the first month you were here," another said.

"Look here, Mr. Tregaskis," protested old Amos Whalebone, "the Lord sent you here in answer to prayer, so don't talk about leaving us."

Then Dodgeon, the church secretary, who had been listening eagerly, felt called upon to speak. "I have always said, Mr. Tregaskis, that your coming to the town was not arranged on business lines. I said as much to Sir Joshua. I reminded him that when you were invited, the matter of salary was not mentioned, and that it wasn't right. As a consequence, we have just gone on paying you the same stipend as we paid Mr.

Ackroyd ; and, seeing that the income of the church is nearly doubled, it isn't fair. Isn't that what's troubling you, Mr. Tregaskis ? ”

“ Great heavens, no ! ” Paul could not help exclaiming. “ If I had been a married man with a large family I might have mentioned it, but I am a single man, and my wants are few. It isn't that at all. This is what is bothering me. I am not making Christ real to the people.”

“ How do you know you are not ? ” asked one of the deacons.

“ Because if I were they would come to Him, and there would be a fulfilment of His own words, ‘ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. ’ ”

“ But mind, you musn't think of leaving us, Mr. Tregaskis. You won't, will you ? ” and turning, Paul saw a young fellow whose father, Jim Pilling by name, had complained to him that although he had belonged to Ebenezer all his life, he couldn't get his children to come.

“ Why ? ” asked Paul, looking at the young fellow steadily. “ What does my being at Ebenezer mean to you ? ”

“ I don't know,” replied young Jim Pilling. “ I only know that Ebenezer means something different to me now from what it did before you came, and I am not the only one that says so.”

Paul's eyes lit up with gladness. At least here was something that *suggested* what he had hoped for, even although it was only a suggestion.

“ I will promise this, Jim,” Paul said presently. “ If I can see a general movement among young fellows like you coming to me, and telling me that I have led them to Christ, I shall not think of leaving.”

“ Well, Tregaskis,” said Mark Pendle when Paul, according to his promise, arrived at Cliviger Hall that night. “ I hear you have been giving the Ebenezer people a startler ? ”

“ In what way ? ” asked Paul.

“ I hear you have been talking about leaving the church,” replied the young man. “ But you mustn’t.”

“ How do you know what I have been saying at Ebenezer to-night ? ” asked Paul. “ You were not there.”

“ No, I know, but news travels fast. Besides, I happened to be in the town to-night, and several people spoke to me about it. It won’t do, my dear fellow. You mustn’t leave us.”

“ Look here, Mark,” cried Paul, laying his hand upon the young man’s shoulder, for by this time a strong friendship existed between them. “ You tell me I mustn’t leave Ebenezer ; will you also tell me what effect my work at Ebenezer has had upon fellows like yourself ? ”

“ Apparently not much,” was Mark’s answer. “ All the same, I am sure it would be a calamity if you left.”

“ Why ? ”

“ Because, in spite of ourselves, you are making hundreds of us think. Your very certainty about things which thousands in the town have been led to regard as idle tales has had its effect. All the same——”

“ All the same what ? ” asked Paul as Mark hesitated.

“ It is difficult to find words to express exactly what I mean,” was Mark’s answer. “ But this I do know. *Something* is wanting, and that something is vital. I will speak plainly, Tregaskis ; perhaps you imagine because so many thousands of us have given up going to church and chapel that we have given up thinking about what church and chapel stands for. It isn’t that at all. The devil of it is—forgive my language, old chap, but I am downright in earnest—the parsons in Cliviger, in the main, seem only a set of parrots who only go on repeating something that they have learnt. In the main, church-going means little more than going through a certain form of service ; listening to a lot of things which no intelligent man can believe, and taking

up a collection. That's why we have got tired of it, and that's why you mustn't leave the town. For you, at any rate, have not been a parrot. You have evidently believed in what you have said, and you have not asked the people to leave their intelligence in the streets. That's why lots of people come to hear you who had practically given up church-going."

"While such fellows as you keep away altogether," retorted Paul.

"I know, but let me tell you this, Tregaskis. While you are better than the main bulk of the others, you lack something. I don't know what it is, but something. Still, you mustn't leave us. It may seem like a mockery for such a fellow as I to tell you so, but I have a feeling that you are on the brink of a discovery; that you are on your way to finding out something which will make all the difference."

Paul gave a quick glance around the room and saw that Sir Joshua and Judith were listening intently to what was being said, and especially did he notice the look in Judith's eyes. Although she said nothing, it was evident that every word that was spoken carried weight with her.

"One thing is certain, Mr. Tregaskis," exclaimed Sir Joshua. "If you were to carry out your threat, and leave the town, the people would think you had committed the unpardonable sin. Isn't that so, Judith?" and the baronet turned towards his daughter as he spoke.

Judith did not reply in words, but Paul knew by her quivering lips how deeply she felt.

"Yes," he said to himself as he made his way back to his lodgings that night, "they were right. In the main, we parsons are little better than a lot of parrots, and as a consequence the churches are getting emptier and emptier. Church work is simply a repetition of something which has been done before, and everywhere the breath of life is lacking. And it is we parsons, of all sorts, who are responsible. Yes, and it is we who are to blame. We have lost the great secret of power."

The next night, after having attended a meeting in one of the vestries of Ebenezer, Paul made his way to the church parlour at the back of the Wesley Chapel. Here he found a number of people from the various churches in the town who had met to make arrangements for the United Mission which they had planned to hold. The gathering was, in the main, made up of the ministers whom he had met at the fraternal, although several lay people were present. As, owing to his previous meeting, he was a little late, he found that several arrangements had been practically made before his coming. For one thing, it had been decided that the mission was not to be held in Ebenezer Chapel as had been the case on previous occasions. He knew, too, by the significant glances which he saw as he entered the room, that the opinions he had expressed had been fully discussed before he came.

It had also been decided that, on the advice of Mr. Crayshaw, Mr. Daniel Priestley, the converted Yorkshire mason, was to be the missionary, and they were, at the time of his entrance, discussing the best means for making the mission widely known.

"We ought, at least, to have five hundred big, bold posters," someone advocated. "For my own part I would have them as big and as bold as they have for football matches, and that sort of thing."

"That will cost a bit of money," was the rejoinder, "and church finances are in a bad way just now."

"I care nowt about that," was the reply. "What we want to do is to get the people, and we mustn't mind spending a bit of money."

Another advocated that a short biography of Daniel Priestley should be written, telling the story of his conversion, and have it broadcast throughout the town.

"We want to arouse interest in the man who is coming as a missionary," exclaimed the brother who had advocated this. "If we could get a couple hundred workers who would each be responsible for delivering a couple hundred of these biographies throughout Cliviger,



we should practically cover the whole town. Hit the people in the eye! that's what I say," urged this brother, "we mustn't stop at sixpence for a job like this."

Paul listened in silence while plan after plan was discussed, and he could not help admitting that a good deal of business acumen was manifested in the arrangements that were made. And yet he could not help being disappointed. As far as he could see, the inwardness of the position was not grasped. It was true that every church in the town was to be called upon to have a week of special prayer meetings prior to the coming of the missionary; but beyond this the arrangements appeared to him as crude, artificial, and mechanical. A public welcome was to be held on the Saturday night previous to the first Sunday of the mission, and it was hoped that a large number would attend. Secretaries were also appointed to take the names and addresses of all converts, who were to be asked to which church they wished to be affiliated; and the ministers of those churches were expected to visit these converts directly the names were given to them.

"Of course we shall be at a disadvantage on this occasion," explained the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, the chairman, when at length the arrangements were practically made. "As you all know, previous missions have been held at Ebenezer Chapel, where two rooms, one on each side of the pulpit, have been used for inquiry rooms, one for males and one for females. At Mount Pisgah, however, there are no such rooms; and although it is the next largest chapel to Ebenezer, it is not so convenient from that point of view. Still, as it has been stated earlier in this meeting, our Brother Tregaskis, whom I am glad to see present to-night, although he has taken no part in the discussion, was not in favour of the mission being held there. As a consequence we had to do—well, the best we could. Perhaps," added the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, "although Brother Tregaskis has not attended any of our other

meetings, he will say a few words expressing his views on the great project we have in hand. I am sure," he added, "that we have Brother Tregaskis's best wishes."

Paul felt in a dilemma. He was anxious not to say a word or to do anything that might hinder any good that he hoped might be done; and yet, although he had thought long and anxiously about the matter, he could not give his approval to what the people had in their minds. During the last few days he had received a good deal of information about Mr. Daniel Priestley, the missionary, and, while he was undoubtedly a good, earnest man, he could not help feeling that his endeavours would end in failure. For one thing, Paul had scholarly instincts, and had followed the trend of the thought of the age with much interest; while Mr. Daniel Priestley, on the other hand, was entirely ignorant. And yet he felt called upon to denounce all biblical criticism, and to speak of certain learned divines as enemies of God. Still, he did the best he could. He said that no one was more anxious that the town should become Christianised than he, and promised to attend every meeting possible, as well as render any help in his power to make the mission a success.

"How can they expect to reach the thousands of hard-headed, sceptical young people of the town by such means?" he could not help thinking, as he made his way back to Mrs. Hemingway's house. "If I understand them, they will either avoid coming to hear this man Priestley, or else they will laugh at him."

And yet he could not help feeling that something ought to be done. He remembered his conversation with Mark Pendle on the previous night, and felt that he himself was powerless to reach the great masses of people who thronged the streets.

Then suddenly all thoughts, even of his work in Cliviger, departed from him. On coming to his lodgings he saw that his study was lit up, and on opening the door he found a stranger there.

The sight of this stranger had a curious effect upon Paul, although there seemed no reason why it should be so. He was evidently a gentleman, but who, at first sight, suggested no particular characteristics. And yet Paul felt every nerve in tension as he looked at him, while his heart beat rapidly.

"You are Paul Tregaskis?" said the stranger, after what seemed to Paul a long, tense silence.

"Yes, that is my name."

"I am your father," announced the stranger.

## CHAPTER XIX

## LORD ST. ELWYN

PAUL did not speak; he could not; instead he kept looking at his visitor like one fascinated.

It was, undoubtedly, the most dramatic moment in the young man's life. Although, after Mr. Bolsover's revelations, he had expected to see someone who claimed to be his father, and although he had made up his mind to go to London on the following morning and meet the lawyer who had promised to take him to his father's house, the sight of this man there in his own room; a man, moreover, who claimed the nearest relationship that one man can claim to another, robbed him of his power of speech.

"Won't you sit down?" he managed to say presently.

"Not yet," replied the stranger. "I want to look at you. I—I want to explain. I've startled you, haven't I?"

"Yes, you have," replied Paul. "I think I have expected you for several days, and yet I am not sure. Of course you know of Mr. Bolsover's visit to me, and you will also know that a man was sent to my old home in Cornwall to make inquiries about me; and I wondered why you didn't come yourself. Still, I suppose it's all right!"

Paul felt as though he were in a dream ; everything was different from what he had planned and fancied. Had he been told that he would act as he was acting under such circumstances, he would have laughed incredulously ; yet he did not see what else he could do. This man was a stranger ; it was true he had made a tremendous claim, a claim which shook Paul's life to its very foundations ; yet, while he felt it to be true, his heart, as yet, gave no response. His visitor had not even told him his name, and although he, Paul, was vastly excited, he did not feel like doing any of the things which a long lost son might be expected to do on first meeting his father.

"I have motored all the way from the West of England to-day," said the stranger presently. "When Mr. Bolsover got your telegram on Saturday morning he sent me word that he was coming to see me. He did not arrive until last evening, and he brought not only your telegram, but the letter you had sent him. I—I started early this morning. My wife—your mother," he corrected, "would have come too, but she was not strong enough."

Evidently the stranger was as excited as Paul. He tried to speak calmly, but it was easy to see by his quivering lips and his trembling hands that he was much wrought upon.

"You will forgive me for acting like this," said Paul presently. "Although Mr. Bolsover led me to expect—well, I hardly know what he did lead me to expect—Anyhow, when I returned here to-night nothing was further from my mind than—this. You see, everything is strange to me. I don't even know your name, and, of course, I have never seen you before."

By this time Paul had become sufficiently calm to appraise the man who claimed to be his father. He was tall, almost as tall as Paul himself, and although he judged him to be fast approaching sixty years of age, he looked young and strong and vigorous. His eyes had the look of youth, too, and although his hair was

iron-grey, his face, being cleanly shaven, he gave few evidences of being past his prime.

"Paul," cried the man presently. "Have you no welcome for me? Don't you—don't you feel that I am your father? I have travelled a long distance to come to you—my son."

Doubtless a young Frenchman, under similar circumstances, would have thrown himself on the older man's neck and expressed the love of a son, but we English are a phlegmatic race, and do not express our feelings easily. And Paul was English all compact. Thus, whatever his desires, he still continued to look at his visitor critically.

"I hardly know what I feel," replied the young man. "As I said, I don't even know your name, and I don't know where you came from."

"But surely Mr. Bolsover told you—told you that——"

"He told me as much as he dared. He said that, acting on your instructions, he had to take every precaution against mistakes. Thus, you see, I am in entire ignorance."

"Oh yes, I remember now. But we will soon put that right. I am called St. Elwyn. Thus, of course, you are Paul St. Elwyn."

"St. Elwyn?" repeated the young man.

"Yes, I am Lord St. Elwyn. It is a well known West-country name, and your family has lived at St. Elwyn Hall for hundreds of years."

"St. Elwyn Hall?" repeated Paul. "Where is it?"

"Don't you know? I thought everyone in the West of England knew it. It is not many miles south of the Tamar, and St. Elwyn is one of our oldest Cornish names. Of course," he went on, "I had to tell Bolsover to take every precaution. I could scarcely do otherwise, could I? You see, it is very important; a mistake under such circumstances might lead to an endless muddle. But you need not fear, my son; everything has been thoroughly investigated, and there

is not a shadow of a doubt that you are Paul Pendragon St. Elwyn, my elder son, who was stolen from me by a gipsy vagrant getting on for thirty years ago. But I needn't go into that, Bolsover explained that to you thoroughly, didn't he ? ”

“ Yoursay I am your *elder* son,” replied Paul, ignoring the question. “ Have I brothers and sisters ? ”

“ You have two sisters and one brother. My younger son, your brother,” he added, “ is very delicate. He has been a great anxiety to us.”

“ Why ? ”

“ Because of his delicate health. Lady St. Elwyn—that is your mother—and myself have been afraid we could not rear him. In which case—— But that is all over now ; I have found you.”

Paul continued to listen like a man in a dream. Even yet there seemed no reality in what he was hearing. It was, to him, like some romance invented by someone who wanted to tell a story. There seemed no foundation in fact anywhere.

And yet the man with whom he still stood face to face was tremendously in earnest. More than that, there was something appealing, beseeching in his eyes ; something that affected him in spite of himself.

“ I haven't told your brother and sisters even yet,” Lord St. Elwyn went on, “ at least, I haven't told them all the truth. Of course they know the story of how you became lost to us, and they have an idea that I am on the way to your discovery ; but they know no details. Your mother and I thought it best that they shouldn't. But I am sure of you now that I have seen you. You—you are a scholar and a gentleman, and I am wanting to take you to my heart, my son. Your mother, too, wants—— But I had forgotten. I have a letter here which she asked me to give you.”

Paul almost snatched the letter from his father's hand. For the first time since he had come he felt the reality of the situation. Up to now everything had seemed detached and far away, but the mention of his

mother's letter created a new atmosphere, and filled him with a great longing.

*Paul, my darling, he read.*

*I haven't seen you since you were a baby ; but you have never been out of my mind all these long years. I am longing to see you, hungering for you. Ever since I caught sight of your little nightdress which your foster mother has kept through all these years, and which was brought to me only a few days ago, I have had no doubts about you. Come to me, my darling boy. Come at once to your*  
*Mother.*

Paul felt the tears start to his eyes as he read. This was what, in spite of everything, he had been longing for, hoping for, ever since Mr. Bolsover's visit. His father even yet was unreal to him, and he could not think of him save as a proud aristocrat who, in spite of everything, acted coldly and in a calculating way. As he thought of it afterwards, he admitted that Lord St. Elwyn's conduct was perhaps natural, and, under the circumstances, necessary. As Mr. Bolsover had hinted, he had been the victim of more than one hoax since his childhood. Moreover, being a proud man, he was anxious not to make further mistakes. All the same, his father's visit left him cold. He had aroused no affection, and he had felt towards him almost as he might feel towards a stranger. But the few words written by his mother aroused emotions to which, up to now, he had been a stranger. He could see the lovelight in her eyes, feel the throb of her heart, and intuitively knew what she felt towards him. This was no calculating, cold epistle written by a proud lady ; it was the out-pouring of a mother's heart, and his own heart thrilled its recognition, and made him long to see her.

"I haven't read that letter," said Lord St. Elwyn. "Will you let me see it ?" and Paul, without a word, placed it in his hands. "Your mother was sure of you from the first," he said when he had read the letter.

"No sooner had I received that note telling me what you were called, and where you could be found, than she wanted to come to you; and, in spite of my protests, would, if she had been strong enough, travelled here right away. But, of course, I had to take precautions. You will do what she says, won't you?"

"Yes," replied Paul eagerly. "I will be ready to start in half an hour."

For the first time since Paul had seen him Lord St. Elwyn laughed. "I am afraid that is scarcely possible, Paul," he said. "For one thing it is a dark, rainy night, utterly unfit for travel; for another, the chauffeur has driven more than three hundred miles to-day, and we both need a rest; but we will start early in the morning. Meanwhile, perhaps you will give me a whisky and soda, my boy, or a glass of port."

"There is not such a thing in the house," replied Paul. "You see, I am an abstainer."

Lord St. Elwyn looked at his son not only with astonishment, but with dismay. "Great heavens!" he muttered, "I had forgotten!"

Perhaps he realised, for the first time, that his son was reared in a different world from his own, and that he would have difficulty in adapting himself to the new modes of life in which he would be called upon to live.

"I am afraid, too," went on Paul, "that it will be impossible for me to get what you want at this time of night. It is eleven o'clock," he added, looking at his watch, "but Mrs. Hemingway has not yet gone to bed, I will ask her to bring you a cup of tea."

"Oh, no! for heaven's sake no!" replied the other quickly, "I shall manage all right. By the way, I am staying at the only decent place which I am told exists in this town, the Holly Bush Hotel, and a car, of some sort, is to be sent for me at midnight. Will that be all right? I wanted to have a good long chat with you," he added.

"Certainly it will be all right. I seldom go to bed until after midnight, and often sit up reading until two and three in the morning."



Lord St. Elwyn threw himself into the armchair which Paul had indicated, and again looked scrutinisingly at his son.

"He is a handsome fellow," he reflected, "and is evidently a gentleman. But, my God, I had forgotten! He is not only an abstainer but a dissenting parson! Of course we shall soon put all that sort of thing right, but it will be better to say nothing about it at present."

For the next hour a long conversation took place which I will not attempt to record. Suffice to say that Lord St. Elwyn informed Paul that his eldest sister's name was Helen Louisa, and that she had, two years before, married into an old Devonshire family called Bolventor; that his second sister was a girl of eighteen, called Mary Pendragon, while his brother, Hugh Pendragon Paul St. Elwyn, was only a lad of sixteen who lived at home with his father and mother.

"We had been obliged to regard him as heir to the title and the estates," went on his father presently. "You see, we had almost given up hopes of your being alive. I am sure," he added, "that both your brother and sister will give you a great welcome."

Paul could not help looking grave, and a feeling like fear came into his heart. In spite of all he had heard, the thought of going to a great historic house as the long lost son did not appeal to him. He had been reared in a humble farm-house, and although after he had grown up he had had many doubts about his birth, his mode of life, he knew, was far removed from that of the man who claimed to be his father.

"Did you tell Jeremiah Hobson, the owner of the Holly Bush Hotel, who you were, and why you came to Cliviger?" asked Paul presently.

"No," replied Lord St. Elwyn, and he laughed a little nervously. "I thought I had better not; neither did I suggest our relationship in any way. You see, if any of these newspaper men got an inkling of the truth they would make a great fuss about it. Of course the

whole matter will come to light presently, but, meanwhile, I thought it best to be quiet. I fancy Hobson looks upon me as some sort of Government agent who has come to Cliviger for the purpose of discovering the truth about the industrial unrest of which we hear so much."

Paul heaved a sigh of relief. He did not know why it was, but he almost dreaded the truth becoming known. He remembered that he had been known in the town as Paul Tregaskis, the son of a Cornish farmer; remembered, too, that he was the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, and that he had only that night promised to help in the mission which would shortly be held. Thus, if it became known that he was the eldest son of a West country Peer, and heir to an old title, it would set the town in a ferment of gossip. No, no, it was best, at present, that nothing should be known, and, certainly, he would not breathe a word to anyone as to what he had heard that night.

"To-morrow morning, then, at half-past eight you will be ready to start, my boy," said Lord St. Elwyn, when at midnight a car rolled up to the door. "We shall have a long journey before us, and I dare not be later."

When his father had gone Paul sat for a long time alone, thinking. On the whole he was not sure that he was glad because of the revelations that had been made. In one way he rejoiced at his father's coming, but in another he felt afraid. A new element had come into his life, and new circumstances would have to be considered. Even while he felt proud of his father, proud of his ancient name as well as the position which he held in the West of England, he felt a kind of antagonism towards him; and but for his mother's letter, he was not sure that he would have consented to go with him the next day. Moreover, would not the facts which his father had placed before him tend to alter the whole trend of his life?

He recalled the fact that he was known in the town as "The Man Who Was Sure," but at that moment he

felt sure of nothing. It seemed to him that, like the Ancient Mariner in Coleridge's poem, he was out on a wide, wide sea, without chart or compass. He felt terribly lonely, too, and could have said with the man in the poem :

" So lonely 'twas that God Himself  
Scarce seemed there to be."

Presently, however, he fell on his knees and prayed for light and guidance, after which a great calm came into his heart, and he no longer feared the future.

Punctually at half-past eight on the following morning a great Rolls Royce appeared at the door of Mrs. Hemingway's house.

" Quite ready ? " queried Lord St. Elwyn, as he entered the study.

" Yes, quite ready," then turning to Mrs. Hemingway who looked eagerly at his visitor, he said : " I shall be away for a day or two, Mrs. Hemingway, but I will not fail to telegraph you of the time of my arrival back."

Lord St. Elwyn made no remark at this, but a peculiar smile played around his clean-shaven lips. He had already been making plans with regard to Paul's future.

To the young man it was a strange journey, and as he sat in the luxuriously appointed car which moved rapidly up hill and down dale, he seemed more like a man in a dream than one living through experiences which, although new and strange, were real.

" Let her rip," was Lord St. Elwyn's command to the chauffeur when they had left the thickly populated districts of Lancashire and had emerged into quieter roads. " I want to get home as soon as possible."

" Very good, my lord," was the chauffeur's reply as he pressed the accelerator.

And he did let the car rip. The perfect piece of mechanism simply ate up the miles as if by magic, and by a little past noon they had travelled nearly two hundred miles.

" We won't stop anywhere for lunch, if you don't

mind," Lord St. Elwyn said about one o'clock. "I have got some lunch here in the car, and we will eat it *en route*."

"All right," replied Paul, who was as anxious as his father to reach their journey's end, "but I was thinking about the chauffeur. The poor fellow will be faint," he added.

"Oh, he will be all right," laughed the other carelessly. "We shall have to take in some more petrol presently, and he can get a bite then."

It was long past dark, however, when at length the car crossed an antiquated stone bridge, and his father said: "Now we are in Cornwall; in another half an hour we shall be at home."

Paul found himself shivering. He was not cold, but he could not repress the shudder which passed through his body.

"Tired, my boy?"

"No, thank you."

"Feeling strange?"

"Yes, a bit."

"Of course you are, but you will be home soon."

Paul looked out of the window, and saw that the stars were shining in a clear sky; saw, too, the pale crescent of a moon which pierced the darkness of the night in a wonderful way. In Cliviger the skies would be grey; probably it would be raining. Even at night-time, when the mills were not working, a great black mist generally brooded over the huge manufacturing town. But here all was different. He was in a new world in more ways than one.

A few minutes later Paul saw a picturesque cottage from which twinkling lights flickered, and a few moments after they had passed through wide-open gates.

"You are home now, Paul. This is St. Elwyn Park," said its proud owner.

But Paul did not reply, he was too excited. "I did not see any woods," he managed to say a minute later. "Mr. Bolsover told me that I was stolen from some woods near the park gates."

"I instructed the chauffeur not to come in that way," replied Lord St. Elwyn a little sourly. "Those gates are on the other side of the house. There," he added, pointing at some trees through which they saw many twinkling lights, "that's the house, my boy. In three minutes you will be home. Your mother usually goes to bed early, but you will find her waiting for you."

Although they had been travelling fast, the car stopped as if by magic before a great stone portico, and a moment later a huge door opened, and Paul saw a spacious hall flooded with light.

"Welcome home, my boy!" and Paul, excited as he was, could not help noting the quiver in his father's voice. "This way," and he led him up some wide steps. "Are there any preparations you would like to make before seeing your mother?"

"No," said Paul. "I want to go to her at once."

He had some dim remembrances afterwards of ascending a broad, circular stairway; while servants, both men and women, looked at him curiously. But the remembrance was only dim. He knew, however, that his father was by his side holding his arm, while he, with fast beating heart, ascended the stairway.

A few seconds later he found himself at a door which his father opened, while standing just inside was a gracious-looking woman with pale face and bright eyes, who stood awaiting him.

"Is—is this he?" he heard the woman say.

"Yes, this is Paul," replied his father.

