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## **CHURCH BELL STORIES**

**By Duane V. Maxey**

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## CONTENTS

### Introduction

- 01 -- After His Father Rang The Church Bell Again
- 02 -- George Used The Church Bells To "Bring Them In"
- 03 -- God Used A Ringing Church Bell In Charlie Wireman's Conversion
- 04 -- A Lasting Impression From The Response To A Church Bell
- 05 -- When A Devout Astronomer Heard The Church Bell
- 06 -- Why He Wanted The Church Bells Stopped
- 07 -- When The Bell Rang At New Hope Country Church
- 08 -- After One Young Man Heard The Church Bell Ring
- 09 -- After The Bremersdorp Church Bell Rang
- 10 -- A Powerful Revival After The Church Bell Was Rung
- 11 -- He Didn't Answer The Church Bell, But Got The Blessing
- 12 -- Beverly Carradine Often Referred To Church Bells
- 13 -- The Thief And The Church Bell
- 14 -- When The Church Bell Rang She Had To Go
- 15 -- When The Church Bell Rang In September
- 16 -- The Church Bell And A Sunday School Dog
- 17 -- How A Stork Caused The Church Bells To Ring
- 18 -- A Church Bell Illustration
- 19 -- How She Was Saved After Ignoring The Church Bell
- 20 -- How The Church Bell Led Her Husband To Salvation
- 21 -- A Striking Occurrence When The Church Bell Rang
- 22 -- In Timidity, He Waited Until Time For The Last Bell
- 23 -- Undaunted, Godbey Continued To Ring The Bell
- 24 -- The Conversion Of The Judge Who Wore The Bell
- 25 -- Desperate To Be Saved When The Old Bell Rang

- 26 -- The Holy Spirit Must Ring The Bell
- 27 -- She Prayed Every Sunday When The Church Bell Rang
- 28 -- At Last The Church Bell Rang
- 29 -- How There Came To Be A Chapel Bell At Perry Hall
- 30 -- John Fletcher's Hand-Carried Church Bell
- 31 -- The Solemn Message Of The Morning Bell
- 32 -- The Sad End Of One Offended By The Church Bell
- 33 -- After That Bell Rang, Her Meetings Were Ended
- 34 -- A Very Unusual Belfry For That Bell
- 35 -- No Bell And No Heat In The Church
- 36 -- Bell Ringers Who Wont' Sweep The Church
- 37 -- How William Taylor Prevailed After The Bell Rang
- 38 -- Just Before The Bell For Afternoon Service
- 39 -- The Bell For A So-Called Experience Meeting
- 40 -- They Heard A Celestial Bell Chiming
- 41 -- The Kafirs Blamed The Chapel Bell For No Rain
- 42 -- Miraculously Saved From Death In The Bell-Tower
- 43 -- The Huguenot Massacre Was Commenced With A Church Bell
- 44 -- The "Great Tom" Bell At Oxford's Christ Church
- 45 -- A Church Bell-Ringer For Luke Woodard
- 46 -- When She Came Back To Hear The Convent Bell
- 47 -- The Bell-Ringing Miracle At Massena
- 48 -- Saved By The Bell
- 49 -- A Bell That Is Too Big To Be Used
- 50 -- The Only Way To Repair A Cracked Bell
- 51 -- Should Ring Door Bells Instead Of Church Bells
- 52 -- Longfellow's Poem, "Christmas Bells"
- 53 -- Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight!

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a compilation of stories and excerpts from the HDM Digital Library, all of which are about, or make reference to, church bells, cathedral bells, or other religious bells. Most of the bells in these stories are those that are installed in a religious edifice or place, but two of them refer to hand-held bells. A number of the stories are quite moving, and some are dramatic. In every case, I trust that my readers will find that these "Church Bell Stories" are interesting. My compilation does not include anything about the history of Church Bells, but does contain some references to their use that date back for centuries.

Various ones of these stories show clearly that God has used the ringing of church bells to touch and move the hearts of people and bring about their conversion or spiritual edification. However, before I begin relating such, let me state right at the start here that not everyone has been in favor of church bells. Bishop Asbury was one opponent of their use. This is seen in the following excerpts found in hdm0560, "The Heart of Asbury's Journal" by Ezra Squire Tipple:

"November 16, 1806 -- (Augusta, Georgia). I wrote to Daniel Hitt on things sacred. I am grieved to have to do with boys. Hugh Porter had written to this town about a station, and added to the mischief he had formerly done. I shall take care of these youngsters. And behold here is a bell over the gallery, and cracked, too. May it break! It is the first I ever saw in a house of ours in America; I hope it will be the last.

"June 13, 1813 -- We rose at four o'clock, to gain twelve miles for Somerset quarter meeting.. I have difficulties to encounter.. In New England we sing, we build houses, we eat, and stand at prayer.. Were I to labor forty-two years more, I suppose I should not succeed in getting things right.. O rare steeple-houses, bells! (organs by and by?) -- these things are against me, and, contrary to the simplicity of Christ. We have made a stand in the New England Conference against steeples and pews; and shall possibly give up the houses, unless the pews are taken out, and the houses made sure to us exclusively..

As I recall, the English Methodists among whom Francis Asbury had been converted were quite plain and his worship and work among them prior to his coming to America was either in ordinary houses or very plain edifices -- perhaps none of which had steeples or bells. This, I think, may have prejudiced his mind against them. Whatever prompted his sentiments, Bishop Asbury saw steeples and bells on church edifices as costly and ostentatious trappings that stemmed from or induced unholy pride. The following is also from Asbury's Journal:

"December 8, 1805 -- I preached in Cumberland Street in the morning, and at Bethel in the afternoon.. Religion of a certain kind must be very valuable, since we spend so much to support it.. a building of theirs will cost fifty, or, perhaps, one hundred thousand dollars. There is a holy strife between its members and the Episcopalians, who shall have the highest steeple; but I believe there is no contention about who shall have the most souls converted to God."

Perhaps Asbury's opposition to steeples and bells on Methodist church buildings actually came more from a Divinely-inspired premonition that if American Methodism took on these trappings it would be robbed of both its simplicity and its spiritual power. And, the fact is that shortly after Asbury's passing, many American Methodists did become ostentatious and proud of their high-steeples and grand church bells.

The following comes from hdm0730, "Foot-Prints Of An Itinerant" by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis, of the Cincinnati Conference:

"January 8. -- This has been my first Sabbath in New Orleans.. I repaired to the Poydrass Street Church. This is a most splendid edifice, of the Grecian and Doric order, the details of which are copied from the temple of Theseus, at Athens. The height of the steeple is one hundred and seventy feet. The entire building combines a beauty and novel grandeur to be seen in no other church edifice about the city."

Gaddis' remarks above were dated only 26 years after the death of Asbury, and already Methodism had already begun to build and admire her massive temples! What would Asbury have thought when looking on these costly shrines with spires reaching ridiculous heights, and

which cost huge sums of money to build, when he disapproved of even having bells for the lowly Methodist chapels of his time!?

One cannot deny that among formalistic clergymen and congregations around the world, steeples and bells have been used for spiritually illegitimate purposes. Contrary to the inference in the following quotation, they are not absolutely imperative to worship services: "The story is told of a pastor in a seaside village in the North of Scotland, who [told] his flock at the close of the forenoon service: 'There will be no service here this evening, as there is something wrong with the bell rope'" (From hdm1012, "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, E-Topics). That statement sounds like there may have been "something wrong with the bell-ringer" instead of "with the bell-rope"!

The following story from hdm0526, "From The Prairie Schooner To A City Flat" by Charles Brougner Jernigan, illustrates how that "big churches and big bells" cannot bring about conversions and spiritual revival apart from the vital presence of the Holy Spirit:

"White Eagle was called the silver-tongued orator in the Ponca Tribe. I shall never forget that speech. With well-rounded gestures and silver tones he poured forth a volume of Ponca oratory that we can not well reproduce. He told how the Indians were brought to the Indian Territory against their own will, and how the white men had never understood the Indian. He told how when he was a baby his mother took him to a Catholic priest who did not understand the Indian -- how he sprinkled water on his head, and kissed him, and told his mother that he had made a holy baby out of him. But White Eagle said, 'Trouble was not with Indian head but his heart -- Indian had a black heart.' Holy water couldn't touch it. Then he said, 'The white man come along and take our children away from us all the week and make them go to white man's school, read white man's books, live in white man's houses, eat like a white man with knife and fork, do housework and farm like a white man, but white man don't know that Indian has a black heart. He sprinkle water on his head, make him learn books with his head. He all the time doctor his head. But the Indian's head not bad -- trouble in his heart. Then come the Methodists and build big church, put up a big bell that we hear every Sunday morning. Mr. Simmons preach heap big sermon -- say heap big words -- Mrs. Simmons sing mighty fine song. Sing like a bird. Play piano good -- fine music. Mr. Simmons don't know that Indian has black heart. Then come Nazarenes -- put up big brown tent -- sing, clap their hands, look happy. Mr. Martin preach hot words. Tell Indian he no good -- go to hell or be better -- Indian feel bad. Come to mourner's bench, get on his knees, PRAY, CRY, shed tears -- talk to great Spirit -- soon he jump up, face shine -- shake hands with everybody, look good. Be happy. Say Amen! Everybody cry. Then he go home -- no more smoke a pipe, no more drink whiskey, no more eat mescal bean -- read a Bible and pray. Good Indian -- heart changed. Come on, Nazarenes, come on!'"

Charles Wesley Winchester also emphasizes the uselessness of church bells apart from the working of the Holy Spirit in his book, "Wells Of Salvation And Other Sermons" (hdm2276):

"Have you not seen Churches like that cold and powerless locomotive? They have everything but what a Church needs most -- steam, the Holy Ghost. At length a conviction comes over the leading members that they are not accomplishing anything for God. They have a meeting of the Official Board to talk the matter up. Different propositions are made. One says:

'Let's paint the church;' another: 'Let's put a new bell in the tower;' another: 'Let's buy a new organ;' another: 'Let's put in a steam-heating apparatus;' another: 'Let's reorganize the Epworth League;' another: 'Let's have a Church Fair;' another: 'Let's send off and get an evangelist.'

"Not one of those dear brethren has any conception of the real need of the Church. If I were invited to preach in that pulpit, I would take for my text, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' If the members of that Church would receive the Holy Ghost, the old bell and the old organ would answer the purpose, or new ones would be quickly procured; steam heat would not be a necessity; the Epworth League would not need to be reorganized; Church Fairs would be an abomination; and every man and woman would be a flaming evangelist, setting the whole town on fire, mid turning multitudes of sinners to righteousness."

However, while it is true that steeples and church bells have often been misused and have been spiritually ineffectual among formal worshippers, it is just as true that church bells have been employed for humble and holy purposes by good and godly people. John Wesley was not opposed to the use of church bells, and early English Methodists under him employed church bells for practical and spiritual purposes. For example, at Wesley's City Road Chapel "a bell was hung in a plain belfry, and was rung every morning at five o'clock for early service, and every evening at nine for family worship; as well as at sundry other times" (from "How Methodism Began," hdm0976, by W. H. Daniels).

And, from hdm0085, "The Life Of Adam Clarke" by J. W. Etheridge, we read the following quotation from the revered Methodist Commentator:

"Yesterday left Coleraine for Ballymena, a journey of twenty-two miles. Thirty-two years ago I walked this same road to a lovefeast. Only one woman remains of those who were in Society at that time... On my arrival today, as our own chapel was utterly insufficient, the Rev. Mr. Babbington, the rector, kindly offered me the use of his church, which, on the tolling of the bell, was soon filled with a great concourse, to whom I found considerable liberty in showing what were the doctrines of the apostles, from Acts ii. 42."

Again, in his book "Elements Of Divinity" (hdm2285), Thomas N. Ralston writes the following that mentions the holy use of church bells:

Since men are so prone to forget God and neglect religion, under circumstances the most favorable, how greatly would this irreligious proclivity be enhanced by a withdrawal of the influences of the Sabbath! There is a sacred stillness which marks this consecrated day -- a solemnity connected with the "sound of the church-going bell" -- and its peacefully-assembling multitudes -- that all must feel and acknowledge. Under these influences thousands of the thoughtless and the gay are led to the house of God, and thus brought within reach of the blessed word... Blot from existence the holy Sabbath, with all its sacred associations and influences, and how appalling the consequences that would ensue!"

