

SHADOWS OF HEAVENLY THINGS

BEING

Teachings from the Tabernacle

AND PAPERS ON OTHER SCRIPTURE SUBJECTS,
ALSO INCIDENTS FROM REAL LIFE
PUBLISHED BY REQUEST

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE publication of this little book has been looked forward to for some time by many Christians, and its appearance will be specially welcomed by those who know something of the circumstances that have caused it to be issued. It may be well to state them briefly.

About three years ago the Author, who had spent the greater part of the leisure time of his life in preaching and ministering the Word of God, found his failing strength would only allow him to do the labour of the day, evening meetings being too much after long hours in the workshop. He therefore reluctantly advised those to whom he had been accustomed to minister that his physical abilities would only now permit of such amount of daily work as would enable him to earn his own livelihood and provide things honest in the sight of all men. But some who had felt the power of the ministry which God had put in this earthen vessel asked the Author to give up his daily work and continue the ministry of the Word, stating their readiness to minister to him in carnal things. It was not an easy step to take after having been able to earn his own living for fifty-five years, and being still able to do so, but after much prayer the Author consented to accede

to the wishes of his brethren—to give up his daily employment, and to accept a small amount from the Lord's people for maintenance.

Accordingly the first few hours of leisure were used to complete an elaborate work on the *Temple of Ezekiel*, which has lately been printed by Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, of London Wall, after which this more simple publication was taken in hand.

The style of the book being sectional, and the matter quite varied, it is hoped that the chapters will be helpful to Christians of different ages and temperaments. Whoso is simple will find entertainment and sweetness in the sections "Service and Servants" and "Incidents from Real Life," whilst the first two sections of the book will afford food to them that are of full age, and to whom strong meat belongeth.

As one who helped to induce the Author to give up his daily living it has been a great privilege to me to revise and edit these chapters. The Author says that the Incidents recorded are quite true; and the whole of the small book has been written, certainly, "By Request."

GERALD VINE

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Shadows of Heavenly Things

BEING

Teachings from the Tabernacle

CHAPTER I.

THREE CUBES. THREE VESSELS.
THREE LIGHTS.

THREE CUBES. THE Tabernacle in the Wilderness contained three cubes. They were so divided that two cubes formed the Holy Place, while one cube, the innermost, formed the Most Holy. The fundamental idea of extension among the Hebrews is the square—not the circle—north, south, east, west. This lends itself more readily to relative locality; and the Square of the Sanctuary raised to the cube is a unit of space; heaven itself. We are quite certain of this, for "*Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true, but into heaven itself*" (Heb. ix. 24). The Most Holy Place in the Temple of Solomon is a cube, as is also the City which is at the end of the Bible, for "*the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*"

THREE VESSELS. The Most Holy Place had three vessels—the Ark, the Mercy Seat, and the Cherubim. The Ark typifies the blessed Saviour in His life; the wood His Humanity, and the gold His Divinity;

while the Mercy Seat, the crown or complement of the Ark, sets forth His wondrous death. Sprinkled with blood and covering the Tables of the Law, we see in it the blessed and stupendous work of the Cross.

The Cherubim issuing out of, and of the same substance as, the Mercy Seat, shows something that came into being by and from the completed work of redemption. They had wings, showing them to be heavenly beings or spirits; also they consisted of gold, and were thus associated with the Divine. While these cannot refer to angels, being connected with redemption, they are all perfectly consistent with, and set forth, the Church or the Redeemed of Christ; that is, the souls of the Redeemed in heaven, brought into being by the Atonement—one with the Redeemer—born of God, therefore partakers of the Divine Nature—gold. They had wings, for they are heavenly beings; and on the Mercy Seat in the golden Cube, they gazed down upon the blood that brought them there.

THREE LIGHTS. In the Tabernacle there were three lights. The Shekinah, the Pillar of Fire, and the Golden Lampstand sustained by the continual oil.

The Shekinah was self-created and self-sustained. No man approached unto it. It reposed upon the Mercy Seat throughout the long silent year, filling the Most Holy Place with its effulgence. *It expressed God the Father dwelling in light unapproachable.*

The Pillar of Fire, also self-created, went before the host through the Wilderness, lighting their way and guiding them in their path. *It expressed God the Son, the Light of the World* (John viii. 12).

The Golden Lampstand was sustained by the oil. The lamps, filled morning by morning, gave out their lights evening by evening. The wick by itself, or lamp, or candlestick, could give no light. All depended upon the continual supply of oil, "*Oil for the Light.*" But when filled with oil, the lamp could shed its light over against the boards, until the whole house was filled with light. Shut in from the Camp, quite shut out from the world and the stranger, through the dark and silent night the House was filled with brightness from the Oil. *In this we see the Third Person of the Trinity, the blessed Holy Spirit, the Light of the House, the Church, the Assembly of God.*

CHAPTER II.

THREE FIRES.

THREE FIRES. IN the Tabernacle of Moses and its surroundings were three fires. A fire outside the Camp, where the sin offering was consumed ; a fire within the Court upon the Brazen Altar, for the reception of trespass offerings, or worship offerings ; and a fire inside the House itself, upon the Golden Altar, where incense only was consumed.

THE FIRST FIRE, judged and entirely consumed the sin offering. It typified Calvary in its first and widest sense, that is, Christ dying for the sin of the world. Nothing is said as to its locality, not even its direction as to the four winds ; it was ever hidden. It is so with Calvary. It was outside the Camp, even as Calvary was outside the City. Thus it, as it were, encircled the whole Camp ; all in the Camp were within its pale or embrace. No burnt offering, nor meat offering, nor trespass offering, nor peace offering was ever offered by it ; neither any incense burnt therein. The sin offering returned yearly, a year worked the cycle, and this fire was lighted once in the cycle at the great Day of Atone-

ment. Thus it set forth the precious sacrifice of the Saviour *once*, "*once at the end of the world*," or age ; and once for all, and for ever.

**THE
SECOND
FIRE,**

that upon the Brazen Altar, was in the midst of the Camp at the door of the Tabernacle. It burned continuously throughout the whole year. A lamb was offered upon it in the morning, which sustained it all day, and a second lamb was placed upon it in the evening to support the burning through the night. It was ever burning for the errors, infirmities, and failures of the Israelites within the Camp, or to receive their worship offerings. It typified the blessed Saviour, ever appearing in the presence of God for His people, "*for He is the propitiation for our sins*"; and also that by Him their praises, adoration, and thanksgiving should ascend to God. "*By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.*"

The first fire has its antitype in John i. 29, where it is for *sin*. The second is in 1 John ii. 2, where it is for *sins*. We can easily see the difference between sin and sins. As to the former, we are all defiled alike ; but as to the latter, alas, you have committed yours, and alas, I have committed mine ; and by no means can mine ever become yours, or yours ever become mine. But the blessed Saviour, the adorable Lord, bare *our* sins, yours as well as mine—in His

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own pure and holy and precious body on the tree. And so, if we confess them and forsake them, we are not only forgiven, but cleansed from all unrighteousness.

The fire outside the Camp was not upon an altar, but only in a "place"; and that place was ever covered and hidden as the Camp passed through the Wilderness. It is so with Calvary, it is only a place—"The place of a skull," and it is so hidden. Men say they have found "Calvary." Alas that they should ever have sought for it! God has hidden Calvary, the place of the holy, stupendous, and awful sin offering. The place where man committed the sin, so exquisite, so enormously wicked, that the sun hid its light, and the earth quaked and gave up its dead.

There was no altar there, unless, indeed, the mound of earth and stones in their natural ruggedness formed such. This seems to be intimated by the heap of earth and stones placed at the end of the Ten Words (Exod. xx.): "*An altar of earth shalt thou make unto Me. And if thou shalt make it of stones, thou shalt by no means make it of hewn stones.*" An altar of earth. Christ was crucified upon the bare earth. The ground drank in His blood. How awful come those words spoken first to Cain: "*What hast thou done? Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.*"

While we see outside the Camp nothing but a "place," earth and stones, inside the Camp there

was a constructed altar, built of wood and brass and to dimensions. This appears to have been typical of the blessed Saviour Himself: "*We have an altar—by Him let us offer*"—that is, by Him the altar (Heb. xiii.).

**THE
THIRD
FIRE.**

This was on the altar of gold and wood which stood inside the Tabernacle itself near the veil. The incense placed upon this altar was compounded of four spices, three of which were used only for that purpose. The Onycha, Stacte, and Galbanum are never mentioned in the sacred Scriptures apart from this incense. They are peculiar, unique; never occurring in the Psalms or Canticles in association with the Bride or her companions, or indeed with the Redeemed at all. They appear to set forth the divine, personal, and incommunicable graces of the blessed Saviour in His eternal Sonship. They could plead for man, send up their fragrance on his behalf, and thereby make him, by imputation, acceptable and comely; but could never be imparted to him.

In this they stand in contradistinction to the spices which were mingled with the oil. These spices were, by means of the oil, imparted to the worshipper, conveying a fragrance to him which men would perceive. So, by the blessed Holy Spirit, graces of Christ are imparted to the believer, and are seen of men, but not those which pertain to His eternal Godhead.

CHAPTER III.

THREE VESSELS IN THE HOLY PLACE.

IN the Holy Place were three vessels: The Golden Altar, of which we have spoken a little, the Table of Shewbread, and the Golden Candlestick.

The first sent up its fragrance to God, covering the worshippers with a cloud and making them comely; thus expressing worship in the Assembly in the name and peerless beauty of the Son of God.

The second held the Bread of the Presence, which was divided among the worshippers and eaten, every seventh day.

The third, the Candlestick, cleansed daily by the golden snuffers, and sustained by the oil renewed every morning, shed its light throughout the Holy Place, until the boards, covered with gold, shone with its beautiful light, and reflected that light both to and upon each other; thus expressing the ministry in the Assembly by the Holy Spirit.

The wick, the poor ministering brother, can give but little light from himself, though he consume himself entirely away. But the mighty oil fills him, and runs through him, and uses him as a means of revealing itself.

INCENSE "And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense
 BURNING every morning; when he dresseth the lamps,
 WHILE he shall burn incense." This dressing the
 THE lamps calls for both the oil-cruze and the
 LAMPS ARE golden snuffers; but while the cruse refills
 BEING the lamps, and the snuffers cleanse the poor
 DRESSED. wick from its night's work, the precious incense
 covers all with a cloud of inestimable fragrance.
 What a beautiful thing it is to be a cruse in the hands
 of Aaron replenishing that exhausted lamp! But
 alas, some seem to desire rather to be snuffers, that
 they may snuff and trim, and reduce the wick, until,
 sometimes, the light is lessened, rather than increased
 by the labour. Nay, we have seen wicks so snuffed
 and trimmed, that the light has quite ceased. "*And
 when Aaron LIGHTETH the lamps at even, he shall
 burn incense*" (Exod. xxx. 8).

Poor wick, tired, worn out, exhausted; still, while
 an inch remains, let it be drawn out till all is con-
 sumed for the Master. Let the touch of the Fire of
 God light that lamp again, till, by the power of the Holy
 Oil, it throws its light "*over against the boards.*" Let
 us think less and less of self, but more and more of
 that burning incense, filling the House, and encircling
 the lamp, in the cloud of the precious, priceless
 fragrance of the Son of God.

Thus these three vessels express the three exercises
 in the Church, the Assembly of God:—

(1) The Golden Altar, worship in the name and
 merit of Christ.

(2) The Table of Shewbread, the communion of Saints.

(3) The Golden Candlestick, ministry by the Holy Spirit.

And how very near that Holy Place was to the Most Holy; only a veil between. And now that Calvary is passed, that veil has been removed, and the Assembly of God, with its exercises, is quite in the presence of God. Oh, let us be certain that the light we give is from the oil, and that the fire is the touch of God. So Peter says: "*If any man speak, let it be as the oracles of God.*" Not *about* the oracles of God, but *as* the oracles; that is, as the voice from the Mercy Seat. "*If any man minister, let it be as of the ability which God giveth*" (1 Peter iv. 11).

Moreover, when an Assembly is so ordered, the worshippers filled with worship, the ministry filled with the Holy Spirit, and the house full of the fragrance of the name of Jesus, how near to heaven that little company seems to be—nay, for a small moment, in heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE MEANS OF INTERCESSION.

IN the Tabernacle of Moses there were three means of intercession : the Altar of Burnt Offering for a committed trespass ; the Laver for contracted defilement ; and the Golden Plate borne upon the forehead of the High Priest for the iniquity of the Holy Things (Exod. xxviii. 38).

The two former have been noticed. Of the latter, it is written : "*And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts ; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.*" This then does not deal with sin, but service ; not with defilement, but worship ; not with commandments, but gifts. Iniquity is the negative of equity, a want of fulness, a lack of evenness, insufficiency. However sincere, concerned, and anxious a worshipper might be about his offering, it might still lack that purity and that perfection which the law required ; as indeed everything must have lacked the absolute spotlessness and beauty of that Holy and Blessed

One Whom it prefigured. Nothing could have been the very image of Him (Heb. x. 1). So Aaron by the Golden Plate upon his forehead bore the iniquity of the hallowed and holy things.

In the spiritual antitype—the present things—how solemnly and sorrowfully it comes to the evangelist, the minister, the worshipper, that his word and work lack fulness; bare insufficiency, unevenness—*inequity*. The greatest of preachers knows his preaching to be poor; the greatest of ministers, that his ministry lacks fulness; while the most devout worshipper can but ardently desire the time when his poor mind and tongue shall praise as he ought to praise. But such is the preparation of holiness to the Lord, the provision of grace, that in some way our Great High Priest bears upon His forehead the iniquity of our holy things; makes intercession for the insufficiency of our discourses and the poverty of our praises, and makes them acceptable.

“*And it shall be upon his forehead,*” not upon his heart. These inequities are not heart failures, but head failures. The heart abounds in the fulness of desire, the perfection of purpose; but the mind is finite and infirm, and ill expresses what the heart would fain it said. Oh, if our lips could utter all that our spirits feel, if we could only say all that we should like to say, what preachers we should be and what prayers we should utter!

This plate of gold upon the forehead is connected, in Exodus xxviii., with the stones upon the shoulders and the breastplate upon the heart. "And Aaron shall *bear*" (v. 12); "And Aaron shall *bear*" (v. 29); "that Aaron may *bear*" (v. 38).

CHAPTER V.

THREE METALS—GOLD, SILVER, BRASS.

IN the Tabernacle we have noticed Three Cubes, Three Lights, Three Fires, Three Vessels in the Most Holy Place, Three Vessels in the Holy Place, and Three Means of Intercession. Proceeding, by mercy, we may notice Three Metals, Three Colours, Three Skins, Three Sets of Stones, and Three Vessels outside the House.

THREE METALS.

GOLD. Gold is the supreme ; ever the highest, the first, the best. It expresses Divinity, the Godhead. It displays itself in righteousness, strength, power, and glory. In the gold which covers the board, entirely hiding the natural wood, with its knots and grains, it is Divine righteousness ; the righteousness of God. In the golden wire woven into the ephod of the High Priest, it is Divine strength. In the beauty of all the vessels of the ministry, it is Divine grace and power ; while in the blaze of gold that fills the lighted house it is Divine glory, the glory of God.

SILVER. Silver is called "Atonement money" in Exodus xxx. 16, and "Redemption money" in Numbers iv. 49. Redemption brings us out of

bondage ; the bondage of Sin and the World : Atonement brings us into the company of God's people and makes us part of His house. Every board standing up, and builded in with the other boards to form the house of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, had its foundation in two sockets of silver—Atonement and Redemption. These sockets of silver were made of, or consisted of, the redemption money paid by the children of Israel to Moses as a ransom for their souls.

“Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel” (Exod. xxx. 12-16).

“And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the Sanctuary” (Exod. xxxviii. 25-28).

The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less. In a matter of an offering for worship, a voluntary offering, a man could give according to his means—an ox, a sheep, or a dove. But when redemption was to be expressed all were equal. A poor Israelite had an equal part in those sockets with his wealthier brother. His half-shekel was there; and the other had no more. In no sense nor way did this half-shekel purchase redemption. It was an act by which an Israelite expressed his desire to have part in that redemption. When he came up to be numbered, which was equal to having

his name entered, he put in his half-shekel to be melted down with all the other half-shekels to form those sockets.

We are not redeemed with silver nor gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

Had an Israelite come up to be numbered and not put in his half-shekel a plague would have come on him.

For a moment let us trace one of those boards. It is first an acacia tree growing in the clay ground of the wilderness, opposite Jericho in the lowlands of Jordan. It is hewn down and its root left to die in the wilderness, while the tree is to become part of the house of God. Its branches, the glory of the tree, are removed. Its bark, the covering or righteousness, is stripped away. It is sawn and shaped down to the size of the other boards. It has knots and cross grains, all the results of injuries which befell it while growing in the wilderness: these can never be removed, but they can be hidden, and so it is covered with gold: clothed in the righteousness of God. And thus standing in the sockets of silver—on redemption ground—it is joined in, builded in, banded in, commonly with its fellow-boards; all having a common history and all partakers of the common salvation.

In the midst of these boards so builded together stood the Ark, made of the same kind of wood that the boards had been made of, for the boards were

made first (Exod. xxxvi. 20-37), but having the gold *within*; it was at once their fellow, and yet their Lord, the Divine dwelling in the human, The Godhead clothed in flesh.

"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16).

"Because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. ii. 14).

Between the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon there passes a cycle of time, 490 prophetic years. When the Temple was finished and the stones builded together (see 1 Peter ii. 5) just as the boards of the Tabernacle had been, then the Ark was brought in, amid the sacrifices and praises of the Levites; and put in its place under the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies. Thus showing that our blessed Saviour passed into the glory in the same body that He walked this earth. The Tabernacle was dissolved, its boards were "brought up," but never builded in. Their places were taken by the stones, that were covered with gold.

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50).

"I must put off this my tabernacle" (2 Peter i. 14).

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1).

The body of our Lord is never called a taber-

nacle, but a temple (John ii. 19-21). The word "dwelt" or "tabernacled" in John i. 14 is a verb, and signifies an action, not a substance: He came into this world a visitant. His mission was temporary. When fulfilled He would go back.

John xvi. 28 is an epitome of the Gospel by John.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father."