## CHAPTER XX

## PAUL'S MOTHER

PAUL, as we have said, was twenty-eight years old, and was, in many respects, a child of his age. He had passed through an ancient university, too, and had mingled freely with the world. He ought, therefore, according to the dictums of many who live in these

post-war days, to be, if not entirely unmoved by the experiences through which he was passing, at least to have acted as though he were. But although in some ways he was a modern young man, he was, in others, old-fashioned. Perhaps that was partly because of his upbringing. The only father and mother he had ever known up to a few hours before, were simple and homely people, and he had caught much of their spirit. More than that, he was, if I may so put it, elemental by nature, and did not try to hide the fact; and although throughout the whole day he had been looking forward to meeting his mother, he was utterly unprepared for the experience.

He felt a quivering hand upon his arm. "Paul, my darling," he heard a voice say. "Don't you know me?" Then before he had time to reply the voice continued: "Come this way, to the light. I can't see you yet!"

Still almost like a man in a dream he went nearer to the middle of the room, while the quivering hand still rested upon his arm. Looking, he saw a pale-faced woman of apparently about fifty years of age; but he took but little notice of her features. He was gazing steadfastly into the dark eyes which looked almost beseechingly at him.

"Paul, my darling, I am your mother," the woman said, "and you are my son. Don't you know me?"

"Yes, I know you."

"You feel that I am your mother?"

"Yes, mother."

Neither of them knew what they were saying, but each felt that it was one of the greatest moments of their lives.

The woman laughed almost hysterically; she seemed to have lost nearly all control over herself. "I should have known you even if your father hadn't told me," she almost sobbed. "You—you are a big man, and yet you don't seem different from the baby I lost so many years ago; and—and you are the very image of your father. Don't you know you are?"

"I think I am like him."

"Like him! Why—haven't you noticed it, Paul?" And she turned for a moment towards her husband.

"Yes, I have noticed it. By gad, I have noticed it!" replied Lord St. Elwyn with a laugh.

"I am your mother," she repeated again, looking hungrily at her son. "Don't you believe it? Don't you love me?"

"I not only believe it; I *know* it," replied the young man. "And I *do* love you."

"Then aren't you going to kiss me? You are my baby boy, and—and I want to hug you!"

Then Paul's reserve, which in spite of himself he had retained, broke down. "Mother!" he exclaimed, as he threw his arms around her, and kissed her like a boy might kiss his first love.

"I have been wild with excitement for days," went on the woman. "I wanted to come to you right away. Oh, I wanted—I don't know what! But you are home now! Thank God! thank God!"

He did not feel at all strange with her as he had felt with his father. Even as they stood there in the room, Lord St. Elwyn seemed detached from him, and he felt as though he had little to do with him. But with his mother all was different, and looking into her eyes again he felt the tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Mother," he exclaimed, "you are very beautiful!"

"Am I, my dear? Oh, I am glad you think so! Kiss me again, my darling."

She looked at him proudly; noted his every feature; rejoiced in his tall, well-knit figure; felt the charm of his personality. This, in spite of the fact that he had been reared among homely people, was not a son of which she need be ashamed. Like Sir Joshua Pendle who, long months before, when he had first seen him, she felt that he looked a gentleman. There was no suggestion of commonness about him; not a hint that he had been reared amidst plebeian surroundings. Yes, not only did her heart go out to him in a burst of

motherly love, but she was proud of him, proud that he was her son.

"Tell me about yourself, my dear. There, sit down beside me here and tell me everything."

"What shall I tell you, mother?"

"Why, everything. Go back to your earliest remembrances: you were a year old when you were stolen from us. Do you remember nothing of those days?"

"Nothing," replied the young man. "All I can call to mind of my early childhood is that I lived on a bleak, wild moor in a lonely farm-house. I remember, too, how the winds used to howl across the moors and around the farm buildings."

"Were you happy as a child, my dear?"

"Yes, I think I was. Both my foster father and mother loved me very dearly, and made much of me."

Then, little by little, she drew from him the story of his life. He told her how at length they moved to another farm where the country-side was more beautiful, and where trees grew in abundance; told her, too, of the school to which he went, and of his successes; told her how at length, by means of scholarships, he went on to Oxford.

"And did you never realise, Paul, that you were not the child of John Tregaskis and his wife?"

"Not until my boyhood was passing away."

"And then?" she asked eagerly.

"Then I realised that I did not feel towards them as other boys seemed to feel towards their parents."

"Your heart was longing for me, wasn't it?" There was yearning in her voice, and a beseeching look in her eyes.

Paul was silent. Even now, sitting alone with his new-found father and mother, he wanted to be loyal to the only father and mother he had ever known until now. Nevertheless, he told them freely of the conversation he had had with John and Eliza Tregaskis, and related the story they had told him concerning the dark night on which he was brought to them.



"Oh, Paul, my darling, you will never know the agony we suffered when we lost you!" she exclaimed, as she looked at him fondly, "or how through the years we longed for you, and tried to find you. You told me just now that I was beautiful, Paul, my dear; but my sorrow at your loss broke down my health, and made me an old woman before my time. I have been practically an invalid for years, but your coming has made me feel young and strong again, and the thought that you are going to live here has destroyed everything dark and sombre."

Paul did not immediately reply to this. In spite of the welcome he had received; in spite, too, of the fact that this gracious woman constantly called him by endearing terms, and kept fondling him as though he were still the baby she had lost long years before, he could not feel that this great house was his home, or that the future of his life was to be associated with scenes such as now surrounded him.

"See," went on his mother, "this is the night-dress you wore when you were brought to John Tregaskis's farm that winter's night. I have had it by me here all the evening, and kept looking at it while I remembered that you were on your way to me." She showed him the little garment as she spoke, or such of it which still remained, and which his foster-mother had kept through the long years. "There are your initials, Paul. P.S.E., and there is our crest above the name."

Paul looked at it curiously. It seemed like some fantastic dream to him that he was once enveloped in this little garment. But he saw what John and Eliza Tregaskis had failed to see. Yes, what they had said was a smudge over the initials he deciphered as a crest; while there was a little blot after the "S" which made the initials read Paul St. Elwyn.

"My father told me last night," he said presently, "that I was called Pendragon St. Elwyn. From what I learnt, too, my sisters and brother also had the name Pendragon given to them?"

"Yes," laughed his mother. "That was Paul's—I mean your father's doing. My name was Pendragon before I was married, and Paul insisted upon giving it to each of the children. It's an old Cornish name, Paul. Don't you like it?"

"Yes, I think I do," he replied, "but it sounds mythical. It reminds one of the days of Jack, the Giant Killer."

"There have been Pendragons in Cornwall ever since Cornwall has been known as a county," replied the woman a little proudly. "I will take you to see my old home some day, Paul. Oh, we are going to have some glorious times together!"

"Do my brother and sisters know I am here?" he could not help asking at length. "I want to see them."

"You remember what I told you last night, Paul," broke in Lord St. Elwyn at this juncture. "As you know, your very existence was unknown to us until a few days ago, and although Bolsover has been at infinite pains to verify everything—and *has* verified everything," he added vehemently—"I felt I could not tell them what we were doing until I had actually seen you."

"You thought I might be a clown?" queried Paul quickly, "or that there might be some mistake?"

"I wanted to see you," persisted his father. "I wanted to hold you by the hand, to be assured of your reality. As I told you last night, your brother and sisters knew your story, but although they may have thought I might be on my way to your discovery, I don't think they regarded you very seriously. You were stolen away before they were born, and thus your very existence is only shadowy to them. I imagine," he added, "that Hugh has never thought of the possibility of anyone but himself inheriting the title and the estates."

Something like pain entered Paul's heart. He realised for the first time, not only the change that was

come into his own life because of his father's revelations, but the fact that his coming must revolutionise his brother's prospects.

"You told me that my elder sister was married?" he managed to say at length.

"Yes. She married Arthur Bolventor; a jolly nice chap he is whom you will be glad to know, and she lives in Devonshire. We will go to their place in a day or two."

"As for Mary and Hugh," broke in Lady St. Elwyn, "they are gone to a dance at the house of a very old friend to-night, and they won't be back until past midnight."

"And they know nothing about me?" Paul asked.

"Nothing more than I have told you of," replied Lord St. Elwyn, "but they shall be told everything on their return. Of course your coming will make a great difference to Hugh, but he will not trouble anything about it; he is too young. Besides, Mary and he will be overwhelmed with joy at the sight of you."

"I wonder?" Paul could not help saying.

Even yet he felt almost like a man in a dream. The night before he had been in the Wesley Church parlour, and had heard the discussion which took place about the United Mission which was to be held in Cliviger; while now he was in the old home of the St. Elwyns, and was claimed to be the son and heir of this old name. It seemed like some fantastical fairy story, and yet, in a way he could not understand, he knew it to be true. His father still seemed detached from him, but his mother, the woman who still held his hand, and called him by all sorts of endearing names, was, somehow, part of his own life. She, at all events, went far to make him sure that this was not a figment of the imagination.

"I am hungry, Mary," broke in Lord St. Elwyn at length, "and Paul has had nothing since breakfast except a bite in the car a few hours ago. He, too, must be nearly starving. I am sure the servants must have

got something in readiness for us, Paul, my son. Shall we go and get it ? ”

“ Need we leave this room ? ” asked the young man. “ I feel as though I want to stay with you, mother. ”

Lady St. Elwyn laughed like a girl. There was something not only in Paul's words, but in the tones in which he uttered them that appealed to her. “ Yes, let us have our first meal together here alone, ” she said, “ and I am going to wait on you, Paul, my dear. I never felt so happy in my life ! ”

A few minutes later, while Lord St. Elwyn conducted Paul to his bedroom—he said he would not allow a servant to do this—a meal had been laid for them in the room which was peculiarly his mother's own, and which the old butler persisted in calling “ 'Er Ladyship's boodwar. ”

“ There, that's the sound of the car ! ” exclaimed Lady St. Elwyn more than an hour later. “ Mary and Hugh will be here in a minute. ”

Paul felt his heart beating rapidly as he heard the car stop outside the main entrance of the house. Even although he had been trying to accustom himself to the thought ever since his father had visited him on the previous night, he could not help feeling excited at the advent of the brother and sister he had never seen, and an anxious feeling came into his heart as he saw Lord St. Elwyn leave the room as if in the act of going to meet them. Presently he heard someone speaking in low excited tones, and some minutes later the door opened and a young girl entered the room.

Paul rose to his feet as she entered, but made no other movement. At that moment he felt like an intruder. The girl came towards him slowly, and apparently with some reluctance, but she looked at him steadily, scrutinisingly, critically.

“ Are you—— ? ”

She stopped suddenly as though she could not finish asking the question which had been born in her mind. “ Father has told us a strange story, ” she went on

impulsively. "Of course we have all heard about the stolen baby," and she laughed a little sceptically, "but—but——"

Lady St. Elwyn was watching her daughter anxiously. Doubtless, too, although she had received her newly-found son with great enthusiasm, she wondered what her other children would say. It was some minutes now since Lord St. Elwyn had left the room, and, as yet, he hadn't returned, neither had Hugh appeared.

"It seems like some fourth-rate melodrama," and again the girl laughed. "Don't you think so?"

"Yes, it does rather."

"Do you believe it?"

"Yes, I believe it."

"Of course it is natural that you should," and the girl continued looking at him almost mockingly. "But it doesn't seem real to me."

"I don't think it would seem real to me if I were in your place," replied Paul. "You needn't believe it unless you wish."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that the story you have doubtless heard must be a strain on anyone's credulity, and, by the look of you, I shouldn't regard you as very credulous." Paul laughed as he spoke; he rather liked this sceptical young lady.

"You don't expect me to welcome you with enthusiasm, do you? You will be disappointed if you do."

"I don't expect you to welcome me at all," replied Paul. "Why should you?"

"But if you are my brother——"

"You can't help your feelings, and I can quite imagine that you regard the story which doubtless Lord St. Elwyn has just told you as a cock-and-bull affair not worthy of your credence. I shall not be in the least offended if you do."

Again she looked at Paul attentively. Her father had just told her and Hugh how and where he had found his long-lost son. Told her, too, that he was the

minister of Ebenezer Chapel in a dirty, manufacturing Lancashire town called Cliviger, and she had, as a consequence, pictured a kind of Mr. Stiggins, who was shabbily dressed in ill-made clothes, and spoke with a kind of whine. Therefore, when she saw a tall, handsome young fellow who knew the value of a good tailor, and who in no way suggested the kind of man she had conjured up, she was, to say the least of it, nonplussed. Besides, he seemed to be perfectly indifferent as to whether she regarded him as her brother or not, and did not seem in the least anxious to make a good impression.

"I can't for the life of me think of you as a brother," she blurted out presently.

"Why should you?" asked Paul. "Whether I am or not is another matter, but there seems to me no reason why you should pretend what you don't feel. So, if you are agreed, let's forget all that."

"Then how am I to regard you?"

"Simply as a visitor to the house. You are Miss Mary Pendragon St. Elwyn and I am Paul Tregaskis. Let's shake hands, shall we?"

"And you are not going to make any claim that you are the long-lost son, and all that sort of thing?"

"Not I," laughed Paul. "Why should I?"

Again the girl looked at the young man attentively. She noted his handsome appearance, his bright laughing eyes, and, in spite of herself, he attracted her. Mary St. Elwyn, although scarcely eighteen years of age, was more than a little of a coquette, and, under ordinary circumstances, would have been delighted to have captivated this more than ordinarily good-looking young stranger.

"Yes, on that understanding, I will shake hands with you; and, to tell you the truth, I think I rather like you. But there must be no kissing or anything of that sort, brother or no brother."

"I promise I won't kiss you until you ask me to," replied Paul with great solemnity.

Again the girl laughed merrily, but the laugh quickly died on her lips, for at that moment Lord St. Elwyn returned accompanied by a pale, delicate-looking boy.

"This is your brother Paul, Hugh," Lord St. Elwyn said somewhat nervously, leading him close to where Paul stood.

The boy came forward slowly, watching Paul's face furtively as he came. There was a look of antagonism in the new-comer's eyes, and his face suggested a stormy interview prior to his entering the room. There could be no doubt about it, Hugh St. Elwyn did not look upon the man who had been introduced to him as his brother with favour.

He was not altogether a prepossessing-looking youth. As his father had said, he was weak and delicate. But that was not all. Perhaps his ill-health had robbed him of much of the gladness which should belong to boyhood, and gave him a somewhat sulky and peevish appearance. Moreover, he had not had the usual upbringing of boys belonging to his station in life. Owing to his delicate health he had never been away to school, and although a governess who had taught him the rudiments of knowledge as a child, and the tutor who was, at that moment, in the house, and who had done his best to atone for the lack of public school training, Hugh St. Elwyn was rather an unlovable boy. Still, he was intelligent, almost preternaturally so, and as he had doubtless looked upon himself as the only son and heir of Lord St. Elwyn, he naturally regarded Paul with suspicion and dislike.

"Aren't you going to welcome your brother?" asked Lord St. Elwyn, looking not only at his wife's pained face, but at Paul who was evidently summing up his brother.

"I have yet to be convinced, sir, that this stranger is my brother," replied the youth sulkily.

"Hugh!" exclaimed Lady St. Elwyn in an aggrieved voice.

"It's true, mother," persisted the youth. "How do

I know, and how do you know for that matter, that this man is not an adventurer who has made you believe a lot of false credentials ? ”

Paul could not help laughing. He thought he understood his brother perfectly. Added to his natural repugnance at being called upon to welcome a stranger as his brother, he also knew that his coming made a tremendous difference in the boy's life. All the same, he was a little angered at his accusation. He did not like being referred to as an adventurer who had attempted to foist false credentials upon a credulous man ; neither did he feel drawn towards the boy who continued looking at him with suspicion, and with an angry gleam in his eyes.

“ I think I can understand this young gentleman's attitude,” Paul said after a painful silence, “ and, to an extent, I sympathise with him. All the same, I would like him to understand that it was not through any action or wish of mine that I came here. I have manufactured no credentials, false or true, and I have made no claims whatever. Perhaps,” he added, “ it would be better for me to go away at once, and I can promise him that neither by word nor suggestion will I refer to my visit here.”

At this both Lord and Lady St. Elwyn protested vigorously. The latter rushed to Paul and seized his hand, while the former looked at his younger son rebukingly and angrily.

“ Hugh,” exclaimed his father sternly, “ this is not the way to welcome your brother who has been lost to us for so many years, and whom, ever since he has been stolen from us, I have vainly tried to find. Let me tell you, too, that before I visited him yesterday, Mr. Bolsover had taken every possible step to substantiate the fact that he is our son. Moreover, he *has* substantiated it without a shadow of doubt.”

“ That's all very well, sir,” protested the youth, who still spoke sullenly, and in whose eyes anger gleamed. “ This man may be all you say, but you can't expect



Mary, or me, to go into hysterics of joy. From what you have just told me, he is a dissenting parson, and I, for one, am not ready to fall upon the neck of an ignorant ranter, and welcome him as the lawful heir to our name."

"By golly, I won't have that!" and Mary St. Elwyn almost shouted her protest. "Whatever else he is, Hughey, he is not an ignorant ranter. He is a jolly good chap, too, and, on the whole, I like him. You may refuse to shake hands with him, but I have shaken hands with him once already, and I am going to do so again. There is my hand, Paul Tregaskis, and whatever you are, you are a jolly good sport. You can kiss me if you like," she added.

"I would like to all right, for you are a jolly pretty girl," laughed Paul. "But I am dashed if I do! It is not pleasant," he added, "to be accused of playing a low-down game like that which your brother suggested."

"But, Paul, my dear," protested Lady St. Elwyn, "there is not the slightest doubt that you are our boy! You are the very image of your father—a hundred times more like him than Hugh is. You have the St. Elwyn mouth, the St. Elwyn eyes, and you are a St. Elwyn without doubt."

Hugh laughed scornfully. "One might be witnessing a fourth-rate melodrama at a country fair," he said sceptically. "I wonder he hasn't a secret birth-mark by which you can identify him, mother." Evidently Hugh St. Elwyn was determined to fight for the rights he had always regarded as his own to the very last.

Paul could not help feeling pained at the trouble he had doubtless caused. Both his father and mother had accepted the proofs that Mr. Bolsover had produced without a suggestion of doubt. They had greeted him warmly, too, and taken him to their hearts. Even Mary, his sister, had given up her first antagonism, and seemed prepared to accept the situation. But Hugh was different. He saw in the stranger not only an enemy to his own interests, but an interloper, an adventurer, and possibly an impostor.

"I think I understand your younger son's attitude," said Paul after another painful silence, "and I hope I am not one who would willingly destroy the harmony of a home. Master Hugh evidently doesn't believe in me, and, doubtless, he has reason for his unbelief. I, on the other hand, don't wish to foist myself upon him. All the same, I don't want to be regarded as a false claimant and an impostor. For that matter I claim nothing—of what Master Hugh is thinking. But I have come here in good faith; come here, too, because of what you," and he looked at Lord St. Elwyn, "have told me. Since I came, too, I have seen the lady who says she is my mother, and whom I already love as my mother. I tell you this, too," he went on as he turned to Hugh. "I am not going to give up without a struggle, because I instinctively feel that I am your brother. All the same, we will get Mr. Bolsover down here to-morrow, and he shall lay his proofs before you, and if those proofs are not convincing you need never hear of me again. Meanwhile, I am very weary. I did not sleep last night, and I have motored more than three hundred miles to-day. Will you forgive me," and he turned to his mother, "if I go to bed now?"

A few minutes later, Paul was kneeling by his bedside. His mind was bewildered by the scenes through which he had just passed, but in his heart there was a great peace.

## CHAPTER XXI

## PAUL'S TEMPTATION

WHEN Paul woke the next morning he could not, at first, realise where he was. The room was strange, the atmosphere was strange, everything was strange. Then suddenly the truth flashed into his mind. He was in the old home of the St. Elwyns, the home which he had been told was his.

It was nearly dark in the bedroom where he had slept,

although he saw that the morning light was beginning to pierce through the windows. Leaping from his bed he drew up the blinds, and looked across a wide-spreading park. Everything here presented a different aspect from what, for several months, he had been accustomed. In Cliviger his bedroom looked out on grey, barren hills on one side, and on a smoky, dirty, manufacturing town on the other. Here, in spite of the fact that it was winter, everything was clear and bright, while evergreen bushes grew in abundance. Even although everything seemed to him like a dream, it felt like home, a home that appealed to every fibre of his being.

He heard a knock at his bedroom door. "Are you awake, Paul, my son?" It was his father's voice.

"Yes, sir. Won't you come in?"

A second later Lord St. Elwyn appeared. "I couldn't help coming," he laughed. "I thought you were bothered last night, and I wanted to tell you that after you went to bed I rang up Mr. Bolsover at his private house, and, by a lucky chance, I got him. He was just going to bed, but the lines were clear and I could hear him plainly. He is catching the first train here this morning," he added. "He will be here early in the afternoon."

"Was there any need of such a hurry?" asked Paul.

"Perhaps there wasn't, but your mother insisted. Of course she is very fond of Hugh, and she didn't want a shadow of doubt to remain. She is longing to see you, too. Won't you come to her right away?"

He found Lady St. Elwyn sitting up in bed. Evidently she was much excited. Her eyes shone with an unnatural brightness, and her hands were trembling. "Forgive me for sending for you so early, Paul," she cried, "but I could not help myself. I did not sleep for hours, and when I woke this morning the first thought that came to me was that you were near by. But I wanted to make sure. Did you sleep well, my dear?"

Paul never forgot that morning's experience. It was

something entirely new to him. He realised, as he had never realised before, what a mother's love meant, and what it was to have a home in which he rejoiced. As the day went on, too, he became more and more accustomed to his surroundings. It was true Hugh still continued to treat him coldly, but Mary's greeting was so frank, so utterly what he liked, that it almost atoned for his brother's evident dislike. Indeed, but for his own wish, it would have been made known before the morning was over that he was the child who had been stolen long years before.

"At least, let us wait until Mr. Bolsover has been here before anything is made known," he had insisted. "Up to now everyone regards me as a stranger from Lancashire who is here on a visit. Let that belief continue. Perhaps after Mr. Bolsover has been here, and if he succeeds in convincing Hugh— Anyhow, let us wait until he comes."

Lady St. Elwyn strongly protested against this. Motherlike, she wanted to tell all and sundry of her new-found joy, but she yielded to Paul's entreaties; and, as a consequence, the morning passed away without anything becoming known or even suspected.

Early in the afternoon Mr. Bolsover arrived. Lord St. Elwyn being his most important client, he was anxious to do everything in his power to serve him; and, having caught the earliest possible train, he had reached St. Elwyn long before night. He came, too, armed with the results of the investigations he had been making, and was fully prepared to assert his absolute certainty that Paul was really the child whose loss Lord and Lady St. Elwyn had mourned long years before.

They were alone together in the library of the old house when he had said this. None but the members of the family, with the exception of the lawyer, being present. Mr. Bolsover had been told of Hugh's scepticism, and had used the evidence he had gathered to convince the unbelieving boy.

"Am I to understand then," said Hugh with a sullen

gleam in his eyes, "that you are absolutely convinced that this man who has always been called Paul Tregaskis is my brother?"

"Absolutely," replied the lawyer.

"Are you prepared to assert," persisted the youth, "that you regard your so-called proofs as conclusive?"

"I am," replied the lawyer. "I am sure, too, that if the case were brought before any judge or jury in the land they would say what I have said."

"For heaven's sake, don't talk about judges and juries!" exclaimed Lord St. Elwyn almost sharply.

"This is not a question for judges or juries, it is simply a matter of straightforward evidence."

"It seems to me," persisted Hugh sulkily, "that what you call evidence is not evidence at all. At any rate, it isn't proof. How do you know that this man here," and he nodded towards Paul, "is the child who was stolen away from our old nurse? She is an old woman now, but she is as clear-headed as ever she was. She is in the house, too, and yet this man will not let her come and say what she thinks."

"I will admit," said the lawyer presently, "that the case would be more complete if we could find the vagrant who stole the child, and left him at the house of the man, John Tregaskis. If we could do this, and if John Tregaskis would state on oath that Mr. Paul Tregaskis was the child who was brought to him, there wouldn't be a link missing."

"Yes," cried Hugh triumphantly, "but you declare that you cannot find this vagrant. You have been trying to find him for nearly thirty years in vain, and yet after all this time, on the flimsiest of evidence, you expect me to acknowledge this man as my brother? Well, I won't do it."

"I regard the garment which Lady St. Elwyn declares her baby boy wore, and which the baby deposited at John Tregaskis's house, wore, as conclusive," exclaimed Mr. Bolsover.

"How do you know it is the same child?" persisted Hugh.

"Because Paul is the image of his father," replied Lady St. Elwyn, who for some time had, with difficulty, refrained from speaking. "Personally, I have not a shadow of doubt. Indeed, I am sure. I have seen proofs which only a mother could see.—Yes, Paul, you were about to speak, my dear. What is it?"

"I am sorry to intervene," replied Paul, "and yet, in a way, I am anxious to do so. As you may imagine, it is no fun for me to have to listen to this conversation, and, in spite of everything, I feel in a false position. I have made no claim, and, as I said last night, I am willing to go away and be silent about the whole matter until Hugh is absolutely convinced. What would convince you?" he added, turning to the angry boy.

"Get hold of the poacher!" cried Hugh triumphantly. "Let him swear that he chloroformed and nearly killed old Dorcas Rickard: that he afterwards spirited the kid away, and finally deposited it at this man Tregaskis's house. Let him swear that, I say, even although his confession would mean several years in quod. Then let John Tregaskis swear that this man is the same kid that was brought to him, and I'll be convinced; but nothing short of that will satisfy me."

He spoke almost like a man of mature mind, and it was evident that since the previous night he had thought much about the matter. Doubtless, too, he saw what Mr. Bolsover claimed for Paul meant to him. He would no longer be the only son and heir of Lord St. Elwyn, but simply a younger brother who would have to be content with a younger brother's portion. More than that, he was more than ordinarily clever, and saw the weak places in the lawyer's statements.

