

Real Life Stories
The Saloon Keeper's Children

“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee” (Mk. 5:19)

When I first began to work for God in Chicago, a Boston businessman was converted there and stayed three months. When leaving, he told me that there was a man living on such a street in whom he was very much interested, and whose boy was in the high school. He said that he had two brothers and a little sister who didn't go anywhere to Sunday School, because their parents would not let them. “I wish you would go round and see them,” he said.

I went, and I found that the parents lived in a saloon, and the father kept the bar. I told him what I wanted, and he said he would rather have his sons become drunkards and his daughter a harlot than have them go to our school. It looked pretty dark, and he was very bitter to me, but I went a second time, thinking that I might catch him in a better humor. He ordered me out again. I went a third time and found him in better humor. He said: “You're talking too much about the Bible. I'll tell you what I will do; if you teach them something reasonable, like Paine's Age of Reason, they may go.”

I talked further to him, and finally he said: “If you will read Paine's book, I'll read the New Testament.” Well, to get hold of him I promised, and he got the best of the bargain. We exchanged books, and that gave me a chance to call again and talk with the family.

One day he said: “Young man, you have talked so much about church, you can have a church down here.”

“What do you mean?”

“I'll invite some friends, and you can come down here and preach to them; not that I believe a word you say.”

“Very well,” I said; “but it must be understood that we are to have a definite time.”

He told me to come at 11 o'clock, then surprised me by adding, “You aren't to do all the preaching.”

“How is that?”

“I'll want to talk some, and also my friends.”

I said, “Suppose we have it understood that you are to have forty-five minutes and I fifteen; is that fair?” He thought that was fair. He was to have the first forty-five, and I the last fifteen minutes.

When I arrived at the appointed time, the saloon keeper wasn't there. I thought perhaps he had backed out, but I soon found the reason. His saloon was not large enough to hold all his friends, and he had gone to a neighbor's, where I went and found two rooms filled. The place was filled with atheists, infidels and scoffers.

I had taken a little boy with me, thinking he might aid me. The moment I got in, they plied me with all sorts of questions, but I said I hadn't come to hold any discussion that they had been discussing for years and had reached no conclusion. They took up their forty-five minutes talking. No two of them could agree.

Then came my turn. I said: “We always open our meetings with prayer; let us pray.” I prayed, and after I finished, to all our surprise, the little boy prayed. I wish you could have heard him. He prayed to God to have mercy on those men who were talking so against His beloved Son. His voice sounded more like an angel's than a human voice.

When he and I got up from our knees, I was going to speak, but there was not a dry eye in the assembly. One after another went out, and the old man I had been after for months—and sometimes it looked pretty dark—came and, putting his hands on my shoulder with tears streaming down his face, said: “Mr. Moody, you can have my children go to your Sunday School.”

The next Sunday they came, and after a few months the oldest boy, the promising young man in the high school, came up on the platform; and with his chin quivering and tears in his eyes, said: “I wish to ask these people to pray for me; I want to become a Christian.”

Real Life Stories
The Saloon Keeper's Children

God answered our prayers. In all my acquaintances I don't know of a family it seemed more hopeless to reach. Yet I believe if we lay ourselves out for the work, there is not a person but can be reached and saved. I don't care who he is, if we go in the name of our Master, and persevere, it will not be long before Christ will bless us, no matter how hard their heart is.

“We shall reap, if we faint not”

(Galations 6:9)

. *D. L. Moody*