There was no gold *in the boards*: there could not be; moreover, gold is quite foreign to the nature of wood; but they were covered with it, as with a robe of righteousness. Thus the saints, although passing through the wilderness, yet builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit and having the worship, the communion, and the ministry in their midst, are covered with the righteousness of God.

Outside the Tabernacle was no gold; inside **BRASS.** was no brass. Inside all was gold; outside all was brass. While between them were the silver sockets and the boards. As gold is glory; silver, redemption; so brass expresses judgment.

All defilement, whether committed transgressions or contracted spots, was settled outside. Could an Aaronite have entered the house with sin upon him, there was nothing there to meet it. He would have gone into the blaze of the glory, into the very presence of God defiled, and surely, as in the case of

Nadab and Abihu, the fire would have come out upon him.

As the sun shone upon the brazen vessels in the court they would blaze with light like a burning furnace.

"Our God also is a consuming fire."

"And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

The brazen altar held its fire continuously, night and day, for the reception of offering for transgression, or for sins of ignorance made known; while the lamb, offered evening and morning, spoke for the errors, infirmities, and mistakes of the Camp (Heb. v. 2). The brazen laver, with its water ever unmeasured, waited to remove the spots contracted by an Aaronite while walking in the Camp. Thus there was full provision for a worshipper to enter the house, "*clean every whit*" (John xiii. 5-10).

To presume to enter the assembly of God, the presence of the glory and the worship, the communion and the ministry, with unconfessed sin upon the conscience, were to dare the fire of God. The taking of the Lord's supper is not an act of merit performed as a set-off against wrong-doing; but an act which celebrates a victory (Gen. xiv. 16-18). An act of communion with the Lord Himself and with His people.

Oh, let all wrong-doing be settled outside; confessed, forsaken, given up, and its stains cleansed;

and so let us, with undefiled hands, touch the Holy things.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John i. 9).

CHAPTER VI.

THREE COLOURS.

THE Divine order taken in the design of the tabernacle commencing in Exodus xxv. to xxx. goes from inside to outside, or from the Divine to the Human. Thus of the metals, gold is first; of the colours, blue; of the skins, goat's-hair; then the oil, and finally the stones. That the gold is Divinity, and the stones the saints, there can be no doubt. Regarding the three colours consistently with their order, blue is the heavenly colour. Red at the bottom, the Adamite (Adam means red), while the purple coming between is the mingling of the two in perfect and resplendent harmony. Moreover, as we go through the Bible, purple develops as the kingly colour. These three colours in their spiritual significance encircled our blessed Lord in all His life on earth. Just as the high priest was ever encircled in these three colours in his ephod.

"The second Man is the Lord from heaven"
(1 Cor. xv.).

"Thou shalt call His name JESUS" (Matt. i. 21).

"And shall call His name IMMANUEL" (Matt. i. 23).

"*The KING of the Jews*" (Matt. ii. 2).

They abound in the Psalms and Prophets:—

"*I have anointed My KING upon My holy hill of Zion*" (Ps. ii.).

"*Thou art My SON; this day have I begotten Thee*" (Ps. ii.).

"*Things touching the KING*" (Ps. xlv.).

"*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*" (Ps. xlv. 6.).

"*One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven*" (Dan. vii.).

"*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*" (Isa. ix.).

Like so many other things, these glories of Christ gather to the Cross.

"*Truly this Man was the Son of GOD*" (Mark xv. 39).

"*Jesus of Nazareth the KING of the Jews*" (John xix.).

"*Certainly this was a righteous MAN*" (Luke xxiii.).

By the volume of the book, the Messiah, God's anointed King, must consist of the two natures, the heavenly blue and the Adamite red; and the mingling of those two colours into a perfect purple. The root of David and yet the offspring of David; David's Lord and David's Son.

Few matters are more obscure than the origin and natures of these colours among the early Hebrews; they evidently had the Crimson worm; but Cochineal

was not produced *Scarlet* until the fifteenth century A.D., while of their blue and of their purple we know nothing. But ere the end of the world (age), when Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, a magnificent purple had been discovered.

An alchemist, passing round the wall of New Tyre, stepped upon a small fish which gave out a peculiar purple. This the alchemist took to his laboratory, and from it produced the costly and lustrous Tyrian Purple. And thus was provided and prepared the purple robe put upon the Messiah when the soldiers hailed Him the King of the Jews.

In that purple we see the man of the four gospels.

The Son of God in **Mark** and **John**.

The Son of Man in **Matthew** and **Luke**.

Not only were these colours displayed in the ephod of the High Priest, but they occurred also in the ten curtains of fine linen which formed the top of the tent. These ten curtains are never called coverings; they were part of the tent itself. Each one of these ten curtains stretched from side to side and embraced four boards, two on each side. Thus the whole ten curtains embraced the whole of the boards, and being linked together by blue loops and golden taches, formed one tabernacle. In this great curtain, consisting of the ten small curtains, we see the Church of God embracing the whole of the saints, and combining them into one house; while the

curtain itself is composed of ten small curtains ; just as the Church consists of small local Churches, each one embracing some saints. The ten is the Gentile number ; and the Church is called out in the times of the Gentiles.

The whole structure of the tabernacle is a combination of the numbers ten and twelve, or divisions or multiples of them. Twelve is the Jewish number, while ten is the Gentile number. And the spiritual house is a combination of converted Jews and converted Gentiles joined into one new thing (Eph. ii.). At the first mention of the Nations they are ten (Gen. xv. 19), the last seen of them they are ten (Rev. xvii. 12), and in the toes of the image in Daniel they are seen prophetically as ten. These ten curtains were linked together into two sets of five in a set, then finally joined in the centre.

If a Christian, or a Church, forget the blue, it becomes worldly and carnal ; if it seek to repudiate the red, it assumes an ultra-angelic kind of holiness, which may, or may not, be real. But where the red and the blue exist in just proportions there is godliness and separation from the world ; consistently with a faithful attendance upon home duties, family ties, and the pursuit of business. Such an one, displaying the lustrous purple, is a moral king among men.

There is no black among the hieroglyphic colours. Such a colour, or rather absence of colour, would

seem to suggest the absence of light, and so the presence of darkness.

An Israelite looking towards the tabernacle could not see the ten curtains with their blue and purple and scarlet ; neither the holy vessels of the worship and ministry ; but he would know they were there by the instructions of the Levites.

It was only the Aaronites, the worshippers who entered into the house and moved among the holy vessels, that would actually see these things. It is only as we draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, true worshippers, worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, that we can really see the beauty, the preciousness, the security, and the acceptability of the redeemed of Christ, the oneness of the whole Church, though formed of many local Churches, linked together ; and composed of the blue, the purple, and the scarlet.

How blessed it is to know, and how grateful we should be, that our security does not depend upon our perception or the degree of our light ; for though it was not for every Israelite to enter into the house, yet each might always know, that by his half-shekel being part of the silver sockets of redemption, actually melted in with the half-shekels of his fellows to form and constitute those sockets, his salvation was established for ever. Moreover, assuming him

to be one of the wise-hearted men who wrought all the work of the sanctuary (Exod. xxvi. 4), he might also know that his work was established in the house of the Lord, and should be preserved in the presence of the Most High for ever.

“And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands” (Exod. xxxv. 25).

Thus a godly woman who had worked, whether much or little, whether she had spun many threads or few threads or only one thread, might know that her work could never be undone again; her one thread could never be removed from that curtain, which she helped to weave. Thus every Israelite, both in his person and in his work, was represented in that house.

CHAPTER VII.

THREE SKINS.

THE tabernacle so builded was covered by three kinds of skins which, formed into curtains, enwrapped, sheltered, and hid the whole building. These three kinds of skins speak of the blessed, divine, and peerless Son of Man, the Saviour of His Church. The innermost covering was made of goat's hair "spun" into curtains, the centre one of rams' skins dyed red, and the outermost of badgers' skins.

BADGER SKINS. A stranger viewing the tabernacle from a distance would see it as only badgers' skins. And as such all strangers see the blessed Saviour; as such we all saw Him once, and as such Israel first saw Him.

"And when we shall see Him, there is no beauty in Him that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. liii.).

RAMS' SKINS. But one who comes nearer, near enough to see the second covering, beholds in Him the ram of sacrifice crimson dyed: the Man upon the cross, the priceless, precious Saviour, deluged with blood from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He

was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. liii.).

GOAT'S HAIR. The third covering, the goat's hair, shows us still more of that wonderful Saviour and His infinite salvation. The goat was sacrificed for the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of God's people: these it removed, took away, and bore into a land uninhabited.

"And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited" (Lev. xvi. 21, 22).

Thus this goat's-hair curtain shows us in its first teaching that our sins are not only pardoned, but taken away. They are gone. The ten curtains which formed the top of the tabernacle were twenty-eight cubits in length, and as the house was thirty cubits from the ground on one side, over the top, to the ground on the other side, such a length would not reach from ground to ground, but would leave a

cubit on either side exposed. But the goat's-hair covering was thirty cubits in length and so entirely covered the house.

"And a cubit on the one side and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it."

The Church cannot cover the saints; it is not intended to; but Christ does.

"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust" (Ps. xci.).

The goat's-hair covering contained eleven curtains: five linked together in one set, and six linked together in the other set; then both sets linked into one covering in the middle. Thus, half the Gentiles, five, and half the Jews, six, are united, in Christ, into one.

"That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. iii. 6).

The eleven curtains of goat's hair were forty-four cubits in width (11 × 4). As the full length of the tent was thirty, and the depth from top to bottom ten, there was a curtain to spare. One half of this was doubled over at the front, and the other half-curtain doubled at the bottom of the back end. In Christ there is ever a fulness, and to spare.

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE SETS OF STONES.

“ONYX stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate” (Exod. xxv. 7).

The order given in Exodus xxv. of the materials is:—

Gold	.	The Divine Godhead.
Skins	.	The Sacrificed Saviour.
Oil	.	The Holy Spirit.
Stones	.	The Saints.

The three sets of stones were: (1) the Onyx; (2) the twelve precious stones, to be set in the breastplate; and (3) the Urim and Thummim, to be placed in the ephod, that is, *in* the bosom. The Onyx stones being placed upon the shoulders of the High Priest, he carried them. The twelve precious stones being set in the breastplate, he bore them upon his heart—cherished them; while the Urim and Thummim were in the bosom, the secret place of communion.

THE Each of the two Onyx stones had the **names**
ONYX. of six tribes engraved upon it, the two stones thus carrying the whole twelve tribes. These names

were not merely written on, but graven in "*like the engraving of a signet.*" It would be impossible to remove one of these names; moreover, one name could not be broken away without breaking the other five, while each stone was securely fastened to the ephod, both by being set in an ouch of gold, and fastened to the breastplate with chains of gold. Hence we see not only the security of the whole of God's people, but of every one of them: ever carried on Aaron's shoulders. (See Luke xv.)

**THE
TWELVE
STONES.** The twelve stones upon the breastplate were fastened, each one, in an ouch of gold; and the breastplate itself fastened to the ephod and to the shoulders by golden chains. In this we see the everlasting, and never-ceasing, love of Christ towards His people.

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually."

He could not go in himself without bearing them also. These twelve stones were various in colour, in form, and in transparency, but each one was precious. God's saints are not quite alike in all things, but different in character, disposition, and degree of light. The preciousness of these stones lay in the fact that each one was pure, true to its own lines of character and in absorbing or reflecting light according to its own nature. Some were

crystals, fire formed, and so pure; for in going into its crystal form each substance precipitates all impurity, and so, being *itself only*, shows its true lines, or form. Some were produced by great pressure, some by rolling on the ever-grinding sea-beach. The Onyx, or finger-nail, was, as its name implies, an Agate bearing the lines or pattern of a finger-nail. Such a stone must have formed the core, or heart, of a larger stone, which by the ceaseless rolling of the sea waves had been reduced or ground down until it showed the circles or half-circles of the finger-nail, its core.

These twelve stones were not only various in colour, but had very different origins. The White Agate came from Sicily; the Green Jasper from Greece; the Yellow Topaz from the Red Sea; the Crimson Sardius from Babylon, Arabia, Egypt, and Lydia; and the Blue Jacinth from India. But whatever the form, or colour, or degree of brilliancy, or origin, all were precious, and all met together in the span, the double span (see John x. 28-30) of the beautiful breastplate, set in the gold, the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and the fine twined linen, made like unto the ephod. Thus would God have His saints; each one true to himself, showing his own true lines of character, colour of disposition, and degree of light. And every Christian has in his, or her, heart of hearts some beautiful lines of character, fair hues of colour, and capacity for truth

or light, which make him precious in the sight of his Saviour; and the fires of trial, the pressure of burdens, and the ceaseless grind of never-ending toil and labour, only serve to bring out that preciousness until we stand before God *just ourselves*.

THE
URIM
AND
THUM-
MIM.

These were closer even than the twelve stones, they were *in* the ephod; in the bosom, dwelling in the secret place of communion. They were taken out only to answer an enquiry when the mind of God was sought.

It is written of John:—

“When Jesus thus spake, He was troubled in the spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake. There was at the table reclining *in* [R.V.] Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us of whom He spake. He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus’ breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?”

How blessed to dwell so near to Christ, that when the disciples would know further of the mind of the Lord, they come to us and say, not “What are your *thoughts?*” but “What does the Lord say about this?”

CHAPTER IX.

THREE VESSELS OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.

As there were within the Most Holy Place three vessels, and within the Holy Place three vessels, so outside the House were three vessels, or features: the brazen laver, the brazen altar, and a place outside the camp where the sin offering was consumed. The sin offering was made once a year. It met and dealt with sin in its nature and origin; so that a believer who accepts Christ as God's provided sin offering may know that sin has been judged and settled for ever, for every one of God's people. Moreover, the blood of this offering was placed upon the altar at the door of the Tabernacle, and so made a way inward; then upon the altar of incense, making a way into the Holy Place; and finally carried right into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat; thus making a way for the redeemed of Christ right into the presence of God. A new way, a living way, a consecrated way, newly made by the blood of Jesus.

THE The altar inside the camp, in the court, was
BRAZEN burning continuously for the daily errors of
ALTAR. those inside the camp—the individual or
personal weaknesses, frailties, and mistakes of those

who were already under the shelter of the blood of the great sin offering. A godly Jew, conscious of his unworthiness, would look towards that morning or evening sacrifice and know that its smoke was ascending for him, and thus his communion with God be ever sustained. When the angel Gabriel touched Daniel, it was about the time of the evening oblation.

In the spiritual antitype, how precious and blessed it is, at the opening of the day and at its close, to commune with God. Conscious of our own unworthiness, pleading the precious name and offering of Jesus, Who offered one sacrifice for *sins* for ever, and is even at the right hand of God ever living to make intercession for us. Hebrews ix. 25, 26 shows Christ to be the Antitype of the *yearly* offering for sin; while Hebrews x. 11, 12 shows Him to be the Antitype of the *daily* offering for sins. And these being accomplished, the believer is perfected for ever. There can be no more offering for sins.

**THE
BRAZEN
LAVER.** The water of the brazen laver did not meet transgressions, they were dealt with by the brazen altar; but it removed the defilement contracted by an Aaronite in leaving the court and moving about in the camp. Such an one, in returning into the court, dare not approach unto the altar nor touch any holy vessel until the water from the laver had removed any contracted spots. Whether he saw such defilement or not was not considered; he dare

not walk in the courts of the Lord's House until hands and feet had been washed at the brazen laver. The Aaronite was a worshipper, and the more devout a Christian is, the more sensitive he is to defiling influences of his daily associations with the world. We are reconciled to God, but our surroundings are not, and we feel it. But how blessed to know that our God has made full provision, in that He has given us His Holy Word to cleanse our way, to correct our path, so that no contracted spots should adhere to us or become ours. As soon as we turn to the precious Word of God we breathe a different atmosphere, and the ways, the principles, the terms and the talk of the world are put off from us, and we worship God with a true heart and a purified mind. *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Eph. iv. 29-32).

When this washing of the water of the Word is submitted to, we are conscious of the holy power that teaches and controls our lives, leading us contrary to the ways of the world.

Thus in the fire outside the camp we see sin

judged, in the brazen altar transgressions atoned for, and in the brazen laver contracted defilement taken away.

The laver had its commencement in the brass mirrors of the godly Israelitish women, in which they would look to see that they were clean and comely. These were given up to Moses and from them he made the laver. In the days of Solomon the laver became the brazen sea, having abundance of water. In the millennium it divides into the *earthly* living stream or river of endless supply, and into the *heavenly* sea of glass, no longer flowing but congealed, and upon which the 144,000 stand, having the harps of God. The days of defilement being over, the need of cleansing is over too, and they look down into it only to see how clean they are.

CHAPTER X.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON THE BOARDS.