"There is no need of that," cried Lady St. Elwyn. "I know—and I do not speak lightly—I *know* that Paul here is my first-born child. Yes, I see you laugh, Hugh, but I *know* it. I said just now that there were proofs such as only a mother could recognise. But Dorcas Rickard also knows something of what I know, so let Dorcas be called, and let her look at Paul's face, and

at the marks at the back of his neck, and let her say whether he is not my boy. Send for her at once," and her voice rose almost to a scream.

"No," asserted Paul, "I will not have that. At least I have a right to say so much, and I will not allow my identity to depend on marks which only my mother and the nurse know of. Hugh has declared that he will be satisfied only on certain conditions. Well, those conditions shall be complied with."

"But how can they be complied with, my boy?" cried Lord St. Elwyn. "I have, as Hugh has declared, been trying to trace that vagrant ever since you were stolen, but in vain. How, then, can you find him now?"

"I *will* find him, anyhow," protested Paul. "I have, as you know, up to now done nothing. There was no reason why I should, but now I owe it to my mother to act, and I will act to some purpose, too."

There was nothing boastful about his way of speaking, but all knew, by the look in his eyes, that Paul had made up his mind, and all felt, whatever might be the truth, that he was transparently honest and sincere. Especially did he evoke his sister Mary's admiration.

"By Jove, Paul," she exclaimed, going to his side, "whatever else you are, you are a brick, and I jolly well hope that you *are* my brother! For that matter, I feel sure you are."

"So do I, Mary," he said, taking her outstretched hand; "but Hugh doesn't, and as he is the one most affected I want to satisfy him."

"Yes," protested Hugh, into whose heart a kindlier feeling was coming for the stranger, "but what is to happen in the meanwhile?"

"Nothing need happen," replied Paul. "To-day is Wednesday, and to-morrow I will return to Cliviger and go on with my work."

"You mean, then——" began the boy excitedly.

"I mean that my coming here need make no difference. No one suspects who I am, and my going away in silence will arouse no suspicions."

"I think," exclaimed Mr. Bolsover in his best legal manner, "that this is altogether unnecessary. Even without what Lady St. Elwyn has said, there is sufficient evidence to prove that you are Paul St. Elwyn, his lordship's rightful heir, and further evidence is a matter of supererogation."

"Nevertheless, Hugh shall be satisfied," exclaimed the young man, "and I will do as I said."

"But I cannot allow you to go, Paul!" exclaimed Lady St. Elwyn. "You must not, my dear, you simply must not!"

"We will talk about this later," said Lord St. Elwyn. "Of course, what you say, Paul, is absurd, and, in any case, there is no hurry. Even if you insist on returning to Cliviger, we could not allow you to go until Saturday morning."

Before the day was over Paul knew the meaning of temptation in a way he had never known it before. His mother had proved to him beyond all seeming shadow of doubt that he was her son, but it was old Dorcas Rickard whose evidence most moved him. He had not doubted it before. For that matter, even while the whole thing which had come to him was strange, Mr. Bolsover had, during his first visit, convinced him of the truth of his story. But that was not all. After the lawyer's visit came Lord St. Elwyn, who had accepted him as his son. This was followed by the meeting with his mother, who had, if a shadow of doubt remained, utterly convinced him of the truth. His heart had thrilled its recognition, and had gone out with a great love to the gracious woman who had claimed him as her son.

But even after all this, he could not help feeling the strangeness of the position. He, up to a few days before, had never dreamt of such a thing. He was simply Paul Tregaskis, who had been reared on a lonely farm in Cornwall, and who had at length gone to Oxford, where he was said to have had a brilliant career. Then, in spite of himself, he had felt it his duty to accept the



call from Cliviger, and he was now Paul Tregaskis, the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. Thus, in spite of the protestations of his father and mother, especially in view of the attitude which Hugh had adopted, there had been something shadowy and unreal about his position. How could he, Paul Tregaskis, be Paul St. Elwyn, the heir of an old name and valuable estates ?

But, in a way he could not understand, the evidence of his old nurse made everything more real to him. She was now an old lady of over seventy years of age, and had nursed three generations of the St. Elwyns. As an old friend of the family, too, she was greatly respected, and her pride in the name was so great that everything she said about it was regarded as of importance.

Paul had at first protested against her being sent for, but, after the interview with Mr. Bolsover, he had yielded to his mother's entreaties. She had come into the room where he was sitting with Lord and Lady St. Elwyn, and was utterly ignorant as to who he was and what had been said about him.

"This is a gentleman from Lancashire, Mr. Paul Tregaskis, who has come to pay us a visit," Lord St. Elwyn had said.

The old lady looked at Paul keenly, and appeared on the point of speaking. Then she gave a start, and looked at the young man long and anxiously. "I beg your lordship's pardon," she said, "but I didn't catch the name plainly. Will you tell me again ?"

"This is Mr. Paul Tregaskis," repeated Lord St. Elwyn.

"Tregaskis, Tregaskis ; I never heard the name before," muttered the old lady. Then like one in doubt, she looked from Lord St. Elwyn to Paul, and seemed to be comparing their faces. "Your name isn't Paul Tregaskis," she said to Paul at length. "You are—you are—— Speak to me !" she continued, like one uttering a command. "Tell me with your own lips who you are."

"I am Paul Tregaskis," he said. "I came here from Lancashire only yesterday."

Like one unconscious of what she was doing, she went closer to Paul and looked at him long and steadily; then, as if not satisfied with her examination, she took him by the hand. "Come to the light," she said; "I want to see you more plainly," and again she looked at him long and scrutinisingly. "Your name is not Tregaskis!" she cried. "You have the St. Elwyn face, the St. Elwyn voice!" and her own voice was tremulous with emotion. "This is he, your ladyship! It is the baby who was stolen from me! I could swear to it!"

"Why could you swear to it?" asked Lord St. Elwyn.

"As if I could doubt it!" cried the old dame. "None but a St. Elwyn could look as he looks!"

"But you may be mistaken," said Lord St. Elwyn, who might be amused at her vehemence in spite of his almost painful interest.

"Mistaken!" cried the old dame. "Didn't I hold him in my arms directly he was born? Didn't I wash him and dress him every day while he was a baby? Didn't I almost break my heart at what happened? Besides, look at that mole under his left ear; and yes, here they are, two more at the back of his neck! You remember them, your ladyship? Why, we have often talked about them together. Am I not right?" and she turned to Lord and Lady St. Elwyn almost passionately. "Isn't this he, young Master Paul? Ah!" and there was something almost triumphant in her voice, "I knew I could not be mistaken!"

It was this testimony that did more to make Paul absolutely certain than even his mother's welcome. She had expected him; she had examined the little gown which he wore on the evening he was stolen, and in which his little body had been wrapped when he had been left at John Tregaskis's house. More than that, she had been longing for his coming, and thus might be in a credulous frame of mind. But the old nurse was different. She had not expected him; she had

heard nothing of the story which had been made known to Lady St. Elwyn, and thus her recognition was of infinitely more value.

“Thank God! thank God!” the old nurse said after the story had been made known to her. “I have never felt that Master Hugh could be the real Lord St. Elwyn. Now—yes, now I can die happy! The boy who was stolen from me has come back as the rightful heir to his old name.”

It was after the nurse had gone, even although she had solemnly promised to say nothing of her recognition of him, that Paul understood the meaning of temptation as he had never understood it before.

“It is nonsense your talking about going back to Cliviger,” his father and mother had said to him. “It is all nonsense, too, to say that you will wait until that poacher is found before the truth is made known. You are our son, and you must take your place as our son.”

“What exactly do you mean by that?” asked Paul, looking at his father.

“My meaning is plain enough,” replied the older man. “You are our elder son, and you must live here as such. Of course, a suitable compensation shall be made to the man John Tregaskis for caring for you, but as for the rest, the past is past.”

“But I promised Hugh——” he began to protest weakly.

“When Hugh has heard what old Dorcas Rickard has to say,” broke in Lord St. Elwyn, “he will not want the proof he asks for. Besides, it’s absurd for him to expect it. No, no, my boy, you must not leave us again. You must live here as our son. Mustn’t he, Mary?”

Then as Lady St. Elwyn added her pleadings to those of his father, Paul felt that the promise he had made to Hugh was weak and childish, while for a time the hopes and dreams of his past seemed to him no more than the shadows of reality. Almost unconsciously,

too, he compared his life at Cliviger with the life which opened out before him as the son and heir of Lord St. Elwyn. What, after all, was he in that dirty Lancashire town? He was simply the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. And what was Ebenezer Chapel? Only a dissenting conventicle; a place held in scorn by the world which now claimed him. Why, after all, should he, Paul St. Elwyn, care about the sayings and doings of a lot of operatives in a manufacturing town?

"Naturally," said Lord St. Elwyn, "I have, since I first saw you two evenings ago, been thinking about your future. For that matter, your mother and I spent hours last night talking about you, and making plans for you. Of course, we knew about your career at Oxford, and rejoiced that our son had won distinction as a scholar. Then, too, I learnt while I was at Cliviger of your fame as a preacher, and while, of course, you will give up that kind of thing, I felt proud to know that you were a fine speaker. As a consequence I see a brilliant future opening up for you, my boy. The Parliamentary Constituency in which this house is situated is on the look-out for a candidate, and although the sitting member is, I hear, a good fellow, I believe that my son could turn him out at the next election. Then, with your name and the influence of your family, there is no reason why you should not, in a few years, have a seat in the Cabinet; while, of course, when I die—but I hope that won't be for many years yet—you will take your place in the Upper House. Those are the lines on which I have been thinking for you, my boy," and Lord St. Elwyn looked at Paul proudly.

Well, why not? If Hugh accepted Dorcas Rickard's evidence as conclusive, why should he not do as his father had said? At that moment the prospect appealed to every longing of his heart. It had everything in its favour, and there seemed to be nothing against it.

"At any rate, you will not think of leaving us yet, will you, Paul?" pleaded his mother. "Remember,

my darling, it is only a few hours ago that I first saw you since you were a baby, and I shall be heart-broken if you carry out your promise to Hugh. My heart has been hungering for you, my dear, hungering for you all these long years, and now that you have come back to me the world seems new."

"But I promised Hugh," he could not help protesting after a long silence, "and I cannot break my promise."

"But if Dorcas Rickard convinces him. What then?"

"He will not be easily convinced," he said stubbornly.

"But if he is?" pleaded his mother. "Anyhow, Paul, you will promise to stay with us for a long time, won't you? You will not go back to Cliviger?"

"I will think about it," replied Paul.

## CHAPTER XXII

## PAUL RETURNS TO CLIVIGER

PAUL slept but little that night. He could not. Two forces were at work within him; two powers claimed him.

On the one hand was the claim of family and self-interest. He was in his rightful home, and he felt it to be his rightful home. Even although up to two days before he had never seen or heard of it, he now realised that it was the home of his dreams, the home which his heart had always craved for. But more than that, his love had gone out to his mother in an unaccountable way, and her pleadings seemed to make him as weak as a child. She had begged him to give up all thought of going back to Cliviger; besought him with a tremulous voice and with tears in her eyes to stay in the home of his fathers as its rightful heir. And he wanted to. Everything seemed to tell him that this was what he ought to do. What, after all, was Cliviger to

him ? What Ebenezer Chapel ? It had been revealed to him in a most remarkable way that he was Paul St. Elwyn, and that one of the most beautiful homes in England was his.

And Paul was a patrician at heart. He loved old houses, old names, and rejoiced in the fact that his own name went far back in history, and that his forbears had taken an honourable part in the life of the nation. The St. Elwyns were known among the most famous legislators of the land. They had also given and commanded ships in the time of the Great Armada. Indeed, there had scarcely been an epoch-making event in the life of the land he loved but that the St. Elwyns had had their share in it. What wonder, then, that he was proud of being a St. Elwyn ?

There was another fact, too, which influenced him. Even Hugh had withdrawn much of his opposition before the evening was over. Old Dorcas Rickard had, at Lord St. Elwyn's command, told him what she felt about him ; and Hugh, so much was he influenced by the old dame's testimony, that he had nearly apologised to Paul for his surly behaviour. As for Mary, she, in her hoydenish, impulsive way, had become completely converted to her mother's beliefs.

"Stay, Paul," she had said with a happy laugh, "and we will paint this old place red. Why, there will be no end of the good times we will have together."

And this was not all. Self-interest played its part. Naturally Paul thought much of the picture which his father had painted of his future. Like every other young man he was ambitious, and, being a keen politician, the opportunity of taking his part in the councils of the nation appealed to him. He thought of himself fighting and winning a Parliamentary election in the constituency where St. Elwyn Hall was situated ; pictured himself speaking, not to a lot of weavers and colliers in Cliviger, but at Westminster, before the most critical audience in the world, and, in due time, becoming an important personage in the life of the nation.

That on the one hand.

But there were other factors which influenced him ; other voices, loud and clamant, which demanded to be heard. After all, what were these things which so appealed to him ? What was his love of an old name and of a proud position ? Was it not pure snobbery ? And if he yielded to the temptation which was surging in his heart, would he not be selling his real birthright for a mess of pottage ?

He recalled the evening when a few months before he had discussed his future with the only father and mother he had, up to that time, known. He had been weighing in his mind whether he should accept a professor's chair at the Oxford University, or whether he should become the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. He remembered his father's words, too. "If you feel it is the call of God to be the minister of Ebenezer Chapel it is at your peril that you refuse. But remember, my boy, that if you do not feel it to be the call of God to be a minister, you will be usurping a sacred office."

And he was sure that he had been called of God to preach the Gospel. He had been sure that it was his duty to go to Cliviger. What, after all, was a politician's life compared with that of a minister of Christ ? Supposing he decided to obey his father's wishes, and decided to remain at St. Elwyn Hall, would he not be untrue to the highest within him ?

He compared the two careers. One the proud, aristocratic son of a proud father, who would be, because of his position, regarded as a sort of superior being by the farmers and labourers on his estates. He would be kow-towed to by a lot of sycophants. He would also be a rich man, and, as far as riches could give it, he would have all that his heart desired. Then, on the other hand, he remembered the dreams he had dreamed, and the hopes he had cherished concerning Cliviger. Up to now he had comparatively failed, but his hopes had not died. He saw himself the instrument in God's hands of bringing about a new life in the town ; of

influencing the whole community towards Christianity. What compared with that was the career of a wealthy aristocrat? He had repeatedly said that Christianity was the greatest thing in the world; the only solution of the world's problems. Should he then give up his work?

He thought of something else, too. He remembered the night he had realised his love for Judith Pendle. It was true his love was hopeless, and that she had practically given her heart to another man. Still, the fact of that love influenced him beyond words.

It was not until morning that he fell asleep, but before doing so he had made up his mind.

"Sleep well, Paul, old man?" Mary greeted him as he entered the breakfast-room.

"What little there was was good," he laughingly responded.

"There wasn't much of it, then?"

"No, not much."

"You can kiss me if you like," and she lifted her face coquettishly.

"I'd love to, but I mustn't."

"Why? You are my brother."

"Because you might be sorry for it afterwards."

"Why should I be sorry?"

"Because no one knows what may happen. For one thing, I have not fulfilled my promise to Hugh yet, and for another, I am going back to Cliviger to-morrow morning."

They were alone in the room as he spoke, neither of the others having yet appeared. But at that moment his father and mother entered.

"Going back to Cliviger to-morrow!" exclaimed the former. "No, no, my boy, you are not. I thought we had settled that matter last night."

"Of course we did," added his mother. "At least, when I insisted that you should stay and you said you would think about it, I regarded it as a promise to stay."



After breakfast Paul told his father and mother of his decision. He said little about the battle he had fought, but he made it clear to them that, at all hazards, he must go back to Cliviger and continue his work.

"But why, Paul?" pleaded Lady St. Elwyn.

"Because I feel it my duty," he said simply.

"But have you no duty to me, and to your home?"

Whereupon Paul told them the whole story of his going to Cliviger, and of the reasons which finally decided him.

"But you didn't know then what you know now," protested Lord St. Elwyn.

"Has that anything to do with the matter?" asked the young man quietly.

"Of course it has. How can my son, my eldest son, neglect his home to work among a lot of weavers and colliers?"

"Remember," replied the young man, "that I am not yet accepted as your son. For that matter, although Hugh is altering his behaviour towards me, he still demands the proof he insisted on at the beginning; and a promise is a promise."

"But if that proof is obtained?" persisted Lord St. Elwyn. "If you find that poacher, and everything is proved to Hugh's satisfaction. What then? The truth must come to light."

"Even if it does I must continue my work," replied the young man.

"What! Still remain the minister of that dissenting conventicle?"

"If it was my duty to be the minister of that dissenting conventicle, as you call it, before I knew you, it is my duty still," replied Paul.

Then Lord St. Elwyn lost his temper. "You can't be such a fool!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "Why, think of it! What will the world say when it becomes known that the eldest son of the house of the St. Elwyns is a dissenting parson?"

"Does it matter what the world says?" replied Paul.

"But think of your career, my son."

"I don't want to appear stubborn or foolish," replied the young man, "but what greater career is there than that of an ambassador of Jesus Christ?"

"My God!" exclaimed the peer, "but this is madness gone wild! You don't mean that you have made up your mind to remain a dissenting parson?"

"I believe that to be my duty."

"But, look here," cried Lord St. Elwyn at length, after many protestations not only on his own part, but on that of Lady St. Elwyn, "if you must be a parson, at least do the thing reasonably. The St. Elwyns have always been supporters of a State Church, and I should regard it as a disgrace to my name if my son became known as a dissenting minister."

"It need not become known that I am your son," replied Paul. "As yet the fact has only been discussed by your solicitor and members of the family. Anyhow, my mind is made up."

"But, Paul, do be reasonable! The truth *must* become known. For that matter, I am inclined to think that some of the servants have suspicions already, and, in any case, if you *will* be a parson, don't remain a dissenting parson. There is no reason why you should either. I know the Bishop of the diocese intimately, and he will be only too glad to ordain you."

"I am ordained already," replied Paul quietly.

"Ordained already!" repeated Lord St. Elwyn with a sneer. "Do you mean to say that the so-called ordination of a dissenting parson is real ordination?"

I will not enter, at length, into the discussion which followed. Suffice to say that Lord St. Elwyn, as a low churchman, while he repudiated what he called the Anglo-Catholic party in the Church of England, yet maintained that the ordination of dissenting ministers was only a mockery and a sham.

"Do you mean to tell me," he almost shouted at length, "that your ordination is equal to that of the Bishop of this diocese?"

"Certainly," replied the young man. "I feel I was called of God to be a minister, and I have been set apart for that work. That is the only true ordination, and I should not, even although a hundred bishops were to place their hands upon my head, be more truly ordained than I am now. True ordination is not a matter of magical virtue which comes through the laying on of a bishop's hands; it is the dedication of one's whole life to the work of God."

Then Lord St. Elwyn altered his grounds. He admitted that many of the pretensions of the sacerdotalists were absurd and nonsensical. All the same, the State Church was the State Church, and he maintained that no gentleman could be a dissenter. The St. Elwyns, he added, had always upheld the Church of England, and he appealed to Paul, on that ground, to resign his position as a Nonconformist minister, and join the Church of England. "Of course," he concluded, "I utterly disapprove of your being a parson at all, but if you *must* be a parson, at least conform to the established order of things."

Paul shook his head as if in dissent.

"But why not?" exclaimed his lordship.

"Because I should be repudiating what I hold as sacred," replied the young man, "and I should, for the sake of pleasing you, be untrue to my deepest convictions."

"Then do you claim that your ordination is superior to that of the clergy in the Established Church?"

"I merely say that it is equal to it," replied Paul, "and that I could not submit to re-ordination. Besides, I have accepted the call to the Ebenezer Chapel at Cliviger. It is there my work lies, and to it I must return."

"Then are my commands to go for nothing?"

Paul could not help smiling a little sadly. "I must do what my conscience tells me to do," was his reply.

At that Lord St. Elwyn lost control over himself. "Then it comes to this," he exclaimed, "you have to

choose between your parents and your miserable fanaticism ! ”

“ Very well,” replied Paul, “ I have made my choice. Please do not mistake me, I have no quarrel with the position which thousands of clergymen hold. For that matter, I am not one who troubles about churches or denominations ; but when you tell me that I must give up my convictions as to my right to being a minister of Jesus Christ in order for you to recognise me as your son, I simply reply that I cannot do it.”

“ Then you will sacrifice your father and mother, and all that they hold dear, for the sake of this madness ? ”

“ I could, with just as much reason, put it another way,” replied Paul, “ and say that you will sacrifice your son rather than give up your paltry pride. For it is only pride that is influencing you. Don’t deny it,” went on the young man earnestly. “ It is not the validity of my ordination that’s troubling you ; it is the fact that I choose to be a Nonconformist minister, and you cannot bear the thought that your son should be a dissenter.”

“ Paul, Paul, don’t break my heart ! ” exclaimed his father, after which he went over the whole ground of their disagreement again.

During nearly the whole of their discussion Lady St. Elwyn sat in pained silence. On the one hand she was grieved at the attitude which Paul had adopted, and yet, on the other, she repudiated what her husband had said. “ Remember, Paul,” she declared to Lord St. Elwyn, “ whatever action you take I shall never give up my son.” Then turning to Paul she went on : “ You will not leave us, Paul, will you ? You will stay here as our son ? I love you, my darling, my heart has been hungering for you all these long years, and I cannot bear for you to leave us now we have found you.”

“ Please try to understand me, mother ! ” exclaimed the young man. “ I cannot express the gladness I feel at knowing that you accept me as your son, but seeing

things are as they are, will it not be better to say nothing about it to the world? As you know, Hugh will not accept me as his brother until certain conditions are fulfilled; and as, at the best, it may take a long time to fulfil those conditions, would it not be wise to make nothing known for the present? Indeed, even if he *were* satisfied, it would not alter me at all. I should feel it my duty to go back to Cliviger."

Thus it came about that after much heart-searching and many protestations, Paul left St. Elwyn Hall and returned to Cliviger. To say that he did it with a light heart would be wrong. It grieved him to oppose his father, and it pained him beyond measure to leave his mother; but he felt he could not help himself. Personally, he had no doubt that he was Paul St. Elwyn, but whether the evidence which Mr. Bolsover had collected would satisfy a court of law, he had his doubts. Moreover, Hugh, although he regarded Paul in a kindlier fashion than when they first met, had declared that he would not accept him as his brother until absolute proof was forthcoming. Moreover, he had threatened to instruct a solicitor to fight Paul's claim, if any were made on his behalf. Thus Lord St. Elwyn, hating as he did the thought of litigation in such a matter, and shrinking from any form of publicity, fell in with Paul's suggestion that nothing should be made public until Hugh's conditions were fulfilled.

The young man was in a curious state of mind and heart when on the Saturday night the train drew near Cliviger. To say the least of it, the position in which he had been placed was a difficult one. After all it was no light matter to practically abandon such a home as St. Elwyn Hall in order to return to a black, smoky Lancashire town; and, in some ways, it seemed to him like madness. When he left the West of England that morning, November although it was, the sun was shining, and the air was clean and pure. Every prospect, too, was delightful, while here, in this manufacturing part of Lancashire, the air was black and

sooty, while, as it seemed to him, every prospect was unpleasant. Why, after all, should he be such a fool? For, judging from every worldly standpoint, he had been a fool; and yet, in his heart of hearts, he knew that his foolishness was wisdom. The decision to which he had come long months before was not a mere yielding to a hasty impulse. He had accepted the call to Ebenezer Chapel because he had felt that God had spoken. Therefore, although judging from every worldly standpoint he had acted the part of a madman, he knew he had done right.

The welcome, too, which Mrs. Hemingway gave him when at length he arrived at his lodgings, cheered him beyond words.

"Ay, Mr. Tregaskis," she had said, "th' 'ouse 'ave been as lonely as a grave while you 'ave been away, and I am fair glad to see you."

"Has anyone called while I have been away, Mrs. Hemingway?" he asked, when presently the old lady had placed a simple meal before him.

"Nobody in particular," replied Mrs. Hemingway. "Young Jim Pilling wur 'ere last night to see you, and 'ee was awfully disappointed that you were away."

"Do you know why he came?" asked Paul.

"Nay, I don't know, but I'd just got your telegram saying you would be home to-night, and I shouldn't wonder if he isn't here presently. He said he would come," she added.

After Mrs. Hemingway had left him he sat alone in the room which had been his home for the last few months, and he could not help recalling the difference in his outlook on life on the June night on which he had come, and his outlook now. Then, even although he knew that John and Eliza Tregaskis were not his father and mother, he had no premonition of the truth. His every hope, moreover, was centred in Ebenezer Chapel, and of the work he should do in the town. He remembered his walk through Cliviger on the following

evening ; thought, too, of the hopes he had entertained about the great crowds which surged the streets.

Now all was changed. Mr. Bolsover's visit had, as he had said, led to events which had revolutionised his life. And yet not altogether. Whose ever son he was, he was still the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, and although his visions and hopes had not been realised, he longed, with a great longing, to see his dreams fulfilled.

Presently young Jim Pilling came.

" I've only called for just a minute, Mr. Tregaskis," Jim said, " but I wanted, if I could, to see you before to-morrow."

" Why before to-morrow, Jim ? " asked Paul.

" Because after I spoke to you last Sunday I've had several talks with a lot of fellows who have come to Ebenezer since you came to the church. You know you said you didn't know if it was not your duty to leave us, and it fair worried me. Ebenezer, and for that matter life generally, has been altogether different to me since you came, and what's true of me is true of a lot of other chaps, too. As I told you, I have had several talks with them, and, as a result, they asked me to come to you and tell you that whatever you do, you must not think of leaving Ebenezer. That's all I've got to say, Mr. Tregaskis, but I wanted you to know before you began your work to-morrow."

Paul, in spite of everything, could not help being cheered by Jim's visit. The young fellow had told him what he had longed to hear. It was true he had felt himself to be a comparative failure in the town, and yet he hoped he had not laboured in vain. Well, this honest young fellow's statement had told him that although he might be a comparative failure, he was not altogether a failure. If he had influenced a dozen or more such as Jim spoke of, he might be influencing hundreds of others of whom he knew nothing. Yes, he was thankful to Jim for coming.

