

"SHE SPAKE OF HIM."

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LATE

MRS. HENRY DENING.



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Dear Miss Gordon
with love -
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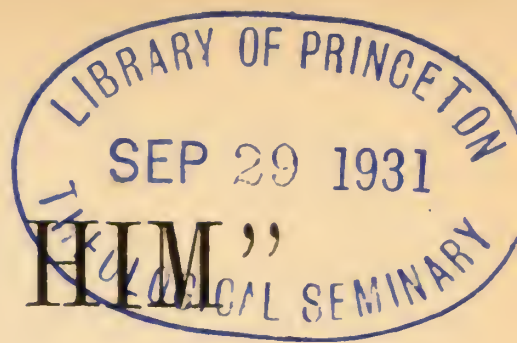
Yours very affectionately
Elizabeth Pease

THE Author feels it due to the Publishers to state that they have spared no pains in their endeavours to procure a good portrait for this book, though they have not succeeded so well as the friends of Mrs. Denning could wish. The fact is, no good likeness of her exists, and "carte de visite" photographs, when enlarged and printed, often lose, somewhat, their resemblance. One of the most approved photographs will be found in the volume of Mrs. Denning's Addresses (*See Advertisement*).



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"SHE SPAKE OF HIM"

BEING RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LOVING LABOURS AND
EARLY DEATH OF THE LATE

MRS. HENRY DENING;

BY HER FRIEND

MRS. GRATTAN GUINNESS.

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY THE REV. S. A. WALKER, M.A.,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY-LE-PORT, BRISTOL.

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INTRODUCTION.



I ESTEEM it little less than a solemn duty, as well as a Christian privilege, to comply with the request of the bereaved partner of her whose brief career is here depicted, to introduce this Memoir with a few words of humble testimony.

Truly, little does the dear departed one, or her kind and gifted biographer, need any formal recommendation. The record of the female labourer and preacher in the Lord's vineyard is on High ; and the work now in the hands of the Christian public answers for itself. But I have had the privilege of long and intimate acquaintance with Geraldine Hooper,—afterwards Mrs. Dening—and I can speak of her as thousands who will, I trust, read this little book cannot. I can say I knew her well, and I loved her much. She was not, to me, merely the female preacher, followed, gazed upon, and listened to by admiring crowds ; still less the Miss Hooper

or the Mrs. Dening whose name and whose work formed the subject of animated discussion in many a drawing-room, and at many a dinner and tea table ; and in connection with whom, one or two texts of Scripture obtained a prominence and a frequency of quotation which they had not done before. I refer to 1 Cor. xiv. 34—"Let your women keep silence in the churches ;" and 1 Tim. ii. 12—"I suffer not a woman to teach." I knew, I heard, and I observed her in her own house, and in my house,—where, I am thankful to say, she often tarried for more than a night, especially previous to her marriage—and I can truly affirm that a more beautiful specimen of a loving, large-hearted, unselfish woman I never saw, or expect to see, on this side the grave. Her entrance to our house was always like that of a sunbeam : it brightened everything. I believe she loved me and my dear wife, and all of us ; and when the door opened and dear Geraldine leaped in, rather than walked, in the exuberance of youth and love and anticipated joy, we all in our turn leaped to our feet and ran to embrace her. We knew she had come to bring us happiness ; and we felt that we had it, as we embraced our beloved friend.

One of her foremost beauties consisted in her sweet, unaffected humility. In the zenith of her popularity as a preacher, when I knew, from personal observation, how she was prized, and followed, and flattered ; when I knew, not only that the

largest buildings in some of our leading towns were not sufficient to accommodate, within hundreds, the multitudes who flocked to hear her, and that evening after evening ; but that crowds of working men and women, as well as others, thronged those large buildings as early as five and six o'clock in the morning, so as to hear her before entering on their day's labour, I was charmed to find that, by the grace of God, she was kept from all apparent consciousness of the power which she possessed, thus to influence the minds and draw the hearts of her fellow-men. There was not the slightest evidence of it in her manner, and a very rare, and always subdued reference to it in her conversation. To us, amidst it all, she was the same dear Geraldine, so kind, so gentle, so self-denying ; so anxious, in her own house or in ours, that every one should be served and made comfortable ; so ready to start up from table, or from her seat, to have the pleasure of doing herself the little kind things which others could have done, but which she seemed to grudge them the happiness of doing.

And she loved to speak of Jesus and sing His praise. Oh, that loving and lovely voice ! I hear it now ! My ear seems, as regards that voice, like an *Æolian* harp, upon which memory, like an evening breeze, breathes soft and sad ; and brings out, again and again, those exquisite notes that, once heard, could never be forgotten. I appeal to those who,

for some years past, have attended the Clifton Conference, and heard that wonderful voice issuing from a corner of the platform in the Great Hall of the Victoria Rooms, and penetrating, with undiminished power and sweetness, to the remotest ear in the vast assembly gathered there. How many, during our recent Conference,—where she, alas, was not, and from which nothing but sickness or death could have withheld her—uttered the sad truth, in a tone of genuine sorrow,—“We shall miss Mrs. Denning’s voice.” Well, He who gave the voice was glorified in the use of it, while it remained. She who possessed it, never spared it in His service. And it shall be heard again, amid the chorus of the living and loving ones that shall throng around Emmanuel’s throne of glory, when He “comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

Many who knew how much I loved and admired the dear departed one have asked me what I thought of female preaching, evidently with reference to her. My reply was then, and is now, —doubtful as I am of the exact application of the Scripture passages quoted in the case,—I could not venture on recommending the practice, neither dare I assume the responsibility of forbidding it, where I found it actually adopted; and therefore I never uttered a word of objection to the course pursued by my beloved friend. I heard, in various places, that

her addresses had been blessed to many ; and what was I, that I should attempt to stay what appeared to be God's work ? If the female preacher proclaimed Jesus sweetly and powerfully, as she did, to perishing sinners ; and if God the Holy Ghost applied her word convincingly and savingly to the souls of not a few, how could I tell but that this was one of the signs of the latter days, mentioned by the prophet Joel, and repeated by the Apostle Peter, when God would "pour out His Spirit upon sons and *daughters*, upon servants and *handmaids*, and they should prophecy" ? At all events, there was the work manifesting power, and its fruits manifesting blessing from on High ; and I felt, for one, that I could "say nothing against it."

Geraldine Dening "rests from her labours, and her works do follow her." "Blessed are the dead" in such a case ; and "blessed is she that believed," and worked, and was great in prayer and praise. Her life was brief ; perhaps it was shortened by over-work ; but it was work for the Great Master Builder ; and, when He comes to set up the Great Temple, she will have a place as one of the "polished corner-stones." And I doubt not that many other living stones will be there,—her glory and joy—to take their place beside her, and "call her blessed." Can all those who blame her for the work to which she felt she was called, and for which she certainly possessed wonderful gifts, feel that they

are doing better, and that, when their hour of departure comes, they will be happier, in the retrospect of their earthly career, than she was? Are there any casting a stone of reproach at the sainted Geraldine Dening, who prefer a life of fashion and frivolity to the service of Jesus; and who, although they would not accept her office, because they consider it unscriptural, are yet either withholding their talents altogether from the service of the Redeemer, or employing them in the service of "the god of this world?" Ah, it is easy to chide "the female preacher," but it is far less easy to do what Geraldine Dening did—to forego the admiration and the homage which personal loveliness, rare endowments, and accomplishments of a high order, were sure to command in a world prepared with its idolatry for whatever pleases the eye and gratifies the taste; and that, at an age when heart and eye are yet all incredulous of fading pleasures and disappointing hopes. God found Geraldine on the threshold of the temple of vanity, and claimed her for Himself. He had given her to Jesus, and Jesus had accepted the gift, with all its penal consequences; and, just as she was stepping into the unhallowed fane, decked with nature's and art's rarest gems, and sweetest flowers, all ready for the sacrifice, the Lord of Life and Glory laid His hand upon her and said—"Thou art mine." She "turned and said unto Him, Rabboni, which is, being interpreted, Master;" and became

consciously, joyfully, and devotedly His for ever. "A sinner saved by grace;" a stray child led homewards; "a chosen vessel," to be "filled for the Master's use."

In her last moments, she did not regret the consecration of gifts and acquirements, intended for the world, to the service of the Triune Jehovah. She felt that, to be a monument of sovereign grace for eternity, was far better than to wear, for a few years, the diadem of kings, or occupy the loftiest pedestal of earthly renown. These things are often, even now, trampled in the dust, and must ultimately mingle, like those whom they exalt, with the clay from which they are taken; but the sons and daughters of God, the redeemed of Jesus, and the temples of the Holy Ghost—though, like dear Geraldine, entering into their chambers of slumber, and dwelling for a little moment in the dust—shall soon hear the well-known voice of the Bridegroom, and come forth all radiant with His likeness, to enjoy with Him that eternal life which He has given to the objects of His love, and to share with Him that throne of glory to which He Himself will be exalted, as their Redeemer, as their Brother, as their Divine Head. Then, Geraldine, we shall meet again! Together shall we "behold the glory" of our Lord; and thou, beloved one, wilt know that, through grace, thou hadst, like Mary, chosen "the better part, which shall never be taken away from thee."