THE latter part of the twenty-sixth chapter of Exodus speaks of the BOARDS which form the sides and back of the tabernacle. There were twenty boards on each side, and those boards were obtained from trees which grew on the borders of the Jordan. If we follow the Israelites in all their journeyings, we find that they rested for a year on the borders of Jordan at a place called Shittim, which gives the name to the wood. It was acacia wood as to its kind, but the fact that it came from that district gives the name Shittim to it. Moreover, the word shittim means scourges, rods or thorns. Travellers tell us that the trees that grow there—the acacia wood—are very stubborn and barren. This is undoubtedly true, as those who use the material discover. These trees were cut down and the root was left to die in the wilderness, and then the tree itself was dealt with. Its branches were all lopped off—that is the glory of the tree. Then the bark was taken away—that is the righteousness of the tree. Then the tree was cut down into one particular size—ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. There is the ten again, and there

is the $1\frac{1}{2}$ as a part of 12. There are not different sizes of Christians in the Church. As we stand there covered with the gold, we are all one size, just as the curtains were all one size. Then when they had got a board just to its right size and shape, it would have a lot of old knots and cross grains in it. Now every one of those knots is the scar of an accident that occurred to it when it was growing in the wilderness. But if we had seen the boards exactly alike standing there all covered with gold we should not have seen the wood. They were so entirely covered that the wood was invisible; but the wood was there. That is what we feel, the wood underneath, although covered with gold, which is the righteousness of God. They stood there on silver footings, which is redemption; we are quite certain about that. It is very simple. Moses was commanded to gather half a shekel from every Israelite over twenty years of age, who when he came up and declared his pedigree had to bring half a shekel of silver as an offering; and those half-shekels of silver were all melted together. It was called the Redemption Money in one place, the Atonement Money in another place. They were all melted together, and out of them were made sockets for these boards to stand upon. The board itself was shaped up like all the other boards, standing in their company and banded together with them on a silver footing and covered with gold, and that is what Christians are in every Assembly. During our

wilderness journey down here as the House of God, as the Church of God, that is what we are, and that is how God sees us. The Shekinah glory shone not upon the wood, but upon the gold. The candlestick threw its light over against the boards, and those boards would glitter with that light and throw the light back one to another until the whole house was full of glory. That is God's pattern of the Church. But although only the gold could be seen here, and although the Shekinah, if regarded as the eye of God, only saw the gold, and although the Aaronites who went in for their daily service only saw gold, yet the wood was underneath, and that is what we feel all the way along. When the prodigal son came home they dressed him magnificently. He had never been dressed like that before he went away. And these boards when they grew in the wilderness had no gold on them. That prodigal had never been dressed before he went away as he was after he came home; and although if you had looked at him you would only have seen that best robe, that ring, and those shoes, still the prodigal was underneath, and he knew it. If nobody else knew it, he knew it; and I must think that that young man, when he got quite alone and he would think of what he had lost out in that far-off country, he would think of it until he wept hot and scalding tears; but all he could do would be to dry his tears and look down at his best robe. That is the mystery of grace. The mystery of grace is beyond

our ken. We see through the Word of God that if we had never sinned we should never have been robed with the righteousness of God. After all, we are like beggars that have been taken from the dunghill and are set among princes. To all eternity the Church will be a monument of God's grace. He does not want a monument of His power, the sun is that, and the stars; "*the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork.*" But the Church will to all eternity be a monument of God's grace, of His pity, kindness, mercy, and of His tender loving-kindness. Have you ever noticed that word in the Psalms? The Holy Spirit coins words that we never dream of. The tender lovingkindness of God; the riches of His grace, the riches of His glory; oh! there is such a deep mystery in that grace.

The whole of this tabernacle is God's provision in grace for a condemned guilty man. The Ten Commandments proved his guilt, and when he was hopelessly undone, God set up this tabernacle before him. It says in one of the prophets, "*only acknowledge your transgressions.*" When a man acknowledges his transgressions God can deal with that man; but until a man acknowledges his transgressions he has nothing to do with grace. Grace is pardon, forgiveness, and kindness, undeserved and unmerited—nay, where punishment is merited, grace brings in favour instead. I do not think that any of us under-

stand much about grace. I think the great Spurgeon did, and I think John Bunyan understood a great deal about grace, and of course the Apostle Paul knew by Divine inspiration very much about grace. But grace expresses itself to me very much in these boards and in that prodigal; that although covered with gold, and standing on a silver footing, and all of one shape, and all clustered together, and all formed into one house, still there was the wood underneath.

As to the cherubim, I think they express the souls of the redeemed in heaven. Now there was no wood there; they were all gold and they had wings—they represent heavenly beings and they are in heaven itself. I have some dear ones like that now, and if the Lord does not come very soon, some of us will be like that; but at the present day we have got the wood. We shall not have the wood always; when death comes we shall leave the wood in the old churchyard and our souls will be all gold in the glory.

These boards were all banded together by bars that ran across them. There were five bars, two at the top, one in the centre—the centre one ran right through the middle of the boards, and then two at the bottom, so as to bind it together as one tabernacle. I have no doubt whatever that the bars and pillars mean ministers. By ministers I mean those who minister the Word, those who are elders in the Assembly, those who live to bind together, to keep them together, to save them from being driven

about by every wind of doctrine; these bars keep them all steady. I think that the one that went from end to end inside the boards was Christ. Some say they do not think it ran inside the boards; well, it says "in the midst from end to end," that is enough for me. There were four then of these bars binding these boards together, and then there was one running from end to end right through every board.

Then at the back of the tabernacle there were six boards. There were twenty boards on *this* side, twenty boards on *that* side, and six boards at the end, but two standing in the corners make eight. Now those six boards (the tabernacle being ten cubits wide), being a cubit and a half wide each, would only make nine cubits, so that there must have been an aperture of half a cubit each side; but those two boards covered that aperture and prevented a division, and made it all into one tabernacle. Now try and be a board standing in the corner. If there is an aperture, get into that corner and stop it; prevent a division. Oh! I am quite certain that these things are not accidents; they are Divine patterns, and it was commanded to Moses to make everything according to the pattern shown him in the Mount, and he was to put these boards at the back, which left an aperture in each corner, and then he was to put a board in each corner overlapping and linking on to each side, so that there should be no division; that it should be bound into one tabernacle.

Every one was to pay half a shekel; if he was a rich man he only paid half a shekel, he could not pay more; if he was a poor man he was to pay half a shekel, he could not pay less; and all those half-shekels were mingled together into the one set of talents (one hundred talents altogether) that these boards and pillars stood upon, so that you see when it is a matter of redemption we are all one price. In a matter of a trespass a ruler had to bring a greater offering than a poor man, or one of the common people—well, he ought to have known better. But when it was a matter of redemption it is all one price. I believe the great Queen Victoria was a Christian; and consequently was worth half a shekel, and the poorest of us here is worth half a shekel too. When it is a matter of redemption we are all half-shekels. A man could point to the tabernacle and say, "I have got a half-shekel in those sockets and you have not any more." Every man had a part in that tabernacle by means of those half-shekels, and every man could say, "A little piece of that belongs to me, and as large a piece belongs to me as to you."

These are just a few things that we notice. That God's House to-day, spiritually in heavenly Divine things, is just what these curtains and these boards (*which were the formation of God's earthly House*) were in these temporal, earthly, and worldly things which have passed away.

CHAPTER XI.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON THE CURTAINS.

GOD never dwelt with men until the Tabernacle was built. He walked and talked with Adam before the Fall, but as soon as man fell God retired, and He ever speaks as from a distance—"Let Us go down," and see what men are doing. Then God visited Abraham, but He never dwelt with Abraham. God never dwelt upon this earth until a sanctified spot was made by blood a spot quite separated; that is the meaning of "sanctuary"—"Make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." This Tabernacle, composed of the boards and curtains, was the House of God. The words "House of God" do not occur in the Book of Exodus, but they do in Judges and also in the first of Chronicles. The Tabernacle was the House of God, God dwelt in it. Then when the days of the Temple came, the Temple was the House of God. Then when Our Blessed Lord Jesus was on earth, He was the Temple, and God dwelt in Him. Then after His resurrection and ascension the Holy Spirit came down and the Church was formed, and now God dwells in that. It says in Timothy: "That thou mightest know how thou oughtest to

behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, a pillar and ground of the truth," or a pillar and stay of the truth, which is Timothy—not that the Church was a pillar and ground of the truth, but that Timothy was, in that House. I think that this is the meaning of this—that the Tabernacle was the House in which God dwelt, then it became the Temple, then it was the Body of Our Lord, and now it is the Church—that the Church is the House of God and the spiritual antitype of this Tabernacle. We are quite certain that the stones in the Temple were figurative of the living stones, which are Christians builded together for a holy house, as we get in Ephesians: "And the whole temple groweth."

Now at the beginning of Hebrews, which is the Divine commentary on these very things, we have at the end of the second chapter the High Priest; then at the beginning of the third chapter we get: "Consider the High Priest and Apostle of our profession, Jesus Christ." For He was the antitypical Aaron as well as the antitypical Moses. Moses was the Apostle, and Aaron was the High Priest; Jesus was the Antitype of both. Then we have at once the building of the House. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant"—as a pattern or figure of Christ—Who is "*as a Son over His own house, Whose house are we.*" Now those verses can be understood only as meaning that Moses was typical of Christ in that House, and

the House that Moses built was typical of the House which Christ is now building, "which House are we." Then in Corinthians, which is the wilderness journey of the Church—just as Romans is the coming out of Egypt under the blood—we no sooner get to the third chapter than there is a house being built. There are the gold, silver, precious stones, and the wood, hay, and stubble. Then in Timothy (which in the first Epistle is the Church in its right condition and how a man should act in it—the second Epistle is rather the Church in a wrong condition and how a man should act under that wrong condition) Paul uses the very words, "the house of God, which is the church of the living God." Then there are the vessels and then there is God dwelling in light unapproachable, which is, of course, the Shekinah dwelling on the mercy seat covered with a veil, which no man could approach unto.

NOW WE COME TO THESE TEN CURTAINS. The Church is called out in the times of the Gentiles. Israel was put on one side and Judaism ended. God never does these things hurriedly. It was not until forty years after our Lord said that the Temple should be taken to pieces that it was destroyed, but in the year 70 Judaism, as represented by the Temple, utterly ceased to be. It has never existed since the year 70, and the Church is being gathered out while Israel is put on one side. The Gentile number is 10, and the Jewish number 12.

If we turn to the end of the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, where God first speaks of the nations in contradistinction with, or in relation to, Abraham, He speaks of them as 10 (Gen. xv. 19-21): "The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites"—that is three—"and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims"—that is six—"and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites"—that is nine—"and the Jebusites"—which is ten. Then if we go to Daniel, in the middle of the Bible, it speaks of the Gentile nations as the ten toes of the image. Then at the end of the Bible the Gentile nations are headed up into ten; there are ten kings who receive their kingdom one hour with the Beast, and it is out of those ten kingdoms that the ten virgins come to meet the Bridegroom and His Bride. They come from the Father's house to His house. Dr. Kitto says that in some of the manuscripts of the New Testament the words are: "Behold, the Bridegroom and His Bride cometh." In our version it is: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh"—the Bride is not seen at all. The ten virgins are the attendants. The form of the Jewish marriage was this: The bridegroom went into the bride's father's house with his bride, the wedding took place there; they remained there for seven days, and then at midnight they came forth, the bridegroom bringing his bride to his own abode, and they were met by these virgins at midnight—so they had their lamps. Now if we look at that, it is full of meaning

to us. The Bride is taken into the Father's House first, and we—the Church—will be there seven days, no doubt representing seven years, before we are brought to this earth, and then the ten virgins come out of the last condition of the nations to meet us.

If we regard THESE TEN CURTAINS AS FORMING THE CHURCH, we see it all, because they form the top. There were ten curtains, made with blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with the cherubim woven on them. One of these curtains went over one side, up, and across the top, and down the other side, and embraced some of the boards; and the third more still, until the whole ten curtains embraced the whole of the boards and made them into one Tent, one Tabernacle, or one House. If we think of the Church of God we know it embraces every believer, every saved one. If we question whether one is in the House of God, we are questioning whether that one is saved, and that is quite understood; but where a man is redeemed by the blood of Christ, where he has new life by the Holy Spirit, that man is a part of the Church of God, which, looked at as one great whole, is embracing all. But then there are local churches, just as there are these ten curtains; and while one of these ten curtains only had some of the boards, yet the whole of the curtains, linked together, had all of them.

Now all those ten curtains were linked together. There were no less than fifty holes in the border of

two—that was about ten inches apart, that is all—and the holes were loopholes of blue; then a golden tache, or clasp as it says in the Revised translation, went from one hole to the other, and so linked the two curtains together, and made it into one tabernacle. Now that is the design, that is the pattern, that all the churches should be linked together through a blue loophole, which is heavenly, and through a golden clasp, which is Divinity. If you cannot link churches together in that way, you had better let them be unlinked. It is no use to make iron and brass hooks and eyes and think you are going to get them all together. It is an awful thing for me, and every Christian who studies the Word of God, to see the churches divided as they are. But this is the pattern. Local churches there should be and must be—the Church at Rome, and the Church at Corinth, and the Church at Galatia, and the Church at Ephesus, and so on; but they should be all linked together by the heavenly blue and by the Divine gold. So it makes one Tabernacle, one Tent.

Then these curtains which formed the top are never called a covering, they are part of the tent itself. The boards do not make a tent, but only the sides of a tent—you must have a top before you have a tent. The boards were not the tabernacle without those top curtains, any more than the top curtains were the tabernacle without the boards. The boards and those top curtains make the tabernacle.

Then they were made of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, and had the cherubim woven upon them. That is what God's churches are in His estimate, in His design. The blue is the heavenly colour. The red is the earthly colour; red means Adam and Adam means red. Then the purple is the mingling together of those two colours into a perfect, beautiful, splendid purple. If you put too much blue you spoil the purple; if you put too much red you spoil it also. I do not know that we cannot see spoilt churches round about us. If we forget the blue we are likely to become worldly; if we forget the red we are liable to become monks or nuns, or to fancy we are holier than everybody else, and almost too holy to work or walk about in the same clothing that other people wear. I have often said our blessed Saviour never dressed up "religious." They knew He was a Prophet by His words and by His power. And I have sometimes said, "Well, don't dress up; if you have not enough religion to show it without dressing up, don't dress up; get more religion." However, blue expresses the heavenly nature in the churches of God. The red expresses the Adamite. Now do not think that the Adamite is wrong. Then the purple is the perfect mingling together of those two into a resplendent medium colour. Of course, if we get too much red, and go in for all sorts of things "to get the people," as it is called, the purple will be spoilt. I once heard Webb-Peploe say, "One of my curates

came to me and said, 'I have tried every trick of the trade, and I cannot get the people'; 'Well, then,' I said, 'give up the tricks of the trade, and preach the Gospel, that gets the people.'" Yes, it is the Gospel that gets the people; but where there is too much red the purple is spoilt. I do not know that there is ever too much blue. Romanism has tried to carry on these colours, but she has turned them all into black. Now I do not think that is an accident; I do not think that many of the things which are distinguishing marks upon peculiar sects of Christians are accidents. The black means death and darkness, and that is Rome. There is no black here; there is no death and darkness here. There is a great deal of white; there are blue and purple and scarlet; there is no black at all.

Next we have to notice the numbers that are in these curtains. I have said before that everything in the tabernacle is a combination of 10 or 12, and their divisors or their multiples. These curtains were 4 cubits wide—there is the divisor of 12; but then they were 5 in a set, and there is the divisor of 10. Then they were 28 cubits long—there is the 4 multiplied by 7. Then the two sets were joined together in the middle, making them 10, and there is the 10 again. The 10 is the Gentile number and the 12 is the Jewish number, and everything in this tabernacle is a combination or linking together of those two numbers in their parts.

This tent had three coverings, and I am persuaded that all of these three coverings are figures of Christ as the One that covers His people, and protects them and saves them and cares for them. Looking at them from outside, if we stood upon a distant hill, we should only see badgers' skins, and we should say, "Well, there is nothing to attract there," and that is what Christ was to me for twenty-five years. That answers to the first part of the fifty-third of Isaiah: "*When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*" But then if we went nearer we should see that underneath those badgers' skins there are those rams' skins dyed red—*dyed red*. I often think about that when I wake up in the night. Christ was like those rams' skins dyed red. The red that they used was no doubt got from the cochineal, the worm, and that worm had to be broken and crushed before that red came out; and when they got that red dye they dyed those rams' skins all red—they deluged them with that red. Jesus Christ on the Cross was deluged with blood. He says in the twenty-second Psalm, "I am a worm, and no man." We see there that worm, as it were, broken and the blood deluging Him. It came from His forehead, it came from His back, it came from His hands, it came from His feet, it came from His side—from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot He was deluged with blood, for you and for me,

just as you and I from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot were nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Do you ever think thus solemnly about these rams' skins dyed red? Underneath those badgers' skins seen from the distance there is the sacrificial animal in these skins, the ram, and they are dyed red. Then underneath that again were these goat's-hair curtains. The goat is strength and hair is strength and weaving is strength, so that there is a combination there of figures of strength. That is what we learn the Saviour to be after we have come to the Cross. After we have seen Him as the rams' skins dyed red we learn Him as the One that keeps us, that carries us, that bears us, that sustains us. We learn Him as the goat's-hair curtains woven, after we have seen Him as the rams' skins dyed red.

We are given the numbers of these goat's-hair curtains, but we are not given the numbers of the curtains of the two other coverings. Now this is most remarkable. In these goat's-hair curtains there are 11 instead of 10. Eleven is a strange number, but there it is. If you notice, 5 is a half of 10 and 6 is a half of 12. Five curtains were linked together on one side, then six were linked together, making another side. Then they were both joined in the middle. Cannot we see Jews and Gentiles joined together in Christ as it is in Ephesians? Ephesians speaks about the House of God. But the Jews and

Gentiles are not joined together in the Church, they are joined together in Christ. It is their being joined together in Christ that forms the Church. It is not their being joined together in the Church that gives them association with Christ, they are joined together in Christ, they are made one in Christ, and that by judgment, that is to say, they are linked together with brass, which means judgment. The inside curtains, as I have said before, are linked together with golden taches, so that when we have got those three curtains the top of the tabernacle appears. The middle one of the three coverings, takes us to the middle of Isaiah: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Bible History and Prophecy

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

THE New Testament is not chronologically arranged. It contains no dates. Not one of the Gospels is dated. The Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of the Revelation are not dated. There is one verse which connects the New Testament with secular history—the first verse of the third chapter of Luke. And this verse gives seven distinct facts to fix that connection, thus:—

1. The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar.
2. Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judæa.
3. Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee.
4. His brother Philip being Tetrarch of Ituræa, etc.
5. Lysanias, Tetrarch of Abilene.
6. Annas, High Priest.
7. Caiaphas, High Priest.

Thus we have, as it were, seven lines all crossing each other at one point. And yet historians differ to

the extent of seventeen years as to that particular year. We cannot find in the New Testament the year of the birth of our Lord ; nor the year of His awful crucifixion. It does not tell us the age of any one of the apostles, when commencing his ministry, nor the year of its close. It thus seems to be a heavenly book for a heavenly people, without earthly dates. The Old Testament, or Covenant, is the record of an earthly people, and abounds in dates. Those running from Adam to the Captivity are expressed mostly in the terms of the ages to which men lived ; while after the Captivity, events are dated either from the Captivity or from the commencement of the reigns of the Gentile kings.