As may be imagined, he felt ill prepared for his work on the following day. It was true he had tried while

at St. Elwyn Hall to concentrate his mind on the messages he hoped to deliver, but had found it difficult to do so. Now, however, his thoughts came more freely, and before he went to bed he felt prepared for the morning's service; and Jim Pilling's testimony was, as it seemed to him, a great factor in his preparations.

As Paul found his way to Ebenezer Chapel on the following morning, it seemed to him that his experiences of the past week were like a dream. St. Elwyn Hall and all that it meant were vague, unsubstantial and unreal; but Cliviger was real. The smoke-begrimed houses, the granite-paved streets, and the general life of the town had a new meaning to him. Then, presently, when he came within sight of Ebenezer Chapel and saw, early as it was, people finding their way up the broad steps which led to the building, a premonition of something came to him. What it was he did not know; but something great, something wonderful.

Nothing particular happened that day, yet the premonition remained, and he felt that a great change was coming to Cliviger before many weeks were over; a change which meant revolutionising the life of the town.

And he was right.

#### CHAPTER XXIII THE GREAT MISSION

ON the Monday afternoon as Paul found his way from his lodgings to a bookshop in the heart of the town, he saw several men standing before a billposting station on which huge placards were placed, stating that Mr. Daniel Priestley, a converted Yorkshire stonemason, would conduct a great mission in Mount Pisgah Chapel, to commence on the following Sunday week. He discovered, too, that similar posters had been placed on every billposting station in the town.



Arrived at the door of the bookshop, he saw Sir Joshua Pendle coming down the street.

"How are you, Mr. Tregaskis?" asked the baronet.

On being assured by Paul that he was in good health, the older man looked at him keenly.

"I didn't like the look of you yesterday," he volunteered.

"Why?" asked Paul.

"I thought you looked pale and worried. You have been away for a few days, haven't you?"

"Yes. I had to go to the west of England."

"I heard about it. I was told that someone who had been staying at the 'Holly Bush' took you away in a motor-car. Is everything all right?" And the baronet looked at him questioningly, and as if he hoped that Paul would inform him of his doings.

But Paul gave him no information. Somehow his experiences in the west seemed far removed from his present life, and yet in a way he could not understand, he found himself comparing Sir Joshua Pendle, the chief man at Ebenezer Chapel, with Lord St. Elwyn. What would his father think of him, he wondered. Sir Joshua was a typical keen-brained, pushing, energetic, and yet kindly Lancashire man. Baronet though he was, many of the people in the town who had known him as a comparatively poor man continued to speak of him as "Josh Pendle"; and by no stretch of the imagination could he be called aristocratic in appearance.

No, his father would have nothing in common with this so-called Lancashire magnate. They lived in different worlds, and had entirely different views of life.

"Did you see the posters?" asked Sir Joshua.

"Yes, I saw them."

"I am glad you have come into line. Mr. Brighthouse told me about your visit to the Wesley Church parlour last Monday night, and said that, on the whole, you made a good impression. I am hoping for great things," he added.

"Will you attend any of the meetings at Mount Pisgah?" asked Paul.

"I may drop in once or twice, but not often," replied Sir Joshua. "I have a great many town meetings to attend. Still, I hope the mission will do a lot of good, and that you will join heartily with the other ministers in making it a success. Still, I have my doubts about it."

"Why?" asked Paul.

"Another strike is threatened," was the reply, "and I fear we shall have bad times. People in these days think more about shorter hours and better pay than they think about their souls. Anyhow, you must expect to have small congregations on the two Sundays the man Priestley is here."

"Why?"

"Because a lot of our Ebenezer people will go to Mount Pisgah. Are you doing anything to-night?"

"No, I have nothing particular on. Why?"

"I think Mark wants to see you. Can't you come up and have a bit of dinner with us? Do, if you can."

"What does Mark think about the mission?" asked Paul.

Sir Joshua laughed. "He gives all that sort of thing the go-by," he replied. "So does Judith. I shall look out for you at dinner to-night then," and without waiting for a reply he made his way down the street.

Although Paul felt angry with himself for doing so, he made his way to Cliviger Hall that night. He told himself that he was going there because Mark wanted to see him, but he knew that was not the real reason; knew, too, that he was hungering for the sight of Judith. She had confessed to him that she was in love with another man, and that if certain conditions were brought about she would marry him. In any case, it was madness for him to think about her. What of his promise to try to convert Jack Ridley? In one sense the matter was laughable, and yet to Paul

it was almost tragic. Even although the young manufacturer became a changed man, could he, Paul, bear the thought of his being married to Judith Pendle? And more than that, did he really want, realising what it would mean to his own life, Jack Ridley to become a changed man?

Presently he arrived at Cliviger Hall, and received a warm welcome from both Mark and Judith. Yes, there was no doubt about it, he was a welcome guest there. He both liked and admired Sir Joshua's son and heir.

"I say, Tregaskis, have you seen this?" asked Mark presently.

"Seen what?"

"This pamphlet containing the autobiography of Mr. Daniel Priestley. It is a positive shame," he added.

"What is a shame?"

"That he should be allowed to write it, and that the people in Cliviger should have it hawked around. The fellow can't write the King's English, and it is in the worst of taste. I know our Lancashire operatives are not literary critics, but they will laugh, just laugh at the whole thing," and Mark spoke a little angrily.

"Are you going to attend any of the meetings?" asked Paul.

"The Lord save me from that!" replied the young man. "Look here, Tregaskis, I want to speak to you seriously. When this thing was delivered here yesterday I told father that I should like to have a talk with you about it. I was awfully disturbed throughout the whole of last week," he added.

"What about?"

"What you said at Ebenezer in your sermon yesterday week. I wasn't there, but I heard about it."

"What are you referring to?"

"To your threat to leave Cliviger. You mustn't do it, old man, you really mustn't. As you know, I am not a chapel-goer, and I take very little interest in that sort of thing. All the same, you mustn't leave us. You are

influencing the town more than you think, and, in a way I thought impossible, you are doing a great work. Your sermons are being talked about everywhere, and hundreds of fellows who had given such things a wide berth have been led to think about religion as they never thought of it before. But for God's sake give that mission a miss! Don't encourage the people to go to hear stuff that will drive them farther away from Christianity instead of leading them to have more sympathy with it."

"Is that what you wanted to say to me?"

"Yes, and Judith is of the same opinion, aren't you, old girl?"

When Paul returned to his lodgings that night his mind was full of conflicting thoughts. In a way he agreed with much that Mark had said, yet he remembered the promise he had made to support the mission which was to be held. It was not that he did not believe in missions. If a cultured man, one who was abreast of the best scholarship and the best thought of the age, and yet filled with divine enthusiasm, were to come to the town, he believed that he might do a great deal of good. But this man Daniel Priestley!

He thought of something else, too, widely divergent from the religious life of the town. When he had first visited Cliviger Hall he was impressed by its spaciousness, and by the comfort which was everywhere manifested. It was true some of the furniture was a little grandiose, nevertheless, it struck him as a fine specimen of a rich man's house. Now, however, he found himself comparing it with his own old home. The atmosphere of the two places was entirely different. The one spoke aloud of newly made riches, while the other, in a subtle, unostentatious way, suggested centuries of culture and refinement. And yet was Judith Pendle inferior to his own sister? Place the two side by side, and did Mary Pendragon St. Elwyn suggest a superiority to the manufacturer's daughter? No, a thousand times no!

\* \* \* \* \*

On the following Saturday week Paul wended his way towards Mount Pisgah Chapel, where a huge concourse of people had gathered. There were representatives from every chapel in the town, while a number of strangers were also present. Hours previously a great public tea had been held which had also been largely attended, but at this, owing to other engagements, Paul had not been present.

It was a great demonstration held to welcome Mr. Daniel Priestley into the town, and to inaugurate "The Great United Mission" at which it was hoped numbers of people would be converted.

Paul, in spite of all that had been said to him, or perhaps because of it, still had strong opinions as to the good that would be accomplished. Nevertheless, he determined that, as far as he was able, he would support it. Many still remembered what he had said to the Rev. Judah Brighthouse on the night of the ministers' fraternal, and regarded him with suspicion. All the same, when he entered the chapel and Mr. Brighthouse invited him to come on the rostrum, there was a great cheer. Paul hoped that he would not be called upon to say anything, but he made his way to the rostrum, where a number of the leading ministers sat, and who were there, as they said, to support Mr. Daniel Priestley.

Whatever else might be said, there was no doubt that Mr. Priestley was a personality. Tall, large-boned and stalwart, he was a man who would be noticed in any crowd, and there was no doubt that he was keen-witted and clear sighted. He also possessed to a large degree that somewhat grim, caustic humour for which Yorkshiremen are famous. As far as Paul could judge, moreover, he was evidently sincere, and desirous of doing good. It was true he had stipulated with the committee which had been appointed by the Cliviger Churches, that whatever the result of the mission might be, a substantial sum of money should be paid to him for conducting it. But that might be only an expression of his upbringing as a Yorkshireman. Indeed, so earnest

did he seem in his appeal to the great crowd which had gathered to support him in the mission, that Paul could not help feeling kindly towards him; and although he was not called upon to speak, he, in closing the meeting, prayed most earnestly that great good would be done.

I am not going to try to describe the mission at length. Nevertheless, attention must be paid to it because it had a marked influence not only on Paul's life, but on that of many other ministers in the town. Great crowds were attracted. For one thing, Daniel Priestley was in many ways a forcible speaker, and his strong personality made what would, if uttered by some men, seem mere commonplaces, striking and important. The mission was well advertised, too; the huge placards, together with the autobiography of the missionary, had great effect; and, as we have said, crowds came to hear him.

And yet for the first few days many were disappointed. It was true the people listened attentively, and many seemed impressed. It was true, too, that a number of people, who did not belong to any of the churches, were seen at Mount Pisgah night after night, and yet many were disappointed.

"How did yo' like?" Paul heard one weaver say to another at the close of one of the meetings.

"Ay, I liked all right. Yon felly——" and then the weaver shook his head.

"What dost'a mean?"

"Scarcely anybody's bin to the inquiry room. There's bin no breakdown yet."

"Weel, I don't give up 'ope because o' that. I've 'eerd as 'ow Mr. Priestley don't expect conversions until the last night or so. He believes in what he calls 'cumulative effect.' The influence goes on working night after night, and then just before he leaves he goes in for it hot and strong."

"Weel," said the other, "we shall see what we shall see."

Mr. Priestley's visit to Cliviger lasted a fortnight,

and on the Friday, the concluding night of the mission, Paul found his way to Mount Pisgah Chapel.

In many ways what he saw impressed him. The place was crowded with perhaps fifteen hundred people, and the atmosphere was tense with interest and excitement. And yet to Paul everything seemed artificial and unconvincing. Mr. Priestley held to what he called "th' owd theology." He proclaimed, as a fact, that God's justice had been outraged by man's sin, and, as a consequence, a great atonement was needed. Whereupon Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity, offered Himself as a sacrifice to appease divine anger; and, at the same time, to rescue mankind from an awful doom. As we have said, this seemed to Paul utterly unconvincing. Nevertheless, such was Daniel Priestley's personality, and so great was his power of persuasion, that many appeared to believe it; and at the close of his address his appeal was so strong that a number of people found their way into a room at the back of the chapel and professed conversion.

"Ay, but this is summat like," he heard it declared on all hands as a steady stream of people found their way into what was designated the inquiry room.

"I told you about Mr. Priestley's methods, didn't I?" he heard the man say who had expressed his belief in the missionary's methods a few nights previously. "He advocates what he calls 'cumulative effect,' and now we see the result of it."

"How many have gone in?"

"I haven't counted them, but there must be nearly a hundred."

When Paul left the chapel that night he could not help reflecting on what he had seen and heard. According to the latest reports, over a hundred had found their way to the inquiry room, and many pronounced that the mission had been a great success.

But had it? As far as he could see there was no difference in the general life of the town. As he

passed through the huge market-place he saw that crowds of people had gathered, and who scarcely seemed to know of the mission which Mr. Daniel Priestley had been conducting. More than once he heard threats among little groups of men, who were evidently Communists, against employers and against capitalists generally. Evidently there were signs that Sir Joshua Pendle's fears would be realised.

As he passed along the streets, too, he saw crowds of young men and women—many emerging from picture houses, public-houses and dancing rooms; and while he neither heard nor saw anything that could be called evil, it was evident that they had been untouched by the great United Mission.

“A hundred conversions,” he reflected, “in a town of nearly a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants!” To obtain this result the whole of the town had been visited, huge placards had been posted, while thousands of copies of the autobiography of Mr. Daniel Priestley had been scattered. Well, a hundred conversions were not to be despised, and although the result of all that had been done seemed very small, the interest which had been manifested might have done good, and possibly some of the churches had been influenced. It was to be hoped so, anyhow.

A few days later Paul received a letter from the secretary of the mission. This communication contained the names and addresses of eighteen of the converts who had expressed the desire to become affiliated with the Ebenezer Church. He was, therefore, asked to visit these new converts, and undertake their general oversight. The letter concluded with the information that a meeting of all the Free Church ministers in the town would be held on a certain date in January, at which the mission, in all its bearings, would be discussed, and whereby it was hoped all the churches in the town would be strengthened.

The reason for postponing this meeting until January was, of course, plain. They were now approaching



Christmas, and as Christmas festivities would soon be upon them, few would be able to give proper attention to such an important matter.

Paul was sorely tempted to absent himself from Cliviger during Christmas and the first days of the New Year. His mother wrote him a beseeching letter, telling him that her heart was hungering for him, and that she longed with a longing beyond words to see him in his rightful home during the festive season. But he did not go. He remembered the arguments that were urged during his previous visit; remembered, too, the terrible temptation which he had had to fight, and he did not think it wise to submit himself to another time of trial. Moreover, although his father seconded his mother's invitation, it seemed to him that his letter lacked heartiness. Lord St. Elwyn told him that Hugh still persisted in the attitude he had taken up, and was more than ever strongly opposed to Paul being recognised as the heir of the St. Elwyns until the proof he had mentioned was forthcoming. On the whole, Paul decided that while Lord St. Elwyn wanted to see him home, it would not be wise for him to go.

As may be imagined, since his return to Cliviger he had thought much about the scenes which had taken place in St. Elwyn Hall. He had also thought long and anxiously how he might discover the man who had stolen him away from his home long years before. Indeed, he had gone to London and discussed the whole matter with Mr. Bolsover, and had carefully examined the letter which the vagrant had written to Lord St. Elwyn which had led to the after events. But Mr. Bolsover could give him no encouragement whatever; rather he had expressed the strongest doubts as to whether the man could ever be found.

"You see, it is this way, my dear sir," said the lawyer pompously, "if that poacher were to make himself known, he would at the same time expose himself to the greatest possible danger. He must know of the threats which his lordship has made during the years, and

that therefore a long term of imprisonment would be the result of his confession."

"But surely," urged Paul, "my father could make it known that no punishment would follow the confession."

"He *could*, of course," replied Mr. Bolsover. "But *would* he? Of that I have very great doubts."

Upon this Paul had written his father asking him for the assurance that if the vagrant could be found he would be forgiven for his crime. But although he grudgingly assented to this, no result followed. Paul had caused to be inserted in a large number of newspapers a carefully worded statement to the effect that if the man who had stolen a child under certain circumstances would reveal his identity he would be fully forgiven for his action. But nothing came of it.

Thus it came about that Paul's Christmas was spent in Cliviger, and although Sir Joshua had told him that he must regard Cliviger Hall as his home, especially during the festive season, he had remained, for the most part, in his own rooms, even although it was natural for a man of his years to long for young society.

Perhaps the appeal which he had found it hardest to resist was in a letter which came to him on the Christmas Eve from his sister.

*"Paul, old dear," (she wrote), "for in spite of what you said to father and mother, I am more than ever convinced that you are my brother Paul. I have a great proposal to make to you. You say you won't come here, but that is no reason why I shouldn't come to you, so directly after Christmas I propose coming to Cliviger for a long visit. Don't be stubborn and say that it won't do. It will do. Of course you are my brother, and I believe that even Hugh, in spite of his pigheadedness, is absolutely convinced of it. But you learnt what sort of a boy Hugh was while you were here, and, of course, your being father's eldest son makes all the difference to him. That's why he was so awkward. But let that go for the present. Of course I fell in love with you*

while you were here. You could see that plainly, couldn't you? And to tell you the truth, I believe you are a bit in love with me. Anyhow, I want to come to Lancashire, and be with you as long as you will have me. Won't it be a lark? Of course you can tell the people in Cliviger anything you like. Tell them that I am your sister, your cousin, or your sweetheart. It doesn't matter what; and that dear old lady, Mrs. Hemingway, of whom you spoke to me, will, I am sure, arrange for me to have a bedroom in the house. Think of the fun we shall have together! You can show me all around the town, and introduce me to a lot of people, and all that sort of thing. Besides, think how nice it will be for you to have such a nice-looking girl as I am with you, and to talk with you and make you happy! So please, please, Paul, write to father and mother straight away, and tell them that you want me. Perhaps, too, we shall, together, devise means whereby that awful poacher can be found, and thus satisfy Hugh—if it is possible for him to be satisfied. So write at once to me and father and mother saying this must be so.

Your loving sister,

Mary Pendragon St. Elwyn,  
although to you in the future I must be called Molly."

On first reading this letter Paul was sorely tempted to do as she had said, but on second thoughts, hard as it was, he had to say no. He knew that Lancashire towns were hotbeds of gossip; knew, too, that his having Mary there would be the chief subject of talk among the Ebenezer people, and that all sorts of misunderstandings would arise. Besides, he had given it out on coming to Cliviger that he was the only child of John and Eliza Tregaskis, and he had told Sir Joshua Pendle on the first night of his visit that one of the great things missing in his life had been the companionship of a sister. Thus, for him to have this hoydenish, irresponsible girl in the house as his visitor would never do. So he wrote her a long, brotherly letter telling her

that if he followed the promptings of his own heart, he would do as she had said, yet remembering how he was situated, it was quite impossible.

Thus, as we have said, Paul spent practically the whole of the Christmas and New Year's holidays alone at Mrs. Hemingway's house. In many ways, too, he was glad that this was so. In spite of the excitement caused by the St. Elwyn letters, he had been tremendously influenced by the United Mission which had been held in the town, and it had led him to much thought and examination. In spite, too, of the fact that the town had been given over to gaiety during the Christmas season, the premonition which had come to him on the Sunday morning after his visit to St. Elwyn became stronger. In a way he could not understand, he knew that a new life was coming not only to him, but to the town; and as on an evening in January he made his way towards the church parlour at the back of the Wesley Chapel, it became a great conviction to him that the meeting would be destiny laden.

## CHAPTER XXIV

AFTER THE GREAT  
MISSION

WHEN Paul entered the Wesley Church parlour, several of the ministers who had just arrived were discussing, in whispers, what evidently seemed to them a matter of great importance; but no sooner did he appear than they lapsed into silence. Paul judged from this that they still regarded him as somewhat of a pariah, and one whom they could not take into their confidence.

After one of them had led the meeting in prayer, the chairman, the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, rose to his feet, holding the agenda of the meeting in his hand.

"Dear Brethren," he said. "Perhaps this meeting should have been held immediately after the close of the mission, but, as you know, we were then only a short

time from Christmas, and were not in a position to form a true estimate of what had been done. Added to that, many of the accounts had not come in, and so we could not deal with them. The business of to-night divides itself into two parts. First the financial, and second the spiritual. I think it will be best if we deal with the financial matters first, after which we shall, I hope, be in a position to discuss the more important question. I will, therefore, call upon the secretary to give us the financial statement."

It is not my purpose to go into any details with regard to that statement. Suffice to say that a considerable sum of money had been expended, only a part of which was covered by collections and subscriptions. After a lengthy discussion it was recommended that the deficit should be raised by means of a levy on the churches, the amount in each case to depend on the size of the church.

After this matter had been dealt with, the chairman again rose and said that they had now come to the most important part of the meeting, and that he would be glad if the brethren would express their views frankly and freely.

At this there was an awkward silence which lasted for more than a minute. It might seem as though no one was willing to speak. At length Mr. Crayshaw, who was largely responsible for holding the mission, announced that he regarded "the work of our brother, Daniel Priestley, as being greatly blessed. I think we must all admit," he said, "although some here seem to think that the results are not altogether satisfactory, that it was, at any rate, worth holding. Over one hundred conversions were reported to the secretary, which, although the number does not perhaps appear great to some here, is something to be profoundly thankful for. Brethren," he added with great unction, "who shall seek to estimate the value of a hundred immortal souls?"

After Mr. Crayshaw had finished there was another

long, awkward silence. The chairman repeatedly exhorted the brethren to speak freely, but no one seemed desirous of doing so. Then Mr. Brighthouse adopted different tactics. "It has been stated by Mr. Crayshaw," he said, "that over a hundred conversions have taken place, and the names of these new converts have been given to the ministers with whose churches they wished to be affiliated. These ministers, moreover, have been instructed to visit the said converts, and to take the oversight of them. Have the ministers done this? If so, I should be glad if they will make their reports. Perhaps Mr. Tregaskis, as being the minister of the oldest Free Church in the town, will be the first to speak."

This placed Paul in a dilemma. As he had not been in favour of such a mission, he would rather have been silent. Still, as all eyes were turned towards him, and as it was evident that all eagerly awaited his report, he could do no other than respond to the chairman's call.

"I am afraid what I have to say will not be very encouraging," he commenced. "I had eighteen names and addresses given to me of the converts who had expressed their desire to become affiliated with my church. I faithfully visited those eighteen addresses—in some cases I went more than once—but the results of my visits have been entirely unsatisfactory. One name given to me was that of a woman who, I have been informed, has been what she called converted at practically every revival mission which has been held during the last twenty years. Two others have been for a long time members of the Ebenezer Church, and who declared that they did not go into the inquiry room as penitents at all, but only as helpers. With regard to the others, I have altogether failed to find them. This is not because of any lack of effort on my part. I have done my best, but as far as I can discover, they do not exist. That is all I have to say at this juncture."

Paul expected that there would be an outburst of indignation at his report, but it was not so. Instead

the experiences of others practically coincided with his own. Minister after minister declared that either wrong names and addresses had been given, or that the converts did not exist. How this was explained I will not pretend to say, but such was the burden of the reports given.

This was followed by a somewhat painful discussion. Mr. Crayshaw and one other man who held views similar to his own, said all that was possible in favour of the mission, but the general opinion was that it had been a failure. Methods which had been declared to have done a great deal of good in the past, were said, in this instance, to have produced no results.

"Still," urged the chairman, "large crowds of people came to hear Mr. Priestley, and many who had not heard the Gospel for years heard it from his lips. That must be all to the good,"

"Yes, and it *is* all to the good," declared Mr. Crayshaw. "Of course we are all grieved at the reports which have been given, but what can we expect? As far as I am informed, more than one minister in this town, and one especially, has declared against the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and has said that God's Word should be submitted to criticism just the same as any other book. This has led to inevitable results; results which we have heard to-night. Higher criticism!" he exclaimed fiercely; "what has been called higher criticism is from the devil, and has led thousands of people to lose faith altogether. It has been declared that the mission has done the churches no good. What wonder when the ministers have destroyed the foundations of faith!"

So acrimonious was the discussion in danger of becoming that the chairman, at length, thought it best to close the meeting, and announced his intention of doing so. Doubtless, too, he would have carried his intention into effect but for the fact of one young minister, fresh from college, who rose to ask whether nothing could be done. "Are we to go on as we have been

going ? ” he asked almost plaintively. “ On all hands it has been admitted that the life of the town is drifting away from the churches, and after this so-called great mission from which we had hoped so much, we still have to confess failure. Are we going to leave this meeting, and admit that we are failures ? For my part I had hoped for great things from our gathering, but if the chairman dismisses us at this moment I shall go away hopeless.”

“ Come, come, Brother Ormerod,” cried someone, “ you mustn’t say that. God still lives.”

“ There are not many evidences of it,” retorted the young man in question. “ If He still lives He doesn’t take much notice of us. When I came to Cliviger a little while ago I was full of hope and enthusiasm, but the materialism of the town has done a great deal to kill my faith.”

At this there were protestations not only of dismay, but of indignation. “ What would the people of the town say,” many asked, “ if they knew that one of its youngest ministers expressed such sentiments ? ”

“ Doubtless I have been wrong in speaking so freely,” replied young Arthur Ormerod, “ but I am sick at heart, and I am hungering for assurance.” Then turning towards Paul he said : “ I am given to understand that the Ebenezer Church is the only one in the town where the congregations have increased. That, many say, is because Mr. Tregaskis is the best preacher in Cliviger. But is that the *real* reason ? We are not all scholars or orators, and what I want to know is, is there any hope for those of us who do not possess these qualities ? Mr. Tregaskis is often spoken of in the town as ‘ the man who is sure.’ Will he tell us how he became sure, for I, and I confess it frankly, am sure of nothing. Will he tell us, too, the secret of his power, and will he tell us what he thinks will arouse our dead churches into life ? ”

There could be no doubt that the young fellow’s earnestness, although his words were unbalanced and perhaps ill advised, created a new atmosphere ; and all



again turned to Paul, as they had turned to him earlier in the meeting.

"I am sure we shall all be glad to hear what Mr. Tregaskis has to say," remarked the chairman. "Of course we don't agree with Brother Ormerod's sentiments, and we are sorry that he has been led to say what he has said. All the same, we feel the necessity of something being done, and if Brother Tregaskis can help us we shall all be grateful to him."

At this there was general assent, and all appeared to be waiting for Paul to speak.