Then, Geraldine, in bright array,
Far brighter than the sun,
Thou wilt come forth a child of day,
And know thy work was done.

And He from whom thy loving heart
No earthly hopes could sever,
Will say, "I've made thee what thou art,
To dwell with Me for ever."

S. A. WALKER.

BERKELEY SQUARE, BRISTOL.

10th October, 1872.





“SHE SPAKE OF HIM.”

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE following pages have for their object—to give glory to God by recording a notable instance of His strength made perfect in weakness—to hold up a bright example, that others may follow it, in so far as it is Christlike—to encourage youthful labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, by tracing the results achieved by a young sister in a few short years of earnest endeavour—to stimulate all Christian labourers, to redeem the opportunity and work while it is called to-day, by a striking illustration of the fact that in the midst of life we are in death—to recall and urge home on those who heard, but heeded not the Gospel message from the lips now silent in death, the truths she proclaimed to them while living—and lastly, though this is but a secondary object, to gratify the affectionate desires of a very large circle of loving friends and spiritual children, of the dear departed saint, whose life is here sketched, by presenting them with a memento of one who will never be forgotten by this generation, nor the next; one who endeared herself to all who knew her,

from the aged pilgrim to the little child, from the noble lady to the wretched outcast; one whose name is embalmed in thousands of hearts, to whom her memory will to life's latest day be sacred and fragrant with heaven's own perfume.

To God be all the glory for the great grace given to His dear child on earth, and for the eternal blessedness granted to her now in heaven; and may the blessing with which He was pleased to crown her efforts while she lived, be bestowed on this record of them, now that she is gone, so that she being dead may yet speak, and so, that great as was her direct influence, her indirect influence may be even greater!

Perhaps the writer cannot better introduce the beloved subject of this memoir to those who knew her not, than by a few recollections of the circumstances under which she at first met Geraldine Hooper, and of the impressions produced by the occasion. To secure simplicity, the first person will be used, and the reader is requested to pardon the apparent egotism.

The popular objections commonly entertained against women's ministry had, from various circumstances not needful to mention, been considerably shaken in my mind. I had been for many years absent from Bath, in the United States, in Canada, in the East, and elsewhere, and had noted with interest in various letters from home, mention of a certain Miss Hooper, who was preaching in spots with which I was familiar, and in which I had formerly made some evangelistic efforts myself—Trinity Parish, Holloway, and Widcombe, Bath. My sympathies were naturally enlisted in her favour, and on my return to Bath in 1867, some of my first inquiries were respect-

ing this lady preacher of the precious Gospel. I heard various accounts of her; for Rumour, with her lying tongue, has always a bad word to say of the good, and idleness has ample leisure to criticise Christian activity. Some condemned her as eccentric and excitable, others as worldly and fashionable; but some neighbours who had known more than most, of her and her work, and who warmly eulogized both, pressed me to go and hear her myself. "She is to preach to-morrow morning in Avon Street, at 9 o'clock, for the Mission Chapel is under repair, and she does not like the poor people to miss their Sunday service."

We went. The crowd had already gathered, and we had to stand on its outskirts behind the preacher. It filled the decayed deplorable-looking street for some distance, yet formed only a part of the congregation; for at every window were to be seen people of all ages and both sexes, equally interested in what was going forward. The young evangelist, who was tall and graceful in figure, and who was well but quietly dressed in black, was standing on a chair; her audience consisted of a motley group—sweeps in their every-day black attire, costermongers, tramps, beggars, not a few who looked like confirmed drunkards, and many of a more respectable class; tidy women with babies in their arms, aged widows, old men leaning on their sticks, and lads and lassies not a few. Immediately round the speaker were a few nicely-dressed young women, members, as I afterwards learned, of her Bible-class, who came to lend their help in the singing.

Her clear, powerful voice, was distinctly heard all down the street, and her utterance was free and natural. We had not been listening many minutes, when my little boy

withdrew his hand from mine to search for his pocket handkerchief. The speaker was telling of a very undutiful and wicked son, and how *his father would not turn him out of doors*, though urged by all his friends to do so. My child wept as I had never seen him weep before, under a sense of the sweet love of God to the utterly undeserving and unworthy. I rather think I wept myself, many others did; and so absorbed were the people in listening, that no passing interruption seemed in the least to distract their attention.

Long before she had finished her discourse, my heart was warmed towards the young preacher. I loved her before I had seen her face, for I felt she ardently loved Christ and the souls for whom He died. I was not surprised, when she had done, to see the poor people press round her, and try to get a shake of her hand. “I do think she be an angel,” said one old woman to her neighbour as they walked away, “they *be* good words she do say; I never heard the like!”

The crowd began to disperse. I was introduced to her, by our mutual friend. She knew me by name, and, immediately pointing to the chair she had vacated, said, “Speak a few words to them, do; there’s time still.” I declined doing so on that occasion, but promised to speak at her meeting the following evening.

From that day I loved and appreciated Geraldine Hooper, and as fuller knowledge of her, unveiled, by degrees the varied features of her exquisitely beautiful character, my feelings towards her became like those of Jonathan for David. Our acquaintance speedily ripened into the warmest friendship. For six years we were associated in many a gospel mission, and in many a varied experience. In the chamber of sickness, by the

bed of death, and at the open grave, we mingled our tears of sorrow ; and at the marriage feast and over the first-born babe our tears of joy. My affection for her increased continually till the day when it was my painful privilege to share her husband's watch in her last illness, and to wipe the death-dew from her dear brow. Very sweet is the retrospect of that brief but intimate friendship—a friendship which I shall ever number among life's sweetest flowers, and to the renewal of which, ere long and for evermore, I look forward with exceeding desire.

If, therefore, affection unfit for the office of biographer, then has the task of retracing the brief but beautiful career of Geraldine Hooper been committed to the worst possible hands ; but, if loving sympathy and cordial appreciation are the best qualifications for it, then is the writer more competent than most, to accomplish it worthily. “The disciple whom Jesus loved,” and who best loved Jesus, is not the worst biographer of his Master.

She never kept any record whatever of her work, (nor any diary of any sort,) not even of the places *at* which, or the texts *on* which, she preached, nor of the number of meetings she held in a place. She used to say, “The Lord will remember ; I want to forget the things which are behind ;” nor did she write her addresses or anything beyond the very briefest notes. The recollections of friends and the newspaper notices, are consequently the principal sources from which this very defective outline has been prepared.



CHAPTER II.

EARLY DAYS.

EMMA GERALDINE HENRIETTA HAMILTON HOOPER was born at Paris, on the 30th of March, 1841. Her father, Mr. Thomas Clarence Hooper, was the son of the Rev. Thomas Hooper, of Elkeston Rectory, near Cheltenham, a graduate of Oxford University, and a man much esteemed by all who knew him, as a kind and benevolent character. The little Geraldine was baptized at Hemington Church, near Hardington Park, Somerset, the residence of her parents. Her sponsors were Sir Hamilton Leighton, Lady Henrietta Newbolt, and Mrs. Knatchbull, the wife of the member for the county. Her father was descended from John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, the godly martyr of Queen Mary's days, whose Bible is a treasured family relic in the possession of Dr. Hooper, of Cheltenham, an uncle of the subject of this memoir. Of Bishop Hooper, Foxwell says, "Being bishop of two dioceses, he so ruled and guided either of them, and both together, as though he had no charge but one family. No father in his household, no gardener in his garden, no husbandman in his vineyard, was more employed than he in his dioceses among his flock; going about the towns and villages, teaching and preaching to the people there." Every day he entertained a certain number of poor in

his palace, first teaching and instructing them, and then causing them to be comfortably served with dinner; and he never sat down to his own repast till he had first seen his poor guests well supplied. He was an able and distinguished preacher of righteousness, and a most noble witness for Christ, both before Gardiner and Bonner, and in the loathsome dungeon of the Fleet Prison, and in the condemned cell of Newgate. Thence he wrote, "I have taught the truth with my tongue and my pen heretofore, and hereafter I shortly shall confirm it by God's grace with my blood." Nothing could daunt his firm resolution to perish in the flames rather than recant his good confession of the truth. He was sent back to Gloucester to undergo his dreadful sentence; there he slept his last night on earth, rising early to give himself to prayer, and then, his hour being come, he walked, as well as the sciatica he had taken in the damp prison would permit, to the stake raised near the great elm-tree in front of the Cathedral. It was market-day; the streets were thronged with weeping mourners, the tops of the houses and the boughs of the trees were crowded with those who bewailed and bitterly lamented their good bishop. At the stake his pardon was laid before him in a box if he would recant. With the utmost abhorrence he twice cried out, "If ye love my soul, away with it." When stripped and bound, his tall figure and cheerful countenance were visible to all, standing on a high stool. The officer appointed to kindle the fire asked, on his knees, his victim's pardon. "Thou doest nought to offend me; God forgive thee thy sins; I pray thee do thine office, and that quickly," said the heroic martyr. It was done; his agony lasted well nigh an hour, for by a refinement of cruelty green faggots had been ordered

to be used. But the man of God was neither overcome with impatience nor with pain; firm and clear was the voice with which he called on his Redeemer, and at last “he died as quietly as a child in his bed.” The spot whence he ascended in this chariot of fire to heaven is marked by a stone which records the eminent piety of this noble martyr to the Protestant faith. His great enemy, Gardiner, died miserably, uttering words of awful despair: “I have sinned with Peter, but I have not wept with Peter.”

