

I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven.

John vi. 51.

"THAT'S THEE, JEM!"



**C**BAND or "troupe" of young men with hands and faces blackened, and dressed in very grotesque costumes, arranged themselves before a gentleman's door one day for an exhibition of their peculiar "performances." After they had sung some comic and some plaintive melodies, one of the party stepped up to the door, tambourine in hand, to ask for a few "dropping pennies" of the people. The gentleman, taking a Bible out of his window, addressed the youth:—

"See here, young man," he said, "I will give you a shilling, and this Book besides, if you will read a portion of it among your comrades there, and in the hearing of the by-standers."

"Here's a shilling for an easy job!" he chuckled out to his mates; "I'm going to give you a 'public reading!'"

The gentleman opened at the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and, point-

ing to the eleventh verse requested the young man to commence reading at that verse.

"Now, Jem, speak up!" said one of the party, "and earn your shilling like a man!"

And Jem took the Book, and read. There was something in the voice of the reader, as well as in the strangeness of the circumstances, that lulled all to silence; while an air of seriousness took possession of the youth, and still further commanded the rapt attention of the crowd.

As he read on, "That's *thee*, Jem!" ejaculated one of his comrades,—"*it's just like what you have told me of yourself and your father!*"

The reader continued. . . . "Why, that's *thee* again, Jem!" said the voice,—"*Go on!*"

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him."

"That's like us all!" said the voice, once more interrupting; "*we're all beggars; and might be better than we are! Go on; let's hear what came of it.*"

And the young man read on, and as he read, his voice trembled—"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father—!"

At this point he fairly broke down, and could read no more. All were impressed and moved. The whole reality of the past rose up to view; and, in the clear story of the Gospel, a ray of hope dawned upon him for his future.

That day—that scene—proved the turning-point of that young prodigal's life.

As a further guarantee of the truth of this narrative, I append my name to the story.

ROBERT MAGUIRE, M.A.,  
Vicar of St' Olave, Southwark.

I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.—John xiv. 6.