In spite of the opposition to their use by some, it is quite evident that church bells CAN be used by holy and humble Christians in sacred and legitimate ways, and some of the following

stories will show how that legitimate use of church bells has been used of God to touch and move hearts, to bring salvation, to bring revival, and to bring about holy and good results.

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## 01 -- AFTER HIS FATHER RANG THE CHURCH BELL AGAIN

From hdm0158, "A Potpourri Of Writings" by Duane V. Maxey:

A father once told his son that he was going to take him to visit the country church he used to attend as a boy, and where he often rang the bell to call the people to the house of God for worship. So, he took his son out to the old country church, but great was their disappointment when they found the old church-building locked and deserted. Looking through a window they could see the long bell rope. The father managed to borrow a key, and opened the door. The little son looked up into his father's face and eagerly exclaimed, "FATHER, RING IT AGAIN! RING IT AGAIN! So, once again the old church bell rang out. Made curious by hearing the old church bell ring again, people came from far and near to see what was the matter. He told them what the church had meant to him in his boyhood, and with his help the old church was re-opened for worship.

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## 02 -- GEORGE USED THE CHURCH BELLS TO "BRING THEM IN"

This story comes from hdm0935, "Trumpets In The Camp" by Nettie A. Miller, and tells of a little hunchback boy who had prayed through at the altar:

He was singing when he went out of the church. The little hunchback went to the Sunday-school superintendent the first thing after Thursday night. He was standing right there waiting for the superintendent. He said, "Guess you know I got religion. Since I got it, I prayed until my mama's got it and my daddy's got it and the lady across the street got it. I can read, and I done read it in the Bible where I ought to go to work. I've been standing out here nearly an hour, waiting for you to come. I want you to put me to work for Jesus in the Sunday school." The superintendent thought, Well, he can't do a thing in the world. I don't know what to give him to do. He said, "George, I'm sorry. I can't give you a thing to do." But next Sunday George was there in the same spot. He said, "I want something to do for Jesus." The superintendent hated to tell him no.

All of a sudden he said, "George, would you ring the church bell for us?" George said, "Oh, yes, I'll bring them in." He followed him to the belfry. Every Sunday morning right on the dot he began to pull that old rope and the church bell sounded, and the people around that place started coming to Sunday school. Tears of joy streamed down his cheeks and he said, "I'm bringing them to Sunday school."

The days went by. Something happened. Those people let the Lord slip away. One day they said, "We'll just close the church a while." That same place where souls had been born and shouts of victory had gone up to high heaven was closed.

Days went by. One Sunday a man was talking to another one. "Listen, do you hear what I hear? That is our church bell. I wonder if they're having services over there. Let's go." They went. The door was locked. He went through the window to where the bell was sounding, and there was the little crippled boy pulling the rope. "Sonny, are they going to have a church service here?" "I don't know, sir." "Well, you are ringing the bell. Tell us, why are you ringing it?" He said, "This is the job they gave me to do, and I'm going to do it till they tell me to quit." They looked at each other and said, "If we had been faithful to our task, the church would not be in the fix it is in." It wasn't long until the doors opened, and he never stopped ringing that old church bell. Let us be faithful -- ring the bell joyfully till Jesus comes.

Friends, there will be many difficulties and things for you to encounter on this journey, but I would keep ringing the bell till Jesus comes. In these days of perplexities, I would remember God's Word and pray the glory down. He says to you, "Fear not; it is I. And I will go with you all the way." When you have gone about as far as you can go, the Lord will say, "Climb on." Hand in hand you can journey with Him.

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### 03 -- GOD USED A RINGING CHURCH BELL IN CHARLIE WIREMAN'S CONVERSION

The following excerpt is from hdm0180, "Kentucky Mountain Outlaw Transformed" by Charles Little Wireman ("Bulldog Charlie"). It describes things which directly preceded his conversion:

I got home that night just as the family was sitting at the supper table, but my appetite was gone. I went into the bedroom and threw myself across the bed and thought I must get some sleep. It seemed I would smother to death if I did not get up out of that bed and into the fresh air. I walked out on the front porch and I was walking back and forth like a lion in his cage. I was between the two opposing spirits. All Heaven moved me toward the house of God where the revival was in progress, and all hell was marshaled to hinder. That day, as I stood on the street, the evangelist came down the other side of the street and turned and walked across to where I was, and taking me by the hand not knowing who I was, he said, "I am holding a revival in the Methodist Church. I don't believe I have noticed you in the revival. Won't you come and be with us?" But now I opened not my mouth. There was a feeling of admiration came up in my mind for that man and I wondered why a good man would cross the street to shake hands with a man like me. I found the secret in this Book. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." And conviction deepened.

I only had that kind of conviction once before, not a long time before. I fought a man in a gun battle, giving him just a flesh wound on his face, but one week to a day later a man killed him in a gun battle. Both men had notches in their own pistol handles. It was customary for bad men to attend funerals of other bad men, and when I passed around the casket and saw the

wound from my pistol in the face of that dead man, there was a feeling came up in my heart that I ought to change my way of living, ought to be a better man. That feeling was soon crowded out. It came up again when Brother Roberts spoke to me that day, on the street.

That night as I was walking the porch I swore vengeance against the churches, but prayer changes things. While the great spirit was pulling me toward the house of God, all the forces of hell were against me. But the first thing I knew, the old church bell began to toll, and with every toll of the old bell, the arrow of conviction went deeper into my soul. If I were to build a thousand churches in the village, country, or city, I would insist on putting an old fashioned bell on each one of them. Thank God for the old church bell. Then, the first thing I found myself going toward the house of God.

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#### 04 -- A LASTING IMPRESSION FROM THE RESPONSE TO A CHURCH BELL

This is from hdm0616, "Master Workmen by Richard R. Blews:

On the sixtieth anniversary, while going across the campus, Dr. Lord, one of his old professors, made this remark: "Bishop Sellew, something happened here which made a great impression on me. I was going by the ball diamond one evening when the church bell rang, and I heard you say 'Boys, you'll have to get some one in my place; I'm going to prayer meeting!'"

The matter was summed up at an anniversary class banquet by a fellow classmate, Mr. Lane, a banker of Lombard, Illinois. He said, "We have been busy making a living, but Sellew has been living a life."

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#### 05 -- WHEN A DEVOUT ASTRONOMER HEARD THE CHURCH BELL

This instructive story comes from hdm0072, "Present Day Parables" by John Wilbur Chapman, and it titled, "Duty First, Then Revelations":

When the young astronomer Horrocks had made all his arrangements for observing the transit of Venus, and anxiously awaited the critical moment, the church bell summoned him to worship. What was to be done? If he responded to the bell, the transit might occur in his absence, and thus the grand spectacle would be missed, the great secret lost! After one moment's hesitancy the sense of duty prevailed; the service was celebrated; and, returning to his room, the devout astronomer beheld on the screen the coveted sign of the star. Thus it is with other secrets of the heavens; they are made known to us not when we forsake practical duty for abstract intellectualism, much less when we forsake goodness for libertinism; but when we persist in walking in the path of conscience and duty and worship. Curbing our pride, chastening our impatience, denying our passions, and waiting on God, we shall see light in God's light. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and He will show them his covenant."



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## 06 -- WHY HE WANTED THE CHURCH BELLS STOPPED

This dramatic story comes from hdm2318, "Culpepper Sermons" by John B. and O. B. Culpepper:

One beautiful Sabbath morning during our late exposition at St. Louis, a man walked into a barber shop to be shaved. Just as his face was lathered and ready for the razor, the church bells began to chime, calling the people to the house of God. The man rushed wildly from the chair and rushing out at the door shouted, "Stop those bells, stop those bells, they shall not ring!" A policeman caught him and said: "What do you mean; what's the matter?" "O, sir," said the frightened man, "twenty years ago in old Vermont I killed my father. We quarreled one Saturday night, and on Sunday morning when he started up to ring the church bell, I followed him, and away up in the belfry I stabbed him, sir, and left him dead. And every Sunday morning for twenty years the church bells accuse me. O stop them, sir; they shall not ring!" Ground by sin for twenty long years! O, the grinding nature of sin! But, I would not be true to the commission of an all pursuing gospel if I did not tell you that God heard the prayer of this old warped, and blinded, and bound, and ground reprobate of sin in his prison house, and enabled him to catch up the threads of his former strength and weave them into a muscle with which he overthrew that great building packed with sports, so that it was said he slew more in his death than in his life.

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## 07 -- WHEN THE BELL RANG AT NEW HOPE COUNTRY CHURCH

The following is found in hdm2041, "Victory Out Of Defeat" by Lovick Pierce Driskell:

At New Hope, a country church, four miles west of Carrollton, Georgia, on the Burwell Road, we had a unique experience. The people would not come out to meeting very well on Saturday morning, but I was determined to get a crowd some way. The church didn't have a steeple on it, or a bell. A church in Carrollton, Georgia, was being rebuilt, and they had a very large bell that they said I might have for this country church. I told one brother secretly about it. He brought the bell out to the church about the middle of the week. The church had no steeple so we decided to put it up on a big limb in a tree. These people had never heard a church bell out in that section of the woods, so I hurried to my appointment on Saturday morning, arriving there about 10:30, and the brother had agreed with me that he would say nothing about the church having a bell, so I rang the bell good and strong. The people came from everywhere out of the fields and from their work, thinking that some farm home, or the church, was on fire. I had one good congregation at New Hope. I used for a text that morning: Eph. 5:1. "Therefore, He said, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." We did have a gracious service that morning, if I did have to play a joke to get my congregation to come.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 08 -- AFTER ONE YOUNG MAN HEARD THE CHURCH BELL RING

This moving story is from hdm0918, "Behold He Prayeth" by W. B. Dunkum:

Many years ago one beautiful Sabbath morning eight young men who were students in a law school, were walking along the banks of a river that flows into the Potomac River near Washington, D. C. They were going to a grove to spend the day in drinking and playing cards. As they walked along they amused themselves by telling jokes, when a church bell began to ring in a little town two miles away. One young man, by the name of George, said, "I will go no further but will go to church." One of the other boys said, "George is getting religious, come on boys and we will baptize him by immersion." They gathered around him, he said, "I know you have power to baptize me or even drown me, but my mother is an invalid and when I left home she said she would pray for me every Sunday from eleven to twelve o'clock. At this hour she is praying for me. But before I left she put her hands on my head and prayed for her youngest boy, then kissed me good-bye. Boys, I never expect to see her again in this world, but by the grace of God I will meet her in heaven." When George ceased talking their eyes were floating with tears, the ring was broken they formed around him, hence he passed out and went to church. They admired him for doing what they had not the courage to do. They all followed him and on their way they threw away their cards and drinks and were never known to spend another Sabbath in that manner, but they were all brought to Christ through the prayers of the invalid mother.

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#### 09 -- AFTER THE BREMERSDORP CHURCH BELL RANG

From hdm0070, "Blood Brother Of The Swazis, The Life Story of David Hynd":

Some years later the Bremersdorp church bell had summoned all who would come to Sunday school. From the male ward a well-built young man had joined the class being conducted by Miss Latta. His questions showed him to be the most intelligent and interested listener that Sunday morning. The respectful hush with which the others had listened to him talk deepened into breathless silence as he finally asked in the language of his race, "What must I do to be saved?"

Expectant faces fastened upon the teacher as unhesitatingly and unerringly she told him of the way in which he could become a Christian. Eyes pivoted back to the youth as he stood and meditated. Consternation, amazement, happiness broke through in different faces as he finally said, "I choose Christ." A Swazi prince had publicly accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

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#### 10 -- A POWERFUL REVIVAL AFTER THE CHURCH BELL WAS RUNG

This account is from hdm1531, "Praying Clear Through" by William J. Harney:

The second week had come and everything was as bad as ever. We never saw things freeze tighter; there was no warmth at all. Some of our best people had become so discouraged that they advised pulling stakes, and it seemed to us, from the human viewpoint, that a revival was far, far away.