"I would like, first of all," said Paul, on rising, "to thank Mr. Ormerod for speaking so plainly. I think I understand what he feels, and I, for one, have no indignation because of what he has said. I think he has done a great deal of good, too, by speaking."

Several shook their heads at this, but Paul, seeming to take no notice, went on :

"It is only by being truthful among ourselves, and to ourselves, that we shall get anywhere. Therefore, I hope you will forgive me if I speak with absolute frankness, and tell you exactly what I feel. Of course we are all terribly disappointed at the results of the mission. At any rate, I can truly say that I am awfully sorry that, as far as I can judge, it has affected neither the churches nor the town for good. To be absolutely frank, I am afraid I did not expect much from it, especially after I had listened to Mr. Priestley, and analysed his utterances. Brethren, we live in a new world, and what might have done good a century ago, utterly fails to affect the life of to-day."

"Truth is always the same, Brother Tregaskis," shouted Mr. Crayshaw from the other side of the room.

"Yes, truth is always the same," assented Paul, "but, for one thing, we must be sure that we have the truth, and for another, we must see to it that it is applied in such a manner as to meet the needs of the present age."

"Isn't the Bible true?" and Mr. Crayshaw again spoke loudly. "Isn't it a fact that Christ came into the

world to atone for our sins ? Didn't He turn away the anger of God by His sacrifice on the Cross, and aren't we saved through His death ? Isn't that true ? ”

“ Order, order, ” protested the chairman. “ Mr. Tre-gaskis has not spoken during the discussion, and he has been especially asked to speak now. Let's give him a fair hearing. ”

“ I do not wish to engage in a wordy warfare, ” Paul began again, “ but now I have been called upon to speak I must speak plainly. I have not the slightest desire to speak for others. Let me say at once then that I think Ormerod touched the kernel of the whole matter just now when he said that he was *sure of nothing*. At any rate, he was honest, and if I understand the condition of the churches aright throughout the whole country, especially in relation to ministers, it is that *uncertainty* is one of the causes of our failure. ”

“ How can the churches be anything but uncertain while the Scriptures are spoken of in the way they are ? ” asked Mr. Crayshaw. “ It is the so-called higher critics who have created the uncertainty. ”

“ Perhaps if I am to do any good I had better be a little autobiographical, ” Paul went on as if Mr. Crayshaw had not spoken. “ I was brought up in a Christian home, and when at length I went to Oxford I had no doubts about the truth of Christianity. That is to say my mental attitude was largely negative. I had no doubts because I had tested nothing. My faith, such as it was, was largely a matter of tradition, and not because I was convinced of anything as a positive and undeniable fact. As a consequence, I had not been in Oxford long before my so-called faith became a thing of the past. I was brought into contact with a number of clever young fellows who declared that Christianity not only failed to stand the tests which scholarship and criticism brought to bear on it, but that it was little more than a fairy tale. This led me to think a great deal, and to read a great deal. And here I must express my indebtedness to the scholars and the critics whom Mr. Crayshaw denounces so vehemently. ”

Paul paused here as if expecting a further protest from the gentleman in question, but as nothing was said he went on again :

" I repeat," he went on, " that I wish to express my indebtedness to the scholars and the critics for what they have done for the world. It was true that for a time I was led to a position of positive unbelief, but I was not long in finding that such a position was utterly unsound. Still, during nearly the whole of the time I was an undergraduate I thought much and read hard. Then at length, largely through the erudition and wisdom of our scholars, I was led to see that Jesus was a great historical fact, and that although much that was said about Him was difficult to prove, the fact of Jesus was as undeniable as the fact of Queen Elizabeth. I discovered, too, that the Gospel story as it is related in the four Gospels was, in all essentials, true."

Paul spoke very quietly, nevertheless, owing to the tense silence which prevailed in the room, every word that he uttered was heard plainly.

" I may be wrong," he went on, " but I think it would do good to all our ministers if they went through such an experience as I did. It was something, at all events, although not everything, to be *certain* of the Historical Jesus.

" But I was as little a Christian as ever. I was as absolutely sure that Jesus had lived and spoken and died in Palestine as I was certain of any other historical fact. But Jesus meant little to me. For all I knew Matthew Arnold's picture of Him might be true, and He might be lying in His grave outside the lorn Syrian town, just as Socrates might be lying near Athens. Although He was historically true, He was, to me, dead.

" But I was not satisfied, and I asked myself again and again how this man, Jesus, convinced men like the Apostle Paul that He was alive, and how, without any adventitious aids, He became, through the ages, the Life of millions. I called to mind the words written in the Gospel: ' These things were recorded that ye

might believe, and believing, ye might have Life through His name.'

"Then one day, I will not describe how, for it is too sacred to speak of even in a gathering like this, I became sure of Jesus. Not merely as a great historical fact, but as Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was as real to me as the men I met in the classrooms. I knew Him to be alive, not because of tradition, but because of an overwhelming consciousness of His presence, and instantly my life had a new meaning. I felt then, as I feel now, that the greatest thing in life was to make Jesus real to the world. I *knew* that He was the solution of every problem, the key to every mystery. I knew that all life became glorified through Him; I knew that there was no death. I was *sure* of it, not because someone said so, but because I felt Jesus near as my Friend, my Brother, my Lord.

"That is how I came to be a minister, for immediately this great thing came to me I went to the head of a great theological college, and was soon after admitted as a student. Young Ormerod has asked the secret of what success I have had. *That* is the secret of it. I am sure of God and of His Christ."

Paul spoke so humbly, so sincerely and with such conviction, that if there had been previously any antagonism towards him, it no longer existed. All felt that here was a man who possessed the great secret of life, and while perhaps many in the past had regarded him with a certain amount of envy, if not of dislike, they were at least convinced that he meant what he said. Even Mr. Crayshaw, who had Paul in his mind when he had denounced ministers for saying that the Bible should be open to criticism just like any other book, became conscious of a power which had not hitherto existed.

As for young Ormerod, a new light came into his eyes as he listened. Evidently forgetting himself, he was heard to say in a hoarse whisper: "By God, that is what I want!"

"And now," went on Paul, "having said so much,

I am compelled to say something more. I feel that my ministry in Cliviger has been a failure. I have not done what I hoped to do ; I have not even touched the fringe of the work which I meant to do. I have learnt this, too. There is something that I lack. Perhaps all of us lack that something. It must be so, else we should be something more than mere voices crying in the wilderness."

Paul paused at this, and seemed to be waiting for others to speak. But no one said a word.

"It is no use our closing our eyes to obvious facts," went on the young man presently. "Cliviger is becoming more and more pagan. Whatever is true of the life of the whole country, it is true of us. Personally, I am weary of hearing the statement that we, as churches, do not even touch the fringe of the life of the community in which we live. I am sick of being told that not one in ten of the general population are, in any way, associated with the churches. And yet we have to confess that it is true. Why is it? Is it because the great truths which Christ came to proclaim, to live for and to die for, have lost their meaning, and lost their power? I do not believe it. Those things are just as real to-day as they were in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago."

Again he paused for nearly a minute, during which time the atmosphere was tense with excitement. All were eagerly waiting for him to continue, for all felt that he had something more to say. In some ways the scene was almost pathetic, certainly it was striking. Men who had grown grey in the service of the churches were eagerly awaiting the words of one who was a mere stripling, because all felt that he possessed a secret which they, if they had not lost it, did not hold firmly.

"When I came to Cliviger," went on Paul, "I had great dreams, great hopes. Day after day and night after night I came into the town to try to study its life. Especially was I moved by what I saw on Saturday nights. The streets were thronged ; the market-place

was thronged ; the places of amusement were thronged. I saw tens of thousands of young men and women who were trying to find the secret of life, but could not find it. I went to theatres, to picture houses, to dancing rooms in order to see if there was anything in these places that could satisfy them. I do not say I saw anything wrong ; for that matter many of the places of amusement supplied what was necessary to the life of those young people. But something more was needed. I knew by the conversations which I have had with scores of them that they wanted something which they had not got ; that they were hungering and thirsting for something which they did not possess. I knew what they wanted, and I hoped with a great hope to give that something to them.

“ But I have failed. I have not been able to make the Christ Who is real to me real to them. I know perfectly well what the town needs, what the whole country needs. They need what I needed years ago. They need Christ. But here is my great trouble. While they *need* Him, they don't *want* Him. Christ is only a name to thousands of them. As for the churches who are supposed to represent Him, the people pass them by as though they didn't exist, and they look upon Christianity with indifference.”

A quivering sigh was heard on all hands as he paused again, but no one spoke a word. Each and all seemed to be waiting for what he had to say next.

“ We have just had a great mission,” he went on. “ You decided to invite a stranger to conduct it. Doubtless he was, in many ways, a worthy man, but, as you know, he has altogether failed to influence the real life of the town. We were told at the end of the mission that there were more than a hundred converts, but, in the main, we have failed to find them. Perhaps they do not exist : I do not know ; anyhow, I have failed to find those allotted to me. But that is not all. As time after time I attended the mission, I looked out over the faces of those who came. As you know,

they were, in the main, people who were, more or less, associated with our churches. Why they came I do not know, but they came. This, however, struck me. The educated part of the town was absent. I looked around again and again, but the sons and daughters of the manufacturers and of the professional people of the district were not there. I tried to find in the congregations the reading, the thinking, the cultured portion of the community, but they were nowhere to be seen. And I asked myself this question: Have such missions as these no message for the boys and girls who were reared amidst educated surroundings, and have attended our public schools, our high schools, and our universities? Has Christianity only a message for the unthinking and the ignorant? If I understand aright, it has a message for the best intellects of the land. Why then are we unable to reach them?"

"Can you yourself answer that question?" asked one when Paul paused again.

"I have thought a great deal about these things since the mission concluded," went on Paul. "I have spent many hours trying to find the secret of my failure."

"But you are regarded as a success," said young Ormerod, "and you have told us the secret of that success."

"No, I have been a comparative failure," he replied. "My dreams have not been fulfilled. Cliviger as a town is nearly as pagan to-day as it was when I came here, and until I see a great movement towards Christ I shall regard myself as a failure."

"And do you think you will ever see that movement?" asked someone.

"Yes, I believe I shall."

"I can see no signs of it," exclaimed young Ormerod. "Will you tell us how you think it will come?"

"Please do not be angry with me," replied Paul, "but, as I see it, the weakness of our churches lies with us ministers. It is because we lack the great Something which is essential to success that we have failed."

“ Will you tell us what that Something is that we have lacked all the way through ? ” asked Mr. Crayshaw, and this time there was a suggestion of a sneer in his voice.

“ Yes, I will tell you,” replied Paul.

At this the ministers all waited in silence for him to continue.

## CHAPTER XXV

THE HEART OF THE  
MATTER

“ I HAVE learnt,” went on Paul, “ that the great thing lacking in myself, and, forgive me for being brutally frank, the great thing lacking in you all, is Power. When I came to Cliviger I believed that because I was sure of Christ myself that I should be able to make Him real to others. I hope I have made Him real to others to a degree, but it has only been to a degree. As one of the most cultured young men of the town said to me not long ago : ‘ You have not made me *want* Christ ! ’ That has been my weakness. As I said just now, until we make the people *want* Christ, with all that He means, we are failures. I have not been able to do this. That is what has worried me so. Someone has said that big congregations have come to Ebenezer ; that is, to a degree, true. But what is the use of their coming ? As far as I can see, it has made little or no difference to the mass of the people. I have preached Christ, but at the end of my sermons people have believed in Him no more than they did at the beginning, and they have gone away largely untouched. Why ? ”

“ Brethren, the truth ought to have come to me before, but I only realised it to the full to-night as I was making my way to this room. The Something which I lack is Life, Life which means Power. I do not possess that Great Divine Dynamic by which I can make the people know what I know.



“ Will you think a minute ? The disciples and the people who believed in Christ after His resurrection were sure of Him. He appeared to them ; He spoke to them, and yet Christ did not tell them to proclaim His message at that time. If you will remember, He told them that they must tarry in Jerusalem, and wait for the gift of the Spirit of God. You will remember, too, that when Peter asked Christ after His resurrection whether He would at that time restore the Kingdom to Israel that He replied : ‘ It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put into His own power, but ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.’

“ I may be presumptuous in saying so, but I believe that if Peter, and Philip, and Andrew, and James, and the rest of them, even although they were sure of Jesus, had at that time gone into the streets of Jerusalem and preached Him, they would have had very little effect upon the people. No, they were to wait in Jerusalem until they had the gift of Power, and, as you will remember, they did wait. We are told that they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, and then presently, in the fullness of time, the Spirit of God came to them, and they had Power. Brethren, I believe that is the great thing that we lack. To be sure of Christ is a great deal. Indeed, it is *essential* ; otherwise we should be like so many parrots talking about something that *may* be true. But even that is not enough. To be real ambassadors of Christ we need not only certainty, but that Divine Dynamic which means everything.”

Paul sat down at this, and afterwards another long silence ensued. But no one seemed to think of leaving. Rather there was a feeling of intense expectation as though they waited for something more.

“ I am sure we are all thankful to Brother Tregaskis for what he has said,” the chairman remarked at length, and while there had, hitherto, been a tone of patronage in his voice when he had spoken of Paul, that tone of

patronage had altogether departed. "But I, for one, feel, and perhaps others are in a similar frame of mind, that he has not gone far enough. The question with me now is: What are we to do? While in my heart of hearts I cannot help admitting that we, as ministers, have failed to stem the tide of worldliness and paganism which has swept over the town, I fail to see what we can do more than we have done in the past to create the change which we desire so much. Brother Tregaskis, although he disclaims the idea, can speak as a successful man. From all I can hear, Ebenezer Chapel is well-nigh full every Sunday night. He is a scholar, too, and can speak with authority on many questions concerning which some here are entirely ignorant. Therefore, he occupies a different view-point, if I may so put it, from many others. There are ministers here whose churches are nearly empty, and who have difficulty in, what they term, keeping going. There are others who cannot help feeling that, although they believe good is being done, church life is largely a matter of routine. Has Brother Tregaskis something positive to suggest, some practical course of action which we can take? Therefore, I repeat Brother Ormerod's question: Will he tell us what he thinks ought to be done?"

"Yes, yes, tell us!" was heard all over the room.

Paul was pale to the lips as he rose again. He felt that an awful responsibility rested upon him, and he wondered whether he dared to say all that was in his heart.

"Yes, I will tell you, gentlemen," he said at length. "I think, first of all, that every man who goes into a pulpit should be sure of what he has to proclaim. I remember years ago in Oxford listening in a church to a preacher who uttered these words: '*I am a reverent agnostic. I admit that I don't know.*' I felt then as I feel now, that such an attitude on the part of the minister who pretends to be an ambassador of Christ is little short of a crime. I repeat then that the first

great essential of a successful ministry is that the minister should be sure of what he preaches. He should be sure of God; he should be sure of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world."

"Do you mean to say then," asked the chairman, "that, like you, we should become, through reading and studying, sure that Christ is a great historical fact?"

"No, I do not mean to say that," replied Paul, "for there are many ways of being sure of Christ. As far as I am concerned, I was, at the time I mentioned, carried away by the destructive criticism which I heard all around me; and it was only through a hard course of study that I became convinced of Christ as a great historical fact. But, of course, that is not always necessary. My father down in Cornwall, a simple farmer, is sure of God, is sure of Christ. I only say that in certain cases it may be necessary. But I am sure of this. Every minister ought to be able to meet doubters on their own ground, and to prove, from history if needed, the great fact of Christ. But real certainty about Him, the certainty which is essential, lies deeper. That can only come in ways which I cannot describe, but which are possible to all. I say this, too, that, as it seems to me, the man who has no great vital certainty had better be silent.

"But now I come to another question. The chairman has asked what we ought to do. In trying to answer that question I am going to assume that all of us here are sure—sure of God; sure of Christ; sure that He is able to save the most degraded and callous; sure that He is the great solution of all our problems, individual, industrial, national; sure, too, of the great eternal truth in His words: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.' I say I am assuming that all here have that certainty, and if there are any who don't possess it, their great duty is to seek until they

find it, otherwise they will only be able to say with Tennyson :

“ ‘ So runs my dream, but what am I ?  
An infant crying in the night ;  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.’ ”

“ But by being sure of Christ we have not got to the heart of our problem. I said just now that our great need was the need of Power. At least, that is my great need, and it seems to be the need of every minister in the town. I have been told that I aroused a great deal of enmity by saying on the day I came here that if our churches were decaying, it was the fault of the ministers. But isn't it true ? Brethren, haven't the churches lost the secret of power ? Haven't you and I—if we ever had it—lost it ? Personally, I am afraid I never had it. I thought it was enough for me to preach well-thought-out sermons. But what, after all, are well-thought-out, convincing sermons ? Until we possess that Divine Dynamic of which I spoke just now, we are like birds trying to fly with one wing. Therefore, let us do as the apostles did. Let us continue in prayer and supplication until we receive the gift of Power. Personally I am not going to preach again until I get it ; and I would urge that we ministers continue in prayer until we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

“ But surely you do not believe that God will come upon us with tongues of fire as He did on the day of Pentecost ? ” someone protested.

“ I don't know ; and if I may say so with all reverence, I do not care which way God's power comes. It may come to us as the reality of Christ came to me when I was engaged in my studies in Oxford ; it may come to us as we are walking around the streets ; it may come to us in our private devotions ; but it will come, the secret of Power ; the secret of Life ; the secret of Everything ; the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

"Do you suggest then, Brother Tregaskis," asked the chairman, "that we meet together as the apostles met in olden times?"

"If we can," replied Paul. "This is Monday night. Will this room be occupied this week?"

"As far as I know, it will be available every night," replied Mr. Brighthouse, "and it is free throughout the day."

"Then let us meet here as brethren, and pray and wait," said Paul.

"But what of our services?" protested someone. "I am planned to conduct three preaching services this week in and around Cliviger. What am I to do with them?"

"Can there be no service without preaching?" asked the young man. "Turn them into prayer meetings."

"And what of our Sunday services?" asked another.

"I do not presume to dictate to others," replied Paul, "but, for my part, I am going to tell my congregations next Sunday of this meeting here to-night, and I am going to ask the people to pray for the gift of power."

"But if our services are turned into prayer meetings," objected another, "the outside public will stay away altogether."

"Possibly it will," was Paul's reply, "but, personally, I do not think so. I believe the people are longing for reality, and that when they know we are telling them of the great truths which we have experienced ourselves; and, above all, when they realise that we have the gift of power, they will come to our services with a new interest. But if they don't, let us go to them. I have, for a long time, felt as on a Sunday I have seen the streets crowded with people, the mockery of talking to comparatively empty pews, while our real work lies outside. As I understand it, Peter's great sermon on the day of Pentecost was preached in the open air. Therefore, having obtained power, if the people won't come to us, let us go to them. I remember my native county," he went on. "John Wesley realised

the gift of power. His theology was, doubtless, crude, and he uttered many things which we could not believe in to-day, but he changed Cornwall, and, to a great extent, saved England. How did he do it? The parish churches were closed against him; the ministers of those parish churches were, for the most part, his bitterest enemies. What did he do? He went to village greens; he went to the centres of population; he stood in the market-places of our Cornish towns, and told them about Jesus Christ; and because he had the secret of power he made others see what he saw and believe what he believed. Let us not be afraid, brethren. If we are sincere, if we have a great passion for Christ and Christ's work, we shall not be disappointed."

A few minutes later all those present knelt down. No one offered prayer in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Indeed, not a word was uttered, but some felt, and Paul was amongst them, that they were on the brink of a great discovery.

On the following Sunday morning the habitual chapel-goers at Cliviger found their way to their various places of worship as usual. In some cases there were five hymns, two prayers, two lessons, a sermon and a collection as usual; but in others, and Ebenezer was one of them, no sermon was delivered. Instead, Paul, in a few words, told them of what had taken place in the Wesley Church parlour; told them of what he felt his own weakness to be; and how, because of the lack of power, his ministry had been a comparative failure. He requested that the Ebenezer Chapel should be opened throughout every day for prayer, and he asked all who could to come there and pray for him as well as for all the other ministers of the town. He urged them to do this, not in a perfunctory way, but to remember that at all times God was listening and waiting to give them and him what they lacked. He told them, too, how that he and other ministers had arranged to meet night after night in the Wesley Church parlour to pray.

Naturally, this caused a great deal of discussion in

the town. When it became known among the population that a large number of ministers had ceased preaching because they had come to the conclusion that something essential was lacking in them, and that they had determined to find that something, it aroused a great deal of controversy.

As was natural, too, the events of the ministers' gathering soon became public property, and much as Paul had been discussed before, he was discussed a hundred times more now.

"Didn't I say that these parsons were a lot of parrots?" many said one to another. "Well, you see that the truth is coming out now. The whole thing is a pack of lies, and all the brass that has been spent on the chapels and churches has been wasted."

But this spirit was far from universal. Many who had taken no interest in religion whatever began to ask questions concerning it.

"It meant a lot to yon chaps to stand up in their pulpits and say what they have said," many declared.

There were others who were indignant at what they called wrong methods, and among these were a number who called themselves old-fashioned chapel-goers and church-goers.

"Does young Tregaskis think we are going to have a repetition of the day of Pentecost in Cliviger?" they asked. "Does he think that God Almighty is coming to them in tongues of fire, and all that sort of thing? It won't do. This is an age of science, and whatever they may say, we must look at the thing sensibly."

There were a number of sacerdotalists, moreover, especially in the Roman Catholic Church, and in what they called the Anglo-Catholic Churches, who sought to make capital out of it. "What are these dissenting conventicles after all?" they asked. "They do not belong to the true Church, and, therefore, they have not got the true Church's power. That is why Nonconformity is declining. If all these Nonconformist ministers were properly ordained, everything would be

changed. When our clergy were ordained as priests the Bishop's hands were laid upon them, and thus they received the gift of the Holy Ghost at their ordination. Now we can see the result of schism."

But this made little appeal to the hard-headed, clear-sighted Lancashire people. "If the bishops can impart the gift of the Holy Ghost by laying their hands on parsons' heads, the gift of the Holy Ghost must be a poor business," they asserted almost blasphemously.

As it happened, too, two of the sacerdotal order had been lay preachers in the town, and had since been ordained by a neighbouring bishop.

"Sitha," the people said one to another with a laugh. "I knew these chaps when they were lay preachers, and what were their sermons then? Just like peas rattling in a pan. Well, I have heard their sermons since, and what are they now? Nobbut the same. Nay, nay, that'll noan do. Ordination, if it means anything at all, means more than laying a bishop's hands on parsons' heads."

While these discussions went on, however, something became manifest. The congregations in those chapels where the ministers did not preach, but who were daily meeting in prayer, did not become smaller. Rather they became larger. Perhaps curiosity to an extent accounted for this, as doubtless many went to chapel wondering what would happen.

But there was more than that. The knowledge that a large number of ministers, and not only ministers but lay people as well, were constantly meeting for prayer, made thousands who had regarded religion with indifference to think seriously about it, while, in many cases, people who had grown cold in their devotion and faith, were aroused to a new sense of life. Added to this, people like Mark and Judith Pendle, Miss Trevethoe, the teacher of languages in the Lancaster school, and even young Jack Ridley talked about religion as they had never been known to talk before.

As a consequence, when Paul entered the Ebenezer



pulpit three Sundays after the ministers' meeting in the Wesley Church parlour, he found not a smaller congregation, but an augmented one. There had been during the interregnum such a sense of earnestness and reality that while many, as they had declared, missed Paul's sermons, they could not help admitting that there was an influence in the town which was entirely new. On this particular Sunday morning, too, hundreds noted not only the bright light in his eyes which had been remarked upon after his first visit, but something else. Something for which they could find no word.

"Brothers and sisters," Paul said just before concluding the service, "I am going to preach to-night on 'What Christ Means to Me,'" and that was the only announcement he made.

"I wouldn't miss coming to-night," said old Amos Whalebone as he made his way by the side of George Chadwick down the Ebenezer steps, "for a hundred pounds. I wouldn't for sure. I tell thee, lad, we shall hear summat."

"I don't like this sort of thing," said Dodgeon, the church secretary, who heard old Amos's remark.

"What is there about it that you don't like?" asked the sturdy old Lancashire man.

"It is too much like play-acting," replied Dodgeon. "For three Sundays now Tregaskis has never, what you might call, preached to us, and although I've bin a member of Ebenezer for nearly thirty years, such a thing has never happened before."

"Ay," replied old Amos, "but haven't we bin prayin' as we never prayed before? Haven't scores of people come to Ebenezer during the week who had practically given up going to a place of worship, and prayed for the outpouring of God's spirit?"

"It is all wrong! all wrong!" exclaimed Dodgeon indignantly, "and if this kind of thing goes on I shall give up my post as church secretary."

"Wait a bit, lad, wait a bit," replied old Amos.

“The town for years has been drifting, drifting away from God ; but if I read the signs of the times correctly, there is going to be a great movement in the other direction.”

These divergent views were typical of the attitude of the Ebenezer congregation. Some condemned Paul vehemently, and threatened that they meant to give up not only their membership, but their pews ; while others, like old Amos Whalebone, expressed views of an entirely different nature.

Be that as it may, when six o'clock came that night the chapel was crowded to the doors.

“What will he say ? ” many asked. “He has told us before what Christ means to him. Are we going to hear something new ? ” All were on the tip-toe of excitement.

As a matter of fact Paul said very little that he had not said before. Indeed, his address was little more than a restatement in other words of what he had said on the first Sunday he had visited Cliviger. And yet all felt a difference. Those who had been present then had been deeply interested ; they had felt the young man's earnestness, they had realised his certainty ; but there was something more that Sunday night ; something which was indefinable, something which they could not express, and many found themselves listening with almost painful intensity.

The burden of his address was that Christ meant Life to him, and he so interpreted Life as to make the people yearn for it with a great yearning. Life meant joy in Living. Life meant consciousness of God. Life meant the destruction of death. Life meant the breaking of the power of sin.