Running through the Bible in thousands of years we find :—At the close of the first thousand, Enoch was translated. At the close of the second, Abraham was born. At the close of the third, Solomon's Temple was built. And at the close of the fourth, our blessed Saviour was born at Bethlehem. The periods from Abraham to the destruction of Jerusalem may be traced in cycles of four hundred and ninety years, thus :—From the promises made to Abraham at Shechem (Genesis xii.) until the gathering of the tribes to the same place by Joshua (Joshua xxiv.) was four hundred and ninety years. From the death of Moses, when Joshua assumed the first Judgeship, until the death of Samuel, the last of the Judges, was four hundred and ninety years. This was the period of the

Judges. It must be remembered that one hundred years elapsed during this period not accounted for by Bishop Usher in his chronology. From the anointing of Saul to the Captivity was four hundred and ninety years. This was the period of the Kings. From the time when Elijah broke in upon Ahab, asserting the dominion of God over the land, until Malachi, B.C. 420, was four hundred and ninety years. This was the cycle of the Prophets. And again from Malachi, 420 B.C., to the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, was four hundred and ninety years.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. We may notice that the Kingdom of Israel continued for a thousand years, from 1490 until 590 B.C.—with a hundred years added for omitted periods in Judges and the first of Samuel. This thousand years was a period of sad failures, in which the people passed through the terrible judgments propounded in Leviticus xxvi.; while the Millennium, at the close of the Bible, seems to be a similar period of time, during which the Jews will enjoy the blessings—through the blessed Redeemer—propounded by Moses.

There is no such thing as a period of two thousand five hundred and twenty years in Leviticus xxvi., nor indeed any period of years at all. There are five sets of sad and awful judgments, and seven judgments in a set, but there is no idea of a period of years. The word “times” means repeated actions,

as when we say a clock struck twelve times. It does not occur in the Hebrew Bible in all the chapter. The French Bible shows it but as "*fois*," and that in italics. And these terrible judgments which pursued the Jews because of their persistent course of sinning had their fulfilment during the thousand years and their culmination in the Captivity. The awful visitations that have come upon the Jews since their scattering by Titus are through their rejection of the Messiah.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

THE four Gospels are so ordained that two, Matthew and Luke, testify to our Lord's Humanity, while the others, Mark and John, show forth His Divinity. There are thus two witnesses to each glory, the glory of His Manhood and the glory of His Godhead.

Matthew, which is the Gospel of the King, traces the genealogies of Jesus, through Joseph, the foster-father, to David, in whom the Kingdom was founded; then on to Abraham, to whom the seed was promised.

Luke, the Gospel of the Man, traces them through Mary, the daughter of Heli, up to David, then Abraham, then on to Adam. The two lines of genealogies coalescing in David. Joseph was the descendant from David through one son, Solomon; while Mary descended through another son, Nathan.

Of the WOMAN'S seed it was said to the Serpent, "*It shall bruise thy head.*"

Mark speaks nothing of the Nativity, but begins with the baptism of Jesus, when He commenced His ministry at thirty years of age. It is the Gospel of the Servant, the Son of God (Mark i. 1), Who ever did the will of His Father.

Thus, in comparing the Gospels in their beginnings: Mark goes back to the Ministry; Matthew to Abraham; Luke to Adam; while John, the Gospel of the Godhead, goes back farther than all—right into Eternity. “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him*” (John i.).

The last verse in the Gospel by John says: “*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.*” This, if applied to the works of the Son of God while on earth, would imply that the world would not guard, care for, or preserve the books; but when the last verse of the Gospel is linked to the words in the first verse, “*All things were made by Him,*” the truth is absolute. For the circle of the Godhead, *Creatorship*, of Christ, is established.

THE
GOSPEL
BY
MATTHEW

This Gospel divides itself into three great parts. The first part, beginning with the first chapter, goes on to the end of the twelfth; the great feature being the Sermon on the Mount.

The second part commences with the thirteenth chapter and goes to the end of the twenty-third; the great feature being the seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The third part begins with the twenty-fourth and

goes to the end ; the great feature being the declaration, in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth, of the second coming of the Son of Man in glory to establish His Kingdom on the earth.

In the first great part Christ is presented to the Jews as their Messiah. They quite rejected Him.

In the second part He institutes, or founds, an entirely new Kingdom—a heavenly one ; and thus reveals a mystery which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. The occupants of this heavenly kingdom consist of those who have heard the Gospel, the Word of God, the Seed (1 Peter i. 23, 25), and have received it into their hearts ; being born again, not with an earthly life, but a heavenly ; the eternal life of the blessed God, which has dipped down from celestial spheres into their souls, making them children of God.

This Kingdom is founded by a Sower sowing seed. Seed is the germ of a new life, the beginning of a new thing. The life in the seed being Divine, those into whose souls it sinks become partakers of the Divine nature. Such, forming a spiritual family, are all over the earth, and are ruled from the throne of God in Heaven, upon which sits the “Son of His love.”

Satan is the god of this age, this dispensation, when Christ is rejected by the world. But the Kingdom of Heaven is ruled over and reigned over by the Son of God.

Some tares get into the Kingdom, but wrongly so. They have no right there, and though suffered with long, will finally be bound into bundles to be burned.

Thus the Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom among kingdoms, having its occupants among all nations ; living at peace with all, helping all, but identical with none ; governed by the law of Christ.

These inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven are :—

Born with a heaven-born life,
Indwelt by a heaven-born spirit,
Called with a heavenly calling,
Destined to a heavenly country,
Blessed with heavenly blessings,
Given a heavenly inheritance, and
Travelling to a heavenly home.
Their gifts are spiritual,
Their blessings spiritual,
Their warfare spiritual,
They are a spiritual house,
And offer up spiritual sacrifices,

And they look for the Son of God from Heaven, to change their bodies in which they are humbled, and make them like unto His glorified body.

CHAPTER XIV.

SEVEN PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

THE seven parables of Matthew xiii. show the characteristics and progress of the children of the Kingdom and the children of the wicked, right to the end of the world (age). They divide into three pairs and one final parable.

The first pair show the sowing of the seed and its fruitfulness throughout the Gospel age. "*Let both grow together till the harvest.*" "*The harvest is the end of the world*" (age).

The second pair foresee the progress and the working of the evil ones. First in their position, appropriating the tree as soon as it becomes a shelter and a place to nestle in; and secondly in disseminating leaven in the good meal.

The third pair reveal the character and course of the good seed. First in their seclusion, and then in their purity and preciousness.

The final parable shows the great missionary effort put forth at the close of the Gospel dispensation; dragging in all waters and gathering in of all kinds. The final severing of the wicked from the just being the work of angels.

The first pair we shall notice in one of the chapters on "Service and Servants." He that sowed the good seed is the Son of Man, and the sowing has been continued through the ages by a mighty army of Gospel preachers; and is going on now. The leaves of a tree or plant show its profession; the fruit its nature. While the tares were in leaf they successfully counterfeited the wheat; but as soon as the fruit came they were found to be tares. The angels gather out the tares. A stalk of wheat may be ever so lean or weak, or only have one grain upon it, but still it is wheat; the angels would never mistake it for a tare. It is a matter of nature, not of degree of fruitfulness; while a tare is a tare, however fat it may be.

THE BIRDS IN THE TREE. When the Son of Man began to sow the good grain, when the Kingdom was but as very small seed, the birds picked it away and sought thus to prevent the advance. But when the Kingdom had become as a tree, they took possession of the branches. The angels only can tell the children of the wicked from the children of the Kingdom, but sure we are that the tree is among us to-day, and that there are birds of the air in the branches, flourishing themselves, and calling it their tree.

THE LEAVEN. The agents of the Wicked One are not content to sit in the tree, they must be active, and so disseminate leaven in the good meal; thus

making it unlike Christ and spoiling it for the altar; for no meal touched with leaven could be put upon the altar. Although thus rendered unfit for an offering upon the altar, bread baked with leaven could be waved and heaved upward at the feast of Pentecost, thus showing the security and acceptability of all believers through Christ, in spite of the work of the leavening woman. Indeed, when we look into the wonderful works of God, we find that leaven does not really touch the meal itself, but feeds upon the honey or sweetness which exists with the meal and has become deposited there by the process of nature. Hence honey was excluded from the altar as strictly as leaven, for there was nothing in Jesus for the leaven to lay hold of. The new life, heavenly in its origin and nature, in a child of God, is not affected, not touched, by the disseminations of the wicked. The tares may grow in the same field as the wheat, nay, their roots may entwine, still the nature of the wheat will not be affected by its close association with the tares; and in like manner the leaven may come so close to the meal as to be in contact, and still the meal to remain itself. "*He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*" That leaven does not mean the Gospel is evident, for "*Purge out therefore the old leaven*" could not be read as "*Purge out therefore the old Gospel.*" It was the Gospel, the seed (1 Peter i. 23, 25) the Word of God, which imparted life into the heart of the believer

making him a child of the Kingdom. Leaven only inflates and spoils, it cannot give life.

THE TREASURE. While the birds of the air are flourishing themselves in the tree, which they claim, the treasure, the real jewels, to possess which the Man bought the whole field, are hidden. The field is the world. Ignored, often despised, they look for the coming of the King to set up His Kingdom. Imperial Rome, the Queen of civilization, counted the Children of the Kingdom as the filth of the earth, the offscouring of all things, and drove them into those miles of subterranean caverns in which they hid and lived and died and buried their dead:—

“Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. At length they sparkle in Heaven.”

Such were their epitaphs. A day is coming, the Resurrection Morning, when the “Field” shall be opened and the Treasure brought out. When the catacombs of Rome and of Naples shall be uncovered and the Jewels disclosed; the fields of London and Paris and Madrid, and the valleys of Piedmont and Lucerne be rent and give up that precious dust which has lain hidden in the field for so long time. Although the Treasure is hidden in the world, the field, it is not hidden in the Church, the Church in every age knows its jewels and honours them.

THE PEARL. Just as the Treasure hidden in the field stands in contradistinction to the birds in the tree, so the pure and precious Pearl stands in contradistinction to the woman with the leaven. A pearl is intrinsically pure, it cannot impart defilement; and although easily soiled, it is easily cleansed. Moreover, the soiling never enters into its nature. Whatever its surrounding, a pearl retains its purity, never really mingling with defilement. We know nothing in nature so expressive of purity, frailty, and preciousness as a pearl. So is it with the saints of Christ, the priceless Church of God. Purchased, sanctified, cleansed, and at last presented spotless and glorious: "*Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot*" (Eph. v. 25-27).

THE DRAG-NET. Just as the Church of Laodicea stands at the close of the Seven Churches of Revelation ii. and iii., so the Drag-net stands at the end of the Seven Parables of Matthew xiii. The former set of prophetic pictures shows the course of the Churches, or the CHURCH side of believers, while the latter set shows the course of the kingdom, or the WORLD side of believers.

The Drag-net represents missions, casting their nets in all waters, drawing to land of every kind. How

easily we could count a dozen prominent missions, all of which have come in during the present age, and all of which boast themselves to be "unattached," that is, not connected with any Church; while the number of gospel halls, mission halls, guilds, leagues, and societies is unlimited—all "unattached." It were folly, if not actual wickedness, to attempt to blame the promoters of and workers in these missions. They show the characteristic features of the present day—the Age of Missions, the Drag-net, the final stage of the Kingdom of Heaven. While the CHURCH is in the Laodicean state, the KINGDOM is in the Drag-net condition. May not the former account for the latter? With the Church occupied with its wealth, circumscribing its "property" by dogmas and vestments and private interpretations, barricading itself to itself until the LORD stands outside the door and knocks; can it be wondered at that a mighty army of preachers of the Gospel stands outside too, "unattached"? The position taken by missions is that of an army of several regiments, all fighting for one King and for the advancement of one Kingdom, although all using different methods. Disregarding Church discipline and order, they manifest the Kingdom rather than the Church. That is the Drag-net.

If this be the true interpretation of this parable, how near the coming of the Lord must be!

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

THE Apostle Paul wrote epistles to seven Churches, at the commencement of their history, for their instruction and edification, i.e. building up. The Apostle John wrote epistles to seven Churches, but from the standpoint of the Day of the Lord; that is, prophetically from the close of their history; and he looks back upon their state and scrutinizes their achievements. Only one Church is common to both sets of epistles—Ephesus. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle Paul speaks of the Church as in its highest spiritual condition. The Apostle John begins with Ephesus and shows the history, mostly declining, of the Church right down to Laodicea. It is impossible to read the epistles to the seven Churches in Asia (Rev. ii. and iii.) and not see the likeness they bear to the actual history which the Church has passed through during the past nineteen centuries. To deny this likeness were equal to denying that the sun shines, that birds fly, or that flowers grow.

EPHESUS, the first Church that John writes to, shows the Church in its highest spiritual condition,

withstanding evil men, evil in ways and in words, who say they are apostles.

SMYRNA shows the fearful ten persecutions which the Church suffered from the Roman kings, until Constantine.

PERGAMOS gives the condition which followed, when the Church was patronized rather than persecuted, when the world-king came into the Church as a world-king, and set up his throne there, giving his followers official positions in the Church; Antipas—the “one who withstands”—being slain inside the Church. Martyrdom had been, until then, outside the Church, now it was inside; and the Voice that spake said: “Antipas was *My* faithful martyr, who was slain *among you*, where Satan dwelleth.”

THYATIRA brings us to the condition when the clerics, whom the world-king had installed in the Church—just as Ahab had brought in, and installed, Jezebel in the Kingdom of Israel—asserted their authority as the Voice of God, teaching what they chose, committing uncleanness as they chose, and misleading, seducing, some of the servants of God to follow their words and ways. We must distinguish between the Church at Thyatira, which is refusing the teaching of Jezebel, and to which is promised the Morning Star, and Jezebel herself, to whom, with her followers, is promised the Great Tribulation. When our blessed Lord comes as the “Morning Star” He will gather away all His own, but Jezebel, that is

Priestcraft, will be left to go through the Great Tribulation, and will quickly develop into Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth.

SARDIS follows, and is composed of Jezebel's dead children, and so is a dead Church. No one expects a soul to be born again in the Roman Church. But there were a few souls even in Sardis who had life and had not defiled themselves with Jezebel's fornication. The Luthers, the Melancthons, the Knoxes, and the Husses, all these, unable to bear the dead state around them, came out of her and commenced Philadelphia. Jezebel, angry at their separation, follows them with excommunication, assuming to have power not only to destroy their lives on earth, but to erase their names from the Book of Life written in heaven. The Voice in their midst, however, says: "I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

PHILADELPHIA brings us to the condition of the Church when those who had come out from the dead ecclesiastical community through the door which He had opened sought to regain the pure and precious Word of God; the Name of Jesus; the Hope of His return; and the spiritual interpretation of the Mosaic economy, set forth particularly in its two great features, the Temple and the City. It is to Philadelphia that the Voice says, "Behold, I come quickly,"

and this is the living Hope of the Church to-day. Those of God's people to-day who abide in Christ, and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, are holding closely to the Word of God, the Name of Jesus, and the Word of His patience, the spiritual realities shown in the Mosaic types, and to the Hope of His coming.

LAODICEA is the final condition. In it, pride, ostentation, and boasting prevail; she is occupied with self; self-contained, self-possessed, and self-satisfied; esteeming carnal things rather than spiritual things; while her Lord is shut out and thus prevented from interfering with her order or state. He never forces the bolt. Still He has His loved ones even there, and them He will chasten and cause to sit with Him on His throne. In this Church the Voice speaks to the individual soul: "*If any man hear My voice, and open unto Me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.*"

The Church commenced with "Two or three" (Matt. xviii.). It closes with only one. Divisions have rent it into its atoms. Still, where there is only one in an assembly, however large that assembly may be, who will acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and so let Him into His Assembly, desiring to truly take the Lord's Supper in fellowship with his Lord, such an one will find his desire responded to. In no sense will any of those who are Christ's be left to go through the Great Tribulation. The Good Shepherd

Who gave His soul for His sheep knows every one of them, and will have every one of them; no one is able to pluck them out of His hand. The coming of Christ for His own will not be a distinguishing between good sheep and bad sheep, but between sheep and those who are not sheep at all. Just as in the Judgment of Nations the distinction is made between sheep and goats, and in the harvest between wheat and tares. The distinction is one of nature, not degree of merit.

“In My Father’s house are *many* mansions. I go to prepare a place for you,” not *some* of you. Not for only the strong Peter, the loving John, and the prudent James; but also for the slow-learning Judas (not Iscariot), the timid Andrew, and that Thomas who was so slow to believe, but who was willing to go and to die with Him (John xi. 16). The entrance into life at the beginning of discipleship is made by believing that Jesus died and rose again (1 Cor. xv. 1-4) and the entrance into the hope at the close of discipleship is similar: “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again” (1 Thess. iv. 14).

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE ISRAELITES; IN FIGURES (HEB. iv. 2; ix. 9, 24).

THE Israelites had been for three generations in Egypt. The language of the Egyptians was written in pictures—hieroglyphs. And when God brought His people out of Egypt into the Wilderness and spoke to them in a written language, it was one they were acquainted with—hieroglyphs. The Tabernacle and all its surroundings, the whole economy of Moses, is the Word of God written in real, living, moving pictures. And how very real those pictures were: real horses, real men, real oxen, sheep, and goats; real rivers, deserts, seas, and countries; real armies, chariots, peoples, priests, and sacrifices; real colours, metals, stones, and vestments. And yet all together worked into a great picture.

**THE
GOSPEL
IN LIVING
HIERO-
GLYPHS.** Let us look at a few of the great outlines of this picture; the dividing of the canvas:—
THE EGYPTIANS.—The world as it consists of nations, kings, councillors, governments, and peoples; all bent upon labour and gain, advancement and power. The knowledge of the

Most High having been forgotten or ignored, all is ruled by expediency, and expediency has no conscience.

THE ISRAELITES.—These men had, three generations back, saved Egypt; now they were in the way, and must be reduced to servitude, from servitude to slavery, from slavery to hard and cruel torments, and finally their male children thrown into the river. It was expedient. "*Come, let us deal wisely with them. . . . Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river*" (Exod. i.).

PHARAOH.—The King, the justly representative Egyptian; an embodiment of all that is Egyptian—proud, irreverent, and cruel. His first utterance, "I know not the Lord," reveals the heart of Egypt. "*For this cause have I raised THEE up*" (Exod. ix. 16).