About this time God sent a Mordecai into the camp; he was a clerk in a dry-goods store. He came to us saying, "I have to work hard all day, can't get here only of a night, and have but little time to pray through the day. I will do this, I'll meet you here in the church at 3 A. M. and we will pray until 6, and will keep this up until we see the cloud the size of a man's hand. God says where two or three pray, in His name, He will be with them. Now let us agree, and pray until He breaks up this stubborn indifference. Mordecai and Esther prayed three days and nights and God saved the Jewish people. Is He not still the same God? Will He not answer us as He did Mordecai and Esther, and as He answered Daniel?"

I said, "I will go into this covenant with you with this understanding, if you get to the church first, ring the bell until I get there, and if I beat you there, I will be pulling on the rope when you reach the church."

At 2:30 A. M. I awoke, hurried my toilet and had reached the high-school building when Brother V began ringing the church bell. In a few minutes lights were in every home, and men running through the yards, dressing, and screaming, "Fire! fire! fire!" We yelled, "Yes, at the church." Soon that big church had 320 souls in it. Think of it, at three o'clock in the morning, and zero weather, too, and a zero congregation! How that good man did shout as he saw the people flocking into the church at that early morning hour.

God saw that we meant business, that we were determined, that our hearts were breaking under the tremendous, crushing burden; He saw that two of us had agreed, and answered before we had time to pray. There was much excitement and people from various walks of life crowded into the church. We took our text and preached in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit, and conviction deep and pungent fell on that crowd. People sobbed aloud; the State's attorney jumped from his seat and hurried to the altar. What confessions! how he cried to God for mercy, for forgiveness. He promised there at the altar to burn up an Ingersol library and there and then he and his wife found pardon.

There was a going in the mulberry-trees, and the meeting ran at high tide until Sunday morning. That morning while I was preaching the power fell and the head of the First National Bank, like a hoop came rolling by me down out of the choir into the aisle, screaming, "My God! I am a lost man." There seemingly was a shock, a great break, and eighty-three rushed to the altar. Such a scene as followed is indescribable; about fifty men were gloriously converted that morning. Such shouting, such rejoicing, could only follow such an altar service; children were in the arms of their parents, parents were in the arms of their children. One old sainted man attending this meeting from another town said to me, "I have never seen such a scene, this is simply out of the ordinary, God is here, God is with us. In this meeting over three hundred were saved, and scores joined the church.

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## 11 -- HE DIDN'T ANSWER THE CHURCH BELL, BUT GOT THE BLESSING

In hdm0526, "From The Prairie Schooner To A City Flat," Charles Brougner Jernigan tells how he was sanctified wholly:

At these prayermeetings I heard my first testimony to entire sanctification. I had never heard a sermon on holiness in my life, although a regular attendant at my church. We had a cultured pastor, the orator of the conference, but he did not know about the definite baptism with the Holy Ghost.

This testimony by a little woman set me wild: My heart was hungry for the fullness of God. I thought that I had never heard anything like this before. She shouted, and her face fairly shone with divine love. When the meeting was over I went home in deep meditation. I told my wife about the woman and her testimony. I said, "This is what we have prayed for around the family altar all of our married life." (For we always had family prayer.)

Soon the church bell rang for the evening service, and wife said, "Better get ready to go to church."

I replied, "No, I am not going to church tonight."

She quickly asked, "Why?"

I replied, "That woman out in the prayermeeting in the grove told me more real gospel in fifteen minutes than my pastors have in fifteen years. She said she was sanctified, and she looked so different from other people. I must have the blessing or die."

We read our Bibles and prayed, but did not get through that night. I could not sleep; I had no appetite for food. I rolled and prayed all night long. I ate no breakfast the next morning. Oh my heart was so hungry. Talk about conviction -- I had it till there was no rest. I must have the Holy Ghost in all His fullness or die. About nine o'clock that Monday morning walking down a new ground road carrying a plow on my shoulder, and praying with all my heart and strength the "fire fell," and I fell in the middle of the road while billows of glory swept over my soul. I laughed, I cried, I wept for joy, all alone, no one near. But oh! such peace, such contentment. I could not walk. I struggled to a nearby stump and pulled myself up on it to meditate. I suppose had you come along you might have called me crazy; having such spells all alone.

I promised the Lord that I would preach, for this was my first real call to preach. I immediately went at it, and, thank God, can say that I have never turned aside from that day to make money. I have had but one object in my life since that day: to get people saved and into a church where they can live a saved life. I began to preach in fifteen minutes from that time and am still at it.

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## 12 -- BEVERLY CARRADINE OFTEN REFERRED TO CHURCH BELLS

In hdm0028, "A Box Of Treasure," Beverly Carradine said:

God cannot convert or sanctify anyone against that person's will, but He can and does prevent much evil from taking place in one's life through providential dealings and that without interfering with a man's free moral agency. The opening of a religious book, the meeting with a good man, the singing of a hymn, the sound of a church bell in the distance, can all be used by the Spirit of God in disarming evil, changing the current of feeling, arousing conscience and creating better desires, intentions and living.

[Again, in the same book, he writes]:

Once in a great bereavement, a sudden laugh on the street would nearly break my heart. We would find ourselves wondering how any one could be glad in such a grief-stricken grave-riven world like this. The only sound we recall which we could endure in that sorrowful period was the ringing of distant church bells during the month of Lent. Somehow they spoke of heaven and had a soothing power.

[From hdm0034, "Beulah Land"]:

We do not doubt today with the knowledge that has come from the flight of years, that this very heart discontent and inward sigh for something without and beyond, was the soul's craving for the true rest, for the life in the Land of Beulah.

It is wonderful what simple things would arouse and intensify this longing. Chords of music heard faintly in a drowsy summer afternoon, the voice of some one singing in the distance, the sound of a far away church bell, or the sight of a peaceful sunset, were sufficient to fill the eyes with tears, and the soul with sighing and longing for something or somewhat that we did not possess and without which we felt desolate and bereaved indeed.

[Later in the same volume we find]:

A final cause for the heavenward gaze is found in the actual homesickness of the soul for God and heaven. It matters not how blessedly we may be sanctified, and how deep in Beulah Land we may go, there is felt in the spirit at times a longing for the Savior and heaven which is wonderfully like the heartache of a homesick child. The sight of a sunset may arouse the feeling; or it may be the ringing of a distant church bell; or the voice of some one singing over a field. Suddenly the homesickness for God and heaven is upon us, and with swelling heart and filling eyes, we with upward gaze cry out for "a land that is fairer than day," and

"Where the sun never sets,  
And the leaves never fade,  
In that beautiful City of Gold."

[In hdm0040, "Graphic Scenes," The Prince of the Holiness Writers records]:

When the writer was a lad of six or eight, Dr. Marshall visited Yazoo City and preached to an overflowing audience as usual. In the afternoon he was walking on the streets holding my hand, when the church bells began to ring over the town. He asked me what they said, and I confessed that I could not interpret the iron language, when with his eyes full of tears and face aglow he replied, they say:

"The Lord is risen indeed" -- "The Lord is risen indeed."

[The following is taken from hdm0045, "Pen Pictures"]:

When I was a boy I stood one afternoon on the bank of the Alabama River and looked at a steamer going down the stream toward the city of Mobile. The calliope on the upper deck was playing Lorena. As the strains of that pathetic song of the war died, or we might say, faded away in the distance, together with the lessening form of the steamer, I was left spellbound upon the bank. The very ripples of the river seemed as they broke upon the shore at my feet to bring with them fragments of the touching melody that had just ceased reverberating, and out of the distance seemed to come the words of the song:

"A hundred months 'twas flowery May,  
When up the hilly slope we'd climb,  
To watch the dying of the day  
And hear the distant church bells chime."

We remember at the time, that the Confederacy was going to pieces, Federal forces were raiding the land, and a melancholy not only brooded upon the people, but seemed to fill the very atmosphere. Nevertheless there was something in the scene in itself that left a lifelong impression upon the writer. It has been a long time since that afternoon, but the swelling of the heart, the indefinable longings produced by the scene and hour have never been forgotten.

[From hdm0048, "Revival Incidents"]:

One day I had to be put through a window to get in the building, I walked over to him as he began to pull the rope and asked him what he was ringing the bell for? Was it to let the town know that no one else could get into the church? That for my life I could see no other reason in giving those forty or fifty tolling sounds.

He looked up, then around at the packed audience, jammed aisles, and crowded vestibule, and saw the point. With a foolish looking smile he let go the rope and sat down with an air of profound thought on his wrinkled face.

It is well for us to remember that the invention of church bells came after the church lost full salvation or the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. It was to ring up the people and ring back vanished congregations who needed thus to be reminded of the meeting, and stimulated to return. It required two bells.

Whenever holiness as an experience comes back to a church, the summoning chime becomes a back number; it is a needless affair; for the people are that anxious to be in the house of God that they come ahead of time. What evangelist whom God has blessed with genuine revivals but can testify to this fact. The congregations fairly rush to the place of worship, not because of an outward bell, but because of a sound of inward bells hung and swung and rung in the soul of the sanctified.

[The following, amusing story is found in the same volume by Carradine]:

A lady once told me of an evangelist who was invited by a pastor to hold a meeting for him. The town was full of sin, the church was lifeless and the country, in a spirit sense, dry, dead and plucked up by the roots.

On entering the church for the first morning service, the evangelist, who was preceding the pastor, saw three or four solemn-looking members sitting motionless in the center of the auditorium like so many marble statues. It was already past the hour of assembling, and no one could be seen on the streets coming to the service. The view and situation was undoubtedly unpromising and depressing. The man of the world would at once have had his brain in a whirl with thoughts and plans of what was necessary in newspaper advertising, wall placards, printed bills and cards, as well as church bell ringing and house-to-house visiting, in order to secure a congregation to fill the great empty building.

The evangelist of whom I am writing looked at the silent, cheerless scene for a moment, rubbed his chin reflectively, and immediately threw a kind of somersault (a trick he had learned as a boy), landed on the palms of his hands, and walked up the aisle that way, with his feet in the air, where his head usually appeared. He not only went the whole length of the aisle in this manner, but coming to the pulpit, walked up the steps and let the soles of his shoes gaze, so to speak, for a few moments, over the book-board at the four perfectly thunder-struck brothers and sisters in the pew, and then nimbly recovering himself, brought his feet to the floor and his head up, and proceeded to read the lessons from the Bible and lead in prayer.

It is needless to say that the four amazed beholders of the unusual spectacle took the place of church bells and printed notices, and that night the church was literally jammed with a highly expectant audience, while the windows were filled, and the fences and trees nearby were lined and festooned with people who could not obtain entrance in the building, but craved to see what was going on inside.

It is proper to add that the evangelist did not walk on his hands that evening, but preached such a sermon on sin, the judgment and hell that conviction fell on the congregation, and a revival began that very night which resulted in the course of ten days of scores being soundly converted to God.

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This little bit of humor is from hdm0123, "Articles Of Faith" by Duane V. Maxey:

Spurgeon told of a thief who had broken into a church building to steal the communion plate. However, hearing someone approaching, he hurried to the end of the building where seeing a rope descending he attempted to climb it, but thereby rang the church bell, locating his presence. Being caught, he said to the bell: "If it had not been for thy long tongue and empty head, I should not be in my predicament!"

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#### 14 -- WHEN THE CHURCH BELL RANG SHE HAD TO GO

From hdm 0137, "H. Robb French -- Pioneer, Prophet And Prayer Warrior" compiled by Anna Talbott McPherson:

In later years, Robb said, "I guess I'm getting old, and I give way to my feelings sometimes, but I want to be like my mother. She was more earnest in her old age than she was when she was young. Even when the weather was bad, she found her way to the house of God. 'O Mother,' we'd say, 'you shouldn't go tonight. It's a rainy night. You have that cough. It's chilly out there.' But she would brush us aside. 'But I've got to go, Robb,' she'd say. 'There's something about it -- when the church bell rings, I've got to go. My candle is burning out. I've got to make these last moments count for God.' Thank God for her memory. I don't want to get careless and blame it on my age or on my sickness. I want to keep the fire burning brightly on the altar of my heart. I don't want to be surprised and ashamed when the Lord comes.

