

THE LOST SON.

I was standing by the side of my mother, under the spacious porch of Dr. Beatty's church, Union street, Glasgow, awaiting the hour for afternoon service. A holy calm hung over the city; no discordant noise broke the solemn stillness of the day of rest and worship; scarcely a whisper was heard in the assembly of waiting worshippers who crowded the broad pavement on which I stood. All seemed profoundly impressed with the solemn and sacred character of the day, the place, and the occasion which had called them together. It was, in short, a Sabbath in the land of Knox and Chalmers. I had been in this position probably ten or fifteen minutes, when I observed two young men turn a corner and walk towards the church. They were dressed in their working clothes, unshaven and dirty, and slightly intoxicated. As they passed the church door they assumed a swaggering, irreverent gait, laughed, and finally commenced singing a profane song. Some of the bystanders expressed their horror at the occurrence, others wondered what had become of the police; but my mother turned to me, and said "Follow these two men, and invite them to a seat in our pew."

I soon overtook them and delivered my mother's message. One laughed scornfully and began to swear; the other paused and pondered, and was evidently struck with the nature of the invitation. His companion again swore, and was about to drag him away. But he still paused. I repeated the invitation, and in a few seconds he looked in my face and said, "When I was a boy like you, I went to church every Sunday. I have not been inside of a church for three

years. *I don't feel right.* I believe I will go with you." I seized his hand and led him back to the house of God, in spite of the remonstrances and oaths of his companion. The doors were now open, and the church was filling rapidly; we entered, and I conducted him to the pew where my mother was already seated. A most excellent sermon was preached from Eccles. 11: 1: "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it in many days." The young man was attentive, but seemed abashed and downcast.

At the conclusion of the service he hastened out of the church, but he was closely followed, and soon overtaken by my mother, who kindly said to him, "Have you a Bible, young man?" "No, ma'am; but I can get one," was his reply. "Well, take my son's Bible until you procure one of your own. Read it attentively during the week, and come to meeting next Lord's day. I will be always happy to accommodate you with a seat."

He put the Bible in his pocket and hurried away. At family worship that evening my mother prayed fervently for the conversion of that young man.

Next Sunday came, and the next, but the stranger did not appear. My mother frequently spoke of him, and appeared grieved at his absence. He had doubtless been the subject of her closest devotions. On the third Sabbath morning, while the congregation were singing the first psalm, the young man again entered our pew. He was now dressed genteelly, and appeared thin and pale, as if from recent sickness. My mother looked at him with great earnestness, and a