

# An Helpmeet for Him

by Stanley H. Frodsham

---

*The sermon tells the story of Polly Featherstone, a devoted Christian woman who became a helpmeet to her husband, Mr. Greatheart, and together they had a profound impact on their community through their evangelistic work and faith in God's healing power.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 141:5

**Topics:** "Faithful Obedience", "Spiritual Leadership"

---

## Description

Stanley H. Frodsham preaches about the life of Mr. Greatheart, a man with a great heart of love and loyalty to his Master, guiding and guarding fellow pilgrims on their journey. The sermon delves into the inspiring story of Mary Jane Featherstone, known as Polly, who found salvation through the Salvation Army and became a powerful evangelist, winning souls for Christ. Polly's unwavering faith, zeal for the Lord's healing, and dedication to serving others, alongside her husband Wigglesworth, exemplify a life of spiritual fervor, hospitality, and obedience to God's calling.

---

## Transcript

In the second part of the Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan introduces us to one Mr. Greatheart, who guided and guarded Christiana and her sons on their way to the Celestial City. The one whose story we are telling was a Mr. Greatheart. He surely had a great heart of love and loyalty to his Master, for so often we have heard him say, "Isn't he a lovely Jesus?" And he also had a great heart of love for all his fellow pilgrims, especially the poor and needy, the sick and the suffering.

He once said to us, "All that I am today I owe, under God, to my precious wife. Oh, she was lovely!"

Mary Jane Featherstone, whom God chose to be "an helpmeet for him," [Ge 2.18] came from a good Methodist family. Her father was a temperance lecturer. He was heir to a large inheritance that had been made through liquor selling, but he had a conviction that filthy lucre secured through the damnation of souls would do him no good, and so he refused to touch a penny of this tainted money. His daughter followed her father's principles of righteousness and holiness, and was always fearless in speaking her inner convictions.

When about 17 years of age, Mary Jane, or Polly as she was often called, was placed in a milliner's store to learn the art of trimming hats and bonnets. This kind of work seemed too petty for her, so after a month of it she decided to run away from her native town and all the restraints of home, to seek fame and fortune

in Bradford. But the Lord was watching over this handmaid to preserve her from evil. She secured a place to live in Bradford, but it "hapt" that a traveling man whom she knew was just at the door of this house at the moment she was moving in. He exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Featherstone, you must not live in this house. Let me take you to a place that is beyond reproach." He then took her in a cab to a very desirable home.

Polly accepted service in a large family in one of the big homes in Bradford. One night she was in the center of the city, and was attracted, by the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums, to a meeting held in the open air. The Salvation Army was an entirely new thing in those days, and she looked at these people with great interest. When their open-air meeting was over, they marched down the streets of Bradford, and she thought to herself, "Where are these silly people, who play as they march, going?" She followed them to a dilapidated theater building. Dare she go into a theater? At home she had been taught that such a place was unspeakably evil. But she was inquisitive. Looking this way and that way to see if anybody who knew her was watching, she slipped into this terrible place and found a seat at the top of the gallery.

The service began and her interest deepened as she listened to the bright singing and the lively witnessing of recent converts. The evangelist that night was Gipsy Tillie Smith, a sister of the famous Gipsy Rodney Smith, who also was a Salvation Army evangelist in those early days. The evangelist preached Christ with great power. The young girl in the gallery yearned to know him and the power of his cleansing blood to wash away her sins. When the call was made for sinners to come and seek the Savior, Polly made her way from the top gallery to the "penitent form." At first she asked to be left alone, as she called to the Lord to forgive her sins. Later, Tillie Smith knelt by her side and led her to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the assurance came that she was forgiven of all her sins, she jumped to her feet, threw her gloves up in the air, and shouted, "Hallelujah, it is done!"

Our Greatheart, then a young man, was in the audience. He watched that young woman pray through to God and he heard her shout, "Hallelujah!" Later he declared, "It seemed as if the inspiration of God was upon her from the very first." She was a beautiful girl, and as he looked at her in her simple dress and her shapely early Victorian bonnet, he thought she was lovely. He felt the first time he heard her give her testimony that she belonged to him, and soon there began an intimate friendship between Polly Featherstone and this young man. The new convert was very vivacious and soon began to make large and rapid spiritual strides. Her association with Tillie Smith, and her brother Rodney, and Brother Lawley--who later became a commissioner in the Salvation Army--brought her into contact with General Booth, who gave her a commission in his organization without her having to undergo the usual period of training.