"Yes, thank you, Mother," Robb said again and again, "that you stepped out and took the lead and suffered persecution. We're all following in your footsteps. We'll meet you on the banks of sweet deliverance."

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#### 15 -- WHEN THE CHURCH BELL RANG IN SEPTEMBER

From hdm0983, "The Lure Of The Hills" by Mildred E. Norbeck:

In September there was a revival meeting in progress at the mission and I attended it regularly. When I first went I would sit in the back, but I kept moving up every night until I reached the front seat. I got under such awful conviction that I would grip the seat to keep from going to the altar. One day while working on a high hill back of our home I was thinking of what a terrible life I had lived and I wondered if there was any hope for me. My life was so miserable that I could hardly rest day or night. I was so tired of sin and this terrible burden on my heart that I cried, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" He answered in a voice so plain that it startled me for a moment, "Son, give me thine heart." Tears of joy came to my eyes. How glad I was that there was hope for even me! I wanted to pray right there but I was afraid some one would see me. I had served the devil so long that he hated to give me up.



On Monday night a little while before the service, my wife asked me if I was going to church. I said, "No, I'm not going to church. I don't believe in women preaching. I'd like to have Miss Reed show me where it says in the Bible that a woman has a right to preach." In my heart I did not mean this for the only real reason that I opposed women preaching was that every time I heard them they preached me under conviction. If Miss Reed had come I would have gone the other way. I did not want to go to church because I knew if I kept going I would soon be at the altar and this made me angry at myself.

However, when the church bell rang I could not stay away, so I went as usual. This time when the invitation was given I did not feel as much conviction as I had before and I was afraid God's Spirit was leaving me. I made up my mind that I would put it off no longer. Hastening to the altar I wept my way to the foot of the cross, confessed my sins, and met God's conditions. He forgave all the past and wonderfully saved me.

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## 16 -- THE CHURCH BELL AND A SUNDAY SCHOOL DOG

From hdm 2316, "The Wonder Book" by William Edward Shepard:

Patsy is just a common little yellow dog, but he has a very uncommon habit for a dog. Every first day of the week he goes to Sunday school. He knows what day of the week it is when he sees the children all putting on their Sunday clothes. He never thinks of going with them to the public on a week-day, but when the church bell rings and the boys and girls start off to Sunday school, he is never missing. Dogs are not usually allowed to go to church, you know, but this little fellow behaved himself so well the first time he came that the superintendent let him stay, and he soon came to expect the dog as much as he did the children. So that now Patsy has his regular place, and he never has to be marked absent. His little master brings a penny for him to put in the collection, and when Christmas comes he receives a box of candy and an orange, along with the other members of the school, and he enjoys it too.

Nobody laughs or makes any ado over Patsy. He just comes in, curls down in his place or occasionally moves about a little in a perfectly orderly way. And the children would be ashamed not to be so good as he is. When the last song is sung and the going-home bell rings, they stand aside and let Patsy lead the way down the aisle and out into the street. Then he walks home with his master and mistresses just as a dog should.

Sometimes he doesn't go home quite so soon as his master and mistresses and sometimes his picture-lesson card is missing, and then the children are sure that he has stopped to tell some other dog who doesn't attend Sunday school all about the lesson, and has given him his card to study.

At any rate, Patsy is a pretty good dog all the week; he doesn't use up all his Sunday manners on Sunday.

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## 17 -- HOW A STORK CAUSED THE CHURCH BELLS TO RING

From hdm 2316, "The Wonder Book" by William Edward Shepard:

In a little house in far-off Norway there lived a poor widow and her only child, Conrad. Every spring a stork came and built her nest on the roof of the tiny home. There she laid her eggs and raised her young, and when the chilly winds of autumn came she flew away to the sunny south, returning the next spring. From the time Conrad was a little boy he had watched every year for the coming of the big bird, which he fed daily. Both he and his mother grew very fond of their feathered guest. Conrad would whistle in a peculiar way, and the stork would fly to him for food. Thus, the bird and the boy became fast friends.

When Conrad was old enough he went to be a sailor. On his first voyage, when the ship touched Africa, he and all the crew were taken prisoners by pirates and sold as slaves. Weeks went by; months and years passed. The poor, lonely widow in her northern home mourned for her sailor boy as dead. But poor Conrad was working in chains under a cruel task-master, away in Africa. How often he thought of dear Norway, of his beloved mother, and of the little cottage! Should he ever see them again? There seemed no hope.

One day a stork circled above his head, and Conrad, thinking of his old-time pet, whistled the bird-call of the olden days. To his surprise and joy the bird came to him. He saw that it was his old friend. What joy it was for Conrad to find his pet! Why, it was like seeing one from his own land, from his very home. Now a plan came to the lonely, discouraged slave. "When the stork is ready to fly homeward in the spring I'll tie a message to its leg. It will go to my dear old home, and perhaps mother will see the note," he said. This he did, hoping that all would go well with his friend on its long northern journey.

When spring came to the little Norway village the old stork came as usual to the roof of the tiny house that had been its home so long. Conrad's mother welcomed it and fed it for the sake of her boy who had loved it. Then she spied the paper wound around its leg, and taking it off she read the message her boy had sent. Quickly the wonderful news spread through the village that Conrad was living, but a slave. Then the minister said: "We must save Conrad." Someone went around and collected money, and everyone gladly gave what he could and the matter was laid before the king, and he was asked to help. When the king heard the story his eyes filled with tears, and before many days a great warship, fully manned, sailed away to the African coast to rescue the young slave. Before the summer closed it returned, bringing Conrad back to his mother's cottage. How merrily the church bells of the little village pealed a welcome! How the people rejoiced and gave thanks together on the day of Conrad's return!

On the top of the church and on his own house Conrad placed the figure of a great stork, to show all who came to the village that God had saved his life by means of a bird. But the neighbors all said that if Conrad had not been kind to the stork when it first came it might have gone to some other roof, and thus his chance of rescue would have gone. On the quaint village church the stork may still be seen, as well as on many houses. And often in the long twilight

hour do the boys and girls gather about some dear old lady to hear the story of Conrad and the stork who once lived in that village.

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## 18 -- A CHURCH BELL ILLUSTRATION

From hdm0165, "Effective Illustrations" by William Moses Tidwell:

A church bell became cracked. A skillful smith mended it so carefully that the crack could not be seen. But when they re-hung it, its tones were appallingly dull. They took it to the foundry and recast it. Then its tones were as sweet as ever. So with these poor sin-cracked natures of ours. We may patch them all we can, but they will never be right until the Spirit of God recasts them in the mold of the new birth.

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## 19 -- HOW SHE WAS SAVED AFTER IGNORING THE CHURCH BELL

From hdm0047, "Remarkable Occurrences" by Beverly Carradine:

In one of our Southern towns dwelt a woman who was the occasion of envy to many hundreds of hearts. She was beautiful, to begin with, was educated and accomplished, possessed wealth, moved in what is called the best social circles, married well, had a lovely family of three sons and a daughter, and owned one of the handsomest homes in the town where she lived.

This lady was a Methodist, but scarcely ever attended church. The temple of worship was only two blocks from the house, and its great bell summoning its congregation could be heard even through the thick walls and closed doors of the family mansion. She in after years confessed that the sound disturbed her. She said it had an accent of invitation and entreaty, and seemed to say, with its solemn swing and deep-toned note, "Come! Come! Come!"

But why go? According to earthly light and wisdom she did not need to go. Did she not possess everything dear to a woman's heart? Were not her husband and children devoted to her? Were they not all well? Did she not have friends and money in abundance? What need to go? Churches doubtless were very good for the disappointed, afflicted and heartbroken of earth, But she had suffered no bereavement, lost no fortune or friends; what need, then, for her to attend? Her household circle was unbroken, and she had never known what it was to have a serious spell of sickness. No, the bell might ring on, but she was not going! She had all she wanted right around her.

It would be impossible to tell how many people who passed down that street, and, glancing over the lawn and flower yard at the stately dwelling, surrounded by large shade trees, felt that they would gladly exchange places with such an obviously blessed and favored woman.

It would not require much spiritual wisdom for a person to see that the things in this life which absorb our attention, engross our affection and take up our time are the rivals of God and the enemies of our soul. In the faithful dealing and providence of the Almighty, false deities are struck at and idols have to go. Men would be spared more suffering in this world if they did not bow down in false worship and make divinities of flesh, mud and metal.

In the fullness of time the clouds gathered, the winds arose, and the cyclone fell. The husband, a son and daughter died; a second boy wandered from home and was heard of no more, and the third became a drunkard. Then the fortune took wings and vanished, the home went under the auctioneer's hammer, and the sorrowing woman took refuge in an humble cottage near by. For years her health had been going down, and now she became a hopeless invalid...

It is with deep gratification we record the fact that when the great troubles of the woman's life came rolling in upon her like the billows of an ocean, she turned to God. Instead of engulfing, these waves under the blessing of heaven, tossed her soul to the feet of Christ. Widowed, childless, beggared, homeless, lonely, wrecked in health and all but friendless, she called on God, was heard in that she feared, and was delivered and carried from that time like a lamb in the bosom of the divine Shepherd.

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## 20 -- HOW THE CHURCH BELL LED HER HUSBAND TO SALVATION

From hdm2216, "Some Women I Have Known" by John B. Culpepper:

That afternoon he changed his business clothes for a Sunday suit. His wife, noticing it, said: "Are you going to church tonight, Chris?" "No." "Where are you going?" "To the lodge." He was the lodge Master. She said: "Chris, don't let that Masonic horn be blown tonight so close to our meeting." "I guess she will blow." "Well, I hope there won't be anybody there but you and Jesus." "Guess we will have a crowd."

That night, while the men were gathering, he took cognizance of the furniture of the room. The ringing, of the church-bell across the street; its intonations through his soul drifted him into a mental, soliloquial comparison. He said, "This is something of a church itself. There is the chandelier -- that's church furniture. There's the Bible -- that's church furniture. There's the altar -- that's church furniture. Here's the pulpit -- it's church furniture." Here, it dawned on him, and with all the emphasis of an electric shock, he said: "Yes, and I am the preacher -- and I swear, and am wicked."

Church out, the lodge adjourned, the husband and wife returned home and retired. After several hours of fruitless effort at sleep, sister Mollie said: "Chris, what's the matter? Why don't you sleep?" He replied, "O, nothing." She said, "Chris, I believe there is, and I believe you are miserable about your soul." Without any concessions on his part, but with much prayer on hers, the night was spent. The next morning, at a testimony meeting, some one, Bro. Murphy, I believe, was saying, "We are doing but little; look at how few of our business men are here," at

the same time calling over the names of men who were related to the church by marriage, among them Mr. Buchanan.

About this time he [Mollie's husband, Chris Buchanan] walked in, followed by some twenty others, whom he had gotten to close their places of business. They took seats in the church. After prayer, to the surprise of all, Mr. Buchanan arose and said: "Good people, I want you to sing 'Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy.' We are here, Sinners is our name, and we are very needy. I want to go to that altar for prayer, and I wish my friends, who have so kindly come out at my request, would go with me." I am told the scene was indescribable. Attraction turned the other way that morning. The town changed front. A new Waycross almanac was edited from heaven. Henceforth the town was to be known in the religious annals of the country.

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## 21 -- A STRIKING OCCURRENCE WHEN THE CHURCH BELL RANG

This strange and astonishing story comes from hdm0551, "The Voice Of God" by Paul Frederick Elliott. I think Elliott is quoting this story as told by someone else. I have purposely omitted the name of the denomination:

The \_\_\_\_\_ church stood on the hill about two blocks from our home. I could see the folks going to church; I hated every one of them, and cursed them as far as I could see them. When the bell would ring I would put my fingers in my ears so I could not hear the sound. One Sunday morning, while it was ringing, there was thundering and lightning; I called on the God whom I tried to disbelieve in to strike the church with lightning. To my surprise, God answered the prayer of a sinner. There was a sharp flash and a clap of thunder. I looked out of the window, and soon discovered that the church had been struck with lightning. It had struck the rear of the building and run by the pulpit. This frightened the preacher and the choir, for they were not used to the fire.