Now piety is not hereditary, as alas! ten thousand mournful cases prove; but the godly are often much given to prayer for their children and their children’s children, to the latest generation, and our God is a hearer and answerer of prayer. It is an interesting fact, that both Geraldine Hooper and the excellent and devoted evangelist to whom she was united in marriage were descendants of martyr bishops. If *her* family possess relics of Hooper, *his* possess relics of Cranmer, Hooper’s fellow-witness and fellow-sufferer: from whom, on the maternal side, the Denings are descended. Oh, if those two venerable men of God could have taken a glance into the distant future, and beheld their descendants three hundred years after them, proclaiming to assembled thousands, the Gospel for which they endured the flames of martyrdom, would they not have thanked God and taken courage? And shall we not do the same? The weeping multitude that followed Geraldine Hooper to the grave at Bath, in 1872, was as large, if not larger, than that which accompanied her heroic ancestor, John Hooper, to the stake at Gloucester, in 1555, and equally bore witness to the fact, that England loves the pure and unadul-

terated Gospel of Christ. In reading the descriptive records of Bishop Hooper's life and character, one is haunted with a singular sense of a moral family likeness between two beings on the whole so unlike—the venerable martyr and his distant daughter. His great practical sagacity, his extraordinary zeal and diligence, his generous love and service of the poor, his self-forgetfulness, his moral courage, his eloquence and pathos in the pulpit; the unbounded love and admiration he won from the populace; his affectionate disposition and noble magnanimity (exhibited so strikingly in his letter to Ridley); his cheerful disposition and voice, his fervid love to God and hatred of sin, and his premonition of coming death, (as expressed to Bullinger,)—all these features recall similar traits in the beloved subject of this sketch.

Is it not a solemn reflection for parents, that they may unwittingly transmit, to distant generations, a certain cast, not only of countenance but of character; that they may benefit and bless their distant posterity, not by their prayers and their example only, but by *being* what they would desire their children to be?

To another patriarch in the Church of Christ, did Geraldine Hooper perhaps owe some of the blessings and some of the success so richly bestowed on her; for “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” One day when, as a bright observant child, full of curiosity and spirits, she was walking in Bath, she stopped to peep at some poultry through the palings of a garden in the outskirts of the city. Presently the kind voice of an old gentleman who was feeding them, invited her to come in, and see them more at her ease. Her nurse consented; and the old gentleman, pleased with

her grace and vivacity, talked kindly with her for some time. When they parted, he laid his aged hand on her childish head, and sweetly and solemnly said: “*The blessing of the Lord rest on thee, my child, and make thee a blessing.*” It was the revered William Jay, the “boy-preacher,” who had publicly proclaimed the gospel a thousand times before he was twenty-one years of age, and who was for sixty-three years the beloved and highly-honoured minister of Argyle Chapel, Bath. He was then about eighty years of age, and soon to be taken to his rest; awaiting, after his well-run race, the crown of righteousness reserved for him in heaven. The child was awed by his words. In after-life she used to say: “I felt for a long time, that I had been blessed by an aged and holy man of God, and *I expected to be blessed in consequence.*”

Little did William Jay imagine that the voice which had charmed him with its childish prattle would, very soon after his tongue was silent in the grave, proclaim, with much of his own simplicity and fervour, the Gospel he had so long loved and preached, to thousands and tens of thousands, in the scene of his own labours, and elsewhere. He could not foresee the future; but he could pray, and God answered his prayer, above all that he asked or thought. The light-hearted child was not predestined, like himself, to pass the term appointed for human life, and “by reason of strength,” to attain the age of fourscore and five; but in the brief years of labour allotted to her, she was to preach the Gospel of Christ well-nigh 4,000 times, and be instrumental in the salvation of multitudes. She *was* indeed blessed and made a blessing, and ere this she may have thanked William Jay, in the great congregation above, for that godly benediction.

It is not our purpose to linger much on the early life of Geraldine Hooper; we date her career not from her natural, but from her spiritual birth. Her parents resided first at Caerleon Priory, Monmouthshire, subsequently at Hardington Park, near Frome, and at Clifton, and then at Green Park, Bath, where their daughter was brought up. She was always remarkable for vivacity and intelligence, and was an intensely warm-hearted, sensitive, affectionate girl. She usually contrived to have her own way, but never by insisting upon it. She carried her purpose by the extreme sweetness with which she *gave up* every desire that was opposed by parents or teachers. Her prompt and cheerful acquiescence in their wishes, often turned a refusal into consent.

As a young girl she was by no means a saint, but her character even while unrenewed was in many respects lovely. Her amiable disposition, sparkling wit, and ready repartee, made her an acquisition in society. She was fond of dancing, in which she excelled, and for which her graceful and agile figure seemed peculiarly to fit her. She matured rapidly, and circumstances led to her early introduction into worldly society, in which she appeared destined to shine. She was the life and soul of many a gay assembly, and not only were the young and thoughtless, of her own age, captivated by the vivacious and gifted girl, but elderly people of literary and artistic taste were equally her admirers. She had a very beautiful voice—clear, sweet, and powerful, so eminently adapted for public singing that she was once offered £1,000 if she would allow it to be cultivated for that purpose. Not long before her early death she remarked with intense feeling to the writer, when something had been said about the beauty of her voice, “I am so thankful that

it has never been used in public for anything but the praise of God.”

At seventeen she was, to use the language of her uncle, “much like other young ladies of the same age—fond of music and light reading,” and in danger of becoming one of the spoilt favourites of fashion.

But the providence of God was preparing the instrument of which He designed to make so much use in the future. She was permitted to taste the pleasures of the world, that she might know their sweetness *and their bitterness*; that she might be able in after years to estimate aright, and truly to portray their attractive power over the young; and at the same time expose their utter vanity and impotence to give real, or pure, or lasting joy. She was allowed to feel the emptiness and vanity of worldly joys very early, and was conducted through deep floods of sorrow which fell upon her young heart, with a keen acuteness that less sensitive natures can hardly realise. She drank deeply of the cup of suffering, very, very deeply, and thus she was able in after years to speak words of rich sweet comfort to many a youthful sufferer. But for the dark clouds which at this period were permitted to over-shadow her sky, Geraldine Hooper might have—would have, in all probability—continued in the path she was treading. Balls, soirees, theatres, and operas forming her nightly occupation—novel reading, morning calls, shopping and dressing, her daily routine. But before the foundation of the world her name had been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life; she had been given by the Father to the Son, He had loved her, and given Himself for her, and was pledged as a faithful Shepherd not to lose this wandering sheep. Good works had been ordained, that she should walk in them; she was a “chosen vessel” to

carry the Gospel message far and wide, and the days of her years were to be few, very few, for her Saviour had resolved to translate her early to His immediate presence. And so the one predestined was speedily called and justified, used and glorified; and the first call came as it comes so often, in the form of affliction.

“ It needs our hearts be weaned from earth,
It needs that we be driven,
By loss of every earthly joy,
To seek our all in heaven.
Most loving is the hand that strikes,
However keen the smart,
If sorrow’s discipline can drive
One evil from the heart.”

It is neither possible nor desirable to enter into the particulars of the trials that at this time were permitted to encompass this lovely and loving young creature. In a tract which she published some years after the period of which we now speak, she thus describes this painful experience, and its results.

“An idol,* which she had long enshrined in her heart’s warmest affection, was suddenly shivered just at the moment when she thought she held it firmly in her grasp. To her young heart, the trial was a crushing one. She mourned, murmured, and repined; the sorrow told its tale upon a fragile form and delicate constitution. Suppressed grief—for she was too proud to manifest it outwardly—occasioned the rupture of a small blood-vessel, and it was then deemed advisable that she should be sent abroad to recruit her shattered health.

“Accompanied by her father, she reached Calais, and proceeded from thence to a very pretty and healthy spot about nine miles from Calais. There her father left her, in the midst of kind friends, and it was there she first thought of eternity. Weary, worn, and sad, she yearned for rest; she had lost a prize, and in her heart was

* This was the lady who first introduced her into society.

an aching void, which only the One whom she *knew not*, could have filled.

“She, however, determined to become religious; the world had ceased to woo her, its pleasures to charm her, and now nothing remained for her but to make herself a Christian—and this she tried her best to accomplish. The Bible was read night and morning; prayers were said: yes, even delicate though she was, she would often rise at three o’clock in the morning, and resort to the garden, in the month of December, thinking that prayers said at such a cost would surely gain her admittance into heaven. Thus passed six months, and at the end of that period she returned to her own home, chastened and sad, with a yearning after something she possessed not—Conversion!