I will not try to reproduce his sermon, for while I might repeat every word he uttered I should altogether fail to convey the thousand emotions that it aroused ; the untold longings it inspired ; the infinite joy that it promised. Many saw Christ as they had never seen Him before, and longed for Him as they had never

longed before. He was not simply a great fact in history, not even the Power which had triumphed in millions of lives, but Someone in Ebenezer Chapel Whom the people wanted to know, and Whose secret they wanted to learn.

"Ay, he's got it!" said old Amos Whalebone when he had finished. "Yon chap's got it! 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless and praise His Holy name'!"

As it happened, too, Sir Joshua Pendle's pew was full that night. Mark was there listening with great intentness; Judith was there with a strange look in her eyes, while her lips were tremulous; and seated near to her was Jack Ridley with a look on his face which more than one wondered at. As for Sir Joshua, there was more than once a great sob in his throat, while he constantly wiped his tear-dimmed eyes as if desirous of getting a better view of the preacher.

"I have been wondering," Paul said quietly in concluding, "whether there may not be some who would like to talk with me about the things I have been saying to-night; and, as a consequence, I will be in my vestry to-morrow evening at six o'clock."

He did not announce any prayer meeting, but directly he had pronounced the benediction found his way down the pulpit steps and into the minister's vestry, where Sir Joshua Pendle awaited him.

"Will you come up and have a bit of supper, lad?" the older man said as he grasped his hand.

"Thank you, but not to-night," was Paul's reply. "I am nearly done up, Sir Joshua."

"I wish you would. It is not because I have anything to ask you. I only wanted——" For some seconds he seemed like one overwhelmed, and then, dashing the tears from his eyes, "I only wanted to talk with you about my dear wife," he said. "You see, after to-night I shall know that she will be awaiting me on the other side."

"Will Tuesday do?" asked Paul. "I shall be free

on Tuesday night, and will come up to dinner if you like."

"Yes, do," the baronet said, as he pressed the young man's hand, "and be sure you don't fail us, my boy."

Sir Joshua had scarcely left the vestry when Jack Ridley entered. "Are you going up to Cliviger Hall to-night?" asked Jack.

"No, I can't, I am just a bit overdone," replied Paul.

"My God, you must be!" exclaimed Ridley. "Will you be free to-morrow morning? I ask," he added, "because I want a chat with you."

"I will be free," replied Paul.

"Then—then I will be at your lodgings at ten o'clock in the morning," and without another word Ridley left him.

It was not until an hour later that Paul was able to leave his vestry, so many there were who wanted to speak to him; and when at length he left the church by the vestry door, he wondered whether he would have strength to walk home. But he had no need to fear. No sooner did he reach the gate to which the vestry door opened than he saw a car awaiting him, in which Mark Pendle and Jack Ridley were seated.

"I am here to give you a lift home, Tregaskis," Mark said. "Father told me that you wouldn't come up to supper, so I got out the mill car and brought it here."

"Have you been here long?" asked Paul.

"Nearly an hour," replied Mark. "I was jolly well sure you would be tired, and when Jack Ridley saw what I was up to he said he would wait with me."

"It is awfully good of you both," said Paul, getting into the car.

Not a word was spoken during the few minutes it took to drive to Mrs. Hemingway's cottage, and neither of the young men said anything to him when he again thanked Mark for his kindness; but he knew by the pressure of their hands what they felt.

Half an hour later Mrs. Hemingway came into his room, and told him that a man wanted to see him.

"What man?" asked Paul.

"I don't know, Mr. Tregaskis, who he is," replied Mrs. Hemingway, "but if I were you I shouldn't see him."

"Why not?"

"Well, for one thing, I have been to Ebenezer to-night, and I know how tired you must be; and for another, I think the man is either drunk or mad."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he acts so queerly. He looks like a gipsy," she added.

"I'll see him," replied Paul, after a moment's hesitation.

When his visitor entered the room Paul looked at him in astonishment. "I have seen you before, haven't I?" he asked.

"You may have," replied the man.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Luke Galilee, and I have come to tell you something."

## CHAPTER XXVI

## PENTECOST!

PAUL looked at Luke Galilee intently, and remembered that he had seen him at Ebenezer when he had first visited Cliviger. Even at that moment the pound note which George Chadwick had brought to Cliviger Hall, and which he had said the gipsy left for him, was in his pocket.

The man's face was working convulsively; his eyes were bloodshot, while great beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead.

"I didn't mean to come," he ejaculated in a hoarse voice, after the two had been looking at each other for a few seconds. "I fought like hell against coming, but something made me."

"Yes?" asked Paul. "Why did you come?"

"Because I couldn't stay away. I never thought years ago—but there!"

"Well, what do you want to say to me now you have come?"

The man did not reply for nearly a minute. There was evidently something he wanted to say, but he stood looking at the young minister like one incapable of speech.

"Did you see me at chapel to-night?" he almost gasped at length.

"No, I didn't see you."

"I was there. I was up in the end gallery, but I don't think anybody noticed me. Who was I to be noticed in such a crowd? But I heard you; heard every word."

Paul waited for him to continue.

"Look here," and the man's voice was tremulous with rage. "Why the hell are you making me speak to you?"

"I am not making you speak to me."

"But you are! You are dragging it out of me! When I heard you first you made me feel what a devil I'd been, but I didn't want to alter. I said, 'Let him go to blazes, it is nothing to do with me.' But to-night something got hold of me, I don't know what it was, and I wanted to be a different chap. Look here, you can box a bit, can't you?"

"I could years ago."

"Well, that's my job. I've been in some big fights in my time, and now I go around to country fairs and challenge all comers. But that is not what I have come about. You made me want to give up being a devil; you made me want to be a different chap."

"I am glad of that."

"Well, I don't know that I am. And, mind this: I been a bad un, a downright bad un. I've committed every sin known to man except murder, and I don't know if I haven't done that in my time. But I want

to give it all up now. You've made me, and yet if I do I shall have a hell of a time."

"No, you won't," replied Paul. "You are going to have a jolly good time; you are going to have more joy in life than you ever had before."

The man laughed scornfully. "You don't know!" he almost shouted. "Do you know who I am?"

"Yes," replied Paul. "You have told me your name is Luke Galilee, and on the night I saw you first, you gave a man a pound note for me, and I have kept it ever since. I wouldn't part with it for fifty others like them; it is one of the treasures I am going to keep until I die."

"You don't mean that?" exclaimed the man excitedly. "You don't really mean that?"

"But I do."

"I didn't know at the time why I left it for you," exclaimed the gipsy. "And yet perhaps I did. I—I—Do you know who you are?"

Paul was silent. A hundred wild thoughts passed through his mind, and he found himself making all sorts of conjectures.

"I came to Cliviger last March in the ordinary way, so to speak," went on the gipsy excitedly. "I had no thought of seeing you. How could I? But when I was in the 'Fox and Hounds' I heard someone talking about a chap called Paul Tregaskis who was going to preach in the biggest chapel in the town. After I had asked some questions I went and had a look at the chapel. That was on the Saturday night, and I made up my mind that I would go and hear you on the Sunday night. I hadn't been to such a place for twenty years, and—and— Well, you know what happened?"

"I remember," replied Paul.

"I left Cliviger the next morning early. I didn't want anyone to see me, but I kept on thinking of what you had said, and, as I told you just now, while you made me feel what a blackguard I had been, I didn't want to be any better—yes, I did though. Look here,

you go by the name of Tregaskis, but that isn't your real name. Do you know what it is ? ”

“ Why do you ask ? ”

“ Because I must tell you. You are not the son of a farmer down in Cornwall, you are a big swell. You are the son of a lord.”

“ How do you know ? ” asked Paul.

The gipsy looked at him keenly as if wondering if he ought to say more.

A few minutes later Paul had extracted from Luke Galilee practically the same story which Mr. Bolsover had told him in the same room some time before. Told him how in his peregrinations around the country he had happened to meet John Tregaskis who had given him, a gipsy vagrant, a hot meal one night when he was tired and hungry. Told him, too, how he had heard that although they were childless, John Tregaskis and his wife longed for a child. Then he went on to relate how after Lord St. Elwyn had sentenced him to prison he had made up his mind to have his revenge, and rob the proud aristocrat of his son and heir.

“ But I didn't know what to do with you when I had got you,” he went on at length. “ I had no woman living with me at that time ; I didn't even own a caravan ; I simply went around from boxing booth to boxing booth at country fairs. Then I hit upon a scheme. I remembered the man and woman who had been kind to me, and I determined to take you there. That's how it all came about.”

“ And you came to tell me,” said Paul presently, “ that I am Lord St. Elwyn's son ? ”

“ Yes, but that is only part of it. I don't know how it was, but while I was in that chapel to-night I was ashamed, fair ashamed of being a sort of devil let loose. I wanted to go straight, mister. Good God ! to think that you, the kid I stole out of pure devilry, should become a sky pilot ! and to think that you should make me want to be a Christian ! Yes, and I am going to be, too. I can't help myself.”



The man was silent for a few seconds, and then went on again :

" But I felt I couldn't be a Christian while I remained a skunk. I had to do the straight thing. I had to come and tell you the truth. I felt that God Almighty couldn't do anything for me until I had done my part first. And now will you tell me something ? "

" If I can," replied Paul.

" Then what are *you* going to do ? "

" What am I going to do ? I don't understand."

" Yes, you do. You are the son and heir of a big swell. Are you going down west, and take, what people would call, your proper place ? "

" No, I am going to stay in Cliviger."

" What ! When you might be a lord ? "

" I am going to remain in Cliviger," replied Paul.

" Why, in God's name ? "

" Because this is my place, and because I can do more good by remaining here than by doing what you said."

Luke Galilee came towards Paul with unsteady footsteps but with an outstretched hand. " Put it there, mister," he said.

" Why should I ? " asked Paul, although he obeyed his behest, and placed his thin, nervous hand in the broad palm of the gipsy.

" Because you are a man of God," said Luke Galilee fervently ; " and because you have helped me to do what I thought I couldn't do. When you asked me just now to go to Lord St. Elwyn and tell him what I have told you, I thought I couldn't do it. It will mean quod for me, perhaps years of it. Yes, I know what you said. You told me that Lord St. Elwyn promised you to forgive the man who stole his kid ! But I don't trust him. Anyhow, it doesn't matter to me now. If you are going to give up the thought of being a lord for the sake of leading dirty devils like me to God, I will do what I said, and tell him everything ; quod or no quod."

When Luke Galilee left Mrs. Hemingway's cottage at midnight, Paul felt like a man in a dream. It seemed to him that the impossible had come to pass. Not only did he possess a new life and power, but the secret of his birth was proved up to the hilt. The gipsy had insisted that Paul should write at his dictation the story I have recorded in these pages, and had signed his confession plainly and legibly. But that was not all. He had told Paul that he was going to the west of England on the following day, and make a clean breast of everything to Lord St. Elwyn.

"I owe it to you, mister!" exclaimed the gipsy fervently. "I owe it to you. And more than that, I feel that God Almighty cannot make a man of such a dirty beast as I have been unless I do what I have said."

Paul had scarcely finished breakfast on the following morning when Jack Ridley appeared. The young manufacturer was evidently under the stress of a great emotion. Not only was his face pale and bloodless, but his eyes shone with a light which was almost unearthly.

"I told you I was coming this morning, didn't I?" he remarked as he entered the room.

"Yes," replied Paul, "you did."

"I have had a hard fight to keep my word," laughed Ridley nervously. "It seemed easy enough last night, but this morning everything seemed changed. Still——"

He stopped at this as though he did not know how to proceed. "What's come over you?" he asked at length.

"What do you mean?"

"Of course I know what all the town has been talking about these last three weeks, and have laughed at it, just laughed at it. 'It's a new stunt on the part of the parsons,' I said when I heard that several of you had given up preaching. All the same, when Mark Pendle told me yesterday afternoon that you had made an announcement yesterday morning to the effect that you were going to preach a sermon in the evening, I

made up my mind that I would go to Ebenezer. Look here, Tregaskis, I will be absolutely frank with you. I haven't liked you in the past."

"No? Why?" asked Paul.

"Well, for one thing, I thought you had set Judith Pendle against me."

"Why should you think so?"

"Pure devilry, I expect. Anyhow, I thought you were not on my side. Perhaps you have heard that I want to marry her? Have you?"

"It has been the talk of the town," replied Paul.

"Yes, of course it has. But that isn't what I wanted to see you about. I went to chapel last night out of curiosity; but, by Jove, you shook me!"

"In what way?"

"I hardly know. When I heard you preach before, I thought you were a clever fellow, and I congratulated you on your sermon; but last night everything was different. I couldn't tell why it was, but I had a great longing to learn the secret which you had learnt. Look here, Tregaskis, I've gone the whole hog. I was anything but a saint while I was in the Army, and I have been worse since. I dare say you have heard about me, haven't you?"

Paul was silent.

"Anyhow, it's true. I had given religion of all kinds a wide berth. I have played fast and loose with women. I've—I've—God only knows what I've done! But last night something new came to me. You didn't talk like an ordinary parson at all; you made me want— Well, there it is. You meant what you said, didn't you?"

"Yes, I meant what I said."

"It is this way," went on Ridley. "Of course I haven't been satisfied with the life I've been living; it is no use saying I have; I haven't. I've lost my will power. I've made up my mind a dozen times to be a better chap, but I have yielded to the first temptation. But last night something new came to me. I felt that

I could have a new strength, a new power if only that Life which you talked about, whereby I could say 'no' to the devil, could be mine. Can it be mine, Tregaskis?"

"Yes," replied Paul.

"I have often wanted to be a better chap," and there was a tone of humility in his voice. "It is true my family have become cold about religion. All the same, I have been an awful trouble to my father, and I have been a disgrace to my sisters. All the same my self-respect, the spark of manhood which still remained in me, made me ashamed of myself; and last night I longed, just longed, to be a good, clean chap. And that isn't all. I am in love with Judith Pendle. Yes, I have been in love with her for years; I have been in love with her when in my heart of hearts I knew that I shouldn't be faithful to her if I married her. And yet I wanted to marry her. God only knows how much. So, for her sake as well as the other things, I want to start on new lines; I want to be a new man. You believe I can, don't you?"

"I am sure you can," replied Paul.

"Well, that's what I came to see you about. From this time forward I mean to go straight. I know I shall have a hard time, and I hardly slept last night for thinking about it. Will you help me, Tregaskis?"

Then Paul realised to the full what the promise he had made to Judith Pendle meant. If he did what Ridley had asked him, he would be like a man signing his own death warrant. He remembered what Judith Pendle had told him; remembered her declaration that she could never marry Jack Ridley until he became a changed man, although he was the only man she had ever cared for. Never did he love Judith Pendle as he loved her at that moment. Humanly speaking, she was the hope of his life, and if he did what Ridley asked he would thereby put the woman he loved in the arms of another man.

"Do you remember the hymn with which we

closed last night ? ” he asked after a moment’s silence.

“ ‘Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find.’ ”

“ Yes, I know,” broke in Ridley, “ but you must remember that I have been for a long time off the track, and I want human as well as divine help. I want someone whom I can trust, and to whom I can go in times of difficulty. Anyhow, you will help me, won’t you ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Paul.

When Jack Ridley left Paul half an hour later the young minister felt that he had given up the dearest thing in life. Up to now, even although he remembered that Judith Pendle had told him that Jack Ridley was the only man she could ever care about, there had been a kind of hope in his heart that in some way this girl whom he loved so dearly would be his. But that hope had gone now, and it had gone for ever. He had fought the great battle of his life. He had, at the call of duty, put the woman he loved in the background of his life ; he had made the great renunciation.

And yet he felt strangely exalted, strangely happy. In a way he could not understand, he felt himself to be born anew. In a sense, his life was desolate, and yet a great joy surged in his heart such as he had never realised before.

On the previous night when Luke Galilee had told him that he would go to his father and confess the truth, he had been sorely tempted to go to St. Elwyn as the heir of an old name and of an old property. Nothing now stood in the way of his announcing himself as Lord St. Elwyn’s elder son, and he was sure that when the truth became known no one would expect him to continue as the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. All the same, he knew that if he gave up his work at Cliviger he would, although he might gain the whole world, lose his own soul. That was why he had told

the gipsy that he should remain in Cliviger. But that battle seemed as nothing compared with the battle he had fought while Ridley was with him. Still he had fought it, and he had won. He felt now that he could preach as he had never preached before, for he had come into an inheritance a thousand times greater than the world could give him. He had, as he had said on the first Sunday he stood in the Ebenezer pulpit, been sure of Christ; sure of all that Christ mean to the life of men. But this had a new meaning to him now, a more glorious meaning, and he knew that he would be able to make Christ real to others. Knew, too, that Cliviger would become a new town.

Jack Ridley had not gone more than a few minutes before the Rev. Judah Brighthouse, the superintendent Wesleyan minister, was ushered into his study.

"You preached last night!" exclaimed Mr. Brighthouse.

"Yes," replied Paul.

"So did I," replied Mr. Brighthouse with a happy laugh. "I couldn't help it. I was planned at Wesley last night, and had made up my mind to say nothing except to call upon the people to continue praying. But just as I reached the pulpit steps it came to me."

"What came to you?"

"I don't know what it was," replied the older man with another laugh. "Yes, I do though. It was what we have been praying for: Certainty; Life; Power. Something practically unknown to me entered my being, and made everything new. The ministry had a new meaning to me; Christ had a new meaning to me; the Gospel had a new meaning to me, and I couldn't be silent. What do you think I preached about?"

"I've no idea," replied Paul.

"It all came to me as I made my way up the pulpit steps," and there was a glad light in the minister's eyes. "'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye heareth the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So it is with everyone that is born of the Spirit.' I had a glorious time," he continued,

“ and I preached as I never preached in my life before. Do you know the greatest thing that ever happened in Cliviger, Tregaskis, old man ? ”

“ I think I do ; but what do you say it was ? ”

“ It was that meeting when you told us that the great thing wanting was Life, Power. We are going to have some grand times now. I am sure of it.”

Scarcely had Mr. Brighthouse finished speaking when young Arthur Ormerod rushed into the room. “ I’ve got it, Tregaskis ! ” he shouted. “ By jove, I’ve got it ! ” and the young fellow’s eyes burned with a new light, and his voice was hoarse with emotion.

“ When I woke yesterday morning,” he went on, “ the heavens were black ; everything was black. My heart was as heavy as lead, and I had no more inspiration than that chair. ‘ What’s the use of our praying ? ’ I said to myself. ‘ Prayer isn’t an atom of use. There is no God who cares, while Jesus Christ is as dead as the Dodo.’ ”

“ Still, I knelt down by my bedside as usual and tried to say something to, what seemed to me, The Great Unknown, and then went downstairs. During breakfast I determined to announce my resignation to my church, and to tell the people that I would leave immediately. I felt that to stay in Cliviger any longer would be mere mockery on my part. Then afterwards, as I made my way through the streets to the chapel, I met old Elijah Blackman, the town missionary ; and what do you think he was saying ? ”

“ I have not the slightest idea,” replied Paul.

“ I could hear every word plainly as he came towards me. ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.’ Then when he came close to me he stopped. ‘ Brother Ormerod,’ he said, ‘ the Lord is risen indeed. Be ready when He comes to you to-day.’ ”

“ Well, what then ? ” asked Paul as the young fellow ceased speaking.

“ Then ? ” exclaimed Ormerod. “ Then—— Well, I

haven't resigned!—and I don't know how it was, but I knew I had got what I wanted: certainty, life, power—— Please forgive me, Mr. Brighthouse, for being so rude, but I was so eager to tell Tregaskis what I had found, that until this moment I didn't notice that you were here.”

“ Mr. Brighthouse was just telling me that he has had an experience similar to your own,” Paul informed him.

“ Great God, was he? It is all over the town that you were preaching last night, Tregaskis, and I should think at least fifty people stopped me in the streets and told me about it. I tell you, we must have another great United Mission, and we'll have a missionary different from that man Priestley.”

“ Not a bit of it,” laughed Paul.

“ But why not? ”

“ I've done with ostentation and show,” replied the young man. “ Besides, I think every minister should be his own evangelist. If we are called to preach, we should do our own evangelistic work; and if we are true to our calling our work will prosper.”

“ Perhaps you are right,” admitted Ormerod. “ Anyhow, we must continue to meet in prayer.”

“ Yes, we must never cease doing that,” replied Paul.

That evening when Paul entered his vestry according to the announcement on the previous evening, he found that not only was his little sanctum full, but at least a score of people were waiting in the aisles of the chapel. Most of them had come there straight from their work. The engines at the various mills in the town had stopped at half-past five, and many of the operatives leaving immediately after, had found their way to Ebenezer Chapel.

I am not going to try to describe the interviews which took place. Indeed, there is no need that I should, except to say that many told Paul that he had struck a new chord in their hearts on the previous night. That for months and years they had felt something wanting in their lives; something which would make it real and



worth the living, and that he had made them feel that that something could be found. Paul had never had such an experience before, and as one after another told, each in his or her own way, of the heart hunger they had felt, and the many unrealised hopes they had cherished, he was simply overcome. When at length, too, a number of them adjourned to what was called number one vestry, a room capable of holding a hundred people, and many who had not prayed for years besought the great Saviour of men to help them to live the new life they had determined to live, the young minister was more than ever sure that it was his duty to stay amidst the blackness and the soot of that dirty manufacturing town.

Paul did not go to Cliviger Hall to dinner on the Tuesday night as he had promised Sir Joshua Pendle. His heart yearned to go, but he wrote a letter to Sir Joshua asking him to excuse him. For one thing, he felt that it would be wrong for him to do so. Remembering the promise he had made to Jack Ridley, and knowing what was in the young manufacturer's mind and heart, he felt that he would be putting himself in the way of temptation to visit Cliviger Hall at such a time. But more than that, he was simply besieged by people who came to him to talk about the Sunday night service at Ebenezer Chapel. Indeed, he was not long in finding out that what he had thought to be dead in the town had become its chief interest.

Then something else happened. On the Friday morning Paul found among his letters one from Lord St. Elwyn.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## BEGINNINGS

"I HAVE had an exciting time since I wrote you last," Paul read. "Late last Monday night just as your mother and I were going to bed, Perkins came into the

room, and told us that a wild, evil-looking man wanted to see me. It seems that Perkins, having been very unfavourably impressed by him, had told him to leave the house immediately. But he had persisted in demanding to see me, and to see me at once. This led Perkins to ask the fellow certain questions, who at length informed him that his name was Luke Galilee, and that he had come from Cliviger that morning. I, therefore, gave him instructions for the man to be shown in.

“ I recognised him immediately. It was true that something like thirty years had elapsed since he had been brought before me at the St. Elwyn police court, but I was certain that the poacher on whom I passed a somewhat severe sentence, and who had threatened to have his revenge on me if I sent him to prison, stood before me.

“ I need not relate to you the details of his story. All that he told me he told you last Sunday night. He also said that it was through your influence that he determined to come to see me. I was sorely tempted to ring up the police station, and have him arrested at once ; but remembering my promise to you, I did nothing of the sort.

“ I am not going to dwell on his description of what you are doing in Cliviger, or on the strange influence you had over the fellow. In any case, whether it was, as he said, through you that he came to me or not, he did come, and he made a full confession of everything.

“ Although, as you know, neither your mother nor myself have had the slightest doubt that you are our son, I, knowing Hugh's attitude towards you, and remembering his threat if you were publicly proclaimed as our son, determined to put the fellow's confession to good account. On the following morning, therefore, I not only rung up Bolsover and told him what had taken place, but I also telegraphed to Tregaskis, your *soi disant* father, to come here as soon as possible. (By the way, I find that Trelyon, the place Tregaskis farms,

belongs to me. Rather strange, isn't it?) Later in the day I got a telegram from Tregaskis saying he would be here soon after midday on Wednesday, upon which I arranged with both Bolsover and Galilee to be here also.

"Naturally your mother was much excited, and begged me to telegraph to you to come, but remembering what you said when you were here as well as what you told Galilee, I refrained from doing so. I may add that your mother is nearly breaking her heart because of your continued absence, and is all the time longing to see you.

"John Tregaskis arrived here on Wednesday a little after one o'clock. Bolsover was already in the house. He came late on Tuesday night, and slept here. Galilee was here also. He came early during the forenoon, and had lunch in the servants' hall. From what I can gather, he behaved very well, and, in accordance with your wish, has refrained from saying a word to anyone concerning the purport of his visit except to your mother and myself.

"Directly after lunch we all met in the library. Of course I was very careful that Hugh should be present, while Mary, who, I believe, had an inkling of what was going to be on the *tapis*, insisted on being there. I was careful also to have old Dorcas Rickard there. (I am telling you these things so that there may not be a shadow of doubt in your mind as to the upshot of our little conference.)

"Galilee told his story again just as he had told it to me. I may add that he recognised John Tregaskis the moment he saw him, and declared that he was the man at whose house he left the baby he had stolen. Mr. Bolsover asked the gipsy innumerable questions which, I must say, the man answered frankly and with apparent truth; while John Tregaskis declared on his oath that the baby who was left at his farm and reared as his own son, had finally become the minister of Ebenezer Chapel in Cliviger. Hugh insisted on this.

The upshot of the whole business was that Hugh expressed himself as entirely satisfied, and that he was prepared to receive you as his brother. Dorcas Rickard also declared that she recognised the gipsy as the man she had seen loafing around the place days before her charge was stolen from her.

“ Now then, Paul, my boy, I have told you everything. As I said, Hugh is entirely satisfied, and seems to be quite content with the thought that he must be in the future regarded as a younger brother ; so there can be no longer the slightest reason against your being publicly recognised as Paul St. Elwyn. I may also add that John Tregaskis is also reconciled to the idea of giving you up to us. He realises that you are not his son, and as I believe the man really loves you, he is anxious that you should take your rightful place in the country. By the way, he is a good fellow, and your mother and I have been considering what we shall do for him. What do you think ? Do you not think it will be a gracious action on our part to make him a present of the freehold of Trelyon Farm ? I want your opinion. Naturally, in view of the fact of your previous relationship, and also remembering that you are the potential owner of the property, it is right that you should be consulted.