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## 22 -- IN TIMIDITY, HE WAITED UNTIL TIME FOR THE LAST BELL

From hdm0287, "My Early Years And Five Revival Sermons" by Ralph Goodrich Finch:

As the night service at Aberdeen drew on, I became more and more restless. My soul and spirit were champing the bit to tell the world what God had burned into my heart, but to overcome a human timidity which possessed me took all the courage I could scrape up and lots of boosting from my wife. I waited until just time for the last bell to ring so I could begin at once. The janitor was ringing the bell as I entered the church. I thought my knees would fail to hold me up as I walked down the aisle. The building was full. The leaders of the town were in the choir, among them, one of the doctors. His wife sat at the organ. The seats were amphitheater style. High stained windows and heavy chandeliers gave the place a richness which awed me into feeling about as big as a mouse. A long time afterwards a lady, after I told her how I felt that night, laughed and said, "How strange! As you walked in that door you looked so large and

carried an air that frightened me at once. I felt like getting up and running, but I wanted so much to hear what you said that I stayed. And it was that way until I got saved. You walked in and down the aisle like a conqueror. After that first night we could not stay away." My one thought that night, as I went down the aisle, was to get behind the pulpit and pray for help as quickly as possible, and this I did. I knelt and asked God to please help me that once, for Jesus' sake.

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## 23 -- UNDAUNTED, GODBEY CONTINUED TO RING THE BELL

From hdm0296, "The Autobiography Of William Baxter Godbey":

When I arrived in Uvalde an Old Methodist preacher met me and told me that he brought four promising sons to that place and they had all been killed. I had gone out and walked through the graveyard and seen superscriptions on the tombstones stating that the inmates were murdered. I saw a double grave superscribed, "These men were both murdered," giving the date. I suppose all the men there went armed. But I did not heed the old preacher but continued to ring the bell. He still tried to get me to quit, assuring me that I would have no congregation, because they had been cursing me all over town and arrangements were made to mob and kill me that night. But he said that the good people had made arrangements to guard me at his house till the first east bound train at two o'clock and put me on it, thus sending me away and saving my life. Then I said, "Brother Walker, we will turn the proposition round; you stay here with me and I will protect you, for I see that you are afraid, and I am not." So I continued to ring the bell, and, as I expected, a large audience assembled and filled the house, which was quite capacious.

We went on with the introductory songs and prayers beginning at sunset and the people gathering till I supposed they had nearly all arrived, then I proceeded to take for my text, Psa. 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God." As I looked them in the face and dispensed to them the awful truth of their coming doom, I concluded that old Brother Walker was correct in regard to their purposes. I saw the lurid glare of Hell in their faces and the very fire of the pit flashing from their eyes, and could hear them grit their teeth, and could see clearly that Satan had them and that they were full of demons; I realized that the very powers of Hell were present. Rely upon it, I preached my best, and God wonderfully helped me.

My sermon was lengthy and all of it on the horrible doom of the lost, describing the unutterable horrors of Hell, and doing my utmost to portray an eternity of woe, telling them that God sent me there to warn them of their impending danger, and He would put me on the witness block in the day of judgment to testify against them, because I had faithfully delivered God's solemn warning, and they had hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks. But I would be clear of their blood in that great day when we would all stand before the flaming judgment bar.

As I went on I could see changes in their countenances, paleness superseding the redness of wrath and indignation. As I continued to portray the awful doom of the judgment, and to paint an eternity in the flames of Hell, I began to hear groans, sighs and sobs. These increased more and more and became louder and more acute; then they began to fall from their seats and to

scream, actually by their moans, groans, shrieks and cries, drowning my voice. Then for the first time during the meeting, I threw the altar open for the people who wanted their sins forgiven and their souls saved before it was eternally too late. Behold; one hundred people made for the mercy-seat, falling at the altar and crying.

Oh, what a revival followed! Twenty-three days I there remained, witnessing the mighty works of God. The conversions were bright as a sunburst, and all, so fast as they got saved, went to work heroically at the altar with the seekers, and in the congregation with the sinners.

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## 24 -- THE CONVERSION OF THE JUDGE WHO WORE THE BELL

From hdm0644, "Godbey's New Testament Commentaries, Volume III" by William Baxter Godbey:

I knew a Methodist Church where Judge J\_\_\_ wore the bell, and presided over the Official Board. Still he was a notorious sinner, as all knew and frankly admitted. Revivals came and went, but could not touch him. He would feed and pay the preachers, and do everything but get religion. So eventually the Conference sent a simple-hearted little man to that circuit. On arrival, he began revivals, and went round his circuit like a fiery cyclone. When he got through, he turned and excommunicated all that did not get religion (that was in the olden time). He did not begin with the little folks, but walloped the big horse first of all. The excitement was intense. Many said, "The Church is ruined." The stewards told the preacher he would starve, as Judge J\_\_\_ collected more money than all the balance. He said he would rather starve for God, than fatten for the devil. The judge roared like a lion, and said he had spent his money freely for the Church, and they had treated him like a dog. So he went out with a rage, vociferating that he would never be a Methodist again. Other Churches had their eye on him. Three years roll away. Of course, his mad spell wore off. A revival of unusual power visits the Methodist Church. Many hard reprobates are gloriously saved. The revival runs about three months. Ere long the judge, who never entered the house since his expulsion, is seen in the vestibule. He comes on, and nightly gets a little nearer, till, to the surprise of all, he comes and falls full-length at the mourner's bench. Night after night for two whole weeks he is heard groaning at the altar. Finally he comes through as a sunburst. I conversed with his widow (a paragon saint) after his death, about ten years subsequent to his conversion.

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## 25 -- DESPERATE TO BE SAVED WHEN THE OLD BELL RANG

From hdm0649, "A Voice In The Midnight Hour" by Glenn Griffith:

I knelt, when I was in such desperation trying to get saved -- not sanctified -- in the sand dunes. I got so desperate between services, I knelt down in clusters of sand burrs. They are not easy to kneel in. They are sharp and there are many of them. I was so desperate about my soul that they were as soft as a cushion to me when I knelt down. There was a bigger storm in my

soul, sharper than a sand burr. I prayed until the night service. The old bell rang and I started to get up. The burrs had worked through the trousers into my knees almost to the bone, and I discovered then that I had been kneeling in sand burrs. That was the first time I had noticed them. I wanted God to get to my heart.

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## 26 -- THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST RING THE BELL

From hdm0596, "Five Hundred And One Sermon Illustrations" compiled and edited by W. G. Heslop:

However learned, godly, and eloquent a minister may be, he is nothing without the Holy Spirit. The bell in the steeple may be well hung, fairly fashioned, and of the soundest metal, but it is dumb until the ringer makes it speak; and in like manner the preacher has no voice of quickening for the dead in sin, or of comfort for living saints, until the divine Spirit gives him a gracious pull, and bids him speak with power. Hence the need of prayer from both preacher and hearers.

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## 27 -- SHE PRAYED EVERY SUNDAY WHEN THE CHURCH BELL RANG

From hdm0110, "Pentecostal Papers" by Samuel Ashton Keen:

Together with a brother pastor, some years since, we visited in her home a mother of Israel. She was away up in the seventies, and was a veritable Doctor of Divinity; more truly entitled to that degree than many who wear it. She had walked, and talked, and lived with God so long that she had a wonderful insight into, and apprehension of, divine and spiritual things. After a season of prayer with her, she recited the story of her Christian life; how, when a girl in her teens, she was clearly converted, and began at once to pray for her youthful associates, and saw many of them saved. Then, later, she married a Methodist class-leader, and their home became a meeting-place for the society class and weekly prayer-meeting. Here she had seen many remarkable answers to prayer in souls awakened, converted, and fully sanctified; then she added: "I have been the mother of twelve children, all of whom were converted while I was praying with and for them. Now, brother," she said, addressing her pastor, "I am feeble, and can not get to the house of God, but every Sabbath morning when the bell rings for public worship, I begin to pray for you and your message, and for the people, and I continue to pray until I think the service is over. So I do when the prayer-meeting night comes around." Then she spoke of a young man, a neighbor's son, for whom she was praying. "There is also our physician just across the street; I am asking God to save him: he is a skeptic." What a life of prayer! Begun in her teens, and carried on unintermittingly for sixty years, and now kept up despite the infirmities and retirement of age -- physically superannuated, but spiritually effective! Having heard this marvelous recital, we said to the brother with us, as we walked away from the holy presence of this woman of God: "What is the secret of such a life of prayer as that?" He unhesitatingly replied: "She has been filled with the Spirit."



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## 28 -- AT LAST THE CHURCH BELL RANG

From hdm1595, "Rescued, Or The River Of Death" by Martin Wells Knapp:

From The Testimony Of V. E. M

I knew there was but one way of obtaining relief, and that was to "believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ" -- but, O! who was to teach me how to trust Him for the safety of my soul?

My sorrow of heart was too great for words; I could not voice it to others. Prayer was my only solace. But the more I tried to pray, the farther off from God I seemed to go. "O! hath He not loved me?" I cried. "Hath He not suffered and died to redeem such a lost rebel as I?" But true as this fact was, I could not by faith step out on the promises of God -- they were so very broad and high my soul staggered at them.

As the weary day wore away, and the lengthening shadows of evening came on, how I longed to hear the sound of the church-bell!

At last its tones pealed out in sweetest music to my ear, it seemed to call to me of

"Peace, sweet peace, that passeth understanding,  
Peace, sweet peace, that has no ending,"

until my heart took courage to believe I would find Jesus by going up again to the house of God...

When at last I reached the point that I could, and did, that moment trust in the blood of Christ, instantly I felt the crushing burden lifted, and I knew my heart had been "washed" and made "whiter than the snow."

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## 29 -- HOW THERE CAME TO BE A CHAPEL BELL AT PERRY HALL

From hdm0324, "A History Of The Rise Of Methodism In America" by John Lednum:

In the month of April, 1775, Mr. Asbury first preached to Mr. Henry Dorsey Gough, of Maryland, on which occasion he was convinced by the truth. A gentleman of Bristol, England, had left Mr. Gough, by will, an estate in land, houses, and money, valued at sixty or seventy thousand pounds. He had married a sister of General Ridgely (afterwards Governor Ridgely). His mansion, called Perry Hall, was on the Bel Air Road, twelve miles from Baltimore, and was one of the most spacious and elegant in America at that time. In the midst of all this wealth and

worldly grandeur he was unhappy. It has been stated that Mrs. Gough had been brought to serious reflection by hearing the Methodists preach, and had been forbidden by her husband to hear them any more. One evening he and his companions were drinking and trying to bless themselves with the pleasures of sin, when one of them said, "Come, let us go and hear the Methodist preacher." This was to be a scene of new diversion to them. They went, and Mr. Asbury was the preacher. On leaving the place of worship one of the company said, "What a heap of nonsense we have heard to night." But Mr. Gough, who had been convicted under the sermon, replied, "No, what we have heard is the truth as; it is in Jesus."

His prejudice against the Methodists was now removed, and he could say to his companion, "My dear, I shall never hinder you again from hearing the Methodists." This was an agreeable declaration to her. So deep was his distress on account of sin, that he was near destroying himself; but God mercifully preserved him. It is related of him that he rode over to one of his plantations, one day while under sore distress of soul, where he heard the voice of prayer and thanksgiving, to which he listened, and found that it was a colored man, a poor slave that had come from a near plantation, and was praying with his slaves; and thanking God most fervently for his goodness to his soul and body.

The prayer took a deep hold on Mr. Gough's feelings, and he exclaimed, "Alas! O Lord, I have my thousands and tens of thousands, and yet, ungrateful wretch that I am, I never thanked thee as this poor slave does, who has scarcely clothes to put on or food to satisfy his hunger." In the height of his distress, one day, when a number of friends were at his house, he left his company and retired to his closet to pour out his full soul in prayer. While on his knees, imploring the mercy of God, he received the answer from his Lord, of conscious pardon and peace. In a transport of joy, he went to his company exclaiming, "I have found the Methodists blessing! I have found the Methodists God!"