“Truly she could inscribe upon all her best efforts to obtain peace, ‘Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again.’ But the Lord had purposes of mercy towards her, and the time was fast approaching when He should speak life to her dead soul.

“One Sunday evening she was led to go and hear an excellent minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom she had heard when she was quite a child, and who then made a great impression upon her young heart. She went, and the prayers over, the minister ascended his pulpit and gave out his text: ‘To die is gain.’ Burning with zeal for souls, the man of God portrayed in vivid colours those to whom to die would *not* be gain. After enumerating many classes, he depicted the proud Pharisees, trusting to their own works and righteousness, and then concluded by showing the character of those to whom to die *is* gain.

“Henrietta listened in rapt attention; tears, scalding tears, coursed down her cheeks. She had often wished to die, but now she felt that to her, proud Pharisee as she was, to die would not be gain. The service concluded, she returned to her home in an agony of soul; all was one mighty chaos within, and not a ray of sunshine shed its beams on that convicted heart; truly it was a ‘darkness that might be felt.’ The week passed in wretchedness and misery: all her fancied righteousness had been torn to shreds; she could not read; she could not pray; and she knew not the simple plan of salvation.

“Another Sabbath dawned, and in the evening of it she again attended the same church. The same minister proclaimed the Gospel, and this time his text was, ‘Lo! He cometh in clouds, and

every eye shall see Him.' The arrow of conviction entered more deeply into her soul. If to die would not be gain, the Lord's second advent would be worse to her still. How could she meet Him?

"She returned home. 'The night of weeping' was continuing, but ere long the morning of joy should break forth.

"A friend remarked to her, that if she were seen weeping so much in church, the people would think she was a *great sinner*. Her reply was prompt. 'They will not think me a greater sinner than I think myself. Another Sunday came its round, and she started in the evening to the same place of worship, remarking to a servant who accompanied her, 'Unless I get some comfort to-night, I do not think I dare go again: it is too much for my mental frame.' Entering the church, she saw the Communion-table spread for the commemoration of the Lord's Supper. In her own breast she resolved she would not stay to it. The prayers she hardly heard. She craved for some word which should afford her one gleam of light and hope.

"With trembling eagerness, she listened for the text. It was announced. 'This man receiveth sinners.' O joyous news! Was it true? Then she might come! Was it true? Then she might be saved! Was it true? Then she would be received! She heard no more—she wanted nothing more—the burden was gone—the darkness was past—the void was filled; and peace, such as the world giveth not, hushed the troubled waters of her soul to *rest*. She did not turn away from the Table of the Lord, for now that the *blood* was applied to the lintel of her heart, she might eat the Lamb by faith."

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," had shone into the heart of Geraldine Hooper, "to give the light of the knowledge of His own glory in the face of Jesus Christ." The precious text which has been a word of life to so many, was the first beam that penetrated her soul's gloom. It had to struggle with much darkness. It was but the promise of better things, a dawn, not full daylight, but it was destined to brighten into perfect day. The seed had fallen into good ground, prepared by the plough of affliction, and watered by the

dews of the Spirit ; it was to take root, spring up, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

The Rev. J. M. Dixon, Rector of Trinity Church, Bath, was the messenger selected by God to bear the glad tidings to this troubled heart, and turn its night of weeping into a morning of joy. To the day of her death Geraldine Hooper retained for him a feeling of deep and grateful love. She yearned above all for his spiritual prosperity, and desired and prayed that he might be continually used in leading sinners to a saving knowledge of the truth. She longed that his crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ should be a bright one, studded with many a gem.

Yet as one plants and another waters, as one lays the foundation and another builds thereon, so, as one had rooted this plant in Christ Jesus, another was commissioned to lend important aid in its culture, and be the means of much growth in grace and knowledge to the young convert, as well as the instrument of leading her into paths of public service to God.

The Rev. W. Haslam, now of Curzon Chapel, Mayfair, London, a well-known and successful evangelist, whose labours are not limited by parochial boundaries, but extended far and wide, was at that time curate of Trinity parish. Geraldine Hooper (who, although converted, was still a good deal in the world), first met him at a Bible-reading he then held in Darlington Street, to which she was taken by a friend. She was interested in the truth she heard expounded on that occasion, and led to feel the inconsistency of her life with her profession. She remarked, "I can't come here and go on with worldly society—I must give up one or the other." Shortly afterwards she had a serious and even dangerous



TRINITY CHURCH, BATH.



illness, during which Mr. Haslam visited her, and prayed and talked with her. She resolved, if she should recover, which at the time seemed hardly probable, to live more unreservedly to the Lord. She was raised up, and she kept her resolution ; from that time she gave up the world, and began to devote herself to the good of others, and to the work of God.

The work of God! We pause for a moment on that expression. What, is it so, that God has a work in this world, and that He permits feeble and sinful mortals to help him in its accomplishment? The statesman is absorbed with his far-seeing plans, the scientific man with his discoveries and investigations, the man of business with his enterprises, the artist with his loved avocation, the author with his book, the mechanic with his handicraft, even the labourer with his toil. How intent is each upon his *work!* But what is *the work of God?* What is the undertaking in this world which absorbs pre-eminently the Divine interest? It must be something stupendous, something worthy of God, something infinitely unlike planting and building, buying and selling; yea, infinitely above the noblest human employment. The work of GOD, what can it be? Oh let earth adore and heaven wonder! The WORK OF GOD in this world, is the SALVATION OF SINNERS. The one object on which the Triune God has, if we may so say, set His heart, is the recovery of lost and ruined men and women, to life and purity and joy. For this object God counts nothing too costly, nothing too difficult; for this object the Father gave the Son; for this object Jesus lived and died; for this object the Holy Ghost came, and remains in the Church; and *towards this object* saved sinners are graciously per-

mitted to contribute their aid. It is wonderful, but true; God has in a sense made Himself dependent on the aid of His people for the attainment of the design dearest to Him. Redemption is accomplished, the banquet is prepared; “all things are now ready;” the glad tidings may be proclaimed to every creature; but, “how shall they hear without a preacher?” Ambassadors for God are required, and angels are not selected for the office. The message of mercy through Christ is committed only to sinners saved by grace, and worms of the dust are selected as “workers together with God.” We shall have much to record of the “work of the Lord” in the following pages, for it was the object to which Geraldine Hooper’s life was devoted and an expression frequently on her lips, and we wish that the meaning we attach to the phrase should be clearly understood. Oh, how would it elevate every evangelistic effort, and every ministerial duty, if God’s servants as they enter the pulpit or ascend the platform, as they approach haunts of vice, or the beds of death, were more deeply and constantly imbued with the conviction—“I am about my Father’s business, I am, in a very real sense, *helping God to accomplish the work He has at heart.*”

As a specimen of the earliest work of our dear friend, we give a case described by her in the little tract before alluded to, as having occurred very shortly after her own conversion:—

“Henrietta H—— was saved, saved from all eternity, saved *for* all eternity; and now her earnest desire was, that she might in the Lord’s hands be instrumental in saving others. She had worked *for* salvation, now she would work *from* salvation. That week she sought guidance from the Lord, and was led to go down one of the most wretched streets in the city alluded to. When she reached the

end of it, a miserable woman rushed up to her, and said, 'Be you a district visitor?' 'I am anything you like to call me,' she replied. 'Well, then, do come here; my poor man is in a terrible state: he wants some one to read and pray with him.' The young lady followed the poor creature up a dark staircase; and as she entered a dirty room, she heard a man's voice saying, 'Have you brought him?' 'No, I ain't; but I have *sum'un* quite as good as a minister.' Miss H—— approached the dying man, and said, 'You want something. What is it?' '*Mercy*,' was the reply. Sweetly fell the words on a heart prepared by the Holy Spirit for the reception of the truth:— '*This Man receiveth sinners.*' 'Where is that?' eagerly asked the dying recipient. 'In God's Word;' and then she gently told him the story of her own conversion. 'Say it again,' was his earnest request, 'read me all about it.' For many weeks she visited him daily; and when his last moments drew nigh, he said to her who had ministered the Word of Life to him, 'One high wall,' (meaning death,) 'and I shall be in glory. Bless you for coming to see me! '*This Man receiveth sinners.*'"

But they who would be skilful workers must acquaint themselves with the tools they will have to use; they who would teach others must first learn. The dear young convert of whom we speak felt this, and soon after she received the love of the truth, she joined a Bible-class conducted by her friend and pastor, the Rev. J. M. Dixon, in the vestry of Trinity Church. Her quick intelligence enabled her to grasp the teaching she received there, and her retentive memory treasured all up safely for future use; while the sweet, original, and ingenuous character of her remarks made her a favourite pupil. In after years, when it was sometimes said to her, "But, why do you attend that class now? You are too advanced to be taught with children,"—she would reply, "I hope I shall never be too advanced for a Bible-class."