“ And now another word, As I told you, your mother is longing for you to come home, and while, according to your desires, I have not uttered a word to the world at large, I am sure that not only every tenant on the estate, but every neighbour for miles around, will give you a great welcome. So will you not come home at once ? Your mother wants you ; I want you ; Hugh, I believe, wants you ; while Mary is excited beyond measure at the possibility of your coming home. Of course I take no notice of Galilee’s description of what you are doing in Cliviger, or of your determination to stay there. It is your duty to come home, and you must come home. I will, if you like, go to Cliviger and publicly announce who you are, so that your departure

from the town will be both natural and easy. Please write at once.

“ Your affectionate father,  
“ ST. ELWYN.”

Paul could not help being moved by this long letter from his father. It breathed the air of sincerity ; it also told him that Lord St. Elwyn, proud and reserved as he undoubtedly was, loved him. Besides, his father's appeal was natural. Surely it was right for him to go to his true home, and the fact that Hugh had withdrawn his opposition added strength to the plea his father made.

Besides, why should he stay in Cliviger any longer ? He had done the work he had set out to do. Ever since the previous Sunday, people on all hands had been telling him of the new life that had come into the town, and the new earnestness which was apparent in many of the ministers. In that respect, therefore, his ministry could not be regarded as a failure.

He thought of what his father had said about his mother, and he pictured her sitting alone in the old home of the St. Elwyns longing for the son who had been stolen from her long years before. And he wanted to go to her. His filial duty demanded that he should, but there was more than filial duty which surged in his heart. He loved the gracious woman who had claimed him as her son, and longed to be with her.

There was another reason, too, why he should leave Cliviger, a reason which was strong and clamant. He remembered Jack Ridley's visit to him on the previous Monday morning, and called to mind what he had promised both to Ridley and to Judith Pendle. He imagined now that Ridley had become a changed man that they would soon be married, and perhaps they would ask him to marry them. Indeed, he felt sure that they would. But how could he do it ? How could he, loving Judith Pendle as he did with every fibre of his being, marry her to another man ? How could he stay

in the town knowing that the only woman he had ever loved in his life, and to whom his heart had gone out in all its fullness, had given herself to Ridley? He felt mad at the thought of it. No, he could not, he simply *could* not do it. Thus, while the discovery of his parents, and all that they meant to him, was as nothing compared with his love for this young girl, he could not stay in Cliviger.

Just at that moment the telephone bell rang.

"Is that you, Mr. Tregaskis? This is Sir Joshua Pendle."

"Yes, Sir Joshua. What can I do for you?"

"Look here, my boy, I was awfully disappointed on Tuesday at getting your letter saying you couldn't come to dinner. We all were. Mark was awfully anxious to see you, so was Judith. In fact they gave up other engagements in order to be home."

"I am sorry for that."

"Well, never mind that now. You will come up to-night, won't you?"

"I am afraid I can't."

"Do," and there was a beseeching tone in Sir Joshua's voice. "I have a lot to tell you; a lot that you ought to hear. You've no idea of what's going on in the town; but that isn't all. As I told you last Sunday night, I want to talk with you about my wife. You will come, won't you?"

"I am afraid I can't," Paul repeated.

"But you must; you really must. I shall be all alone. Judith is going out somewhere, and Mark has an engagement," and Sir Joshua laughed meaningly. "I want to tell you about that, too."

"About what?"

"About Mark. I expect I shall soon have another daughter. Say you will come."

Paul reflected. He had refrained from going to Cliviger Hall on the previous Tuesday because he feared to meet Judith; but if Sir Joshua was to be alone——

"Very well, Sir Joshua. I will try to get to you about seven."

"Good! I shall expect you."

"I am glad you are able to get here," Sir Joshua greeted him. "I have wanted all the week to have an hour's chat with you, and as both Mark and Judith had arranged to be out, I couldn't help ringing you up."

"What have you to tell me about Mark?" Paul asked.

Sir Joshua laughed merrily. "I thought he would have told you himself, but I expect the young beggar has been too busy. He's done it!"

"Done what?"

"Got engaged! I tell you, my young friend, you will have a great deal to answer for."

"I don't understand you," replied Paul.

"Don't you? Why, you are responsible for Mark's engagement."

"Responsible for Mark's engagement! How can that be? Mark and I have never discussed the question of marriage in any way."

Sir Joshua laughed again. "You know Miss Trevethoe, of course?"

"Naturally. It was only last Monday that she came to me, and asked to be admitted to church membership."

"Yes, that's it," laughed Sir Joshua. "Mark has wanted her for months, and has more than once asked her to marry him. But she wouldn't. She is a fine girl," went on the baronet, "but before you came she seems to have got on the rocks with regard to her religious beliefs; and when Mark asked her to marry him, and, at the same time, told her that he had been led to give up all religion as an idle tale, that made her refuse him. She wanted to marry him, but she said she could not marry a man who negatived the faith she was longing to find. Oh, I tell you it was grand, Tregaskis!"

"Grand!" repeated Paul in a tone of wonderment. "How could that be?"

"Why, last Sunday night's service made Mark see everything in a new light. Anyhow, when they met last Tuesday night, and Mark was able to tell her what he did tell her, he seems to have broken down every barrier."

"Do you mean then that Mark——?"

"That I do," interrupted Sir Joshua. "Don't mistake me, Mark has always been a good, straight chap, but he had become a materialist, an agnostic. But last Sunday night he saw everything in a new light, and, if I am not mistaken, you will find him one of your great helpers in the future. Anyhow, they are engaged, and I regard you as responsible for it."

"Splendid!" cried Paul.

"It *is* splendid. I have got to know her well during the last few months, and there isn't a finer girl in Lancashire. In fact, if Mark had searched England all over he couldn't have found anyone who would have pleased me more. As for Mark, he seems like a new man. I tell you, it was a great day for Cliviger when you came here."

Paul was silent.

"I said I wanted to talk with you about my wife," went on Sir Joshua. "You have heard more than once how much we were to each other, and how lonely I was when God took her away. I felt, for a time, as though I had nothing to live for, and although that feeling went presently, nothing seemed the same. I suppose it never will," and he dashed the back of his hand across his eyes. "All the same, I shall never doubt again."

Paul looked at him questioningly.

"I mean it, my boy. Why, last Sunday night while you were praying I knew that she was in the pew beside me. *Knew* it! Hitherto, while I had a sort of conventional belief that she was still living, and still loved me, I was sure of nothing; but while we were in the chapel everything became real, and I felt like shouting for joy. I wanted to tell you this, for I feel towards you as I never felt towards any other man."



Then Sir Joshua opened his heart to the young minister, and they talked long and intimately about things which had been a sealed book before. "I never told you about Judith and Jack Ridley, did I?" he went on presently.

Paul was silent.

"Jack has told me through the week that he had a long talk with you on Monday," went on Sir Joshua, "and now I hope—— You see, while I believe that Judy has always liked him, she could never make up her mind to have him. Jack has been a bad chap. Yes, it's no use mincing words, he has. He's played fast and loose in all sorts of ways, too, and while, from a financial point of view, it would have been a good thing for me if they could have made a match of it—— well, you understand. But Jack has changed. I know it is early days to talk yet, but he's a changed man. He looks at everything from a new standpoint; regards everything differently. He is no longer a boy either. He must be thirty-five if he is a day, and I am sure he means to live a different life."

They had finished dinner for some time, and were now sitting in the room which had been furnished according to Mark's desires. So immersed had they become in their conversation that neither of them had heard the approach of a motor-car outside, and thus both were startled when the door opened and Judith Pendle entered the room.

"Why, Judith, my dear!" exclaimed Sir Joshua, "when you told me you were going to Mrs. Hawkborough's to-night, I didn't expect you back until late."

"And aren't you glad I have come early?" laughed the girl.

"Of course I am; not but what Mr. Tregaskis and I have been getting on very well together. I told him I wanted a long talk with him, and when I knew you were going out to-night I immediately tried to persuade him to spend the evening here with me. I had some little difficulty, too," he added.

“And have you had your talk out?” asked the girl.

“Not quite,” replied Sir Joshua. “I wanted to say something more to him.”

“Then I suppose I had better leave you?”

“No, my dear, there is no need of that. I was only going to tell him that he must never think of leaving Cliviger; that he must make his home here always.”

“Why, is he thinking of leaving?” asked the girl.

“I hope not,” cried Sir Joshua fervently. “Some weeks ago he startled us all at Ebenezer by saying that his work was a failure, and that perhaps he ought to leave us. But he can’t say that now. You must make up your mind to settle down among us, my young friend. You will, won’t you?”

Paul remembered the letter he had received that morning from his father, and he called to mind what Sir Joshua had just been telling him about Jack Ridley. Could he, in face of what he was sure was in the baronet’s mind, remain in Cliviger?

“You will, won’t you?” persisted Sir Joshua. “If I read the signs of the times aright, we are at the beginning of something wonderful in this town, and it will be nothing short of a crime for you to leave us.”

Paul did not reply. He wondered whether the time had not come to tell the principal man in his church something of what had happened during the last few weeks, and to ask his advice concerning his own duty. But no words passed his lips; he seemed like one struck dumb.

At that moment a servant appeared at the door. “A gentleman has called to see you, Sir Joshua,” the man informed him. “He says it is about something very particular. I have shown him into the library,” he added.

“Don’t go yet, Tregaskis,” Sir Joshua said as he left the room. “I shall be back in a few minutes, and there is a lot I want to say to you yet. Judith

will be with you while I'm away, won't you, my dear ? ”

He left the room as he spoke, leaving Judith and Paul together.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII THE GREAT REVIVAL

“ You had a long talk with Jack Ridley last Monday, didn't you ? ” the girl began. “ Have you seen him since ? ”

“ No.”

“ Tell me what he told you.”

“ I am afraid I can't do that.”

“ Why ? ” Then, as he remained silent, she went on, “ I had a reason for leaving Mrs. Hawksborough's house early to-night. Father told me before I went out that you were coming to dinner, so I made an excuse and came away as soon as I could.”

Paul still continued silent. He felt that somehow a new atmosphere had come into the room ; that the girl, by her presence, had changed everything.

“ You didn't answer father just now when he asked you to give a promise that you would not think of leaving Cliviger,” she went on. “ You seemed like one in doubt. Are you ? ”

Still he did not speak.

“ Tell me,” persisted the girl. “ I want to know.”

“ Why do you want to know ? ”

“ Because—if you felt it your duty to come, is it not a thousand times more your duty to stay ? Has father told you about Mark and Mary Trevethoe ? ” she added.

“ Yes.”

“ Aren't you glad ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Then, of course, it is your duty to promise father.”

“ Perhaps I could not keep my promise.”

“Why?”

Almost for the first time since she had come into the room Paul looked straight into her face, and noted her pallor; noted, too, that her lips were trembling.

“You couldn’t leave the work which you have only just begun,” she said.

“It might be my duty to,” he could not help saying.

“Tell me why. I don’t understand.”

For the moment he had forgotten all about his father’s letter; forgotten even the appeal which his mother had made. He remembered only what Judith had told him about Jack Ridley.

“Why couldn’t you keep your promise?” she persisted. “What do you mean?” There was a bright light in her eyes, a light he had never seen before.

“Perhaps it is not right for me to tell you,” he said presently, “but I simply can’t help myself. You remember what you said to me months ago? You told me that you had loved Mr. Ridley for years, and that if he became a changed man you would marry him. I couldn’t stay in the town if you did.”

“Why?” and the word was a gasp.

“Don’t you know? Can’t you guess? Oh, forgive me, I ought not to speak about it, but I can’t help myself.”

“But—but I don’t understand. Tell me.” Her face had been pale before, but now it seemed to be entirely bloodless. Her eyes, too, shone with an unnatural light.

“Then if I must tell you,” said Paul, “I could not bear to stay.”

“But why?”

“Because—oh, I know I must seem mean and contemptible, but I must tell you everything. You know how soon after I came here you told me what you said was the great secret of your life. You said that while you loved Ridley you could not marry him if he remained the kind of man he was. Then you

pleaded with me to do everything in my power to make him a different man. You remember, don't you ? ”

“ Yes,” the girl almost gasped.

“ It was then that I found out my own secret. I knew that I loved you more than life. I know I must degrade myself in your eyes by saying what I have to say, but I did not want Ridley to be a changed man. While he continued to be the fast man-about-town I felt there was some hope for me, and so I determined not to move a finger to help to reform him.

“ I conquered that feeling after a bit. I felt that my life in Cliviger was a mockery while I dreaded his reformation. I think it was the hardest battle I ever fought in my life, but I fought it ; and when he came to see me last Monday morning I did my utmost to help him, and, according to the letter I received from him yesterday, I did help him.”

The girl sat staring at him. Every particle of her body seemed to be shaking, while her eyes shone with an unnatural light.

“ I tried to fight against my love for you,” went on Paul, “ tried to forget you. But how could I ? Every thing in my life fought against what I was trying to do. That's why I can't stay in Cliviger.”

The girl seemed to be trying to speak, to protest, but could not.

“ Your father has been telling me about you to-night,” went on Paul. “ He seems to regard your marriage with Ridley as a settled thing, but there are limits to human endurance—— Oh, I know what a fool I am ! I recognise the fact that even if you were free to marry me it would be nothing less than madness to think that I, a poor parson with a few hundreds a year, should wed Judith Pendle, the only daughter of Sir Joshua Pendle. But even that is as nothing compared with the other. How could I live in the same town as you, knowing you had given yourself body and soul to Jack Ridley ? Every hour I stayed here I should be committing a sin, for I

should be longing for another man's wife. I should— Great God; Miss Pendle, you don't understand! I love you! How then could I stay in Cliviger when all the time I knew that you——”

Paul, who had been looking into the fire while he was talking, now turned his eyes towards Judith, and noted what, to him, looked like horror on her face; and he felt, in spite of everything, that every particle of respect she had had for him in the past, had gone clean out of her life.

“Don't look at me like that,” he almost shouted as he rose to his feet, “and please forgive me—— I won't trouble you again, only——”

“Don't! Don't!” The girl's voice rose almost to a scream as she spoke, and then without another word she rushed out of the room, leaving him alone.

“I didn't think it would be so hard,” muttered the young fellow as he wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead. “Still, it's better so. She will understand now.”

Sir Joshua came in a little later. “Where is Judy?” he asked.

“She left the room a few minutes ago,” replied Paul, who by this time was able to speak collectedly.

“I don't understand the child,” remarked Sir Joshua. “She doesn't seem at all well, and, from what Jack Ridley told me early in the week, I should think she was unhappy.”

Mark Pendle came in soon after, and formed a striking contrast to his sister. Whatever might be in her mind and heart, Mark looked the picture of contentment and happiness.

“You surely had some idea, Tregaskis, old chap,” Mark laughed. “Why, I have wanted her for months. Anyhow, it is all right now, and as soon as arrangements can be made you will have to tie the knot. You will, won't you? I wouldn't think of allowing anyone else to do it, neither would Mary. By gosh, Tregaskis, old man, she's a grand girl! Yes, we are the happiest pair

of turtle-doves in the country, and, what is more, we owe it all to you."

"I wonder where Judy has gone?" remarked Sir Joshua an hour later. "It is not like her to go away like this— What! You must go! Then I will ring for Riley to drive you home."

"You will do nothing of the sort, pater," said Mark with a laugh. "I am going to take Tregaskis home myself. I have a lot to say to him."

Sir Joshua laughed boisterously. "Good!" he exclaimed. "I know what it is to be in love. Here is Judy coming. Where have you been such a long time, my dear? Mr. Tregaskis is just leaving."

"He mustn't go yet." She spoke quietly and distinctly, but it was easy to see that she was much excited. "I want to speak to Mr. Tregaskis alone," she said to her father, "so Mark will have to wait a few minutes. Come this way," she added, looking towards Paul, and she moved towards the study.

Paul followed her like a man in a dream.

"I am ashamed," she said when they were alone together.

Paul waited for her to continue:

"I am not going to marry Jack Ridley," she went on. "I shudder every time I think of it. It is months now since I gave up all idea of it. Besides, it is his duty to marry another woman; he told me so to-night."

Paul looked at her yearningly, beseechingly, but he did not speak; neither did Judith. The young man noted, however, that the pallor had left her cheeks, while there was something in her eyes which he had never seen before.

"Paul," she sobbed. "Don't you know? Don't you understand?"

The young man continued looking at her as though the gates of Heaven had been opened to him, but he was unable to utter a word.

"Paul," she went on at length. "I hoped—I almost believed that—what you told me a little while ago was

true, but I was not sure. How could I be sure? And yet I longed—oh, you don't know how I longed for it to be true. I was afraid, too. How, I asked myself, can he respect me when he remembers what I have told him about Jack Ridley? But I hated the thought all the time. I didn't love him either; I never loved him. I never knew what love meant until that night after you had promised to reform him."

She laughed almost hysterically. "I almost prayed that you wouldn't succeed," she said. "Paul, aren't you going to say anything? Don't you care?"

"Care!" he gasped. "Why—why, you don't know. But it is impossible."

"What's impossible?"

"That you should ever be the wife of the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. Think of the little houses that the ministers of the town live in, and——"

"Don't!" interrupted the girl. "I would rather be your wife living in any sort of little house than the Queen of England. Paul?"

"Yes, Judith," and he stood looking at her lips like a man parched with thirst when he looks at pure water.

"Aren't you glad? Aren't you going to kiss me?" Her voice broke as she spoke, and the tears rolled down her cheeks.

When Sir Joshua and Mark came into the room a little later both were overwhelmed with astonishment to see the young minister holding Judith in his arms, while he uttered things which seem foolish to the cynic, but which have been uttered all down through the long centuries since the first man saw the first woman in the bowers of Eden.

"What's the meaning of this?" gasped Sir Joshua in astonishment.

"It means that Judith has promised to marry me," cried Paul, "and I am almost off my head with happiness. It means, too, that we want you to give your consent, and—and I don't know what beside. Mark, old chap, give me your hand."



I will not try to describe what followed. Of course Sir Joshua, as a practical business man, could not help reminding his daughter of the difference between living in the house of the minister of Ebenezer Chapel and Cliviger Hall; even although at that moment he was making all sorts of plans as to what he would do for their future. For Sir Joshua had come to love Paul with a great love, but, like all Lancashire men, he laid great stress upon money. And yet he felt sure, after he heard what Judith had to tell him, that she would be happier with Paul than with the richest magnate in Lancashire. As for Mark, his joy knew no bounds. To him Jack Ridley was not worthy to clean Paul's boots, and he said so in no uncertain tone.

"Ay, well," said Sir Joshua presently, "one can be as happy in a little house as a big one, for, although I am proud of Cliviger Hall, I was never so happy as when I took my wife to our little house in Todmorden Street."

For Paul had not said a word about St. Elwyn, or about what his father and mother wanted him to do. The life of St. Elwyn seemed as far removed as the East is from the West from the smoky Lancashire town.

"You are not going to leave Cliviger, are you, Paul?" Judith asked him as at an unreasonably late hour he got into Mark's car.

"No," laughed Paul, but even then he did not realise what the promise meant.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two outstanding events of great importance took place in Cliviger during the next month. Although years have passed since the first, Cliviger people have not ceased to wonder at it. Indeed, they are wondering still.

I do not pretend to tell how it came about, only in so far as to emphasise what I hinted at earlier in these pages.

If you ask the Rev. Judah Brighthouse what caused the great change to come over Cliviger, and for that matter over several other Lancashire towns, he will tell you that

the meeting which took place in the Wesley Church parlour after the great United Mission was the beginning of it.

“As churches,” he said, “we seemed moribund, if not dead. Those who attended our services seemed little influenced by coming, while—I am grieved to say it—our ministers, although there were, of course, exceptions, often seemed like children repeating a lesson. We lacked Power, Life, Reality. Thus it was that we made little or no impression upon the life of the town. People passed us by with utter indifference.

“Then came that meeting when young Tregaskis told us what he thought and felt. There was nothing so particular in what he said. All the same, something happened. He had been known in the town as ‘The man who was sure,’ but, as he declared, that was not enough. What he lacked was the great Divine Dynamic which gave him the power to arouse the people to a sense of reality.

“Talk about prayer being useless! Talk about Pentecost being an empty word! I tell you we realise the meaning of both. It came to us in different ways, too. In fact no two men have had the same experience, yet the essential thing came to us, and from that time Cliviger became changed. Instead of religion being a back number it became the great vital thing necessary. It was on all tongues, too, and as it was in the days of the apostles. The work of God went on everywhere. Yes,” he added, “and it is going on still.”

It was as Mr. Brighthouse had said. It seemed that almost every chapel and almost every minister were born anew. Buildings which for years had been comparatively empty became thronged by eager, inquiring people, while the ministers, many of whom seemed almost ready to give up hope, became alive with a new power.

And this was not all. Largely through Paul, cold as the weather often was, he and others after their services were over in the various chapels made their way to the market-place and other open spaces, and preached Life Eternal through Jesus Christ.

And yet there was no undue excitement, neither did they obtain the service of any outside missionary to do the work which was their own. It simply meant that a power which they had largely lost, and yet was the secret of all power, became theirs. People no longer talked about Christianity being a played-out fallacy, or of Christ being a mere figure in history. They realised that they had entered into an inheritance which the great pioneers of the church down through all the ages possessed, and which they had largely lost.

But the results of this great movement were not simply seen in multiplied congregations, and in a new spirit among the ministers; it appeared in many ways.

If you had asked Sir Joshua Pendle, for example, what stopped the strike which threatened to convulse the whole town, he would have told you that it was through the New Life in the churches. That many of the raucous, loud-spoken communists who preached a wild revolution practically spoke in vain, because the people of the town were more and more learning to see that the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount and the spirit of Calvary were the only things that could cure the discontent and the mad passions which had been so often manifested.

But there was more than this. The new life in what was called the Free Churches of the town did not confine itself to those churches, and ministers of all churches and denominations were led more and more to see that the things which so many of them had insisted on were really empty of all true meaning. Christianity, they saw, was not a mere matter of ancient creeds and ancient ceremonials; that ordination did not depend on what many called magic, but upon the indwelling Christ.

The other thing which took place was seemingly far removed from what the people called the great revival. This I referred to as an event, but in reality it was not an event. It was something greater than that. Events have limitations and boundaries, but that which came to pass in Cliviger had neither limitations nor boundaries

any more than Pentecost had nearly two thousand years ago.

That, however, which I have now to describe, may be called an event.

## CHAPTER XXIX

THE MAN WHO  
WAS SURE

PAUL TREGASKIS did not, for some weeks, write to his father telling him of his engagement to Judith Pendle. Somehow he felt he could not. He knew Lord St. Elwyn's feelings towards everything which appertained to Cliviger, and was sure that if he told him of the event which would chain him more securely to that town, he would do more harm than good. Moreover, he felt that to tell him that he had become engaged to a girl who by tradition and associations was far removed from the life of St. Elwyn, would not only anger his father, but give disappointment and pain to the gracious woman whom day by day he was more and more glad to think of as his mother.

Neither, for that matter, did he tell anyone at Cliviger Hall of his own relationship to the St. Elwyn family. He had come to Cliviger as Paul Tregaskis, the only son of a humble farmer. As such, too, he had won whatever position he had won in the town. Moreover, it was as Paul Tregaskis that he had won Judith Pendle. He had no particular reason for hiding the fact as to whom he was, except that it would seem like boastfulness to proclaim that he, Paul Tregaskis, was Paul Pendragon St. Elwyn, the owner of not only an ancient name, but who would, in the natural course of events, one day have a seat in the British House of Peers.

So, as I have said, he was silent not only to his parents about his engagement, but the people in Lancashire remained entirely ignorant as to his real name.

After some time, however, he felt he was acting an unfilial part in keeping silent about his engage-

ment, and accordingly, after thinking a great deal about it, he wrote his father and mother a long letter describing not only his engagement, but giving them certain particulars about Sir Joshua Pendle and his family.

It was on a Saturday afternoon when his letter arrived at St. Elwyn Hall. Hugh St. Elwyn and Mary had gone for a walk to the St. Elwyn village near by, while Lady St. Elwyn had retired to her own room. Lord St. Elwyn was sitting alone in the library when the afternoon post arrived.

"Here is the afternoon letter-bag, my lord," the old serving man informed him as he laid the receptacle on the table before him.

But Lord St. Elwyn did not expect a letter from Paul. Proud man that he was, while he longed for his son to come home, he had, since his last letter to Paul, refrained from taking any steps in the matter. Indeed, he regarded Paul's behaviour not only as reprehensible, but as altogether unfilial.

"Everything is now proved up to the very hilt," he reflected again and again. "Even Hugh has withdrawn all shadow of opposition; while, as he knows, his mother is almost breaking her heart at his absence. And yet he, my son, whose rightful place is in his own home and among his own people, is disobeying my commands, and remaining in that dirty Lancashire town as a dissenting minister. It is not only unnatural, but absurd! And yet in the face of what he has repeatedly said what can I do!"

A minute later his hands were trembling, while his eyes were burning brightly. "Yes, it is his writing," he declared aloud. "What has he to say, I wonder?"

*Dear Father and Mother (he read). I feel that I have been acting wrongly towards you in keeping from you an event of the utmost importance in my life. I am, therefore, writing fully and frankly, telling you what has happened to me during the last few weeks.*

Lord St. Elwyn read on, line after line, page after page, and as he read his eyes became more and more hard, while his disappointment more and more strongly manifested itself.

"And so the young fool not only persists in remaining a dissenting parson," he reflected, "but has actually got engaged to the daughter of his senior deacon! My God!"

"I had better take it to Mary," he reflected presently. "After all, he is her son as well as mine, and she ought to know. And yet I am almost afraid to tell her."

