

*Real Life Stories*  
*Ike Miller's Conversion*

Some years ago, the superb young English evangelist, Henry Moorehouse, was invited to a Welsh mining town to hold a revival. The few Christian people there built for him a humble tabernacle—earth floor, four walls, a roof. He started preaching twice each day. The crowds came. Souls were converted. A church was organized. The meeting began to stir the town, becoming the talk of the streets.

One night as Moorehouse started for the pulpit, two of the church-members, men, called him to one side. "Brother Henry," they said, "some of us believe you had better close the meeting tonight and leave town." "Why, brethren," questioned the preacher, "what is the matter? What have I done?" "It is nothing that you have done, Brother Henry; it is what is going to be done to you." "What's going to be done to me, and who is going to do it? You may as well tell me. I am not afraid. Besides, I cannot make up my mind properly until I know all the facts."

"Brother Moorehouse," said one of the men, "there is a wicked fellow in this town by the name of Ike Miller. He is the vilest, lowest, lewdest man we know anything about. He hates preachers, despises the church, abuses Christians, curses the Lord and the Bible. He told some of us to tell you that unless you close the meeting tonight he's coming tomorrow night to break it up and pistol whip you out of town."

Henry bowed his head in silent thought. "Brethren," he said, "I feel very definitely that the Lord has brought me to preach to you. He will take care of me and of this meeting. I am not running. What does this Ike look like?" They told him. All the next day the preacher scouted and hunted all over the town to find Ike, to talk to him, but he could not locate him.

That night the tabernacle was packed and jammed. Henry gave out a hymn, then another. He called on someone to pray. The crowd sang again. The evangelist read his Scripture, announced his subject, led the congregation in another season of prayer, then began to preach.

He had just well started when the door opened with a bang to admit the bulky, burly form of Ike Miller. Moorehouse recognized him from the description he had received. Ike walked all the way to the front, sat down on the very first bench, and looked up at the preacher, as if to say, "Well, go ahead and do your stuff," and settled down.

Henry closed his Bible. Once more he lifted his face to God to breathe a silent prayer. Then slowly, gently, clearly, he announced a new text, "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.**"

He preached a sermon on the love of God that would have melted the heart of a statue. Finishing, he called the people to their feet and led out in the invitation hymn. No one moved. Some few sang. In the middle of the second verse, Ike Miller turned about and heavily stomped out of the room. The crowd broke up at once. The men crowded around the preacher.

"Henry, of all the idiotic things that any preacher ever did, you've done the worst tonight. What does a man like Ike Miller know about the love of God? Why did you not tell him about the wrath of God and the doom of sin?" Moorehouse bowed his head as the hot tears scalded down his cheeks.

"Brethren," he plead, "pray for me. Perhaps I have made a mistake, but I was trying to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit."

But the Holy Spirit had known what He was about. It was He who had spoken through the preacher to the sin-cursed heart of the wicked miner.

Ike Miller left the tabernacle blindly and staggered down the main street of the town. He passed saloons, gambling joints, places of infinitely worse repute. Men and women tried to stop him, but he shook them off and kept on walking. He came to the end of the street, turned to the right, walked about a half mile out on a narrow country road, came to a tumbled-down gate in a dilapidated fence enclosing a one-room, weatherboard shack, so

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old and decrepit that the light could be seen through the spaces between the boards. He made good money but drank and gambled and caroused it away.

He plodded toward the door and pushed it open. The room was bare. There was an old stove in one corner, a bed, a pallet, a table, and two rickety chairs. His wife was seated at the table working on some darning in a sewing-basket. His two children, a girl about ten and a boy about seven, were on each side of their mother, fussing over something in her lap.

They heard the door and looked up to see their father come in. Their little faces blanched with fear. The mother stood up, motioned the children behind her, and slowly backed up toward the bed. The boy and girl swiftly crawled under the bed. They thought the father was drunk, coming to beat up on them. The mother was willingly anxious to take all the abuse upon herself to spare the children. Ike knew what they were doing. He was a rotten sinner, but he had plenty of sense. His heart strained in his great body; his eyes began to smart with unshed tears. Walking into the room, he stretched out his arms and gathered his wife into them.

"Lassie," he said, "you need not fear anymore. God has brought you a new husband tonight." He pressed her to his heart while she sobbed. After a bit he released her. Kneeling by the side of the bed, he wheedled his children out. They crept up, saw their mother's tears, and began to cry also.

Ike embraced them, petted them, comforted them, kissed them, cried with them. After a while, he turned to his wife. "Lass, we ought to pray." All four knelt at the old table. The woman began to pray but broke down. All the pain, the torment, the passion of the abused years came out in her loud weeping. The children sobbed with her.

Ike raised his voice. "Lord," he said, and stopped. "Master," and stopped. "Savior," and stopped. "Father," and stopped. He did so want to pray, but he did not know how. His sinful heart broke. The long restrained flood of tears swept him in a mighty emotion of penitence and longing. Somehow there came to his mind an old prayer verse he'd learned at the knees of his mother. Lifting his head, he wept out:

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, Look upon a little child, Pity my simplicity, Suffer me to come to Thee."

Beloved, Jesus reached down from heaven and with His own heart's blood washed away that man's sins. He made him a child of God, called him to preach the Word, used him to win thousands for Christ.

God, for Christ's sake, will do as much for you if you will come, accepting the free gift of His love, even eternal life through Jesus Christ.

*. . . . Gleaned from Baptist Bible Believers*