MOSES.—The champion of Israel. One of the male children cast into the river, and so exquisitely fitted to confront Pharaoh. Behind Pharaoh are the horses and chariots and armies of Egypt. Behind Moses is the God of Righteousness, to Whom vengeance belongeth.

THE TEN PLAGUES.—These having their origin in the Serpent, how quickly blood followed. The blood of Abel came speedily after the beguiling in Eden. *Toads and Lice*: the loathsomeness of sin. *Flies*: the swarms of cares and troubles and worries that invest our lives; "small, we despise them, but they sting." When earth's story is told, how many hearts will have

been broken by worries. *Blains and Boils*: man is wounded as well as worried; sorely stricken with pain, he groans in his sorrow. An outside agent has wounded him and left him half dead. *Locusts*: excesses, extravagances, indulgences, wastefulness, all are locusts devouring the produce of labour until the labourer's child lacks bread. *Darkness*: ignorance of sin, of holiness, of atonement, of cleansing; how it oppresses and burdens us, until our hearts are nearly broken, we *feel* it. "A darkness that may be *felt*." But worse than all these, the heavens are angry, and *the hail falls* and the fire runs along the ground; till finally *the sword descends* upon the first-born of the Egyptians, and in every house there is one dead. The first two or three of these plagues Pharaoh despised, the remainder he compromised about. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the Divine way of refusing his terms and causing him to withdraw them. It was not until the tenth plague that Pharaoh consented to the first request of Moses: "*Let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness.*"

THE SLAYING OF THE FIRST-BORN.—"*Israel is My son, even My first-born.*" The Egyptians slew God's first-born, and God slew the first-born of the Egyptians.

THE OVERTHROW IN THE RED SEA.—"*The enemy said, . . . My lust shall be satisfied upon them; . . . my hand shall destroy them.*" The Lord overthrew the

Egyptians in the midst of the sea ; but it was when the Egyptians sought to overthrow the people of God in the sea.

THE BORROWING.—“*And the children of Israel borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment.*” A poor wage for the labour of three generations. There is an unwritten law of God, which man has no right to exercise, but which the prerogative of God sometimes asserts, demanding payments long withheld.

THE WILDERNESS.—The world in a second sense, the place of barrenness, darkness, and the shadow of a great death, through which the people of God must pass. Viewed from Egypt, it is the desired place of separation ; viewed from the camp, it is the place of the unclean. Blessed indeed it is to know the infinite security which the blood upon the lintel gives, and entire separation by the baptism of the Red Sea (1 Cor. x. 2). But it is not the will of God that one of His children should walk that Wilderness journey alone, but rather that he be among the Great Host of God's Israel ; all passing Zionwards.

SEVEN STEPS. Having got into the Wilderness, we see seven steps, or stages, dividing the throne of Pharaoh from the throne of Jehovah : (1) Egypt, (2) the Wilderness, (3) the Camp, (4) the Square of the Levites, (5) the Court, (6) the Holy Place, and (7) the Most Holy Place.

SEVEN SQUARES. Standing in the Tabernacle we see seven squares: the Holy of Holies, one square; the Holy Place, two squares; the Court, two squares; the Square of the Levites; and the Great Square of the Israelites.

The Manna is a living and beautiful type of the Son of God Who came down from heaven. Seven times over (John vi.) He speaks of Himself as the living Bread come down from heaven. It came unsolicited. It was small, round, wonderful, and white. And it came for every man to gather.

From Egypt to Horeb God was—

Their Saviour by the blood of the Passover Lamb.

Their Leader by the Pillar of Fire.

Their Deliverer by the Red Sea.

Their Healer at the bitter waters.

Their Provider: by the manna, their bread, and by the smitten rock, their water.

Their Defender from Amalek.

Service and Servants

SOME OF THE MIRACLES OF ELISHA

CHAPTER XVII.

SALT.

“And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren” (causing to miscarry) (2 Kings ii. 19).

JERICHO, the city of palm trees, flourishing in foliage, and profuse in bud and in blossom: but when the flower had died away no fruit followed; when harvest time arrived there was nothing to harvest. The water was naught, and all had miscarried. *“And Elisha said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein.”*

It is a P.S.A., and into a large building flows a host of men to hear an able preacher, among them an old Christian. As he looks at the multitude—care-seared, work-begrimed, and sin-scarred, singing hymns, his heart bounds with a hope that God will be revealed; and sniffing the air, as if fragrant with bud and blossom, he whispers cheerfully, “Jericho!” But after listening to a speech full of catchy phrases, eliciting much hand-clapping, but in which there is

nothing of the awfulness of sin, the holiness of God, or the cleansing power of the Blood of Christ, he passes out with the crowd, and solemnly bowing his head, whispers, "Jericho." Oh for a new cruse filled with salt to cast into this spring, that the water might be healed. The water is naught; it lacks salt, lacks the pungent, purging, purifying power that convicts of sin and brings repentance, causing the forsaking of the old, sad, and sinful life. "*When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.*"

"*Bring me a new cruse*"—a young convert, a new-born soul, ruddy with the glow of a new-found love, bounding with the power of a new-found life, and redolent with the fragrance of the anointing oil, the baptism of the blessed Holy Spirit: "A new cruse" unspoiled by the theologies of diverse debaters, and undefiled by the bitterness of creed, of sect, and of party. "*And put salt therein*"—the biting, stinging, stabbing force that convicts of sin; sin, awful, cruel, loathsome, selfish, and soul-destroying to all eternity. "Put salt therein"—salt that purifies by destroying the foul, that cleanses by removing the impure, that beautifies by eradicating the ugly and the repulsive. Oh how we should cry to God for these new cruses!

CHAPTER XVIII.

OIL.

“Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord, and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen” (2 Kings iv. 1).

A PROPHET has died; his widow and children are left destitute. She has a claim upon the Lord of the prophets (1 Sam. ii. 30), and to Elisha she makes that claim. *“And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.”* The answer is both clean and consecrated. Clean in its negative and consecrated in its positive. Not anything in the house. Would it not be to-day, in many cases, “Thy servant hath a pile of novelettes, a packet of society journals, and a parcel of religious magazines”? Oh for a clean negative!

“Save a pot of oil.” A vessel filled with the blessed Holy Spirit. Oh for a consecrated positive!

“Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels.” How many of our neighbours are vessels sadly needing oil? Empty

vessels, sighing, sorrowing, complaining, pleading for power to be what they know they ought to be, but know not how ; perishing for light, for life, for love for *God*. Oh to be vessels filled with oil in their midst !

And from that pot of oil the empty vessels were filled, while the pot still remained full. It is ever so with all that is Divine. The supply from God is infinite, eternal, inexhaustible. "*And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.*" While there was a vessel to fill there was oil to fill it ; and when all were filled, it was full itself. The supply did not stop until the demand had ceased.

CHAPTER XIX.

MEAL.

“And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage : for they knew them not” (2 Kings iv. 39).

A LARGE in quantity and great in bulk ; but **LAPPFUL**. being gathered from a wild vine it was worthless ; and instead of feeding the sons of the prophets, it spoilt their food, and would have poisoned them but for Elisha. A wild vine, unrenewed by Divine life, unregenerated by the Holy Spirit. From such he gathered his lapful.

Where there is zeal, energy, and desire for rapid work, there is ever the tendency to gather a lapful without discretion. Lengthy essays, gratuitous in words, propitious in phrases, culled from the writings of novelists, poets, and philanthropists, without regard to spiritual life ; such gourds, when shred into the cauldron, only poison the pottage. *“ But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot ; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot”* (ver. 41).

“PUT IN MEAL.” Meal, corn, bread, manna, ever the blessed Son of God, Who came down from heaven to give life unto the world. Elisha put in meal, and there was no more “death in the pot.” The great Moody said, “he saw Christ on every page of the Bible.”

“And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley.”

OF THE FIRST FRUITS. The virgin life and worship of a new-born soul, full of desire to serve. Not large in quantity, but good bread. And God can multiply good bread until it becomes abundant. Christ fed five thousand with five barley loaves; can we wonder that these twenty loaves filled a hundred men? Frances Ridley Havergal said, “Let five words feed five thousand.”

CHAPTER XX.

A STICK.

“And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell” (2 Kings vi. 1, 2).

THE dwelling-place where the sons of the prophets assembled, the House of God, was too small, so they would increase it. Each man was to cut down a tree and take his beam. Jordan is the river of death, and from its borders were to be cut down the trees that were to be builded together for the House of God. It is ever so.

“But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water.” The word of the Lord “is like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces” (Jer. xxiii. 29). An axe-head is a hammer sharpened, furbished, and pointed at one end; quickened that it may cut down a tree. An axe-head suggests the Word of God quickened by the blessed Holy Spirit that it may convert a soul to God; bring him from his natural condition by the water of death, to become a saint, builded with others for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

The young man lost his axe-head, his power to cut down trees. "*And he cried and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.*" The power for service for God is entrusted, lent. It may be lost. And although we may go on beating trees with our wooden handle, none will fall under it.

There are five operations of the Blessed Spirit. He convicts of sin, which conviction is never repented of; He quickens with life, which never can die; He indwells the believer, never to leave him; He seals for the Resurrection morning, to keep to the end; and finally He fills with power to convert, and to impart eternal life. And this power may be lost. As sons we can never perish, praise God! but as servants we may be disapproved. As living stones builded into His temple, we can never be unbuilded; but if we build wood, hay and stubble, it will be burnt up.

"*And he cried and said, Alas, master!*" Oh, when once that axe-head is lost, how hard it is to get it back. The writer remembers, many years ago, after an address, an old Scotchwoman coming and looking very sad and miserable, saying, "Oh, I had that power aince, but I've lost ut." "Well," I said, "why not pray? Why not ask God that He may restore it to you?" Never can I forget her sorrow, as she replied, "Ah, ye dinna ken how hard it is to get it back, when you've aince lost ut."

Samson lost his power and never got it back until his last moment. Poor Samson, he would have the wife

that pleased him, at all costs, and it cost him his home, his parents, his country, his liberty, his poor eyes, and finally his life. How bitter comes his cry when, after grinding corn for the jeering Philistines and making sport for their women, he turns his poor sightless eyes upward and says: "Oh, my God, remember me, and give me back my power only this once." And he bowed his shoulders, and the temple fell, and with it a multitude of his tormentors; but underneath all was Samson.

"And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place." Where an axe-head is lost, there is always some place, some quiet corner, some secret recess, some private crevice. As if God could not see as well in the dark as in the light; in the avenue as in the field. God knew all the places where Manasseh built his groves. The place where poor Samson lost his power was the lap of Delilah, whereon he laid his head. The place where David lost his was that housetop on which he walked and saw that woman washing. The place where Achan lost his was where he saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. And all Israel lost their power with him, and it cost him his life.

"And he [Elisha] cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim."

It required a miracle to get back that axe-head; and the Master wrought it by means of a stick.

"And he cut down a stick." Just newly cut and gathered by the Master's hand; severed from its natural source of life, but filled with some new Divine power that would attract that iron and make it swim. A new stick, unpolished, untrimmed, unpeeled, unvarnished by the skill of the schools; but to which had been imparted a force that could again impart force, until a marvel should be wrought and the axe-head restored to the prophet.

There came to Guernsey once a poor Salvation Army lass, small, frail, and wasted with consumption, but filled with Divine power. As she preached of the awfulness of sin and its eternal punishment, of the cleansing power of the Blood of Christ, and the almightiness of the Holy Spirit to convert, to save, to keep, many were converted; and some who had lost their power, and had been useless for years, had their axe-heads restored to them.

CHAPTER XXI.

GEHAZI (2 KINGS v. 20).

POOR Gehazi. He begins well by asking life for the barren woman ; a child for the childless home. But ere childhood had passed, the life lapsed, the child died. It cannot be that a life once given by the Holy Spirit should cease finally ; hence Gehazi is sent to restore the child. But alas, his power is gone ; he places the staff upon the face of the child, but there is neither voice nor hearing.

Following Elisha, the man of God, into that chamber, we see how much, how very much power is needed to restore that lapsed soul. The closed door, the close, exceedingly close, contact ; eyes to eyes, mouth to mouth, hands to hands ; the stretching himself upon the cold body until the warmth of Elisha becomes the warmth of the child.

But though life needs warmth, yet warmth is not life. And so the man of God walks to and fro, and returns and repeats his mighty effort, until the child gives evidence of life and opens his eyes, and Elisha delivers him to his mother (see Luke vii. 15).

Meanwhile Gehazi seeks to come between the suppliant and the man of God, thus assuming a

priestliness which he did not possess, and is put aside.

We know what followed. When Naaman was cleansed from his leprosy, the man of God held himself quite clean from the proffered payment of the Syrian. But Gehazi, having lost his power, and being denied priestly office, follows after this rich man, this "goldfish," saying, "I will take somewhat of him." Then comes the story, apparently quite untrue, of the two young men, sons of the prophet, on whose behalf he sought changes of raiment and wealth; which, having obtained, he carried to the secret chamber and stowed in his house.

Then there is the going in before Elisha; the question, "*Where have you been, Gehazi?*" and the answer, "*Thy servant went no whither.*" Did he not tell Naaman that the master had sent him? How solemn and sorrowful came the words of the man of God: "*Did not my HEART go with thee as the man turned in his chariot?*" "*My heart.*"

We see Elisha covering his face with his hands and bursting into tears as he looks steadfastly upon Hazael (chap. viii.). And was not his heart bowed down with sorrow and sorely pained as it followed Gehazi? "*Is this a time to receive money, and garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?*" How readily our minds go on to the blessed Son of God on earth—the Nazarene, Who took neither lands

nor estates, but sometimes had not where to lay His head. Were a penny needed, it was shown Him by another; a colt required, it was borrowed; a room wherein to take the passover, it was lent; a grave necessary for a little while, it was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa.

Poor Gehazi. The waters of Jordan had cleansed the leper, but not his changes of raiment; and the leprosy of Naaman clave unto Gehazi.

Our hearts are relieved when, seven years after, in chapter viii., we see Gehazi again. He is speaking well of the Master, well of the woman and of her son; and by his intercession the king restores to the woman her estate. Had Gehazi been restored?

CHAPTER XXII.

BEZALEEL AND AHOLIAB.

GOD mostly witnesses by twos. When the tabernacle was to be built he called out two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab (Exod. xxxi.) and made them companions in labour to be leaders in the work. Bezaleel means the shadow of God; Aholiab, a tent.

"See, I have called by name Bezaleel!" "And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab." These two names express the essential qualities necessary for a man who would lead in the service of God. He must dwell in the shadow of God and hold loosely to the things of the world.

"And I have filled him with the Spirit of God to know how to work."

There is, there can be, no teacher like the Spirit of God. That Spirit is the Spirit of Light, of Love, and of Power. He is never wearied; never at a loss to know what to do. He designs and invents. He is strong to work in brass, clever to cut stones, wise to carve timber. He can sew a tache on a curtain, build a candlestick, construct a table, or design a cover. Love never faileth.

Bezaleel was of the tribe of Judah, the highest of

the tribes. Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, the lowest. No man is too low to be a tent-dweller, and none too high to be a worshipper. And with these two were given all that were wise-hearted, not wise-headed. Men think much of the wisdom of the head. God speaks more of the wisdom of the heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Let but the heart be right and the head will seldom be far wrong. A phrenologist once came to the great Spurgeon desiring to try the heads of the students. "Well," said he, "see if they have the bump of *stickatitiveness*; if so, they will do." A poor preacher sat in his room, when his daughter came in and said, "Dad, I believe that I have the bump for keeping babies quiet, the bump for cleaning stoves, and the bump for buying things. I don't let the shopkeepers give me what they just like." For a moment the poor preacher lost his breath, and upon regaining it said, "My dear, there are no such organs in all the region of phrenology!" "Well," was the reply, "they may not be in the head, perhaps they are in the heart; but I believe I've got them."

Bumps in the heart! How new; but how true! And opening his Bible, he found tender-heartedness, forgiveness, mercy, long-suffering, truthfulness, grace, holiness, and purity; none of which is in the region of phrenology.

The Apostle Peter says: "*Add to your faith, virtue;*

and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, self-control ; and to self-control, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they shall make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Wisdom, head wisdom, frequently consists of mere ideas, views, and opinions ; and when these rule, the work may be hindered rather than hastened. But where wisdom of the heart obtains, each worker is willing to follow the leading of Bezaleel and Aholiab. And so these wise-hearted men made the curtains, and the boards, and the pillars, and the cloths, and all the furniture, and the tabernacle was completed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NINE.

“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” (Luke xvii. 17).

THERE is a mission. The preacher is whole-hearted for God. He preaches the Gospel soberly, solemnly, and impressively. Many give evidence of conviction of sin; while some are converted, among them a few who have been the slaves of cruel vices, wandering far from God. The mission closes, and a few months pass, when enquiries are made around, “What has become of the people who professed conversion at the mission? Very few, if any, have connected themselves with the churches; it all seems to have melted away.” To put this in Bible words, it would be “Where are the nine?” Only one has returned to give thanks, and he a Samaritan.

The physical diseases cleansed by the blessed Saviour expressed the spiritual diseases of the soul which the Holy Spirit cleanses. Now there was no disease more deeply seated, more terrible than leprosy; neither could there be a physician, a mighty healer, like Christ. And by the power of His word the leprosy was cleansed. But “where are the nine?”

Alas! dispersed among the people, lost in the crowd. But wherever they were they were *cleansed*. Were there not ten *cleansed*? They could never again be what they had been. Although lost sight of by the preacher, their lives must be different, their circumstances altered, their pursuits changed. They could not speak, they could not exist without bearing evidence of the great change which had been wrought in them by the Word of God. We would desire that the converts from the missions would join the churches and settle down, quiet members, attending the ministry and learning the way of life more fully, but it is seldom so. Just as the natural child bears traits of the parents, so young converts bear characteristic marks from the preacher. Could these converts be traced, they would be found at open-air meetings, gospel services, special missions; and alas! alas! some of them hobbling along the way, or even tumbling along. Only the great, great God knows how deeply lie and run the fibres, tendrils, or living tentacles of old habits; and only the same Almighty One is able to give power and deliverance. Tap-room sinners do not make drawing-room saints all at once; and tent converts seldom mingle with the refined respectability that sits in the churches in a day. But life once given, the struggle against sin has commenced, and will go on to victory.