Our young Greatheart had been greatly attracted to the Army because of their splendid soul-saving ministry; so he threw himself wholeheartedly into the work of the Salvationists. In it he found an outlet for the consuming passion for the unsaved, and he had a joyous satisfaction in watching the lives of many men and women change by the power of the Gospel. And then Polly's presence in the meetings was a great attraction to him! Her alertness and ability in the indoor services as well as in the open-air meetings appealed to him. The officers of the Salvation Army soon recognized that there was coming a "something" between these two. It was contrary to Army rules that an officer, for they had made her such, should associate with just an ordinary "soldier," as they accounted our Greatheart (although he never actually became a member of the Salvation Army).

One day a major in the Army drove to the home where she was working and asked if she would go with her to Leith in Scotland to help start a new work. She agreed, packed her suitcase, went off to the railway station with the major, and in a few hours she was in Scotland.

In those early days of the Salvation Army the public was very generous in contributions of over-ripe eggs and stale vegetables, and the Salvation Army lassies had to be alert to dodge these missiles. One day Polly received a black eye from an orange that was donated somewhat suddenly. But none of these things moved her. She had a lovely voice and would sing and testify in the open air. Many a window and door in the nearby flats would be flung open to hear the songs and the messages of these fearless young Salvationists. And their labors were not in vain; they were greatly blessed of God in spiritual and social service.

While in Leith, Polly took a special interest in the well-being of a recent convert who lived on the sixth floor of a tenement house, and whose husband, who was somewhat of a brute, opposed her attendance at the meetings. Finding Polly praying with his wife one day when he returned from his work, he threatened, if she did not stop praying, to forcibly eject her. She continued to pray, and so he picked her up in his arms and carried her down five flights of steps. Every step he took, she prayed, "Lord, save this man; save his soul, Lord." The man swore wildly and fumed terribly, but she had the joy of hearing him cry for mercy when he got to the last flight. Together they knelt, and made a "penitent form" of the bottom step, where she pointed him to the Lamb of God whose blood cleanses from all sin.

One day in Leith, she was brought before her superior officers who put to her certain leading questions relative to her attitude about the opposite sex, they assuming that she had an interest in a local "soldier." When they could obtain no satisfaction from her they suggested that they all kneel and she should lead in a word of prayer. She began her prayer, "Lord, you know that these men think that I am interested in a Scotchman! Lord, you know that I am not; for if what these Scotch folk say about each other is true, they are all so stingy that they would nip a currant in two to save the other half. You know I don't believe that, Lord, about these Scotch folks, for I have found them to be very kind; but you know, Lord, that I do not intend to marry anyone away up here in Scotland." She continued in this vein and by the time she got through, her examiners were ready to close the interview. Polly knew that there was a young man in Bradford who was desperately in love with her, and she loved him.

She returned to her work, severing her connection with the Salvation Army and associating with a new and, in the estimation of some people, more spiritual group, who were called the Blue Ribbon Army. Mrs. Elizabeth Baxter, a very spiritual woman, was at the head of it. But she remained a true friend of the Salvation Army, often entertaining their officers. At that time evangelistic calls came from many Methodist churches. The Spirit of God moved mightily on her ministry and many souls were won for Christ.

When Polly was 22 years of age she was married to our Greatheart who was then 23. In later years he paid her this tribute: "She became a great help to me in my spiritual life. She was always such an inspiration to holiness. She saw how ignorant I was, and immediately began to teach me to read properly and to write; unfortunately she never succeeded in teaching me to spell."

Speaking concerning his wife, our Greatheart testified: "She was a great soul-winner. I encouraged her to continue her ministry of evangelizing, and I continued my business as a plumber. I had a burden for the parts of Bradford that had no church, and we opened up a work in a small building that I rented. As the children came we always prayed through for them before they were born, that they would belong to God. I

used to carry the children to meeting and look after them while she preached. I was no preacher myself, but I was always down at the 'penitent form' to lead souls to Christ. Her work was to put down the net, mine to land the fish. The latter is just as important as the former."

We have read some biographies, the writers of which have embalmed their heroes very deeply in honey. We read in Proverbs 25.16: "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it." [Pr 25.16] We have been so nauseated by this kind of biography that after reading a few chapters we have had no inclination to finish the book. We will endeavor not to serve up too much honey in this book, for the one of whom we write was just as human as the rest of us.

There came to Bradford a very severe winter and plumbers were in great demand. It was not only through the winter period but for the two years that followed that they were having to repair fallen spouts and other damage done by the storms. Wigglesworth and the two men who were helping him were kept busy from morning till night. In those days of overmuch business and overmuch prosperity, his attendance at religious services declined, and his heart began to grow cold toward God; but the colder he became, the hotter his wife became for God. Her evangelistic zeal never abated, nor her prayer life. Her quiet, consistent Christian life and witness made his laxity all the more apparent, and it irritated him. One night a climax came. She was a little later than usual in getting home from the service and when she entered the house he remarked: "I am the master of this house, and I am not going to have you coming home at so late an hour as this!" Polly quietly replied, "I know that you are my husband, but Christ is my Master." This annoyed him and he put her out of the back door. But there was one thing he had forgotten to do--to lock the front door. She went around the house and came in at the front door laughing. She laughed so much that he had to laugh with her; and so that episode was finished.