She took a class in the Sunday-school very soon after her conversion, and subsequently herself conducted a Bible-

class in connection with the church which she attended. All the important and responsible engagements which crowded upon her in her subsequent years, never caused her to neglect this Bible-class. Nothing but unavoidable engagements or absence from Bath ever induced her to miss it; and the last public service she attempted was to conduct it. She loved her girls—and they loved her, and very many owe their conversion to her words and prayers in the Trinity Infant-schoolroom. She also began visiting a good deal in Kingsmead Square and Avon Street. Her early efforts were not so distinctly for the spiritual good of others, as they afterwards became. She was too young a convert to have much skill in dealing with souls for eternity at that time; but in a bright, kind way, she went about ministering to the sick, teaching and reading to the aged, and helping Mr. Haslam when he held out-door services in the street, by leading the singing, acting as "whipper in" for the congregation, and by assisting in various ways to keep order, and to follow up individual cases. None refused her cheerful invitation to come to the meeting, and when a good audience had been gathered outside, she would lead them singing into the chapel. For the sake of example, she became a total abstainer, which she continued to be as long as her health permitted, and she took a warm interest in getting up a temperance society, the meetings of which she always attended, reading to the people when nobody was there to speak.

In the winter of 1861-2, she began an early morning prayer-meeting in Avon Street (six o'clock) for the poor, before they went to their day's work. She called it "family worship," and never missed it save when, as was not unfrequently the case, she was ill, when Mrs. Haslam sup-

plied her place. The people liked and frequented it. Some one once said: "You must *pay* the men to go at that hour!" "O no!" she replied, "I only told them if they liked to come I would meet them, and they never give me a chance to stay at home!"

In the summer of 1862, Mr. Haslam was absent for six weeks, and she took all the visiting, classes, and meetings in Avon Street, on herself, writing constantly to keep him informed how things were going on. When he, or any other minister was there, however, she would do nothing more than raise the singing; and even before Mrs. Haslam, she would never speak to the people. Others consequently had no idea of the gifts lying latent in her—they regarded her as an active, devoted, and most efficient helper, but had no anticipation that she would ever be more. But he "that is faithful in little" shall have much committed to his stewardship, and he that occupies to the utmost a small sphere, is often called to fill a large one.

Like her Master, Geraldine Hooper was "moved with compassion," as she beheld in frequent walks up Holloway the miserable results of sin. Burning with desire to make known to its poor unhappy victims the Saviour who alone can deliver from it and them, she obtained the loan of a small kitchen, in which she assembled a few of the inmates of the court in which it was situated, and essayed a Gospel meeting. Her friend Mrs. Haslam was with her when, for the first-time, she gave an address in this little kitchen, and was absolutely startled at the discovery of her powers. This meeting she continued till the numbers anxious to be present far exceeded the available space. She applied for permission to use a large schoolroom attached to St. Mark's Church,

which, however, was refused. She therefore transferred her meetings to the Temperance Hall, whither her Holloway congregation followed her, and were reinforced by large accessions from Beechen Cliff and Widcombe. By degrees, persons from all parts of the city began to frequent these meetings; large numbers were converted, and a band of Christian helpers soon gathered round her—the fruit of her labour in the Lord.

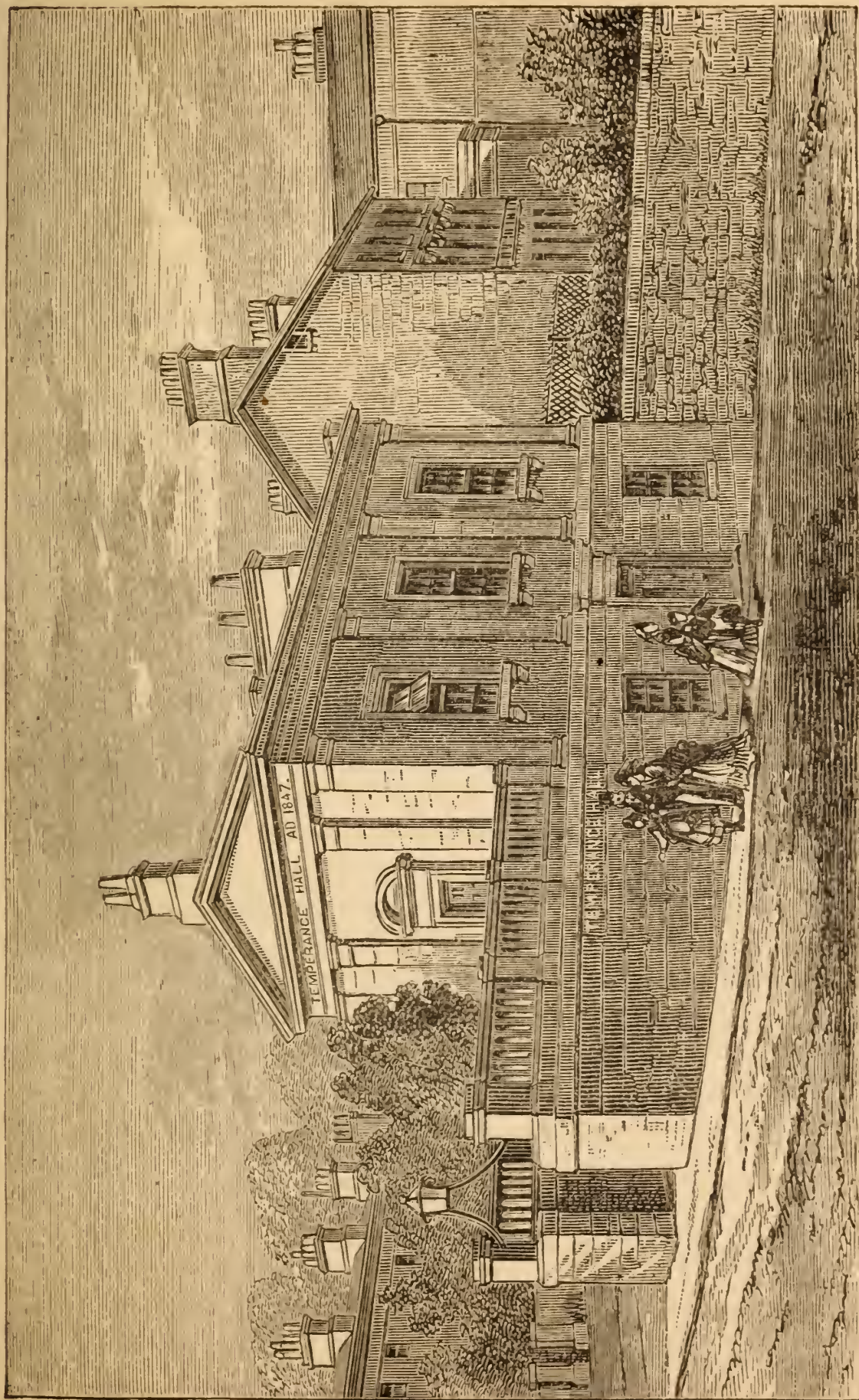
The novelty of a lady preaching, of course attracted many at first. Had Miss Hooper laboured only a short time in each place, the popularity of her ministry might naturally have been in large measure attributed to this source. But she laboured for more than ten years, almost without intermission, in Bath. She was as well known a preacher as any minister in the city, and so far from numbers falling off when curiosity was satisfied, they increased continually to the day when she preached her last sermon. Curiosity had nothing to do with bringing hundreds year after year to drink in the words of life from her lips. The excitement of novelty had long died away; the attractive power lay in something deeper, something which failed not; and so her influence never waned, but steadily increased to the close.

From the Temperance Hall the meetings were removed to a larger room, under the Meeting House of the Society of Friends in York Street. Her interest in her work at this time is shown by the following letter written during a temporary absence from Bath:—

“WOOTTON BASSETT,

“*Sept. 29th, 1862.*

“MY DEAR FRIENDS—It has been very gratifying to me from time to time, to receive such cheering accounts of you all. I have had you constantly in remembrance, both in my prayers and in my thoughts, and indeed you now and then share my *dreams* as well, so you will



TEMPERANCE HALL, WIDCOMBE, BATH.



not think that I forget you ! I was very much pleased to hear that you had such a nice meeting last Tuesday, and I hope there will be a good number present this evening. You have indeed the advantage of many privileges, and never forget, my dear people, that the Lord will require an *account* as to *how* you have *used* these privileges. You will not be able to plead in the judgment day, that “ no man cared for your soul,” you will not be able to plead, like the poor heathen, that you never heard the sweet sound of the Gospel invitation to perishing sinners. Ah ! no ; day after day, it rings in your ears. Do not, I beseech you, let it sound for the *last* time *unheeded* and uncared for ! Only last Thursday a poor man in this parish died from *drink*. His end was a fearful one ; he had often been *warned*, but he had never *heeded* the warning, and at last he was stretched on a bed of sickness. Only *one week's* suffering was permitted to him. A few moments before he died, he said to a friend who stood by, ‘ Oh, Jim, how I wish I could *live my life over again*. ’Tis no use *wishing now* ; I feel there is *no hope* for me, nor *mercy* either ; *all* that is *past*. I lived to and served the *devil* all my lifetime, and now he has got me, and I can't *cheat* him ; and oh, Jim, I am *lost ! lost !* for ever ! ’ These were his LAST WORDS. God forbid that they should be *yours* or *mine*, dear friends ! May the Lord grant you His grace, that you may be *saved for ever* with an *everlasting salvation* !