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returned to them. Proud and worldly members were made humble and kind, and covetous ones made more generous. Seven or eight years passed, and then the great Spurgeon commenced the Metropolitan Tabernacle Church, and nearly two hundred persons sought membership who attributed their conversion to that revival.

There are many, many believers, men, women, and children, mingling with us in the great crowd, known best, or perhaps only, to the least sectarian, and to the most sympathetic with the weak, the poor, and the struggling.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SOWER.

“ Behold, a sower went forth to sow ” (Matt. xiii. 3).

“ He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man ” (Matt. xiii. 37).

“ The field is the world ” (Matt. xiii. 38).

THE Gospel of salvation was first spoken by the Lord (Heb. ii. 1). The Divine Sower, the Son of Man, knew where to sow, what to sow, when to sow, and how to sow ; but the ground being in four different conditions, there were four different results from the sowing. In the first set, the ground, the heart, was not affected because of its hardness. In the second case, the seed got hold, but the ground, the heart, was so full of stones—pride, jealousies, self-will, covetousness, and bitterness—that it could not sink far in. In the third set it sinks in, but the sins of the world, the duties and worries and struggles of home life among the poor, and the deceitfulness of riches among the well-to-do, so hinder the growth, so choke the seed, that there is no harvest. We cannot say that this last has been sown in vain, that that has gone too. The root of the matter is in it, and when the world is shut out and the curtains drawn, and the silence of the death-chamber reigns, the new life looks

up and dares to lay hold upon God. Looking back upon forty years of service, how these cases crowd one's mind.

In the fourth set, the ground is good. "*The preparation of the heart of man cometh from God.*" The birds of the air may fly over the field, but a good husbandman drives them away; the stones may be dead in the heart, but he gets them out; the thorns send their tendrils deep in the soil, but he roots them up. "*My Father is the Husbandman,*" and so the fourth cluster brings forth fruit, but that in three degrees.

When the evangelist finds his sowing to be followed by similar results, let him not be too much discouraged. The Divine Master found the same. "*The servant is not above his Lord.*" Similar results prove similar sowing. Conversions manifested and declared are not an evidence of the full and final issue of the labour. Sometimes seed lies long in the soil before its growth is seen. Think of the waterpots for the water of purifying: "*Fill the waterpots with water, and they filled them up to the brim.*" Then when "the unconscious water blushed to see its God," the command came, "Draw out *now.*" And he that drew out found it wine. How many hands helped to fill those vessels, though only one drew out? You cannot expect always to be that happy one. Other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours. So shall we labour and others enter into our labours. The writer well remembers a few

days' mission in the country, when five souls confessed Christ. The dear good lady who had been conducting this Bible-class for months said, "I shall have a share in this." "Yes," was the reply, "the greater share."

Let not the hand that draws out despise the hands that poured in.

This first parable may show little reaping for much sowing, but the second one goes deeper and reveals an enemy's hand at work, sowing tares among the wheat, so that when the wheat appeared, "*then appeared the tares also.*" So the promoters of the mission, the friends of the evangelist, come to him and say, "I thought you sowed only good seed!" "So I did." "How is it then that there are tares?" "These are not of my sowing; that is not my work! An enemy did this while you were asleep." The evangelist is not the only worker in the mission. True he sows the seed, but the promoters of the mission, the friends of the evangelist, are co-workers too. And if the results of the work are *only* equal to what they were when the Master, the blessed Divine Son of Man—sowed, do not blame the evangelist for circumstances over which he has no power.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GLEANER.

RUTH the Gleaner knew nothing of the Law. She was one whom Grace only could receive. The Law would have repelled her (Deut. xxiii. 3), but Grace encourages the alien and gives her confidence and boldness. *“Let me go into the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace.”*

Everybody cared for Ruth, though a stranger without inheritance, widowed and homeless, nay a Moabitess. Where Grace reigns the poorest are most precious, and the uncomely ones are adorned until they become the most comely. Naomi cared for Ruth, and as a true shepherdess led her gently and wisely, step by step, until she left her in the place of the Bride. Boaz cared for Ruth and spoke tenderly to her, encouraging her in the way of trustfulness and righteousness, telling of all the good he had heard of her. The Law can only note and mark the evil—give bad marks. Grace detects and approves the good—gives good marks. The reapers cared for Ruth and welcomed her among the sheaves, letting some handfuls drop on purpose for her. All the

people and the elders cared for Ruth and said, "The Lord make thee like unto Rachel and Leah, which two builded the house of Israel." And above all, and beyond all, God cared for Ruth, and when she went into a field to glean "her hap was" to light upon the field of Boaz, the man of wealth and might, who came from Bethlehem having right to redeem; and who, having sought her, loved her and redeemed her, both herself and her inheritance, so that the field in which she gleaned in process of time became her field.

The gleaner gleaned from morning until evening, resting only for a little time while she sat in the house among the reapers at the table of Boaz, who gave to her parched corn from his own hand.

Amid the busy day of reaping, when the hours are so full of labour, no time is so well spent as that given to communion with the Saviour. How precious must have been those handfuls the reapers let fall of purpose for Ruth; but how much more precious that handful of parched corn which the master reached to her himself.

GRACE!—Think of this stranger drinking water from the pitchers of the young Israelites; this alien sitting among the reapers in the house of her lord; this Moabite taking parched corn from the master's hand. There is no limit to the possibilities of grace. And the Lord gave her a son, and they called his name Obed. "*He is the father of Jesse the father of*

David," of whose seed in process of time Christ came.

While it was called to-day the worker worked, toiling, plodding, gathering, and treasuring her gleanings, ever keeping in the field of Boaz. She does not seem to have stopped to count her grains while the day lasted ; but when even was come and the day closed, and tired and burdened she sat down to beat out her gleanings, she found too much to count. She had to measure it with a measure, and there was an ephah. "*Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.*" And an omer is one man's portion for a day (Exod. xvi. 16). Ruth had gleaned ten times her requirements, and she gave unto her mother-in-law. Naomi had given to Ruth abundantly of her spiritual things ; it was meet that Ruth gave to Naomi of her temporal things.

AN EPDAH !—What myriads will be in heaven as the result of those that have sowed, those that have watered and watched, and those that have reaped and gleaned. Who can count them ?

"And I saw a multitude that no man could number."

"And I heard the voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia."

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia."

Is not the time very near when it shall be said, "The wife hath made herself ready" ? "Behold, he

winnoweth barley to-night in the threshingfloor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee." How we long for that night of winnowing, when every particle of husk shall disappear, and all dust and impurities, and we shall stand forth pure barley—just ourselves.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“AND AS YE GO, PREACH” (MATT. x. 7).

“*And as ye go, preach.*” Do not wait until you reach some prospective or desired destination ; some wider sphere of operation. The cities of India, the towns of China, and the villages of Arabia may gleam with a romantic halo, but you may never see any one of those places. But the souls that live and struggle and die around you are quite close and awfully real ; and many of them would give all they possess to know what you could impart to them : “*Being justified by faith we have peace with God.*”

“*And as ye go, preach.*” Do not delay until you become a popular minister, a much-sought-for teacher, or a bishop ; you may never be any one of these. But the opportunities, the privileges, the responsibilities which open to you day by day, and so pass, are very present and very pressing. How many years we spend in the same district, the same street, the same house ; for how many days we meet the same faces, receive the same salutations, the same greetings ; and every one of these souls is as precious, as eternal, and alas ! mostly as lost as the souls in India, in China, or in Arabia. And among

them God has placed *you*. "*And ye shall be witnesses unto Me.*"

"*And as ye go, preach.*" Do not expect to be great without the labour of becoming great. Greatness is the result of experience, and experience of practice, and practice must have a beginning. Only great men can fill great positions; and the sustaining of greatness imposes a strain that can only be borne by a greatness that is inherent. Most of us are born and live and die commonplace people. "*God hath chosen the weak things.*"

"*And as ye go, preach.*" Mr. Eliot Walton, the founder of the Railway Mission, commenced that great work by entering into conversation with one railway boy, whom he invited home to tea, and to whom he spoke confidently about his soul. That boy brought another, and he a third, until at the end of thirty years the Railway Mission filled the land. The great Doctor Muller, of Bristol, began the Ashley Down Orphanage—that mighty monument of "Jehovah Jireh"—by sharing his food and lodging with one destitute lad; and when the writer was there, there were thirty hundreds of children. The great man who could trust God to feed three thousand orphans was the same who shared his home with one. "*He that is faithful in that which is least.*"

"*And as ye go, preach.*" A writer, some time back, suggested that at the close of this life we might be missionaries to distant worlds, far-off stars.

Whether there are far-off worlds we do not know, but if there are, we trust they are not fallen, and so our hopes for celestial missionary enterprise may fail. But certain we are that this world is fallen; that souls around us are toiling, doubting, hoping, fearing, dying and perishing for lack of knowledge (Eph. iv. 18), and that knowledge we possess. Do not therefore wait for the distant stars; you may reach them some day; but "*as ye go, preach.*"

Incidents from Real Life

CHAPTER XXVII.

“I AM GLAD I EVER CAME TO THE HOSPITAL.”

THOUGH Guernsey is but a small island, yet being self-governed it is a miniature state. One cannot live there for a few years without noticing some features that contrast with London. The people are restful and confident: every man can get work. There is no blandishment of state, no ostentatious display of wealth, and correspondingly one sees there none of the sickening distress, impure squalor, and hopeless destitution that confront one in the London slums. The Rich Man and Lazarus do not live in the little island. Those inseparable complements of a bad socialism are the proper denizens of big cities. A visitor sees nothing of the mechanism of Law: no tax-gatherer or water-rate collector. When the householder has paid his rent he has nothing further to trouble about. Indeed, Guernsey does not seem to be governed so much by inflexible enactments as by honest common sense, native wisdom, and just discrimination.

The writer lived there for nearly five years and

never knew the head men of the island until invited by them to a drive and a luncheon at a country hotel. This gracious mark of honour was bestowed upon him only because he had worked unobtrusively among the people, helping dear John Williams, a missionary, in evangelistic services.

That which is called a workhouse in London is called in Guernsey a hospital. If a man loses his step for a time and falls into distress it is because of some infirmity, mostly physical, sometimes mental or possibly moral; and his townsmen care for him and seek to restore him to health and fitness for toil. Still, Guernsey is not a paradise. Paradise is lost. Before I had been long in the island, I commenced, together with John Williams, an evangelistic service on Tuesday evenings at the hospital. The people were got together in a large room, when we spent a very happy hour with our Bibles and hymn-books. The object of the meetings was to preach Christ crucified, and thus to bring the knowledge of God and eternal life to the acceptance of the people. Such meetings are always encouraging and inspiring.

I well remember on one occasion speaking about the Golden Candlesticks of the Temple, endeavouring to persuade the people that every one might be a golden candlestick if he would accept the gospel and all that followed it. I went on to silver spoons and bowls and snuffers. The address seemed to be interesting, and I thought that I had spoken fairly

well. During the singing of a hymn I saw John Williams turning over the leaves of his Bible rapidly and with energy. It was evident that he could not find his text, and as I stepped from the platform he whispered to me, "Whar's it about the frypan?" "Say it again," I whispered. "Where is it about the frying-pan?" he answered. "In the beginning of Leviticus, I think; look at the second chapter." John soon found the place and stepped up on to the platform and commenced to speak.

"Friends," said he, "we have been hearing some very beautiful things this evening about golden candlesticks and silver bowls and all those wonderful things that were used in the services of the Temple. But, friends, I feel that there are many of us here this evening who fear we shall never get so high as to reach those beautiful vessels. But I read here in this chapter about a frying-pan; and, friends, we may all be frying-pans; and frying-pans are required in the service of the spiritual temple as well as golden candlesticks."

I sat up and felt as if my address were suffering a total eclipse, and muttered to myself that while the real frying-pan had been speaking about golden candlesticks the real golden candlestick was talking about frying-pans. But I never told John so.

At these Tuesday-evening meetings there used to be led in a poor woman whose head and face were totally swathed in a woollen shawl. We never saw

her face; but upon my leaving the island the mistress said that a poor woman wanted to say good-bye to me. I was shown into a small private room, and there for the first time saw this poor, truly suffering creature. Her face was partly eaten away by some frightful disease. "I wanted to see you," she said, "to say good-bye to you. I do so thank God for these meetings, for they have brought me to the knowledge of Christ, and I am not afraid to die now. I well remember when I was obliged to leave my little cottage and come here: with what a heavy heart I turned the key in the door and wended my steps toward the hospital. But now I am glad I ever came to the hospital, for here I have found the Saviour, and I do not think I should ever have heard about Him if I could have stayed in my cottage."

I read to her some of those precious passages and eternal words of love and grace and comfort which only her Creator could speak to her, and having prayed with her, she said "Good-bye."

I suppose that long ere this she has gone to that country where "the inhabitant shall never say, I am sick."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SELLING CANDLES.

I HAD worked in a large candle factory from childhood, and after passing various grades had "got out" a new article of manufacture and so made a department. As soon as this was settled in prosperity I had notice to leave. Though thus cast out of employment, I was not forsaken of the Most High, nor by His children, but was sustained for the first twelve months, during which time I made a small candle business of my own. Trials, encouragements, disappointments, failures, and kindnesses came daily. I well remember passing through my "Night of Horror." Abraham had his "Night of Horror" when he saw that lamp and that furnace passing between those pieces. Jacob had his "Night of Horror" when that Man wrestled with him until the day broke. So did Elijah¹ when he curled him-

¹ With regard to Elijah, no one knows how that widow's meal barrel became replenished. We might argue too about the ravens, and speculate concerning the angel, but sure we are that the Divine hand was moving among the affairs of the life of the prophet; and if the processes were changed, it was not to hide that hand, but that it might be revealed. In the life of faith processes are ever changing, to the end that the recipients may not trust in the security of circumstances, but in the integrity of the Eternal.

self up under that juniper tree and wished that he might die. So did David, or we should have had no seventy-seventh Psalm. Daniel had his. How I long to see Daniel and to ask him how he felt among the lions! Jonah had his when he went down into the lowest depths; and Paul had his when caught up into the highest heights, while his poor body, bruised and broken and bleeding, lay outside the walls of Lystra. And if we pass onward and upward till we reach the Divine and Eternal, we think of Gethsemane and bow our heads in wonder and sorrow and adoration.

How well I remember that night, when I slept not, but prayed and devised and planned and was all the time conscious of One in that room wrestling with me—One Who brought me to my knees, and while I sought to cast Him off and go on planning and devising, touched my thigh, and I fell overcome and helpless and fainting. Then I clung and got a blessing.

Faith never works through negligence, but diligence. Accordingly I went into the country to a farmer whom I knew and begged the use of an outhouse; and having patched up the large apertures with some sacking, commenced making fancy Christmas candles. After making the candles by day I would go up to my bedroom and make some fancy boxes in which to put the candles. Though the sacking kept out most of the wind, the rain came into my improvised workshop, and falling on the floor, caused me to be ever working

in mud. My utensils were frail and very much home-made, while my melting-pan, instead of holding thirty pounds, held only two pounds, and was heated by a paraffin lamp which I had rigged up underneath. When the storms came and the rain beat in, how often would I go into the corner of that shed, and standing among piles of beansticks, cry to God to enable me to make those candles well and keep them clean.

When the candles were made and boxed they had to be sold, and as I did not know the shops a young man, a butcher in the market, undertook to show me round. The first place we went to was a store near the sea-front and not far from the White Rock. This store was not kept by a Guernsey man, but by a seaman from foreign parts; moreover, some mystery hung over this man's past life. Going into the shop, I placed my candles on the counter, some with boxes open and some with boxes closed, to show both boxes and candles. "Now," I said, "these are the first fancy candles ever made in the island: everybody will want them, and you have only to put them in the window and they will sell right away." And holding up one I said, "This is a perfect miniature candle: it will burn without guttering, keep bright and not require snuffing, and if you do not put it under a bushel nor under a bed, but on a candlestick, it will give light to all that are in the house. But remember that the light is small and will soon go out; but the

Bible, the wonderful Bible, is a Light that will light us all the way through. It is a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. It will light us through the dark valley of the shadow of death and right up into the Glory Land." The man looked astounded and for an instant seemed to lose his breath. Regaining confidence in a moment, he came to the counter, leaned himself over it until his face nearly touched mine, then said in a stern and commanding voice, speaking slowly and emphasizing every word, "I vill gif you—five shilling—eef you—can tell me—where Cain got—his vife from." "Oh, that is easy," I said. "No, eet is not eesy. There vas no womans in the world. I will gif you five shilling if you can say there vas some vomans in de vorld." "But Adam had a family of sons and daughters in addition to Cain and Abel," I answered. "Have you a Bible? I don't want your five shillings, but I will show you that." "No, I haff not a Bible." Then, as if suddenly remembering, he added, "Yes, I haff. Follow me." He ran up a dark and narrow flight of stairs two or three at a time, I following. At every turn in the staircase I looked back to see if the coast was clear in case I might have to run for my life. Up and up he went, up and up I went too, till he turned into a back room at the top of the house. In this room there was a bedstead with no bedding upon it. The man went to a cupboard in the corner, and putting both arms under a large parcel, carried it

across the room and plumped it on the bedstead. "La!" he said, "dere is the Bible—now vind eet." The Bible was very old and dusty, indeed dirty, and upon opening it I found to my great disadvantage that it was in French, of which language I knew very little. However, two words came to my mind, "fils" and "filles," which I knew to mean sons and daughters. So turning to the fifth chapter of Genesis and running my finger down to the fourth verse where I saw these two words, I said, "There it is: just read that." The man put his face nearly down to the book and read the verse, then pausing a few seconds he said, "Vell, it ees dere." "Yes" I said, "it's there." In a moment he repeated, "Vell, eet's dere." "Yes," I added, "it's there; and believe me, there is much more there that you never think of. How much I wish that you would concern yourself with what is in that Book. There are words of life and words of death. We must all die and stand in judgment before our Maker, and we shall be judged by the words in that Book."