In July, 1775, Mr. Rankin tells us that after preaching at the chapel at the Forks of Gunpowder Falls he rode to Perry hall. Mr. And Mrs. Gough had, by the mercy of God lately found a sense of the divine favor, and now cheerfully opened their house and hearts to receive the ministers and children of God. "I spent a most agreeable evening with them. A numerous family of servants were called in to exhortation and prayer; so that with them and the rest of the house we had a little congregation. The Lord was in the midst, and we praised him with joyful lips. The simplicity of spirit discovered by Mr. And Mrs. Gough was truly pleasing. At every opportunity he was declaring what the Lord had done for his soul; still wondering at the matchless love of Jesus, who had plucked him as a brand from the burning. He and his wife united with the Methodists, and continued to cleave to them during the war that resulted in the independence of the American colonies, at the risk of the confiscation of his large estate."

Mr. Gough continued for a number of years happy in religion and zealous in the cause of God. He built a chapel joining Perry Hall, on which was a bell that rang morning and evening, calling the household, white and colored, together for family worship. So numerous was his family that when assembled they made up a medium congregation to hear the Scriptures read, and engage in singing and prayer. At that day the Methodists were strictly taught to allow their servants the benefit of family worship, nor would a Methodist preacher like to lead in family devotion when the greater part of the family were absent in the quarter, and at their work. In this

chapel the circuit preachers preached every two weeks on a week day, and the local preachers every other Sabbath; also strange preachers, when they turned in to tarry for a night, often preached in it to the family...

Mrs. Prudence Gough lived a widow for several years after Mr. Gough's death.. Perry Hall was the resort of much company, among whom the skeptic and the Romanist were sometimes found. Members of the Baltimore bar, the elite of Maryland, were there. But it mattered not who was there. When the bell rang for family devotion, they were seen in the chapel, and if there was no male person present to lead the devotions, Mrs. Gough read a chapter in the Bible, gave out a hymn which was often raised and sung by the colored servants, when she would engage in prayer. Take her altogether, few such have been found on earth. Of her Mr. Asbury remarked, "She had been a true daughter, she has never offended me at any time." [In the case of the Chapel Bell at Perry Hall, Bishop Asbury seems to have laid aside his dislike for church bells because of his deep appreciation for the Goughs. -- DVM] Her only sister became a Methodist about the same time that she did; they continued faithfully to a good old age, when they were called to take a higher seat. Mrs. Gough's only child, a daughter, also gave her heart to the Saviour, while she was yet young; and most of her relations followed her example of piety -- many of them were Methodists cast in the old die.

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### 30 -- JOHN FLETCHER'S HAND-CARRIED CHURCH BELL

From hdm 2403, "Men And Women Of Deep Piety" by Clara McLeister:

Both in public and in private, Fletcher labored to be a faithful minister of Christ. His public ministrations were frequent and earnest; and this not only in his own parish, where he preached several times in the week, beginning sometimes at five in the morning, but also at other places -- eight, ten and sixteen miles off, from which he would get home at one or two in the morning. No pains were spared that the people should be brought within sound of the Gospel. Some gave as an excuse for not being at the church service on Sunday morning that they did not waken early enough. To meet this excuse, he provided himself with a bell, and every Sunday morning, for some months, set out at five o'clock visiting the most distant parts of the parish, and inviting all to the house of the Lord. Five o'clock prayer-meetings were held for the benefit of the miners on their way to work in the mornings. As people heard the bell they remarked, "There goes the soul-saver!"

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### 31 -- THE SOLEMN MESSAGE OF THE MORNING BELL

From hdm0408, "Incidental Illustrations Of The Economy Of Salvation -- Its Doctrines And Duties" by Mrs. Phoebe Palmer:

I have recently been visiting a village where scores have been brought to see their need of a Savior. The village is not large; but, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, I think the

revival is the most general I ever witnessed. On Sabbath evening, the pastor requested that those who were resolved to seek the Lord would manifest it by rising. About seventy arose. But what a solemn announcement was made that evening! A young physician, who, by his impious course, had set God at defiance, was announced as on the very verge of eternity, and requesting the prayers of the congregation. This young man had been extensively known in the village as an opposer of religion. Three years previous to this time, the Lord commenced to work in the place, when this young man openly said he would put a stop to it. For this purpose, he got up a ball, and so engaged the attentions of the community that he actually gained his point. No special work of the Spirit had been known from that time till this. And now God was about to take him away. The next morning, the bell, in solemn tones, from the spire of that village church, told the community that the opposer was removed. God had taken his own work in hand. The work of the Lord went on with power while I remained, till it really seemed as if the whole place was turning to the Lord.

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### 32 -- THE SAD END OF ONE OFFENDED BY THE CHURCH BELL

From hdm0637, "Life Of Lucius Bunyan Compton The Mountaineer Evangelist" by John C. Patty:

Mr. Compton started a revival in a small Methodist church in a Kentucky hamlet about eight miles distant from a railroad. A few rods from the church lived a man of wealth and position, in a house befitting his means. The man was the leading physician in that country. He opposed religious meetings and was much provoked that this one should be held so close to his residence. The doctor sent word asking Compton to please close the meeting, and by all means to "quit ringing that screeching bell."

Mr. Compton replied that the meeting seemed to be greatly needed in the community and therefore would continue two weeks. The doctor then wanted to know how much money he expected to receive for "the racket he was making there," and promised that he would give him more to stop the meetings than the community would to continue them. He said he would give him enough corn to keep his "poor old horse" for months. Compton assured him that he was seeking neither corn nor money, but precious souls.

Now the doctor, evidently intent on stopping the meeting, had a platform erected on his lawn and procured several musicians to play each night. He provided beer in generous quantities and invited all the people to partake. The devil seemed to have a more successful revival in the doctor's yard than the pastor and evangelist in the little church, for the meeting closed without having aroused any considerable interest.

On Tuesday after the meeting closed, the doctor remarked to his wife that he was feeling badly. Wednesday he was an awfully sick man, and Thursday two specialists were called to attend him from the city. The physicians found him in a very critical condition and frankly told the family that, if he had not done so, he had better adjust his affairs, as the end might come very soon.

When the wife broke this news to him, the doctor said that the most important thing for him was to see preacher Compton. "You know," said he, "how I opposed Compton and the meeting and how I tried to buy him off. His words, as they came through the open windows of the church, fell on my conscience like coals of fire. I ridiculed the meeting, and hired musicians to come here and drown the preacher's voice. You know how I have argued the non-existence of hell and against consciousness after death; now I want to retract every word. I have lived wickedly; I have talked wickedly; I am dying, and am lost forever. Believe and obey the Bible." His last words were, "I am going to hell. Have Compton preach my funeral sermon."

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### 33 -- AFTER THAT BELL RANG, HER MEETINGS WERE ENDED

From hdm0853, "Life And Labors Of Auntie Coon As Related To E. E. Shelhamer":

The hour came, the bell rang, and about forty women came to the service. God helped me for about half an hour. As I read and expounded I saw one after another hang their heads. I said: "This is God's word, not my own; we must be careful how we hear, for awful results hang upon this meeting today." Tears began to run down every face. "I have never seen anything like this in all my religious experience, and my husband has paid my board for eight days; I wonder if it is possible for me to live that length of time. I have not closed my eyes; I have been with Jesus Christ in Gethsemane all night long. There are scores of people on this campground that are putting Him to death. I can not but speak; I must get rid of this sorrow, which belongs upon your souls and not mine. I do praise God for the privilege of standing before you that I may be delivered, and that your blood be not upon me in that day." Everybody was weeping. "Every one of you that want to get saved, kneel down," I requested of them. Every one knelt and the entire crowd were weeping and praying. We were not nearly through when the dinner bell rang, and I said: "If any of you want your dinner worse than you want your soul saved, go on; but if you stay I certainly shall. I think it would do us good to fast, and all I ask is that you may be saved this day." So we prayed on, and at the preacher's table the meeting was discussed, and the elder said, "I have never seen anything like this; I wonder if she doesn't know it is dinner time." Another said, "Well, that woman has got real salvation," and the elder remarked, "I don't want any such thing here." Another said, "Does she not keep to the Bible line? Does she not talk just like the Bible?" and again the elder said, "We can not have it here." The third man said, "If she talks as the Scriptures do how can we forbid her?" "This doctrine of living without sin splits the church," he made answer. "Well," somebody else said, "let it split." Again he said, "We can't have it."

When the meeting was through there were fifteen or twenty that had the witness of the Spirit, and we made the little tabernacle ring with shouts and songs, and the rest said, "I am going to seek till I get through," but that ended my meetings; they would not allow me to hold another.

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### 34 -- A VERY UNUSUAL BELFRY FOR THAT BELL

From hdm2326, "Fads, Fakes, Freaks, Frauds And Fools" by William Edward Shepard:

In the city of Tacoma, Wash., is one of the strangest and oldest of church towers in this country. It was never built; it grew there. High up on the top is the bell, which calls the worshippers to come to the place of worship. That strange belfry is covered with green, climbing vines, and practically hides the real nature of the tower. It is the trunk of a tall tree.

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### 35 -- NO BELL AND NO HEAT IN THE CHURCH

From hdm2326, "Fads, Fakes, Freaks, Frauds And Fools" by William Edward Shepard:

To become so settled in old ruts that absolutely nothing can change one, is certainly foolish. Such used to be the case with people years ago, and doubtless some of the same stock can be found today. To us who have such conveniences today for keeping warm in our comfortable homes, it hardly seems possible that people a few decades ago could be so foolish as to oppose a stove being placed in a church building to keep people warm. Yet such was the case. In the early part of the nineteenth century in a Connecticut town was an old meeting house where the people laid aside their differences in creed and all worshipped together. The building had neither steeple nor bell, and was very plain, comfortable enough in summer, but dreadfully cold in winter on account of having no fire. It seems that stoves in meeting houses in those days were regarded as rather a sacrilegious innovation. The sermons were none too short for those who would rather have been home, but parental authority ordered otherwise. Some of the women carried foot stoves made to cover a few live coals covered with ashes.

After many years of shivering, one of the brethren proposed to have the church warmed with a stove. His audacious proposition was voted down with an overwhelming majority. Another year rolled around and in the late fall the stove proposition came up again. The excitement grew and the discussion was carried on in village stores and the juvenile debating club. The church members prayed over it, and finally in a general meeting of the church the question was carried by a majority of one, and the stove was introduced. The first Sunday thereafter, two old maiden ladies were so overcome by the dry and heated atmosphere occasioned by the awful innovation that they fainted and were carried out into the cool air where they were restored to consciousness, especially when they were informed, that owing to the lack of two lengths of stove pipe, no fire had yet been made in the stove.

The following Sunday was a bitter cold day, and the stove, filled with fine hickory, was very gratifying to many and displeased only a few. After the meeting an old deacon arose and requested the congregation to remain, when he called upon them to witness that he had from the first opposed the bringing in of a stove into the house of the Lord; but the majority had been against him and he had submitted. Now, if they must have a stove, he insisted upon having a large one, since the present one did not heat the whole house, but drove the cold to the back pews making them three times as cold as they were before. In the course of the week this deacon

was made to comprehend that except on unusually cold days the stove was sufficient to warm the house, and, at any rate, it did not drive all the cold into a corner.

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### 36 -- BELL RINGERS WHO WONT' SWEEP THE CHURCH

From, hdm1531, "Talks By The Way To Highway Travelers" by Richard Shelley Taylor:

That feverish insistence on perpetual lightnings and thunderings, that determination to live in the realm of the superlative, is a symptom of either immature instability or fanatical superficiality. Such people have no sympathy or patience with the burden-carrying plodder. They want to ring the bell, but sweeping the church is distasteful. The unglamorous jobs of organizing Sunday Schools and filling out record cards and sitting on the board and paying bills -- the business and mechanical end of the church -- are not spiritual enough for them. There is not enough fire or power in that. It is man's work, they scorn, all human. Now you and I and every right-thinking person live for those hours when we mount up with wings as eagles in a glorious altar service, when the shouts of saints and the joy of new-born babes in Christ fill us with rapture. But it is a mark of greater grace to be able to trudge through the week, when duty reigns and rapture sags, doing the routine praying and commonplace tasks, both in the home and church, which make that hour of triumph possible. It is to be doubted if anyone will truly mount up with wings or run without fatigue in the great opportunities of life unless he also learns to walk without fainting in the grind of life.