“ I know you will like to hear that my health is much improved, although I do not feel very strong yet. I am enjoying the quiet very much, but I am looking forward with great pleasure to seeing you all again. It seems an age since I left you. On Wednesday I am going to Cheltenham for a fortnight, and after that visit is paid I hope to be in your midst once more. To each and all who labour amongst you remember me most affectionately, and esteem them very highly yourselves, in love for their work's sake. Be *stedfast*, be *watchful* ! continue instant in *prayer* for yourselves, your families, and your teachers, and for her who, with much Christian love, remains,

“ Your very sincere Friend,

“ GERALDINE HOOPER.”

About this time she had a remarkably vivid and apparently God-sent dream, which produced so strong an effect on her as to make her ill for a week afterwards.

She used occasionally—not often—to relate it in preaching in subsequent years, and it was blessed in several cases to the awakening of young people to the danger of a life of pleasure and sin. She used to say, “I dreamt that I was standing on the edge of a magnificent cliff, overhanging a lovely lake. While I was admiring its beauty, I heard a voice as if coming up from the depths of the lake, saying, ‘Don’t come near this lake, death lies here.’ Hearing the sound of voices behind me, I turned and saw a large concourse of people coming up the steep incline of a broad road which led on to the cliff. I rushed towards them, crying with a loud voice, ‘Don’t go near the lake, *don’t* go near the lake, death lies there.’ Some attended to my earnest entreaty and turned back ; others halted for a moment and then passed on. I ran forward and again entreated them to stop. One of the foremost, a young woman whom I knew well, said, ‘Oh, one step more and then I will turn back !’ She and a group of giddy companions went on, and I saw them all fall over the cliff, into the deadly lake. I cried aloud for a boat, but no boat was visible. I found a rope, but it was not long enough ; and as I stood watching in breathless agony, I heard the voice of the young ringleader, as she sunk beneath the waters, exclaiming in anguish and despair, ‘One step more, one step more, and my soul is lost ! lost for ever !’ The words were repeated twice, and she sank to rise no more !”

Her private ministrations to the poor were very often blessed to them. She seemed to see just the truth they needed, and like a skilful doctor hit at once on the right remedy. A clergyman met her once as he came out of the house of a dying woman. “Do come and see Mrs. —, she is dying unhappy, anxious, and nothing I can say gives

her any comfort." They turned back—she stood a minute by the bedside, and then said emphatically, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea come, buy wine and milk, *without money and without price.*" The last words she repeated three times—slowly—as if designing an explanation by the very tones of her voice, when suddenly a bright light dawned upon the face of the sufferer. She had been trying to get it the wrong way; but the Spirit opened her eyes; she saw it was "without money and without price," and the burden rolled off in a moment. She stretched forth her hand that was getting cold, with the damp dew of death, and said "God bless you! 'without money and without price!' I have it now! I see it now! Breathe one prayer for me, and then kiss me before I go," and then she said, "I will bless you in heaven where I shall meet you. God bless you for the message '*without money and without price!*'"

Whenever her health, which was not very strong, obliged her to leave Bath for a little rest and change, the love she bore to the people and her work among them, made her impatient to return. When staying for a fortnight with her aunt at Malvern, she wrote, "I am much enjoying the repose and beauty of this lovely place, . . . but I am longing to be in your midst again, though I feel it is well to come apart and rest awhile." On another occasion, when sojourning at Aberdovey, she writes, "They kindly wish me to stay till the end of October, but I cannot delay a day beyond Sept. 29th. I long to get back to my work, for I feel every day how short the time is, and how great is the privilege of telling poor sinners about a precious Saviour.

. I have been inhaling, to-day, the fresh, invigorating breezes, and my heart has been soaring

upward and homeward. How one longs for the moment when our eyes shall behold ‘the King in His beauty.’ Meanwhile, ‘O for a closer walk with God,’ a mind more assimilated to Christ’s, a heart to cultivate more and more intimate communion and fellowship with Him.”

But whether enjoying the sea breezes and seeking health in retirement, or whether in the midst of her usual engagements at home, she always kept her life-work in view. The providence of God led her once, when at the sea-side, to stay at the home of a young friend whose father and brother were both ill in consumption. She did not see the lad, who was confined to his room, but the father she judged from his appearance to be a dying man. She asked her young friend if he was a believer, and was grieved by the reply, “My father will permit no one to speak to him on the subject of religion ; it is entirely interdicted in his presence.” The father *died* a few days afterwards, giving no sign that it was well with his soul. Her heart was now intensely troubled about the son, to whom the doctor refused her admission, saying that any further agitation, or the fear that he might be dying, would do him a serious injury. She grieved over this cruel kindness, and was driven to the only resource left open to her—earnest and constant prayer. With her young friend, she pleaded the promises of God, and, as it were, travailed in birth for the soul of this poor youth. But no door of hope seemed to open. Her visit drew to a close, and the doctor and the invalid himself, both denied her entrance. It was a trial of faith and patience, but she prayed and hoped still. At last, on the morning of the day she was to start for home, a message came that the youth wished to see her. He was

propped up in his bed with pillows when she entered ; worldly books were scattered on the bed, and a map lay open before him. Was he planning for some journey, when the shroud, the coffin, and the narrow house were awaiting him ? Time pressed ; after tenderly greeting him, and sadly noting the signs of a dying body and a dead soul, she said, “ You seem to be fond of geography ; do you know anything of the geography of that land to which you are going ? ” He turned his brilliant eyes on her, with a bewildered look, as if he hardly understood the question. She did not give him time to reply, but continued, “ Dear young friend, I am so glad of this one opportunity of speaking to you about your soul and your eternal interests. Do not consider it harsh or unkind of me, a stranger, to tell you that your complaints are of a most serious and alarming nature, and that I fear you are leaning on a broken reed in cherishing a hope of recovery ! Very soon to you, as to your father, this world, with all its joys and sorrows, will be past ; very soon the silver cord will be loosed, the golden bowl broken. Do let me urge you earnestly and affectionately to prepare to meet your God ! Jesus is willing to be your Saviour, God is willing to pardon and cleanse you ; but oh, delay not, lest it be too late ! ” After explaining simply the way of salvation, she said, “ May I pray with you ? ” And on his assenting, poured out her heart in fervent petition, and then took leave of the dying lad, whom she had seen for the first and last time, and started on her homeward journey. A few days after this interview, the invalid asked his sister to get some pious minister to come and see him. She did so ; he poured out a troubled heart, received the Gospel message, and in a few days more death did its work, but *not till it had*

been robbed of sting. Her heart was rejoiced when she heard that he had laid hold on eternal life 'ere he fell asleep.

She had to undergo at this time a good deal of petty persecution. Much jealousy and unkindness were manifested by some who ought to have been her counsellors and helpers, and the novelty of the line of service into which she had been led, excited, of course, the antagonism of all who were more conservative than candid—all who accepted custom as an authority, and were too prejudiced to "search the Scriptures" to see whether they indeed condemned her course. She had to face opposition both at home, in the Church, and from the world. Very often her heart was keenly grieved by cruel misconstruction of her motives, by bitter words, and malicious stories, circulated in Bath and elsewhere. She had grace, however, not to resent this conduct. A friend who knew her well at the time says, "Never did I hear a word of murmuring, or bitterness, or anger come from her lips. She used to tell her grief to her heavenly Father, but never spoke of it even to her most intimate friends. She would say, 'Why should I grieve them by letting them see my grief?'" A hymn written about this time seems expressive of feelings naturally produced by these experiences.

"Saviour! Thou wilt not leave me,
Thy child is sad and lone;
Let me feel the 'everlasting arms,'
And know 'I am not alone.'
My heart is worn and weary,
I fain would be at rest;
Oh pillow Thou this aching head
Upon Thy loving breast!"

“ I know there is a needs be
 For every grief I bear ;
 But Thou wilt soothe its anguish,
 And every sorrow share.
 Hast Thou not trod a lonely path
 With a burden all Thine own,
 When Thou didst breathe the plaintive cry,
 Alone, yet not alone ?

“ Speak ! speak those words to me, Lord,
 Those words so soft and sweet ;
 They will calm the ruffled waters,
 And tell of joy complete :
 Oh let me claim them now, Lord,
 This promise as my own ;
 E'en though the path be dreary
 Alone, yet not alone ”

The extent to which jealousy influences even some who make a profession of personal piety is almost incredible. A spirit the very opposite of that of the noble Baptist, who said, “ He must increase, but I must decrease ; this, my *joy*, therefore is fulfilled,”—the very opposite of that which animated Paul, when he rejoiced that Christ should be preached, even though “ of contention,”—seemed to possess some of her own sex. So evil and contemptible a spirit naturally used evil and contemptible means to manifest itself. One of these was an indefatigable circulation of slander. Geraldine Hooper was too pure-minded and too loving to conceive the possibility of professing Christians inventing malicious rumours, for the mere purpose of injuring her character and impeding her work ; and even when she heard, on undoubted authority, that such was the case, her patient grace and sweet amiable temper led her to take no notice of such conduct, keenly as it pained her. In a letter written about this

time to a friend who had mentioned to her these rumours and their author, she says :—

"I leave her in the Lord's hands, as I do all my persecutors, enemies, and slanderers. It is well for me and needful that I should have some thorn in the flesh, lest I should be exalted above measure. They seek to 'curse whom the Lord hath not cursed,' and would be well content if they could close my lips that I might not speak of Jesus; but out of the abundance of my heart my mouth must speak. These trials are sometimes very depressing, but they are all so many errands to the throne of grace, and any grief that sends us there is a blessing. . . . I can safely affirm that I do not feel a particle of hatred or revenge towards those who seek to spread abroad such calumny; yet it causes me intense pain, for my nature is acutely sensitive. Please send this letter to your inquiring friends. . . . This is the first time I have noticed these reports, and it shall be the last."