Upon getting down again into the shop he bought some candles and gave me permission to call in again if passing. Regaining the street, I found my friend shivering with cold. He had been waiting outside all the time. It was midwinter, and a cold wind was blowing off the sea; he had no overcoat on, and with the collar of his little jacket turned up and both hands in his pockets he was shuffling about to try and keep himself warm. Upon my rejoining him he looked

very sad, and with a despondent tone said to me, "Ah, Mr. Cave, you will never do to sell candles; you no sooner get into a store than you hold up a candle and begin talking about the Bible. Then you go upstairs to settle some argument. You will never do to sell candles: you ought to be a missionary." "Never mind, Jim," I said, "we did very well there; let us hurry up to the next place," and getting close to him and putting my arm in his I said, "There is something better to live for in this world than selling candles. I wish I knew that you were saved, Jim." This led to a happy conversation, the result of which made me more glad than if I had sold all the candles at one place.

Man has a free will: we may call him a free-willer, but he is not a free agent. He chooses his walk, but God chooses his work. I never knew more about the man at the shop, but from that time Jim became a decided Christian, and the last I heard of him was that he was preaching the gospel in Canada.

In regard to the large candle factory, it is just to say that upon visiting it a year after my having left it the secretary recognized me, and calling me into his office, introduced me to the head manager, when the following admissions were made: (1) that the head man knew nothing of my discharge; (2) that the man who removed me admitted that I may have been treated unjustly; and (3) that the old shop was open to me at any time if I wished to return.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MOULIN HUET.

KNOWN better lately because of the many holiday trippers that visit it, Moulin Huet is a beautiful bay on the south coast of Guernsey. Stretching for about half a mile, by taking in Petit Port, it is thickly strewn with rugged reefs, boulders, and great masses of granite scattered around in utmost disorder. We may suppose that the coast in ages gone by had risen in a high wall of granite, and that the heavy and ever-washing waves had undermined it until it had toppled over, hurling the huge blocks and broken masses on to the shore in endless confusion. In my earliest days in Guernsey I delighted to get down to Moulin Huet early in the morning or late at twilight, and having the bay all to myself, revel in a free and luxurious bathe. Getting down into one of the crevices and standing back to a great rock, I would hold on to the strong seaweed and let the big waves break right on me, thus getting a tremendous shower-bath. It was venturesome, but what is the use of being in a place like a Guernsey bay, free and rugged and wild, without being a little venturesome?

I once swam through the Gouliot Caves at Sark, and also got down by the bank into the Creux Terrible. I used to climb down the sides of the Coupée and hurl lumps of granite, then descend and look for crystals; and I have now in my desk a cluster of such, won from the core of a block of granite.

One evening I went to Moulin Huet to bathe, and getting down into one of the miniature fissures, had a glorious time; then climbing over many mounds or reefs, ending with the two or three natural steps at the entrance, wended my way up a short incline towards Mr. King's old shanty. As soon as I reached the little square ledge in the rock where he served teas, I put my hand in my pocket and found that my money was gone. I had lost it. Grieved and pained, I felt deeply sorry. It was only three shillings and four francs, but it was not quite my own. It had been sent to me to meet needs while my business was forming. It was the Lord's money and I had lost it. Sitting for a time wondering at my carelessness and at "why it was permitted," I solemnly knelt down, and confessing my carelessness, prayed that I might find it again.

Now to one who knows Moulin Huet this must seem almost madness. The rocks with their crevices and fissures stretched for a wide space, and the finding of the particular place at which I had bathed was most improbable. Even if I did find it—the waves rush and break into those crevices with great

fury, disturbing the sand, and finally covering all to a depth of about thirty feet. However, we walk by faith, and faith does not count upon circumstances, but upon the great God Who is above all things; and rising from my knees, I walked home slowly and seriously. Saying nothing to any one, I went to bed early, and was up again at daybreak and made my way to Moulin Huet, praying all the while. On getting down to the bay I looked upon the scene, then ceased looking at the rocks and looked upwards. I was quite alone. Then began a clambering over the confusion of rocks; not daring to think, I simply climbed and climbed. The coast high behind me offered no clue to the spot I sought, for it stretched in undulations each one quite like every other. At last I stopped at a crevice. "I think it was here," I mused. "I would have climbed down there, and hung my clothes on that rock, and the money would have fallen just in that corner." But oh! that corner. It was draped, curtained, and fringed with long, heavy masses of seaweed, wet and wheezy as the last remains of the receding tide was draining from it. To lift this, a little at a time, on to the rocks required the strength of both arms. This being done I commenced digging; like a man in a dream I digged. Some tiny crabs crawled out, but I digged. Hundreds of sea jumpers jumped on to my hands, my arms, and my face, but I digged. A huge wave came up and I felt the spray on my neck, but I

digged; until at last I saw the edge of a shilling. Without shouting or demonstrating in any way, I continued to dig until the whole of the money was found.

Regaining Mr. King's old shanty, I kneeled down and thanked God for His goodness. Yes, I had found the money, but how much more than three shillings and four francs I had found! How much that answer to prayer, in the midst of seeming impossibilities, prepared and fortified me for many trials that were to follow!

CHAPTER XXX.

JUMBO.

ONE Sunday evening preceding Christmas Day we were about to hold our usual Gospel service in a large room over the Market Place in Guernsey. John Williams, to whom I have referred in another chapter, had said to me a few years before, "If you will work with me we will do something." Guernsey valued this man much, but the great God valued him more, and when the glory comes many souls will hail him as the one who led them to Christ. Together we had commenced these Gospel services and they had continued for some years. On this particular Sunday evening I was to preach.

Before the meeting commenced an old man came up to me and said, looking sad and anxious, "My son will be here to-night; do preach well. He is a big man, with large hands, and they call him Jumbo. He is my boy and far away from God. His life is always in danger, and to-night I feel so anxious about him. Do speak to him if you can." And while the old man looked pale and sorrowful tears filled his eyes.

Soon after Jumbo came in. I knew him at once : a large, strong man, with a weather-beaten face and rough features—a seaman used to hard life and hard weather. There was seldom a quarrel in St. Peter's Port, but upon one occasion I had seen a terrible street fight : one man was fighting two others. That man was Jumbo ; so I knew him.

When the meeting was over I went to him as he sat on a form, and taking hold of his big hand, hard and horny, I said, "I so wish I knew that you were a Christian. I so wish you would accept Christ to-night and go home saved. All I have said has been for you. Come, now, you are big and strong ; be a big, strong Christian and stand out for God." The meeting had evidently very much impressed him and he spoke gently and respectfully to me. "No," he said, "it can't be to-night ; don't fear I shall be all right. I mean to turn, but it can't be to-night. I know that dad prays for me. I mean to be saved. I'll come next Sunday." Feeling a solemn concern for him, I spoke still more, but he slowly drew his hand from mine and went towards the door. I went with him, but he passed out saying, "I'll come next Sunday," and repeated it, adding, "Don't fear."

It was a fearful night ; the wind howled and the rain beat furiously. For two days a gale had raged and the road to St. Sampson's was sea-swept. As I

lay in bed I could hear the wind howling and the sea breaking over the pier and running down again, and I thought of and prayed for the men at sea. The morning coming would be the day before Christmas. About five o'clock I heard people hurrying along the street and talking loudly. Getting out of bed and opening the window, I called out, "Is anything the matter?" Immediately some voices answered, "The 'Echo' has gone down and all on board." Jumbo was in the "Echo." In a few minutes I was dressed and down in the street, mingling with the people, listening to, rather than speaking to those who, bowed down with sorrow and pain, had friends among the crew. I knew the "Echo" well and had often been in her. A staunch and tough little ketch that had been through many a storm. Three days before this awful night she had crossed to France to pick up a cargo of poultry and other provisions for the Christmas market. The weather had delayed her return and the master was getting anxious about the market. So, despite the fury of the storm, he determined to put out of port. The captain and the harbour-master endeavoured to deter him, but saying that he must not lose the market and that his little boat could weather any storm that could blow, he caused her to start on the return journey. Alas! the return journey was never accomplished. Her lights were seen from the lighthouse getting further and further out of her course, and slowly drawing towards the rocks of the

Jersey coast, upon which she was being helplessly blown. Soon her lights disappeared and it was known that she was utterly wrecked.

As soon as morning came and the fury of the storm slackened, boats put off to the spot where she was last seen, but the little vessel had utterly disappeared. Indeed, only one vestige of the boat or its crew remained. This was a fragment of a waistcoat pierced by the splinter of a protruding rock. That waistcoat had belonged to Jumbo.

Who shall undertake to pronounce, who shall dare to say what passed through the mind and heart of that man in the last hour, the last few moments, when all hope was gone and the vessel was breaking on the jagged, cruel rocks of the Corbière? Could that father's prayers have all been in vain? Could that last impressive meeting and that entreaty have only been for condemnation? I at least must dare to hope otherwise. The Day will disclose.

“When from its dangers shrinking,
When in its dread deep sinking,
Remember me, oh Mighty One;
Remember me, oh Mighty One.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

A RICH MAN.

THE first time I saw him was in the market-place. An old man, past four-score, sparely built, poorly dressed, with a boy's cap upon his head, the peak of which was pulled down over his eyes. With both hands in his trousers pockets he was shuffling along for it was winter.

Coming up to me, he held out something and said, "I want to give a five-franc towards your mission." Looking at him kindly and speaking kindly, I said, "Why do you wish to give me that?" "Because you are preaching the Gospel to the people." "But why are you interested in the Gospel if you do not believe it yourself? I cannot take that five-franc unless you give it me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." The old man closed his eyes, and squeezing them together until the eyelashes seemed to sink into them, as only an old man can, answered in a low voice which betrayed a tremble, "I give it you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." I little thought I had been speaking to one of the richest men in the Island.

A few days after I was asked to go and see a man in deep trouble about his soul. I went, and found it to be the man with the five-franc piece. He was pacing his room and ejaculating such sentences as, "Oh, I have been too wicked to expect mercy." "God cannot pardon me, I'm too bad." I answered by quoting some of the precious Divine utterances of the God of all grace, showing the infinite work of Christ, and the willingness of God to pardon the worst of sinners who come in His name.

On my going the second time, he was in despair and said, "I will give you half my money if you can convert me." "I cannot convert you, only God can. Your money cannot help you, it can only hinder you. In the sight of God you are a very poor man. You must never say another word to me about your money, it can only hinder you."

Going the third time, I found him entirely changed. He was in bed, clean, composed, and in the midst of surroundings all clean and white. His eyes were quite open. I had never seen them open before; and he had the appearance of a pleasant aged gentleman. Beckoning me, he said, "Come close." I took a chair. "No, come closer"; so I had to get quite near to him. Then he told me all the dear and precious old story of a soul seeking the Saviour and finding Him, ending, as always, with "And I just believed and found it all true."

Then he told me all the awful past—awful to him,

but not so to the one to whom he was speaking, who knew the depths of sin. There was nothing in that old gentleman's life but could be remedied. He had made haste to be rich, and pierced himself through with many sorrows. "If I get better, I will build mission halls all over the Island, and will have a pony and trap and drive you to them, and you shall preach, and I'll give out tracts." But he never recovered. After making amends for the meannesses and petty injustices which had haunted him, and ending a contract which he had foolishly entered into in his *unconverted days*, and which cost him a deal of money to close, he passed away into the great company of the Redeemed of Christ, saved by the blood of the Lamb.

Looking down into his coffin, how different that white, kind, and noble face looked to the wizened, shrivelled-up old man I saw in the market-place on that winter's evening.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FLO.

FLO worked for me. Though she was a young woman, I had known her from early childhood, and she had often been to my children's meetings. People said I treated my servants as if they were my children. I tried to.

One day, while making me a cup of tea, Flo sighed very heavily, noticeably so, when the following conversation ensued :—

Self. "What's the matter, Flo? A young girl like you ought not to sigh like that. Your troubles have scarcely begun."

Flo. "Oh, I don't know. It's money, money, money; estates, estates; and the ministers seem to be the worst of the lot!"

Flo's style was ever jaunty, so I was not surprised at her manner; but what was I to reply? *I dare not say it was not true.* But neither dare I sympathize with Flo in thus sitting in judgment upon everybody, especially the ministers. The Word of God is always near, and very full, and the blessed Saviour furnished me with a reply.

Self. "Flo, may I tell you of a minister Who never made any money on lands or estates?"

At this Flo gave a slight shrug of the shoulders, as if to say, "If you can." Praying a little for Divine help, I commenced my story, carefully avoiding all Bible names or even Scripture phrases :—

"There lived a very poor family in a city of outcasts. Urgent business took them up to a fashionable and important district. They had no means for sending on and engaging a suite of rooms in the leading hotel ; and so, upon arrival, were compelled to lodge in an outhouse, where cattle usually were sheltered. On that night a Child was born, Who became a great Missionary or Minister. The family returned to the city of outcasts, where the Child grew into a boy, a youth, a man ; living ever among the poorest, cheering them in their distress, helping them through their troubles, and teaching them the things which were the highest, the noblest, and the best.

"At thirty years of age He went out upon a mission into the greatest city in the world. He sought not, neither received payment. He never had money at all, but depended day by day upon the provision of God. As the city was given up to fashion and ungodliness, when evening came He left it, and slept away among the hills, spending much of the night in prayer. Returning in the morning, He

entered into their sacred places, admonishing, exhorting, and calling them to repentance, and even declaring eternal life.

“The appointed priests hated Him, and even sought to slay Him ; but God covered His head. He not only preached among them, but possessing mighty power, healed their sick, gave sight to their blind, and even raised their dead.”

Flo started a little and turned pale ; she had guessed.

“No one was so diseased, or degraded, or lost, but He healed them, and lifted them, and saved them. The most friendless He loved, and the poorest He fed. And at last the schoolmen moved the people to demand His execution.”

Tears were slowly slipping down Flo's face. She knew all. So, speaking slowly and solemnly, I said, “And when He had done all, He went to the cross and died for the poor sinner. You are the poor sinner, Flo, so am I ; but Jesus died for both of us.”

The day after Flo said, without anything leading up to it, “There is only one Saviour ; we can't all be Saviours. Jesus Christ was the only Saviour, and His life puts my life to shame.”

“Flo,” was the answer, “you cannot be far from the Kingdom.”

A little pride says, “The rich men, the ministers” ; but a little grace says, “My life.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FORTY YEARS UNDER A CLOUD.

"MR. CAVE, there is a poor woman in very great trouble and distress. She had three daughters, all grown up, and they have all died in little more than a year. She is almost in despair. Can you go and see her?"

Passing down some back streets, I came to a small house in a very bad condition. The stairs were ascended partly by climbing and partly by pulling oneself up by means of a thick and old rope which served as a banister. Entering a small back room, I saw the poor woman rocking herself in a chair and refusing to be comforted. On two broken chairs rested a coffin, small enough for a child, although holding a woman. Two women followed me into the room from downstairs, and one of them said, "That's the third; they are all gone now." "Did they go anywhere on Sundays?" I asked. "Yes, they all belonged to the Salvation Army." "Well," I said, "she is beyond us now. How about you all? It may be a year, or less or more than a year, but it cannot be long before you are all called

to your account. As she belonged to the Salvation Army, no doubt she was saved." At this the mother rose and answered, "Yes, they were all saved." She looked straight at me and I at her, and I said, almost instinctively, "Are you saved?" Then followed a scene I shall never forget. Standing erect, she placed one foot in front and one a little back, as if she would root herself to the floor, and with her hands clenched and head erect she answered loudly, indeed shouted, "Yes! I am saved. I was converted when a girl; I was baptized, and took the Lord's Supper; but for forty years I have been under a cloud, and no one has known that I am a Christian, but I dare not deny it now." The two women stood away in astonishment. Standing up and confronting her, I said, "Well, if you were a child of God then, you are now, and God has called you back to Himself very loudly by three awful calls." Somewhat subdued, she said, "It may be, but it's all dark." I repeated some texts that came spontaneously to me—I forget them now—and then prayed for her, leaving her to the great God Who was dealing with her. "Where do you go to?" she said. I told her, and for nearly three months she came to all the meetings. A big, dark woman with a sallow, pale face; always sitting in the same seat, and always meeting my enquiries with a sad look and a shake of the head. At last, as I was going in one evening, she came hastily towards me, quite changed, her face full of light and life and

love. "Oh," she said, "I have found Him." She could say no more, but covering her face with both hands, she wept. All I could say was, "God bless you! I am so glad! God bless you!"

In a few months she died.

We learned that she was a member of a Baptist Church, and had married an unconverted man who led her away from her Church, then from all religious associations, until only he and herself knew anything about her early days.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE VILLAGE OUTCAST.

It was the dormitory of a refuge home. The ceiling, the walls, and the floors were clean almost to whiteness. At one side ran a row of narrow iron bedsteads neatly and cleanly furnished. Upon one of these lay a young woman, a mere child in appearance.

Looking back through nearly forty years, I see that face again : round, pale, and smooth, with eyes large and dark, looking larger and darker still as the rings of death gathered round them. It was one of those faces that make one imagine the beauty of Eve.

There was a small mat at the side of the bedstead, and upon this I knelt with one knee and took the small white hand held out to me while she related the events of the last few days of her life. Relieved of the few questions and responses I made to her, this is her story :—

“I wanted to see you, sir. I heard you speak on Sunday night, and I wanted to see you to tell you that I am saved. You do not think that I cannot be saved, do you? I was saved in prison. Yes, I have been in prison for five years. I do not know why I

was sent there. Some gentlemen sat in a large room, and after talking for some time said I was to go to prison. Yes, I am turned twenty—nearly twenty-two. I came out on Saturday. I felt very ill and weak; the fresh air seemed to overcome me, so I laid hold of the railings as I went along to the railway station. I had a ticket to go home to my grandmother's in our village. Father and mother both died when I was little, so I was brought up with grandmother. It seemed a very long way in the train and I fell asleep. When we got down home it was dusk. I got to our village, but when I knocked, some strangers opened the door, and said that I did not live there, and that they did not know my grandmother, and that I could not go in there. I stood leaning against the fence, and some people came round, but I did not know them. After a time some old people came with the constable. He talked with me a little while and then said I must go back to London again, for I did not live there; so he helped me back to the railway station. It seemed a very long time before we stopped at London, and then I got out of the train and went into the waiting-room. I had nowhere to go. It was very late, past midnight, and the room was almost dark. Presently a lady came in and spoke to me, and I told her who I was, and she said, 'Poor thing, poor dear; I will send you to a home where they will care for you.' No, I had had no food nor anything to drink all day. The lady put me in a cab and the

cabman brought me here. When I got out of the cab I felt very ill indeed, as if my heart was broken, and I think that I fell down, for I remember crawling up the steps and thumping at the door with my hand. After a time some one came and said that I could not go in there—that I must go to the workhouse. I said, ‘Oh, do take me in; I think that I am dying.’ Soon after a lady came down with a light, and they took me in and got me upstairs and laid me here. Yes, they gave me some hot coffee and some bread and butter. I heard you speak on Sunday, and I wanted to tell you I am saved.”