When some husbands backslide, their wives get sour and nag at them from morning till night, but that was not the way of Polly Wigglesworth. She had a merry heart, and while she was on fire for the Lord, she made every mealtime a season of fun and humor. And she wooed her husband back to the Lord and to his old time love and zeal for God. Her fidelity was severely tested during those months when he was spiritually unsettled, but it was her gracious stability that guided him through the dangerous period, saving him from a terrible spiritual shipwreck.

Polly Wigglesworth's reputation as a winner of souls went far and wide, and not infrequently she would be sent to restore a work that was failing and to follow on in evangelistic services where others had failed. She was a popular preacher for women's services and quite a favorite with men's bible classes. Untiring in zeal, she literally ate up work of all kinds, including the care of a large house. She and her husband were always given to hospitality, and she never complained no matter whom he brought home suddenly for a meal or invited to stay for a few days in their home. At convention times there were always large numbers entertained in her home, but never once did she murmur.

Wigglesworth had to go into Leeds one day each week to purchase plumbing supplies. In this town he found a place where there was a divine healing meeting. There was such a note of reality in those divine healing meetings and the Lord was so graciously healing people, that he began to hunt up sick people in Bradford and he would pay their fare to Leeds, where the prayer of faith was offered for them. At first he said nothing to Mrs. Wigglesworth about this, for he was not sure of her reaction to this "fanaticism," as most people dubbed divine healing in those days. But she found out what he was doing and since she herself had need of healing she accompanied him one day to Leeds. There the prayer of faith was offered for her and she was healed by the Lord. From that time forward she was as ardent for the truth of the

Lord's healing as he was.

The work in Bradford grew, and so they had to move to larger and yet larger premises, until they settled in quite a large building in Bowland Street. In this Bowland Street Mission they had a huge text painted as a scroll on the wall back of the pulpit that everyone could see, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." [Ex 15.26] In the course of years many testified to being healed through the inspiration of that word of scripture.

There came to this mission a brother who had a gracious ministry of healing. When the Sunday afternoon service was over he was invited to the Wigglesworth home for tea. During the simple meal, Mrs. Wigglesworth put the question to this minister: "What would you think of a man who preaches divine healing to others, yet he himself uses medical means every day in his life?"

"I should say that that man did not fully trust the Lord," was the answer. After the meal Wigglesworth said to this minister: "What my wife was talking about one who preached divine healing to others and yet used other means himself, she was referring to me. From childhood I have suffered from hemorrhoids or piles and so I deem it necessary to use salts every day. I have looked upon them as harmless, natural means; for I knew that if I did not have something of this kind, I should have bleeding every day, and infection might result. But if you will stand with me in faith, I am willing to trust God in this matter and give up the salts. Since I have taken them every day for years, my system is so used to them that there will be no natural function from now until Wednesday. Will you stand with me in faith on that day? for in the natural I shall have great pain and much bleeding through not having used the salts." The brother agreed.

After that Sunday Wigglesworth did not take his daily dose of salts. On Wednesday the crisis came. At a certain hour he went into his bathroom. He anointed himself with oil according to James 5. We have often heard him testify in public, for he was a man of no unwholesome modesty when it came to speaking about perfectly natural things: "God undertook. My bowels functioned that day like a baby's. God had perfectly healed me. From that day forward my bowels have functioned perfectly without the use of any means whatsoever. I have proved the God who is enough."

Polly Wigglesworth loved her husband enough to reprove him when he was wrong--and this was very often. Most husbands bitterly resent any criticism from their wives, but Wigglesworth always took her rebukes with a smile. His attitude was that of David who said, "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and correct me; only so choose let not my head refuse." [Ps 141.5] Even though at times he did not take full heed of her correction, yet there is no doubt that as a whole her admonitions had a great effect in the training of her husband's character.

In his plumbing work, Wigglesworth obtained a good deal of profitable business from saloon-keepers, who sent for him to repair the pumps by which they drew up the beer from their cellars. This was an abomination to Polly who in those days kept the books. She knew that the workmen would be given free drinks in the saloons, and she knew it would have a demoralizing effect on them. She prevailed in her protests, and after awhile her husband, to protect the men who were laboring for him, refused all work from saloon-keepers. This meant heavy financial losses to him, but he gave it up as a matter of principle.

We read in Psalm 127: "Children are a heritage of the Lord." [Ps 127.3] The Lord gave to the Wigglesworth home five children; one girl, Alice; and four boys, Seth, Harold, Ernest, and George. George went to be with the Lord in 1915 and how greatly his loving father missed him.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stanley-h-frodsham/an-helpmeet-for-him/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**