This, however, was saying more than in the sequel proved true; for malice, presuming upon her forbearance, went a little too far, and endeavoured so to blast her character that she was driven, in order to defend her spotless reputation, to demand, under threat of legal proceedings, full retraction and apology, which was made, and a wholesome lesson thus taught, that when Christian principle does not restrain the tongue of the slanderer, the law of the land does.

During the remainder of 1863 she continued to work, both in Bath and in some neighbouring places, where she occasionally gave addresses. Her friends, the Haslams, had removed in the month of September to Buckenham Rectory, Norfolk, and were settled in the midst of a number of remote villages, where great spiritual dearth existed. Very few of the older people were able to read, and multitudes of them were utterly unacquainted with Gospel truth. Among these villagers Mr. Haslam was

earnestly labouring, and on Sunday evenings, when he was preaching at a distance from Buckenham, Mrs. Haslam had invited the neighbours to join the family circle at the rectory for religious and scriptural instruction. The gracious Spirit of God crowned their labours with special blessing; a time of spiritual revival commenced, the people eagerly flocked to the rectory on these evenings, and in such numbers that the room very soon became too small, and the meetings were held in a place fitted up for the purpose in the grounds. Before long, this too was overcrowded, and the meeting was removed to a large barn, which afforded more space for the people. Just at this time (December, 1863) Geraldine Hooper went to Norfolk to visit Mr. and Mrs. Haslam, intending to take a fortnight's rest. She seemed to come under the influence of the same blessed Spirit of Revival, and to get a fresh baptism from on high. After one of the meetings in the barn, Mrs. Haslam, without forewarning her, said, at the conclusion of her own address, "And now my young friend from Bath will say a little to you, dear hearers." There was no alternative. She had never spoken in so public or large a meeting before. It cost her an effort at first, but it was only for a few moments; very soon the tide of thought and feeling rose and carried all before it; it could not be checked. Mrs. Haslam was astonished at the fluency, fervour, and power with which she spoke, and the effect on the hearers was wonderful. From that evening they crowded from every direction to hear her, and very soon the barn was too small. The services had to be held in the open air, with a few lamps hanging from the leafless branches of the trees, the people sheltering themselves as best they could from

the chill air of those cold, frosty nights. Christmas came. Many can never forget the thrilling tones with which she asked for "room for her Master" in the hearts of the people. "There was no room for Him in the inn, no room for Him in the world, but would not they open to Him? He sought to dwell with them;" and she pleaded by all that was tender that their hearts should receive Him, reminding them that "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Mrs. Haslam says, "I recall most vividly her looks of love and words of compassion as she saw the poor people crowding round her, and how she burst out into a torrent of earnest prayer for the wandering sheep having no shepherd."

Surrounding villages sent petitions that she would visit them also, and accompanied by Mrs. Haslam she went and spoke in barns and chapels wherever they were invited. Her preaching and her prayers had an unction and power that was most manifestly blessed to souls, and aroused the attention of the whole neighbourhood. "Hundreds of souls," says Mr. Haslam, "were brought to the Lord under it, who still live to testify of the reality of the work. Six of our own children were converted one evening when she was reading and praying with them." In one spacious barn, which held nearly 1,000 people, a series of services were conducted. There were always a great many anxious souls to be dealt with after her addresses, and many that had been brought into the glorious liberty of the Gospel. Mr. Haslam, who was generally engaged in preaching elsewhere, rarely heard her; but one Sunday evening, having returned to the rectory before they had concluded, he found at least 1,000 people standing ankle-deep in the

snow, and a number of others sheltering in a small adjacent school-room. By the moonlight he saw Mrs. Haslam and Miss Hooper up in a cart or waggon. They had been speaking by turns, and he happened to hear her tell, in her bright, happy way, a story which amused the people at first, though, as she applied it, the smiling turned to weeping. It was of a person who went to a lunatic asylum, and who was standing alone on a balcony, watching the inmates amusing themselves in a garden, congratulating himself on being safe out of their reach, when, to his dismay, suddenly a great strong man with a whip in his hand stepped out of the window into the balcony, and insanely bade him jump down immediately. Seeing him hesitate, "Jump down, jump down," he reiterated. "Oh," said the gentleman with great presence of mind, "any fool can do that! that's easy enough! Come you with me, and I will show you a trick worth two of that! Can you jump *up*?" So he led the lunatic to the door, down the stairs, out into the garden in front of the balcony, saying, "There now, just you jump up to that balcony; jump away," and he left the strong man trying to do his best. "Doing his best! Yes," said she, "and that's just what some of you are doing." Then, very gravely and solemnly, "It is easy to jump down into sin and into hell—*try and jump up the other way*; and if you can't succeed even after doing your best, ask the Lord to lift you up."

Speaking of this "time of refreshing," Mr. Haslam says:—

"The Lord gave her great acceptance among the people, and when they heard she was to preach in a place, the barn or room would be filled long before she arrived. Last week a man who had been a very wicked man, and who was converted under her ministry in

1863, called to see me at Yarmouth. He had heard of her death. ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘it smote my heart when I read it. I could not help crying,’ and the dear fellow began crying again. ‘Ah!’ he said, ‘how well I remember the night when her words convinced me of sin. I sat on the form, not daring to move; some one pointed me out to her as a very wicked man; she came right over to me, sat down and talked, and I just listened,—I didn’t know what to do or say; but, bless the Lord! I got converted that night.’ He did indeed, and he has been a happy and steadfast champion for the truth ever since; and there are scores and scores of others, now mourning her departure, who will be her crown of rejoicing hereafter.

“The last Sunday evening she spoke at Buckenham there were more than 1,800 people in the grounds, though it was a cold winter’s night, the 16th February, 1864. We knew the number because we gave a tract to each, and more than 36 packets of 50 each were required. They went away weeping at her departure.”

That last evening she spoke in the open air, by the bright moonlight, on the words, “*On the last day*, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink.” She described the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles: the verdure of the green booths and the beauty of the palm branches had come to an end, all that verdant decoration had withered, faded and died; and then she showed how, like that, *all* earthly joys must pass away and perish, how there must come a “last day” to all temporal pleasures. “The last day of our happy meeting is come now,” she said, “perhaps the last opportunity of salvation for some of you.” She then most solemnly warned them that there would come a last day of grace, and a last day of life to each one of them, and affectionately urged them to fly to the Saviour, who so lovingly invites the thirsty to satisfy every desire at the everflowing fount of His love.

The enthusiasm with which the people regarded her

was unbounded. They had combined their little free-will offerings in order to present her with some expression of their love : hundreds gladly contributed their pence towards this testimonial, and a handsome gold watch was purchased next day. A week after she was gone one man heard about this, and walked four miles to bring his sixpence, which coin, though too late to help pay for the watch, was duly transmitted to her.

When waiting for a few minutes on a platform once in Norfolk, a friend directed her attention to an unconverted man standing on the opposite side of the line, saying, "He is very hard to reach with the truth." He was a gamekeeper and was accompanied by a retriever dog. She quickly crossed the line, went up to him, and stroking his four-footed friend, said cordially, "What a beautiful dog you have here!" "Yes!" said the man rather gruffly; "but take care he doesn't bite you. He is not fond of strangers!" "O he won't bite me. Dogs know who are fond of them; no doubt you are very fond of him?" "That I am!" "Do you feed your dog?" "Yes, ma'am!" "House him?" "Yes, of course!" "Does your dog obey your word of command?" "Yes, ma'am!" "And you would be disappointed if he did not love and obey you?" "That I should," then looking proudly at his dog, "but Rover does love his master," and he patted the dog's head as it looked up trustfully in his face. "Would you be grieved if he followed a stranger?" "Yes," he replied, rather impatient at so many questions. "Ah!" said she, in a sad, tender, reproachful tone, "you ungrateful sinner, *what* a lesson does that dog teach you! God has fed you, housed you, cared for you, loved you, these many years—but you do not love or obey Him—you do not follow Him! He *so*

loved you that He gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross for your sins, and yet you never have loved Him in return ! *You* follow a stranger. Satan is your chosen master. The dog knows its owner—you know not yours ! Truly may it be said of you, ‘the ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master’s crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider !’” She looked sadly, yet kindly, at him as she earnestly uttered these words. His eyes filled with tears—he fixed them on his dog, and in a choking voice said, after a few moments, “Ah, Rover, Rover ! thee hast taught thy master a lesson this day ! I *have* been an ungrateful sinner, but by God’s help I’ll be so no longer.” The train was just arriving, so quoting a few of the precious promises of God’s word, she bade him adieu with a shake of the hand. That evening the gamekeeper was found for the first time in the prayer meeting, crying, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and soon he was rejoicing in a sense of pardon through the precious blood of Christ. Her friend happened some time after to mention this case of conversion when speaking at the Hanover Square Rooms, London. Next day he was accosted in the street by a soldier of the Guards, who said, “Aren’t you the gentleman that spoke in the Hanover Square Rooms last night ?” “Yes !” “Well ! I was there ; I didn’t care much about the singing or the speaking either, till you told about *that dog* ! I have a Rover at home ! O sir, it’s true of me, I’ve cared for *my God* less than that dog cares for *me* ! What a sinner I’ve been.” The incident led to the conversion of this man also..