She lay back on the pillow and her eyes closed as if exhausted. After a while I repeated to her some of those holy words of grace and pity and mercy and love which only her Creator could speak to her in her abandonment; and I bade her cheer up, for all before her was beautiful and bright. She smiled faintly once or twice. Presently she beckoned me to come close to her, and upon my coming near she said in almost a whisper:

“I have a little boy in that village; he must be getting on for six now, and I did want to see him so, but they would not let me. If ever you see him tell him I died a Christian; tell him he must believe, and meet me in heaven. I do want to see him so.”

Now, I know nothing about the life of villages, or J.P.’s, or squires’ sons, or charges of blackmail or lawyers; but it is quite evident that that girl had been

ruined in her youth, and upon becoming a child-mother and making a statement had been got into prison for five years, while her grandmother and infant had been cleared out of the village. It is vain to dwell upon evil and evil alone. It is all around us ; and to think of it only were to overwhelm oneself with sorrow and anger. Let us think of the good, the agents for good, that are all around us too : the converted chaplain who got that girl saved while in prison ; the lady who visited the London terminus after midnight to pick up the village outcast ; and the home for the friendless and fallen that opened the door in the night and took in that broken-hearted girl, and nursed her into security and quietness and peace—nay, that brought the Word of God first within her hearing and then to her bedside.

Evil had fought fiercely with its passion, its pride, its perjury, and its pitilessness, and had won her pretty life and destroyed it. But Good had also fought patiently, with its truth, its kindness, and its charity, and had won her more beautiful soul and had saved it unto life eternal.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HANNAH.

MR. W. R., one of the best men I have ever known, came to me one night about half-past ten, and said, "There is a young woman at the hospital in a dying condition; she cannot live but a day or two and is quite ignorant of her danger. It seems wrong to let her die so. Will you go and see her?" Then he whispered something to me that need not be repeated. About half-past eleven I was at the place. Tapping at the ward door, I was admitted by a nurse. The lights were low, the windows closed, and the ward in perfect stillness. All was settled down for the night. The nurse did not speak, but pointed me to a bed. Going to it noiselessly, I stood a minute and read the "card"—"Hannah: Phthisis." She was not asleep, and presently turned my way, and then looked at me searchingly as if to judge my character. I bore the scrutiny, then she closed her eyes again. Speaking tenderly, I said, "I have been asked to come and see you, Hannah, because you are so ill." "How do you know my name is Hannah?" she said. "It is on the card," I replied. "Ah yes, I am in the

hospital, ain't I?" and she looked up towards the card, then at me. "You are very ill, dear." She bore the endearing word, then answered, "Yes, I am ill, but getting better, ain't I?" I did not answer. "You think I'm getting better, don't you?" "The doctors say they have done all they can for you, and cannot hope for your recovery." "But you don't think I shall die, do you?" Feeling deeply the solemnity, nay, awfulness, of my position, speaking to a soul so near death, I was filled with pity, tenderness, and love; and leaning towards her, said with emotion, "Hannah dear, the doctors say you cannot live but a few days." She was silent for a minute, then said, "All this was through a broken window; I had a piece of rag stuffed in it, and it came out, and I sat there at needlework one afternoon, and this is the result." Speaking slowly and gently, I said, "That brought about the end, but you had been ill for a long time; and then your life." "Oh, but," she said, "I never went *out*." Praying for help, I spoke firmly and said, "God has sent me to tell you that He knows all the past, all the loneliness and pain and the awful sin, but that all may be forgiven and put away if you accept the Saviour that died for sinners. God knows the awfulness of your life, but still loves you, and in His love has given you a Saviour. That is what I am sent to tell you." Her lips moved, and she whispered, "It can't be." "Yes, it can. You know He saved the Magdalene, you know He did."

“Yes, He did, didn’t He?” she replied slowly and thoughtfully, and then looked to me as if for help. I spoke some texts to her, some of those precious words of pardon and love and mercy which only God could give; then prayed a little and left her.

Going the next night, I found her very low, but she moved her lips into a faint smile and lifted her fingers for me to touch. Poor, poor girl, dying in her loneliness, for no one had been to see her. I leant over her and smoothed her forehead, loving her with that divinely breathed love that only one sinner can feel for another whose salvation he seeks, and said, “Hannah dear, you must believe; you must believe that Jesus died for you. You must believe, dear. All the awful past can be forgiven. Jesus shed His precious blood to wash us white as snow.” Then I repeated some Divine texts, saying at last, “You know He saved the Magdalene. You know He did, and so He will save you, dear.” Her eyes were partly open, and she turned them to me and smiled faintly. After staying awhile, I leaned close to her and said, “You do believe, dear, don’t you? Good-bye, Hannah.”

Early in the morning I was there again, but the nurse met me with her finger up as if to hush me. “She’s gone,” she said. “She died in the night; but she left a message for you. ‘Tell that gentleman that I did believe, and I died happy,’ she said.”

Poor girl, decoyed from her parents, alienated from her friends, shut up to loneliness, selling her life to buy

her bread. When sickness came, she was left to distress, from distress to the workhouse, there to die abandoned. Can it be wondered at that in her utter loneliness she had looked up to her Creator through her Redeemer, and in looking had found mercy?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ANGELS.

It was a windy, noisy, boisterous night. The clouds rushed across the moon so swiftly, that it seemed as if the moon were running a race and beckoning one to follow. The road was desolate. On one side was a slope leading away into fields, and on the other side the black high railings of a park. Happy, full of life, and delighted with the wind, I, like a boy, took up the moon's challenge and ran at her side; sometimes singing, and literally *revelling* in the wildness of the night.

The moon went behind a cloud, and the darkness seemed intense, when, from the side of the black railings, I heard a voice. It was the voice of a woman, and in subdued tones it was crying, "Oh, God, do help me to-night! Oh, God, do help me to-night!" Crossing, almost bounding, to the railings, I saw a woman huddled up with a baby in her arms. "Oh, what's the matter?" I asked. "What's the matter?" She replied, "My husband went away on Monday tramping, as he could get no work, and yesterday the brokers came in and took our

things away, and last night I slept out over against that shed ; but I feel that"—and her voice faltered—"I cannot sleep out to-night!" "Well, what can you do? Where can you go? Could you get a lodging?" "Oh yes, if I had the money." "If I give you a shilling, will it help you?" "Oh, it will indeed! I can get a lodging for sixpence, and to-morrow morning at ten o'clock a gentleman has promised to meet me to take me to the workhouse, and I think I had better go—I cannot sleep out again." After she had received the shilling, she said, "I'm a respectable woman, sir; feel my hand." I took her hand for a moment, and it was hard and rough and scaly, with cuts between the joints of the fingers—a washerwoman's hand. I knew those cuts, I had seen them on my poor mother's hands in years gone by. Looking up and sobbing, she said, "Oh, it seems so wonderful! I felt I could not sleep out to-night with my baby, and looking up beyond the moon, I called out, 'Oh, God, do help me to-night!' and in a moment you were at my side. Oh, you must be an angel that God sent to me!" "God sent me," I answered, "because you called upon Him; not only to give you that shilling, but to tell you that He knows how hard you work, and how hard things are with you." Then in a few moments I told her of Calvary—Eternity only can tell with what result.

Lying snugly in bed that night, nearly asleep, the

words came back to me—"She-said-I-was-an-angel." Conscious that a tear was oozing out, but trying to forget it all and get to sleep, I pressed still more snugly into the pillow, but in a few moments the words came again—"She-said-I-was-an-angel."

Trouble came among my relatives. It was incumbent upon me to take up a burden. This burden was heavy, and three years passed without relief. At the close of this time, I woke up one Friday morning realizing the fact that I had £20 to meet and nothing whatever to meet it with. I was not afraid. Our God is a very present help in time of trouble; a refuge, a fortress, and a strong tower. After lying a few moments thinking, not without tears, I prayed. I told the Lord all about it; that it was because His name was upon me that I had taken up this burden. Would He not help me? "Do help me, Lord!" On the Sunday evening I went towards a meeting, when a Christian gentleman whom I had seen but twice before met me. "Where are you going?" he said. "I thought of going to the Y.M.C.A." "Well, come along, we want you." I went to the meeting and spoke to the children, then at an after-meeting to the adults. On coming out the gentleman followed me, and putting his arm around my shoulders, said, "God is telling me to give you some money. If you are in need, you must tell me." "Well," I replied, "I

must confess that I am. It is the first time in twenty years." We talked for a little while, and the next evening I went to his house and he gave me a cheque for £35 12s. 10d.

Do not, kindly, pass this off by saying, "What a wonderful answer to prayer!" Indeed it was a wonderful, solemn, and direct answer to prayer; but God answers by means. Men who live near enough to Him to hear, nay to *feel* the command, "Go and say"; "Go and bring"; "Go and give;" are not such men God's messengers—children of God, in whose souls there dwells that blessed, divine, ministering spirit? (Heb. i. 14).

Hearing a child sing, "I want to be an angel!" "Well," I said, "*be* an angel. Just now and down here. Don't wait until you get to heaven and have wings. Be an angel down here, walking about on two feet. You may be sure of getting to heaven, but not so sure of ever having wings. Look out for opportunities, chances. All these opportunities to be angels, or messengers of God, are chances to win crowns, and they will not last for long."

Two boys were playing in a court, when a doctor came out of a house, followed by a woman in tears. "What's the matter?" said one. "Oh, my mother is dying; she can't live," was the answer. The boys talked together. "I wonder whether she knows the

way?" said one. "Let's tell her," said the other. They tried the front door, but found it fast. Peeping through the front window, they saw no bed there, so, getting to the back of the house, one climbed a wall, and leaning to the window called out, "Poor dying woman, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Poor dying woman, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The daughter came back, to find the mother in tears, but rejoicing. "Oh, an angel has been here. It leaned in that window and said, 'Poor dying woman, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Oh, it did, it did! I do believe now; I know God has told me. He sent an angel."

And who shall say that boy was not an angel—that is, a messenger from God?

An angel is one who is sent from God with a message, and although angels were individual agents sent by God in old times, since the Holy Spirit has been dwelling in believers, He moves them to go with God's messages, and such are called angels.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BOOTLACE SELLER.

It had been a bad day at the little factory—we have bad days sometimes—everything had gone wrong and everybody had grumbled ; and we were all glad when it was time to turn off the gas, lock up the door, and go home. It was November : cold, wet, foggy, and dismal. My way home lay past a mission hall standing by a railway arch. Sitting upon the steps of this hall was an old man, his elbows resting upon his knees and his face buried in his hands, thinking, perhaps grieving, perhaps praying. We are always living in Bible times, and there is a Voice that still speaks to us as convincingly, if not in the same manner, as it spoke to our fathers of old. That Voice said, “Go and speak to that old man.”

Retracing my steps, I went to him, and stood at his side looking at some bills, hoping that he would speak to me. He did not do so ; so, leaning down a little, I said, “You don’t seem very well to-night.” He did not answer, so speaking louder I repeated the enquiry. He looked up and said, “No, I am not well, and I’ve got to go into the road and cry these

laces"; and opening his arms, he showed a small box containing a few bootlaces. Now, I had a shilling and a sixpence in my pocket, and no demand upon them, for it was Friday night. All my expenses for the week had been met, and on the morrow more money would come in; so, taking the sixpence out, I said, "Well, here's sixpence; go into a coffee-shop and have a cup of tea and something to eat, and rest awhile." He took it, and said "Thank you" slowly and calmly; he was not excited nor effusive; he did not demonstrate. There was something which caused me to say, "Are you a Christian?" What is that something? I have often felt it. Is it a kinship of spirit? He answered deliberately and freely, "Yes, by the mercy of God I am; and I felt so unwell that I seemed unable to go and stand in the road this evening, and was *just saying so.*"

"Well," I said, "God has sent me to you to show He always sees you and never forgets you, but hears when you call upon Him. Take this," giving him the shilling, "and go home for to-night; that is more than you would have earned in the road." He now became much affected, and keeping hold of my hand, and speaking in a choking voice, blessed God for sending me and blessed me for coming. "Oh, He is indeed a very present help in trouble. No, He never forgets me." I am a coward at taking thanks, so soon got away. After a few moments self began to talk to self, and this is something of what self

said : " You have been grumbling all day long, and yet you have been in a warm room with a nice fire ; you had a good dinner, all that you wished for ; and now you are going home to a splendid kitchen, a good hot tea, and your precious wife with everything ready to make you comfortable. Do you think you have much to grumble about ? Above all, your expenses for the week have all been met, and you had eighteenpence to spare. And now God has just made you give that to that poor, sick old man—your brother. As good as you at least, perhaps better ; and who needed it so much more than you did. What a blessing that eighteenpence was to him ; how thankful he was for it ; and yet it was only your spares—your crumbs. Don't you think you deserve something to grumble about ? " Reproved, humbled, almost alarmed at my folly and ingratitude, I could only confess my foolishness and pray for that poor old man.

How wonderful are God's dealings with us ! He can rebuke us, yet make us a blessing ; when we are at our worst, use us for our best ; and remind us of our own ingratitude by causing us to remind another of His care and watchfulness.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AGNES THE STEP-CLEANER.

AGNES was a pretty little Irish girl, alert, obliging, and anxious for work. Though thirteen she looked but ten, small and frail. To offer her work seemed to impose upon her willingness and her weakness. Although pleasing in her solicitations and winning in her address, when asking that she might earn only a penny, yet when unconscious of observation her face sank unto a grave sadness which changed her from a pretty child into an old woman.

“Find out anything you can about that girl,” I said to my daughter. “She is brave and quick as a cricket, but seems to have some trouble.” We soon found that she was a Catholic—lived in the Irish street; had a father seldom in employment, four sisters less than herself, and a mother dying of consumption. In short—pretty, active, obliging, frail, anxious and sad little Agnes was the breadwinner.

“Love believeth all things.” But sometimes suspicion comes instead of love, and in our thrifty excesses and our frugal extravagances we blame the poor for their poverty and the weak for their

infirmity, that we may nurse our plenty; casting reproach when we might strengthen a life or save a soul. Having learnt to beware of self, I got Agnes helped so far as our means would allow. After a day or two, my daughter said, "My father is a preacher; would you like him to come and see your mother?" "But we are Catholics," was the quick reply. "Never mind about that; he would come if he might." The next day the invitation came and I went.

There are some streets in London which may be likened to miniature colonies; in some none but Italians live. Agnes's street was peopled by Irish only. The police constable never entered that street; he was neither needed nor heeded. The priest ruled there; and, to use the expression of Agnes, would cut a man down with his stick who beat his wife.

I had never seen an Irish street before, and upon entering this should have been fearful, but I had God with me, and regarded Irishmen as Englishmen. There were few houses with both doors and windows, some had neither. Sitting on the kerbstones were big girls, chatting and laughing; while in the road were groups of boys gaming. As I passed these they seemed to recognize me, and called out, "That's the house, mister." I simply smiled in reply, but found at last that their instructions were correct.

Being invited in by Agnes, I saw that the room

had but one piece of furniture, a very large bedstead. Upon the edge of this the children sat when not in the street, and lying upon it was the poor dying woman.

Oh, when kneeling at your bedside at night, do you ever thank God that you have a bedside to kneel against, a roof to shelter you, and the quietude of your sleeping-chamber? This poor woman was dying in the midst of tumult; no closed door shut out the noise of the street, and even the windows were not whole; so that the calling and shouting of children in their play came freely in. Having met their immediate necessity for food, I got the children into the street and was left alone with the mother.

One theme, one burden only was upon my heart and mind, the precious Saviour dying upon the cross for sinners; for that woman, that poor, thin, pale, dying woman lying there; and of that only I spoke to her.

She was English, had married an Irishman who was a stevedore, and for some years they had lived very happily; but he strained himself at his work, and little by little they had come down to where they were. She was fairly educated, and had been to Sunday-school when a girl. My visit much affected her. She was amazed and solemnly impressed by it. It seemed as if God had been following her, although unseen, and had sent a Protestant to find her out at last. My heart, filled with the love

of Christ, met with a response in hers, and I believe and hope that at that very first visit she looked away to the sinner's Saviour and believed unto life. Other visits were made, each time with further Divine words of grace and forgiveness. Those precious words, so different from man's words or thoughts, all full of infinite love. At the last time, only two hours before she died, she never took her eyes off me, and calling me close, said, "Take care of my poor little Agnes; take care of her; *do* take care of Agnes. Kiss me and promise me you will take care of her." "*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,*" and leaning over, kissed her forehead; that cold clay, wet with the sweat of death. In the morning Agnes came and said her mother was dead. Within a year the father also died as the result of his injury.

Catholics are, like Protestants, very jealous of their children. So, as soon as it was seen that a Protestant was looking after Agnes, a good situation was found for her in a distant district, which took her out of our neighbourhood; but from time to time she came to see us, always improving in appearance, until at last she came dressed in a black costume, with a silk umbrella, and "gloves on." And so years passed on; till, going home one evening, I saw a pretty baby-carriage at the steps, and in it an innocent and sweet baby, just pretty Agnes in miniature, and coming down the steps was the mother. Upon seeing me she smiled and put up her

left hand to her hat, not, I think, because her hat needed adjusting, but that I might see that she had her ring on the proper finger. Yes, Agnes had married pretty well, and had come to show us her little daughter, and to say that now she was her own mistress she would come at any time to do us a day's work, or if Miss C. was ill would come and do her washing and not charge us much.

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