Then he opened a package which up to now had escaped his notice. "So this is the photograph of the girl, I suppose!" he exclaimed. "By Jove, she is a jolly fine-looking girl, too! Well, perhaps he might have done worse."

With somewhat modified feelings he read through certain parts of the letter a second time, while he repeatedly looked at the girl whose face was delineated on the piece of cardboard before him.

"Mary!" he almost shouted at length. "I have a letter from Paul here! It came by this afternoon's post."

"From Paul?" cried Lady St. Elwyn. "From Paul!"

"Yes. Do you know that the young fool has actually engaged himself to some Lancashire girl!"

"Paul," cried the mother, "the afternoon letters were delivered nearly an hour ago. Why did you not bring it to me at once?" She snatched the packet from her husband's hand as she spoke, and began to read eagerly.

"Paul," she exclaimed presently, as she looked at the photograph, "she's a beautiful girl!—just a beautiful girl! Why, Paul!" and her lips trembled as she spoke.

"Yes, but who is she?" exclaimed the proud man. "The daughter of his senior deacon! Good God!"

"Yes, but Paul, our boy loves her!—she is a beautiful girl, too."

"He might at least have taken us into his confidence before doing such a thing," exclaimed the man irritably.

"Did we take anyone into our confidence when we fell in love with each other, Paul?" exclaimed the woman. "If our boy loves her, what does anything else matter?"

"Yes, but don't you see, he is making everything more impossible than ever."

"No, he isn't," and the woman laughed almost merrily. "He is making everything easy for us."

"Easy! How?" asked the astonished husband.

"Surely you understand. Both of us want our boy home; we want him to leave that dirty manufacturing town, and come here to live. But what have we to offer him? Up to now we have offered him nothing. But Paul," and she caught her husband's arm eagerly, "the old Dower House is empty, and the heirs of the St. Elwyns have often lived in it before coming here. Now I tell you what you must do. You must go to Cliviger again, and you must see this girl. Yes, you must! And Paul, if she is the girl I am sure she is, we shall be proud to welcome her as Paul's wife. Then—then, don't you see? We will invite her here; we will make much of her; and then at the proper time we will show her the old Dower House, and tell her it is her home and Paul's directly they are ready to take it."

"By gad! I believe you are right," exclaimed Lord St. Elwyn with flashing eyes.

He had seen more in his wife's words than had appeared on the surface, and saw in this new development means whereby he thought their hopes might be realised.

"I wish it wasn't so late in the week," he said lugubriously.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Don't you see? I should like to hear him preach! I should like to meet him amidst the sordid surroundings of Ebenezer Chapel, and then I might have some leverage

by which to persuade him. As you see, it is now Saturday, and thus——”

The woman interrupted him eagerly, impatiently. “I wish I was well enough to go with you,” she cried. “I wish I could see him at his work! But my poor health must not stop you, Paul. In an hour from now you must be on the road. Yes, you must! You must give the chauffeur orders right away, and if you travel fast you will get to Cliviger in time for to-morrow evening’s service. Oh, Paul, do you think if we ’phone to Dr. Watson to come over here at once, he would allow me to go with you?”

“I’m afraid it is quite out of the question, Mary, my dear,” exclaimed Lord St. Elwyn, “but I think I see your meaning. Perhaps I could get as far as Chester or Crewe, or some such place, in time for breakfast, and then perhaps——! By gad, it will be funny to hear him preach; funnier still to tear his sermon to pieces and show him what a fool he is.”

“And you must make opportunities to see this Judith, or Judy Pendle, as he calls her. I am *just longing* to see her! Oh, Paul, I *do* wish I could go with you!”

Two hours later Lord St. Elwyn, after discussing a hundred plans with his wife, found himself motoring through the heart of Devon. But he saw nothing of the scenery through which he was passing, thought little of the old-world towns which he ordinarily rejoiced in; his heart was in the mission upon which he had set himself. His determination was to find arguments strong enough to persuade his son, Paul, to leave his madness of being a dissenting parson, and take up his abode in one of the most beautiful homes in the West of England.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although the winter months were now passing away, and although in the county from which Lord St. Elwyn came, the grip of winter had almost entirely gone, the



streets of Cliviger were not very attractive as a little before six on the Sunday evening, Lord St. Elwyn made his way from the Holly Bush Hotel towards Ebenezer Chapel. The sky overhead was black, and while no rain actually fell, the air was damp and clammy. The houses, too, in spite of the many lamps that threw their bright light everywhere, looked black and forbidding; while the streets were greasy and slimy and altogether unpleasant.

“What a place to live in!” he exclaimed, as he made his way amongst hundreds of others towards the town hall clock which was chiming the fact that the time was now a quarter to six. “Any man must be a fool to live here when he can live somewhere else. Every sight and sound and smell is repellent.”

He could not help reflecting upon the fact, however, that Lancashire was one of the most densely populated parts of the country, and that although since the advent of machinery smoke had gone far to destroy what was once one of the most beautiful counties in England, millions of people earned their daily bread there. As a politician, too, he realised that Lancashire went far, not only commercially, but politically, in shaping the destinies of the nation.

As he made his way up the street he listened to the conversation of both men and women who walked near him, and while they spoke the dialect of the town to which they belonged, he could not help recognising the grim strength and the determination of purpose which characterised the people. “Of course one can’t deny that Lancashire is a great county,” he reflected, “but to live here! Great Heavens!”

“Is that Ebenezer Chapel?” he asked presently as he stood before a large, square building, the huge façade of which was supported by great round pillars.

“Ay,” was the reply. “Arta baan?”

“Yes, I am going to the service,” he replied.

“Weel, it’s a good job you’re i’ good time. If you’d bin laate you’d ’ave had no chance of a seat.”

“ Why not ? ”

“ You’ll see for yourself,” was the reply.

“ Is Mr. Tregaskis much respected in the town ? ” he could not help asking.

“ Respected ! Nay, mester, respected is noan the word. Paul Tregaskis was sent to Cliviger by Almighty God.”

Lord St. Elwyn did not make any further remark. There was a tone in the man’s voice which did not encourage gossip, neither, for that matter, did he feel like gossiping.

There was a curious feeling in his heart as presently he found his way up the broad steps of the building. Early though it was, the great temple was wellnigh filled, and he could not repress the feeling of excitement which came to him as he reflected that this great mass of people had found their way to this huge dissenting conventicle to hear the man who, in spite of everything, he was proud to call his son.

No one seemed to notice him. Indeed, there appeared no reason why they should. He was simply one of a great multitude who had found their way into this house of prayer on a Sunday night early in the year 19—. He was not very much impressed by what at first met his gaze. Indeed, it seemed to him more like a public meeting of some sort than a gathering of men and women who had met for the purpose of worshipping Almighty God. He missed the quiet restfulness of the old St. Elwyn Parish Church ; missed, too, what seemed to him the atmosphere of worship ; and as presently the organist appeared in his seat and began to play what seemed to him a cheap overture, he was a little disgusted. He watched while the choir took their places in the seats allotted to them, and could not help reflecting how much more fitting it was that a choir should be made up of men and boys who were properly surpliced for the occasion, instead of a number of men and women who, regardless of attire, took their places.

Then suddenly, he could not tell why, all seemed

changed. A great hush came over the building, and looking he saw a tall, almost attenuated and yet athletic-looking young man find his way into what he supposed was called the pulpit. It was his son Paul; the son whom he hoped to persuade to leave that dirty town of Cliviger. . . .

He could not help confessing that there was something tremendous about the vast concourse of people which had gathered; something overwhelming in the spirit which was everywhere manifest. He was favourably impressed with the singing, too. To hear two thousand people join in expressing their worship in an old, time-honoured hymn was something which, to say the least of it, was new to him. "There is something here," he reflected; "something which I never realised in any service I ever attended before. What is it, I wonder?"

He almost forgot himself when his son began to pray. In one sense he felt very critical, and thought how much more appropriate the evening prayers in the old parish church at home were than the utterances of a young man who had not seemingly prepared his prayers. All the same, there was mystery, power—something he had never realised before.

Half an hour later he had forgotten himself completely. He was under the spell of the man who stood in the pulpit speaking to more than two thousand people. . . . And yet there seemed nothing great in the sermon to which he listened. He had in his time heard more eloquent utterances; listened to what would be regarded as more conclusive argument, and yet he was affected as he had never been affected before.

Paul Tregaskis was not trying to preach a great sermon; not trying, in the ordinary sense of the term, to make a great impression. He was simply telling of what he knew. He made Christ real because Christ was real to him. He made the great words of Christ—the greatest ever uttered on earth—true to others, because they were true to him. The congregation sat spell-

bound, as if anxious not to miss a word which dropped from his lips ; and Lord St. Elwyn, keen-minded man of the world as he was, could not help realising the tremendous influence the preacher was having upon this vast concourse of people.

“ It is wonderful ! ” he exclaimed to himself. “ Simply wonderful ! No wonder the man told me that Paul Tregaskis was sent to Cliviger by Almighty God.”

Then he realised the purpose for which he had come. It was in his mind to persuade the man in the pulpit to leave Cliviger, and bury himself in a country village.

But could he do it ? Had he any right to do it ? Supposing he succeeded . . . ?

What was the career that he, the proud aristocrat, had to offer his son compared with the career that lay before him in that dirty Lancashire town ?

The service came to an end at length, such a service as he had never attended before.

Of course he tried to explain away the influences which he could not understand ; tried to analyse the forces which made that son of his such a tremendous power in the town ; but when everything was said, and every argument analysed, he knew he had not touched the heart of the question.

No, he could not persuade himself that it would be right to tear Paul away from all this, even although he had the power.

But he would not give up all hope yet.

Slowly the great building emptied itself. Lord St. Elwyn waited while the people passed him ; listened while, in hushed voices, they discussed what they had heard.

Great God ! Had it come to this ? Was he, Paul Pendragon St. Elwyn, the last of a long line of Peers, actually proud that his eldest son was a dissenting preacher ? And yet——

\* \* \* \* \*

"Well, Paul, you did not expect to see me here?"

"Why—why, father!"

There were a number of men standing near Paul as he left the vestry followed by Sir Joshua Pendle.

"Yes, Paul." Then after a moment's hesitation he turned to those who stood near. "This is my son," he said, looking towards the young minister, "Paul Pendragon St. Elwyn. I am Lord St. Elwyn."

The standers-by listened like men in a dream. What! their young minister, Paul Tregaskis, the son of this proud, aristocratic-looking man who claimed to be a well-known peer of whom they had all heard!

"Yes, I see you are rather surprised," went on Lord St. Elwyn, "but it is true. It will all be explained some day, but meanwhile I must ask you to accept what I have said."

Again the onlookers glanced first at Lord St. Elwyn's face and then at that of the young minister, as though they were eager to ask questions.

"Oh, yes," went on the stranger pleasantly. "This young beggar has known it for a long while, and he and I have had many arguments about it; but he has preferred to stay here as Paul Tregaskis rather than take his rightful place as my eldest son. Can't we go somewhere where we can be alone, my boy?" he continued, turning to Paul. "I want a chat with you."

Then Sir Joshua Pendle spoke for the first time. "Mr. Tregaskis has promised to come up to my house to have a bit of supper to-night," he said in his homely fashion. "Perhaps you, sir——"

"Father," broke in Paul, "this is Sir Joshua Pendle, and I have arranged to go to his house to-night. I have a particular reason for wishing to go," he added with a smile.

"We shall be delighted if Lord St. Elwyn will go with us," Sir Joshua exclaimed heartily.

"May I?" queried the peer. "That will be splendid!"

A few minutes later the news was travelling from lip

to lip all over Cliviger that Paul Tregaskis, the minister of Ebenezer Chapel, was, in reality, the son of Lord St. Elwyn; and that he had sacrificed everything in order to continue the great work he had begun in Cliviger.

Concerning this, however, it is not my purpose to enlarge in these pages, except to say that if Paul's influence was great in Cliviger before, it was far greater now. To thousands who had not the power to estimate the attraction of a young aristocrat's life, it seemed little short of a miracle that Paul should be willing to sacrifice everything to remain an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile Sir Joshua Pendle's car was making its way through the masses of people which surged the streets of the town towards Cliviger Hall. Judith, who had been at the service that night, had waited in the car for Paul's coming, and had been not a little frightened when the stranger who took his place at her side was introduced by her father as Lord St. Elwyn, Paul's father. For the first few minutes of the journey she was shy and awkward, but the man of the world was able before long to break down the barrier of reserve which had been raised between them.

When at length they reached the house, Lord St. Elwyn attached himself entirely to Judith. He insisted on sitting next to her at supper, and seemed to be trying to find his way into her good graces.

"I bear a message from my wife," he said presently, loud enough for all to hear. "It is a very urgent message, one which I hope you will not think of refusing."

All sat silently waiting for him to proceed.

"It is," he went on, "that my son Paul will accompany me home to-morrow for a long visit, and that Miss Judith here will consent to go with us. After all, it is only natural," he added. "Paul wrote telling us of his engagement, and my wife is eager to make the acquaintance of the young lady he has chosen. Perhaps," he added, "great events may happen."

At this there was a profound silence, and for a few

seconds no one spoke. Then Judith looked towards Paul, and seeing the light in his eyes she burst out eagerly, almost angrily. "Does that mean, Lord St. Elwyn," she asked, "that you and Lady St. Elwyn are going to try and persuade me to give up Paul? If it does I won't go. I will never give up Paul. Why—why, it is only a few weeks since we——"

"My dear young lady," broke in Lord St. Elwyn, almost eagerly, "it is the last thing I should think of trying to do. Let me be absolutely frank," he went on. "When I first got Paul's letter telling me that you and he had become engaged, I did have at the back of my mind a plan whereby I hoped to destroy your engagement. But I had not seen you then, neither had I talked with you. It is true the sight of your face in the photograph which Paul sent almost converted me from my foolishness, and since I have seen you in reality, I can say with all sincerity of heart that nothing would be more in accordance with my desires than that you should be my daughter."

They had left the dining-room by this time, and were seated in the snuggerly of which we have before spoken.

"Do you mean," cried Judith excitedly, "that you want me to—to marry Paul?"

"There is nothing at this moment that I desire more, but I would like also to claim the usual privilege of a father," he added, bending over her. "That is if Paul, who is looking at us so jealously, does not object."

"I object!" cried Paul. "I say, father, do you think of Judith like that?" . . .

"But that is not all," went on Lord St. Elwyn presently. "Your mother and I, Paul, had something else in our minds when late last night she sent me to Cliviger. We want you home, my boy. Your mother's heart is just aching for you, and—and we hoped, although she and I together were not able to persuade you to leave this dirty town, that we might have a new ally in Judith here," and he took her hand as he spoke. "I

don't think you ever saw the old Dower House when you were down at St. Elwyn, Paul. We love the old place, and it has often been used by the heirs of the St. Elwyns until the time came for them to live at the big house. Your mother wanted to show it to you, Paul; wants to show it, too, to Judith, and we have made up our minds to ask you, instead of continuing to reside in Cliviger, to come down to your old home for your honeymoon, and——”

He did not complete the sentence; perhaps he found it more difficult than he imagined.

“What does that mean?” asked Judith. “Are you asking Paul to leave his work here in order to be what you want him to be?”

“What do *you* say, Paul?” asked Lord St. Elwyn. “I do not know much of the circumstances of a dissenting minister, but surely the career which in the past you have accepted, can hardly appeal to this charming young lady.”

“Do you mean me?” broke in Judith. “There is nothing grander or nobler under God's sky than what Paul is, and I would rather be the wife of the Ebenezer minister than anyone on earth!”

“What do you say, Paul?” persisted Lord St. Elwyn.

“What do *you* say, father?” replied Paul. “Would you ask me to give up my work at Ebenezer for anything on earth, however fascinating?”

The peer looked uncomfortable, and seemed to find a difficulty in speaking. Then, almost like a man in wrath he rose from his seat, and walked around the room. “Forgive my paltry pride, Paul,” he said, “but before God I would rather see you what you are than anything else on earth. All the same,” and he seemed to throw off the seriousness which for the moment had overwhelmed him, “I daren't go back to my wife to-morrow without you and Judith. You will come, won't you, my dear?”

“I am longing to go!” cried the girl. “Just longing, if it means only——”



“ Yes, we will be ready to start first thing to-morrow morning, father,” and Paul gave a great happy laugh.

\* \* \* \* \*

Months, years have passed away since the event which I have recorded took place, and Paul Tregaskis is still the minister of Ebenezer Chapel. It was some time before the people were able to accustom themselves to his new name, and he became spoken of in the town as the Rev. Paul Pendragon St. Elwyn.

But that did not matter. There is another name by which he is best known ; a name that has endeared itself to the hearts of thousands, and which means strength and life to thousands who are doubting. That name is, “ The Man Who Is Sure.”

THE END

THE STORY OF NINETTE . . . . .	RUBY M. AYRES
THE FAMILY . . . . .	RUBY M. AYRES
ONE MONTH AT SEA . . . . .	RUBY M. AYRES
LOVERS . . . . .	RUBY M. AYRES
THE HEART-BREAK MARRIAGE . . . . .	RUBY M. AYRES
HUNTINGTOWER . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
MR. STANDFAST . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
GREENMANTLE . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
THE PATH OF THE KING . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
THE HALF-HEARTED . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
MIDWINTER . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
THE THREE HOSTAGES . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
JOHN MACNAB . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
THE DANCING FLOOR . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
WITCHWOOD . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
THE RUNAGATES CLUB . . . . .	JOHN BUCHAN
T. TEMBAROM . . . . .	FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT
JUGGERNAUT . . . . .	ALICE CAMPBELL
THE SINGING GOLD . . . . .	DOROTHY COTTRELL
THE SETONS . . . . .	O. DOUGLAS
PENNY PLAIN . . . . .	O. DOUGLAS
ANN AND HER MOTHER . . . . .	O. DOUGLAS
PINK SUGAR . . . . .	O. DOUGLAS
THE PROPER PLACE . . . . .	O. DOUGLAS
ELIZA FOR COMMON . . . . .	O. DOUGLAS
M'LEAN INVESTIGATES . . . . .	GEORGE GOODCHILD
THE SPLENDID CRIME . . . . .	GEORGE GOODCHILD
JACK O' LANTERN . . . . .	GEORGE GOODCHILD
M'LEAN OF SCOTLAND YARD . . . . .	GEORGE GOODCHILD
FORLORN RIVER . . . . .	ZANE GREY
NEVADA . . . . .	ZANE GREY
TALES OF FISHES . . . . .	ZANE GREY
TALES OF SOUTHERN RIVERS . . . . .	ZANE GREY
TALES OF THE ANGLER'S ELDORADO . . . . .	ZANE GREY
A KNIGHT ON WHEELS . . . . .	IAN HAY
THE LUCKY NUMBER . . . . .	IAN HAY
THE WILLING HORSE . . . . .	IAN HAY
PAID WITH THANKS . . . . .	IAN HAY
HALF A SOVEREIGN . . . . .	IAN HAY
THE POOR GENTLEMAN . . . . .	IAN HAY
SIXES AND SEVENS . . . . .	O. HENRY

THE TRIMMED LAMP . . . . .	O. HENRY
THE HEART OF THE WEST . . . . .	O. HENRY
THE FOUR MILLION . . . . .	O. HENRY
CABBAGES AND KINGS . . . . .	O. HENRY
THE GENTLE GRAFTER . . . . .	O. HENRY
STRICTLY BUSINESS . . . . .	O. HENRY
ROADS OF DESTINY . . . . .	O. HENRY
OPTIONS . . . . .	O. HENRY
WHIRLIGIGS . . . . .	O. HENRY
THE VOICE OF THE CITY . . . . .	O. HENRY
ROLLING STONES . . . . .	O. HENRY
THE ETHERAL CHALLENGE . . . . .	JOSEPH HOCKING
THE CONSTANT ENEMY . . . . .	JOSEPH HOCKING
THE EVIL CHATEAU . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
LADY OF THE NIGHT . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
THE SCREAMING SKULL . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
HORROR'S HEAD . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
THE SPY . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
CHECKMATE . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
CHIPSTEAD OF THE LONE HAND . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
THE SECRET SERVICE MAN . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
THE WORST MAN IN THE WORLD . . . . .	SYDNEY HORLER
IF WINTER COMES . . . . .	A. S. M. HUTCHINSON
THE CLEAN HEART . . . . .	A. S. M. HUTCHINSON
ONCE ABOARD THE LUGGER . . . . .	A. S. M. HUTCHINSON
THE HAPPY WARRIOR . . . . .	A. S. M. HUTCHINSON
THIS FREEDOM ( <i>with new Preface</i> ) . . . . .	A. S. M. HUTCHINSON
CAPTAINS ALL . . . . .	W. W. JACOBS
SHIP'S COMPANY . . . . .	W. W. JACOBS
THE CASTAWAYS . . . . .	W. W. JACOBS
NIGHT WATCHES . . . . .	W. W. JACOBS
SEA WHISPERS . . . . .	W. W. JACOBS
DEEP WATERS . . . . .	W. W. JACOBS
I PRONOUNCE THEM . . . . .	STUDDERT KENNEDY
CAPPY RICKS RETIRES . . . . .	PETER B. KYNE
NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET . . . . .	PETER B. KYNE
THE ENCHANTED HILL . . . . .	PETER B. KYNE
THE UNDERSTANDING HEART . . . . .	PETER B. KYNE
BESIDE THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH . . . . .	IAN MACLAREN
THE DAYS OF AULD LANG SYNE . . . . .	IAN MACLAREN
THE PRISONER IN THE OPAL . . . . .	A. E. W. MASON
THE HOUSE OF THE ARROW . . . . .	A. E. W. MASON
AT THE VILLA ROSE . . . . .	A. E. W. MASON
THE WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE . . . . .	A. E. W. MASON
NO OTHER TIGER . . . . .	A. E. W. MASON

SOME OF HODDER & STOUGHTON'S LATEST 3/6 TITLES

THE FLUTES OF SHANGHAI	. LOUISE JORDAN MILN
IT HAPPENED IN PEKING	. LOUISE JORDAN MILN
IN A YUN-NAN COURTYARD	. LOUISE JORDAN MILN
THE MAN FROM BAR 20	. CLARENCE E. MULFORD
THE COMING OF CASSIDY	. CLARENCE E. MULFORD
BUCK PETERS, RANCHMAN	. CLARENCE E. MULFORD
WHAT HAPPENED TO FORESTER	E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
SHANE'S LONG SHOTS	. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
THE TREASURE HOUSE OF	
MARTIN HEWS	. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
THE GREAT IMPERSONATION	. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
CHRONICLES OF MELHAMPTON	E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
THE FORTUNATE WAYFARER	. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL	. BARONESS ORCZY
ELDORADO	. BARONESS ORCZY
LORD TONY'S WIFE	. BARONESS ORCZY
THE TRIUMPH OF THE	
SCARLET PIMPERNEL	. BARONESS ORCZY
SIR PERCY HITS BACK	. BARONESS ORCZY
I WILL REPAY	. BARONESS ORCZY
THE GUARDED HALO	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE BARBARIAN LOVER	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE LAMP OF FATE	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE VISION OF DESIRE	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE MOON OUT OF REACH	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE HERMIT OF FAR END	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE HOUSE OF DREAMS-	
COME-TRUE	. MARGARET PEDLER
RED ASHES	. MARGARET PEDLER
YESTERDAY'S HARVEST	. MARGARET PEDLER
TO-MORROW'S TANGLE	. MARGARET PEDLER
BITTER HERITAGE	. MARGARET PEDLER
THE SPLENDID FOLLY	. MARGARET PEDLER
DAVID AND DIANA	. CECIL ROBERTS
SAGUSTO	. CECIL ROBERTS
BULL-DOG DRUMMOND	. SAPPER
JIM MAITLAND	. SAPPER
THE DINNER CLUB	. SAPPER
THE BLACK GANG	. SAPPER
THE MAN IN RATCATCHER	. SAPPER
THE THIRD ROUND	. SAPPER
OUT OF THE BLUE	. SAPPER
THE FINAL COUNT	. SAPPER
THE SAVING CLAUSE	. SAPPER
WORD OF HONOUR	. SAPPER
THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES	. SAPPER

SOME OF HODDER & STOUGHTON'S LATEST 3/6 TITLES

DOWN RIVER . . . . .	SEAMARK
WEB OF DESTINY . . . . .	SEAMARK
THE MAN THEY COULDN'T ARREST . . . . .	SEAMARK
THE MYSTERY MAKER . . . . .	SEAMARK
MACLEOD'S WIFE . . . . .	ANNIE S. SWAN
A MAID OF THE ISLES . . . . .	ANNIE S. SWAN
THE INDIA-RUBBER MEN . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
RED ACES . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE STRANGE COUNTESS . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE GREEN ARCHER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE MIND OF MR. J. G. REEDER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE DOOR WITH SEVEN LOCKS . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE YELLOW SNAKE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE TERRIBLE PEOPLE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE SINISTER MAN . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE FOUR JUST MEN . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE JOKER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE BRIGAND . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE THREE JUST MEN . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE BLACK ABBOT . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE SQUARE EMERALD . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
AGAIN THE THREE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE TRAITOR'S GATE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE FEATHERED SERPENT . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE NORTHING TRAMP . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
TERROR KEEP . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE SQUEAKER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE CRIMSON CIRCLE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE VALLEY OF GHOSTS . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE CLUE OF THE NEW PIN . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE CLUE OF THE TWISTED CANDLE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE FORGER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE FLYING SQUAD . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE DOUBLE . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
AGAIN SANDERS . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
AGAIN THE RINGER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE RINGER . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
THE MAN WHO KNEW . . . . .	EDGAR WALLACE
BACK OF BEYOND . . . . .	STEWART EDWARD WHITE
THE CROUCHING BEAST . . . . .	VALENTINE WILLIAMS
PERISHABLE GOODS . . . . .	DORNFORD YATES
BLIND CORNER . . . . .	DORNFORD YATES