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### 37 -- HOW WILLIAM TAYLOR PREVAILED AFTER THE BELL RANG

From hdm0895, "Story Of My Life -- Part A" by William Taylor

Once in early summer I had an appointment to preach one week night in a large bar-room on Moor's Flat, in the mountains. The congregation assembled early and spent an hour in playing ball. When the bell rang for preaching the mass of the audience assembled on the porch and cracked jokes and sang lewd songs with the design, I thought, of intimidating the preacher. After letting them conduct the exercises in that way for a few minutes, I said, "Hold on, boys, and let me sing you a song."

They gave audience, and I sang. Nothing could be more calm than the salubrious atmosphere on that occasion, and the surrounding mountain heights and deep canyons a giant trees of the dense forest all combined to render the scene impressively grand and solemn. The echoes of the song came back from the neighboring mountains, and the trees seemed to be praising God in the melody of song. The singing ended, I said, "Now, boys, walk in here; I have something to tell you." They all slipped in as quietly as possible and I had a blessed season in pressing home upon their hearts the word of life.

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## 38 -- JUST BEFORE THE BELL FOR AFTERNOON SERVICE

From hdm0895, "Story Of My Life -- Part A" by William Taylor

At one of the camp meetings of that season a man of mature age and commanding presence followed me from the stand where I had been preaching that morning into the preachers' tent and sat down beside me; next to me on the other side sat Rev. Brother Willis, an able young minister. The stranger unceremoniously commenced a bitter tirade against Christianity and the Bible, and talked flippantly about the immutability of law; hence the impossibility of miracles. I sat quietly without a word of reply till he was through. He had raised more than a dozen debatable issues. Brother Willis was in a fidget, and said to me afterward, "I did not see how you could sit quietly and hear such a slanderous misrepresentation of God and his Gospel."

Willis was a gentleman, and would not interrupt the speaker, as his address was directed entirely to me.

"Well, you see how I fixed him?" said I.

"I do, indeed, and I see that was just the thing to do."

When the fellow had fired his last gun and silence ensued I said, "Well, my friend, there is one point on which we can agree."

In apparent surprise he inquired, "What point is that?"

"We mutually concede the fact that there is a standard of right, a law of righteousness, by which the conduct of human beings, both in their relations to God and to each other, should be regulated. We may not agree as to the precise lines of its application, nor the source whence, nor the medium through which it comes to us, but we do mutually agree that such a law exists, and that we are amenable to it."

"O, yes, I agree with you on that point."

"Then allow me to ask whether with undeviating fidelity through all the vicissitudes of your past life you have kept that law?"

He colored and coughed and tried to evade my point, but I looked straight into his eyes and said, "Have you?"

Then after a pause of a few moments he replied, "Well, sir, to tell you the truth, I must admit that I have not."



"Then what are you going to do about it? You have been most positively asserting the immutability of law, and now you admit that you have been an habitual breaker of an immutable law. What can the law do for a law-breaker?"

I proceeded to show him that all human attempts to repair the breach by reformation or penance or compensation were entirely inadequate and irrelevant, and that if the Bible did not, through the incarnation, death, resurrection, and mediation of the Son of God reveal a ransom and a remedy adequate to the demands of the case there was none. No human court can righteously acquit a guilty criminal, but, however incomprehensible the mystery, the fact is clearly revealed in the Bible that God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, and will freely forgive and acquit every poor sinner who will confess and forsake his sins, and receive and trust Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." This free gift implies a divine act of acquittal at the bar of justice, a divine communication of the fact to the spirit of the penitent believer, and a divine inward renewal of the heart.

The man sat quietly while I kindly opened up these facts verified in human experience. He finally said, "I have never experienced any such thing, and therefore can't believe that there is any such experience possible."

"You have no experience of life in California," I replied. "You have not been there, and conclude, therefore, that there is no such country in the world. I have spent over seven years in California, and testify to what I have experienced and know to be facts. Would you go before this great camp meeting congregation and contradict my statement of facts on the ground that you had never seen California and knew nothing about it?"

Just then the bell rang announcing the hour for the afternoon public service, and I bade my man a good-bye and took my seat on the preachers' stand.

About half an hour afterward I felt a gentle jerk of my coat skirt, and looking round I saw my man close in the rear of the stand. The public service had opened, so there was not a word uttered by either of us, but he handed me a letter and turned away, and being but a passing stranger in that region I never saw him again. The letter read substantially as follows:

"Rev. Taylor -- Dear Sir: Your convincing arguments have covered all my points, and your kindly spirit has quite overcome my foolish prejudice against God's truths. My wretched infidelity! I am ashamed of it, and do and shall forever abandon it."

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### 39 -- THE BELL FOR A SO-CALLED EXPERIENCE MEETING

From hdm0163, "The Life Of John Wesley Redfield" by Joseph Goodwin Terrill:

Mr. Redfield saw one night that these watchers were greatly elated over something that had occurred. After the meeting closed he asked one of the brethren what it meant.

"Oh," said he, "the man who knelt at the corner of the altar was one of such as they are after."

The next evening Mr. Redfield heard the bell of one of the churches ring, and he asked, "Are they going to commence revival services?"

"No," was the answer, "they are to have an experience meeting tonight."

"What is that for?"

"Don't you remember a man who knelt at one corner of the altar last night who attracted much attention?"

"Yes; I do."

"Well, they are to open the doors of the church for him tonight."

"But he was not converted last night!"

"That makes no difference in this case."

The man was received, settled down satisfied with what he had done, and having been addicted to strong drink, within a year was in the gutter.

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#### 40 -- THEY HEARD A CELESTIAL BELL CHIMING

From hdm0165, "Effective Illustrations" by William Moses Tidwell:

Two members of the church here in Chattanooga, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brock, were very devout. Brother Brock was an old fashioned singing school teacher. His favorite song was, "O come angel band, come and around me stand, O bear me away on your snowy wings to my eternal home." A number of years ago Brother Brock passed on to be with the Lord, His going was triumphant. Sister Brock loved the Lord devotedly and loved the services. She developed a malignant cancer on her face. She was rather sensitive about it and hesitated to be in public. So for years she attended services but little. Her health was fast failing and it was evident she would not live long in this world. One Saturday she said to her daughter, Mrs. Thedford, the wife of our Sunday school superintendent, "Minnie Lee, I feel that I soon will be gone. I feel sure that all is right but I am going to fast and pray today and ask the Lord if all is clear."

This she did and reported to her daughter that the Lord had revealed Himself to her in a most unusual way. She declared that she had seen clear inside heaven. That was on Saturday. The next day she was very ill and never regained consciousness. She grew worse. Friends were sitting up with her. On Tuesday night, about midnight, a strange thing happened. Those who

were sitting up with her, (about a dozen of them) heard music. It was different from anything they had ever before heard. It was instrumental, so soft and gentle. Someone suggested that it must be that some of the neighbors next door had the radio turned on and they were getting this. They went out of the room and listened. They walked around the house, across the street, but not a sound. They went back into the room and it was very audible. It continued until four in the morning, and just at four they distinctly heard a sound like the chime of a celestial bell. Three strokes of the bell were heard. After this the music suddenly stopped.

They were perplexed and awed. Some said she will go three nights from now. Anyway the next night, Tuesday, at exactly twelve o'clock, just as before, the music began and continued till exactly four and suddenly stopped. Many more were there that night to hear the music. Thursday night, at the same time, the music began and continued till exactly four. At that time it ceased and at that moment Sister Brock breathed her last. I cannot explain this. I am only stating what took place. Probably forty or fifty people heard this. Those who heard fully believed that it was a heavenly visitation. The Lord does say that Lazarus was carried by the angels into the good world. It may be that since Sister Brock had been deprived of the privilege of attending the services, and hearing the singing, that the angels saw fit to give her a little free music as she passed over. Anyway if they did I see no reason why one should object. She too loved her husband's favorite song, "O come angel band."

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#### 41 -- THE KAFIRS BLAMED THE CHAPEL BELL FOR NO RAIN

From hdm0395, "Sketches Of Wesleyan Preachers" by Robert A. West:

They believed that one of their number could cause rain; and Mr. S. was obliged, on one occasion, to enter into a controversy with the "rain-maker," who, when hard pressed to make rain at a time when the cattle were dying for want of water, said that the sound of the chapel-bell drove the rain away. After a special prayer meeting for rain by the Kafir Christians, it fell in great abundance.

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#### 42 -- MIRACULOUSLY SAVED FROM DEATH IN THE BELL-TOWER

From hdm2045, "Reminiscences Of Fifty Years In Christian Service" by Charles Wesley Winchester:

I saw that the first thing to be done was to put God's house in repair. An entire new roof was needed. Some sort of a spire must be put in place of the old one. All the rooms needed to be re-frescoed and painted. A new carpet and new cushions were needed for the auditorium. All this was done at an expense of three thousand dollars, of which every dollar was collected by the pastor.

The tall spire was replaced with a much shorter one of a different style. It was designed by me and erected under my direction. When it was finished, and the first severe wind storm visited us, I climbed up into the spire to see if it was firm and able to resist the fury of the elements. It stands now, where I put it a quarter of a century ago.

I helped a carpenter lay a new bell-deck in the tower. When it was finished there was some extra lumber to be lowered down through a trapdoor in a recess in the auditorium. I was standing in the auditorium to receive the boards and scantling as the carpenter let them down with a rope. I turned to speak to someone who was calling me. That instant the rope slipped and the lumber came crashing down a distance of thirty-five feet. I did not see it coming and I was not conscious of hearing any cry of warning, but not knowing what I was doing, or why, I sprang forward with a mighty bound and escaped the mass, which struck exactly where I had been standing a second before. Thus my life was saved, I believe, by a supernatural influence which made me jump when I did not intend to. I have had many narrow escapes in the course of my life.

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#### 43 -- THE HUGUENOT MASSACRE WAS COMMENCED WITH A CHURCH BELL

From hdm 2310, "The Gospel Kodak Abroad" by Charles Wesley Winchester:

The Louvre was built for a royal palace. It is now one of the largest and finest art galleries in the world. It is several stories high. Its architecture is grand and imposing. It contains one hundred and fifty magnificent halls. Merely to walk through its rooms one must travel more than a mile and a half. It covers twenty acres of ground. It is crowded with the rarest and richest treasures of the most gifted painters and sculptors. The contents of its smallest and poorest room would more than buy all the art on the American continent.

We will enter. But, first, I will show you something on the outside. Do you see that beautiful arched window, overlooking the street, in the first story? They call that the window of Charles IX. The stones in that arch could tell you a tragic story, if they had a tongue. Three hundred years ago and more, King Charles IX lived in this palace. He had many thousand subjects, called Huguenots. They were the most intelligent, virtuous, and loyal people in all his realm; but he feared and hated them, because they differed from him and their fellow-country-men in religion. Instigated by a woman -- his mother, Catharine de Medicis -- he planned their massacre.

Their leaders and principal men were invited to Paris, and to this palace, to witness the marriage of the king's sister. A solemn pledge was given, and confirmed with an oath, that not a hair of their heads should be touched. They came. All was mirth and seeming friendship at the palace. At midnight the bell of the Church of St. Germain tolled in the festival of St. Bartholomew. That was the preconcerted signal for the massacre to begin. The assembled guards issued out of the court of this royal abode and spread through the city, murdering every Huguenot they could find. Till morning, and all the day long, the fiendish butchery continued, until the gutters of Paris actually flowed with blood, and the pavements were piled with corpses.

From the capital the massacre spread through the kingdom. When no more Huguenots could be found, the bloody carnival ceased; but not till one hundred thousand of France's noblest sons and daughters had been slain.

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#### 44 -- THE "GREAT TOM" BELL AT OXFORD'S CHRIST CHURCH

The following is taken from hdm 2310, "The Gospel Kodak Abroad" by Charles Wesley Winchester. Perhaps it is a striking example of what Bishop Asbury did not want to see come into existence in the Methodist Episcopal Church in America:

I passed through the lofty and massive tower, under "Great Tom," the thirty-first largest bell in the world -- which for more than two hundred years has closed every college gate in Oxford, at five minutes past nine at night, by striking one hundred and one strokes -- and found myself in the great quadrangle.

Completely surrounding the square is a long line of massive, old, gray stone buildings, with battlemented roofs and clustered chimneys, and many doors and windows -- large and small. Here are suites of apartments for the president and faculty of the college, and rooms for lectures and other college exercises. Facing westward, you see the great tower, with its arched gateway, through which we entered. I must tell you more about the great bell up there, of which I briefly spoke a few minutes ago. I gave you its name -- "Great Tom." It weighs seventeen thousand six hundred and forty pounds. It is three hundred and sixty years old. It was melted down and recast, to cure a crack, in 1680. For more than two hundred years it has never once failed to strike one hundred and one strokes every night at five minutes past nine o'clock. It strikes one hundred and one times because that was the number of students belonging to the college when it received its charter.

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#### 45 -- A CHURCH BELL-RINGER FOR LUKE WOODARD

From hdm0870, "Sketches Of A Life Of 75" by Luke Woodard:

The city of Norwich was the home of the Gurneys. As many of them were prominent members of Friends Church, especially Joseph John Gurney, and his sister, Elizabeth Fry, Friends regard it with more than common interest. In the heart of the city is Gildencroft Meeting House, a large, rather unique structure, which was formerly their place of worship. Now, however, they have in a better part of the city, a more modern one, where Friends attend for their regular meetings for worship, and the other one is used for mission meetings and adult schools. In this we had, by appointment, a large meeting of the laboring classes. Our meeting was announced by a bell ringer, who passed up and down the street, ringing his bell, and crying aloud: "Luke Woodard, from America, has a meeting here tonight."

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#### 46 -- WHEN SHE CAME BACK TO HEAR THE CONVENT BELL

From hdm1040, "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, C-Topics":

F. B. Meyer tells the story of a young girl who lived centuries ago in a convent in France. She was sweet and pure and admired of all who saw her. Her work was to care for an altar and answer the portal. Wars swept over France bringing soldiers to the convent, and one that was wounded was given into her care. When he recovered, he persuaded her to leave the convent. She went with him to Paris where she lost her good name and everything that made life worth living. Years passed, and she came back to die within the sound of the convent bell. She fell fainting upon the steps, and there came to find her, one who had lovingly kept from others the knowledge of her fall into sin. She picked her up and carried her into the convent and placed her on her bed. All the years that she had been gone, she had faithfully done her work and none knew of her disgrace; so she glided back into her old place, and until the day of her death no one ever knew her sin. All this, Christ has done for me. I like to think that He had me in mind when He suffered and died, that He has made up before God for all that I have failed to do, and when I stand before Him it will be as if I never had sinned in all my life.

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#### 47 -- THE BELL-RINGING MIRACLE AT MASSENA

From hdm1874, "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, J-Topics":

Massena, one of Napoleon's generals, suddenly appeared with eighteen thousand men before an Austrian town which had no means of defense. The town council had nearly decided to surrender when the old dean of the church reminded them that it was Easter and begged them to hold services as usual and to leave the trouble in God's hands. This they did; and the French hearing the church bells ringing joyfully concluded that an Austrian army had come to relieve the place and quickly broke camp. Before the bells ceased ringing, all the Frenchmen had vanished.

The incident has often been duplicated in individual lives. They have rung the joy bells in the face of pain, and sickness, and poverty, and fear, and loneliness, and all other trials. Then the joy bells have conquered. Speedily, the foe has slunk away. Speedily, the bell ringers have found themselves in possession of the field. For no enemy is quite so strong as faith companioned with good cheer.

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#### 48 -- SAVED BY THE BELL

From hdm1874, "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, J-Topics":

The great bell of St. Paul's, which tells Londoners the hour, has inscribed upon it these words: "Richard Phelps made me, 1709." It is a huge bell, nearly seven feet in diameter and unusually musical. A hammer connected with clock work strikes the hours and tolls the bell on funeral occasions. The clapper of the bell is used for tolling upon the death of a member of the royal family, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Dean of St. Paul's, or the Lord Mayor of London. There is an interesting story of how this bell saved a man's life.

The story goes that a sentinel on duty at Windsor Castle was accused by the guard who came to relieve him of sleeping at his post. This sentinel was a soldier in the reign of William and Mary. He was tried by court martial and condemned for sleeping at his post upon the terrace of Windsor. The soldier denied the charge and insisted that he had not slept at his post. As a proof that he had been awake while on duty, he declared that on midnight on that particular night he heard the great bell of St. Paul's strike 13 times instead of 12.

The Court did not believe that it was possible for the soldier to have heard the bell of St. Paul's so far away. However, while the poor fellow was under sentence of death, it was proved by many who heard it that at midnight on the night referred to the clock actually did strike 13 times instead of 12. The mechanism was out of order. The king pardoned the soldier, who lived to be 100 years old.

What music St. Paul's bell must have always been in that man's ears, for by it he was justified after being condemned! Yet, how much sweeter is the sound that peals forth in the soul of him who has been guilty, but still has become justified freely by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!

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#### 49 -- A BELL THAT IS TOO BIG TO BE USED

This item also is probably an example of the extremes and ostentation that Bishop Asbury deplored. It is from hdm1877, "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, M-Topics." I have published both paragraphs below for a number of years:

The great bell of Moscow is too large to be hung. The question arises, "What was the use of making it?" Some preachers are so learned that they cannot make themselves understood, or else cannot bring their minds to preach plain gospel sermons. Here, too, the same question might be asked: "What was the use of making such a sermon?" -- Spurgeon

I might add the following question: "Is it not true that some preachers have considered themselves too big of a bell to be hung in the little steeple where God wants them? Disdaining the small place where God would have him minister can render a preacher useless in the ministry, as "too big of a bell" to be hung anywhere in God's will. -- Duane V. Maxey

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#### 50 -- THE ONLY WAY TO REPAIR A CRACKED BELL

From hdm1881, "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, Q-R-Topics":

Human nature is too bad to be improved, too dilapidated to be repaired. Here is a cracked bell. How again to restore it? By one of two methods: The first is to repair the bell, to encompass it with hoops, to surround it with bands. Nevertheless, you can easily discern the crack of the bell in the crack of the sound. The only effectual way is to re-melt the bell, recast it, and make it all new. Then it will ring clear, and sound sonorous. Human nature is a bell suspended high up in the steeple of creation to ring forth the praises of the Creator. The fall in Eden cracked the bell. How again to restore it? By one of two ways: One is to surround it with outward laws and regulations as with steel hoops. Nevertheless, the crack in the metal shows itself in the crack of the tone. The best way is to re-melt it, recast it, remold it. This is God's method in the Gospel.

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#### 51 -- SHOULD RING DOOR BELLS INSTEAD OF CHURCH BELLS

From hdm1804, "Articles By The Bullocks":

Someone has said: "Evangelism is not a vocation but an outcome." It is the outcome of a heart which has been melted before the Lord. Jesse M. Bader writes: "You can be a clerk or a salesman..., the clerk waits for a customer, the salesman goes out for him. We should be ringing door bells instead of church bells; we have been doing by proxy what we should do by proximity; by purse instead of by person."

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#### 52 -- LONGFELLOW'S POEM, "CHRISTMAS BELLS"

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet the words repeat  
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

I thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along the unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;  
"There is no peace on earth," I said;  
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep;



God is not dead, nor doth He sleep.  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,  
With peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

-- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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### 53 -- CURFEW MUST NOT RING TONIGHT!

From hdm2007, "The Story Of Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight" by Duane V. Maxey:

A poem by Rose Hartwick Thorpe, entitled "Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight"

During the time when Oliver Cromwell ruled England, a young soldier named Basil Underwood was found guilty of some offense and sentenced to die at the sounding of the evening curfew. Bessie, the young woman he was soon to have married, passionately interceded for his life, even to Cromwell himself, but all to no avail. Finally, in loving desperation she went to the old, deaf sexton who was to toll the huge bell which would sound Basil's death-knell. As "Old Curfew," the sexton, made his way to the church where he had faithfully rung that bell for many years, Bessie tried to persuade him not to ring the bell that night:

Slowly England's sun was setting oe'r the hilltops far away,  
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad day;  
And its last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair,--  
He with steps so slow and weary; she with sunny, floating hair;  
He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful, she, with lips all cold and white,  
Struggling to keep back the murmur, "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison old,  
With its walls tall and gloomy, moss-grown walls dark, damp and cold,--  
"I've a lover in the prison, doomed this very night to die  
At the ringing of the curfew, and no earthly help is nigh.  
Cromwell will not come till sunset;" and her lips grew strangely white,  
As she spoke in husky whispers, "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton (every word pierced her young heart  
Like a gleaming death-winged arrow, like a deadly poisoned dart),  
"Long, long years I've rung the curfew from that gloomy, shadowed tower;  
Every evening, just at sunset, it has tolled the twilight hour.  
I have done my duty ever, tried to do it just and right:  
Now I'm old, I will not miss it. Curfew bell must ring to-night!"

Wild her eyes and pale her features, stern and white her thoughtful brow,  
As within her secret bosom, Bessie made a solemn vow.  
She had listened while the judges read, without a tear or sigh,

"At the ringing of the curfew, Basil Underwood must "die.  
And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright;  
One low murmur, faintly spoken. "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

She with quick step bounded forward, sprang within the old church-door,  
Left the old man coming slowly, paths he'd trod so oft before.  
Not one moment paused the maiden, but with eye and cheek aglow,  
Staggered up the gloomy tower, where the bell swung to and fro;  
As she climbed the slimy ladder, on which fell no ray of light,  
Upward still, her pale lips saying, "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

She has reached the topmost ladder, o'er her hangs the great dark bell;  
Awful is the gloom beneath her, like the pathway down to hell.  
See! the ponderous tongue is swinging; 'tis the hour of curfew now,  
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath, and paled her brow.  
Shall she let it ring? No, never! Her eyes flash with sudden light,  
As she springs, and grasps it firmly: "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

(Clinging to the ponderous tongue, Bessie muffled its sound with her hands as she hung  
suspended beneath the bell swinging to and fro.)

Out she swung,-- far out. The city seemed a speck of light below,--  
There twixt heaven and earth suspended, as the bell swung to and fro.  
And the sexton at the bell-rope, old and deaf, heard not the bell,  
Sadly thought that twilight curfew rang young Basil's funeral knell.  
"Still the maiden, clinging firmly, quivering lip and fair face white,  
Stilled her frightened heart's wild throbbing: "Curfew shall not ring tonight!"

It was o'er, the bell ceased swaying; and the maiden stepped once more  
Firmly on the damp old ladder, where, for hundred years before,  
Human foot had not been planted. The brave deed that she had done  
Should be told long ages after. As the rays of setting sun  
Light the sky with golden beauty, aged sires, with heads of white,  
Tell the children why the curfew did not ring that one sad night.

O'er the distant hills comes Cromwell. Bessie sees him; and her brow,  
Lately white with sickening horror, has no anxious traces now.  
At his feet she tells her story, shows her hands, all bruised and torn;  
And her sweet young face, still haggard, with the anguish it had worn,  
Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light.  
"Go! your lover lives," said Cromwell. "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

Wide they flung the massive portals, led the prisoner forth to die,  
All his bright young life before him. Neath the darkening English sky,  
Bessie came, with flying footsteps, eyes aglow with love-light sweet;  
Kneeling on the turf beside him, laid his pardon at his feet.

In his brave, strong arms he clasped her, kissed the face upturned and white,  
Whispered, "Darling, you have saved me, curfew will not ring tonight."

Like Justice, deaf to mercy's plea, the old sexton did what Law demanded. Like Jesus,  
Who muffled in His hands on the cross, the death-knell of our eternal doom, Bessie did what  
Love designed to save the one she loved. And, like Basil, whose liberty was love-bought, we all,  
though totally unworthy, may escape the just Curfew of Eternal Death through Jesus' death in  
our behalf.

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THE END