This visit to Norfolk may be regarded as the commencement of her public evangelistic career. She had been at work more or less in Bath—one corner of the Lord’s

vineyard, for three or four years; but now the Lord, having tried and trained her in a small sphere, seemed to call her to a wider one. By revealing to her more fully her own capabilities and powers,—the ten talents that He had committed to her,—He awoke in her soul a deep sense of her responsibility to use them to the utmost in His service, and He gave her grace to resolve in His strength to gain, by their wise employment, other ten also.

From that Christmas 1863 to Midsummer 1872, when she entered into rest, she never laid aside the sickle she had now fairly grasped, and whose edge she had, as it were, tried with glorious results, save when from time to time, sickness rendered the willing hand too feeble to make use of it. She felt it was harvest-time and she dared not sleep, so she redeemed every opportunity, entered every open door, refused no invitation to labour which she could possibly accept; she invented occasions to assemble multitudes, in order to point them to the Lamb of God, and she kept her life-work ever before her. Pleasure, ease, health, society, the joys of home and of Christian communion,—all these she valued, but for none of them would she interrupt or suspend her work. Even in the bright trance-like days of “love’s young dream” the needle kept steady to the pole; she never preached more frequently or more fervently than that year. Up almost to the day of her marriage, and within a fortnight after it, she was at work, and from that time, till the glad summons “come up higher” reached her ear, the faithful messenger hastened and delayed not to finish the work that was given her to do. She preached Christ not less than between four or five thousand times, and rarely without winning souls.

And when love remonstrated and prudence tried to stay her steps, the spirit of her reply was ever the same, "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord has prospered my way." "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"





CHAPTER III.

(1865.)

The following characteristic little address, was printed on the back of Geraldine Hooper's Watchword-card for 1865, of which "Jesus only," was the motto.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"1864 is now passed and gone for ever! Its joys and its sorrows, its clouds and its sunshine, and above all—its many warnings, its many privileges, its many invitations—they, too, are flown, never to return! What account can we render of our stewardship during the past year? What account is recorded of you? 1865 has dawned upon us, and as we stand on the threshold of it, bear with me whilst I ask you earnestly and affectionately some most important questions regarding your soul's eternal welfare:—

Are you saved?

Are you Heavenward bound? or

Are you Hellward bound?

There are two Gates, two Roads, two Homes; through the wide or strait gate you have entered, in the narrow or the broad road you are walking, and to a home of eternal bliss or eternal woe you are journeying. You need not perish, God 'willeth not the death of a sinner.' He 'so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that all who should believe in His name might be *saved*.' Weary one, come; Burdened one, come; Heavy-laden one, come; Thirsty one, come to

JESUS ONLY.

His blood cleanseth from all sin,—repair to that fountain and bathe in its precious stream. You shall find pardon, peace, and a *sure refuge*, and enjoy, in its truest sense, a Happy New Year.

"Your affectionate friend,—G. H."

Perhaps one of the objects the Lord had in view in raising up such a *young* messenger of mercy was *the benefit of the young*. Sympathy is a source of power over others that can hardly be overrated. How many a minister is apt to think lightly of the impressions, and aspirations, and conflicts of the young ; and to how few consequently can the young really open their hearts. We subjoin a few extracts from a correspondence between Geraldine Hooper, and a young friend in whose soul's welfare she was interested ; which shows that in the midst of much bodily weakness, and under the pressure of heavy public claims on her time and strength, the state of a school girl's soul was not beneath her earnest and loving attention :—

“My darling M——, although I have been down in Avon Street for nearly six hours already to-day, and must in the course of another hour return for a prayer-meeting there, yet I must make a moment to write and thank you for your kind little note. I am glad you like ‘The Mountain Clamberers.’ Ah ! dear M——, the Christian has indeed a steep and barren path to climb, before he can reach his home ; but what a home it is to which he is pressing onwards ! May you and I, darling, press forward *together* in that straight road, the end of which shall be a *life of endless bliss with Jesus*. . . . My head has not pained me so much lately, but I have a troublesome cough which tries me.”

An attack of illness had obliged her to leave home for a little change. In her next letter she writes :—

“I went twice with my dear uncle to hear Mr. Spurgeon. His afternoon sermon was a rare treat and very solemn. Oh, dearest M——, what an awful thing to hear the gospel preached, and yet to remain unmoved, either by its invitations or its warnings. How patient the Lord Jesus is ! How long suffering ! How kind ! If any one treated us as we treat Him, we should soon cast them off. I do long to hear, my darling M——, that you have given your young heart to the Lord. I don't want to tread the ways of pleasantness, and paths of

peace *alone*. I want *you* to be my companion in my journey Zionward. How sweet to be sisters in Jesus! Will you not be mine? . . . I leave Cheltenham for Wootton Bassett next Tuesday week."

After an interval, during which she heard from the parents of her young friend that their child had been converted to God, she writes :—

"Dearest M——, I wrote to you lately on your birth-day. Now I have to rejoice with you over a birthday of far greater importance—a-day when there was joy in the presence of the angels of God over another sinner *saved* by grace. Dear M——, what a vast—what a mighty miracle has the Lord wrought upon us both! To Him be all the praise! Glory be to God! Satan has lost another captive. Christ has another jewel added to His crown, and there will be one more in the redeemed throng whose robes are washed white in the blood of the Lamb. Your feelings are just what used to trouble me. When I was first under conviction, I used to look inward and expect to find myself growing better every day; but, my expectations were always disappointed. And thank God they were; for depend upon it, dear M——, the more we know of Jesus, the more vile will self appear. The only remedy for a sin-sick soul is to look away from self altogether, and keep the eye of faith steadily fixed on Jesus. We cannot look in opposite directions at the same moment. When we look at self, we cannot be looking at Jesus; and thus Satan harasses the soul with doubts and fears. . . . It is so pleasant to have you as a sister in Jesus now, dear M——, and I trust that we may be able to help one another onwards. . . . It is very late, I must close with one word of exhortation: *cultivate closet prayer*, be much *alone with God*; a prayerless soul never prospers, and though prayers do not *save* us, a saved soul is a praying soul. When we love a friend, we *love to get close to their side*, to hold frequent converse with them. That we may feel so, as to our *best Friend*, is the prayer of your affectionate.—G. H."

Her young friend appears to have been afterwards troubled with doubts, and she writes in her next letter :—

“Satan would like you to believe you never were converted, because you feel thus, and that therefore you might as well serve him a little longer; but, dearest M——, put yourself to the test. Are you willing *to give up Jesus*? If you won't give Him up, you may be quite certain *He will never give you up!* Have you ever tried the remedy of telling Him how cold and dead you feel?

“Dear M——, surely the Christian needs many lessons in his daily walk that he may be worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. May it be our aim to glorify Him, and may His light so dwell in us, that its rays may be reflected in our every-day life!”

It seems from her next letter she had been to see her young correspondent at school amid her companions, and had not found an opportunity for speaking to her of the things of God. She says:—

“I felt very grieved, on getting home last night, that I had not mentioned the subject which is ever nearest to my heart. I do feel so deeply interested in your spiritual welfare, that you must pardon me if I send you rather a sermonizing letter! Are you living in close communion with Jesus, dear M——? Without it, your walk will never be consistent! It is from the mount of prayer that the Christian comes forth strengthened, and armed for conflict, trial, and temptation. Whatever else you give up, never, *never give up praying*. If you find it a task—even a wearisome task sometimes—never mind, pray on. Make that very feeling a subject for prayer. Tell it out to Jesus, and ask Him to make prayer a delight to you. I am writing this while suffering from my old enemy, neuralgia; but, although in much pain, I must add one word of affectionate exhortation. *Watch*, as well as pray; be on your guard, see which way the temptation comes, and when you see it coming, quick as lightning, *pray*. . . . Satan is ever on the aggressive; we must ever be on the defensive! The hardest enemy to be overcome is *self*. It is hydra-headed, no sooner is it crushed in one form, than up it springs in another, it needs to be crucified daily. ‘If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up the cross and follow me!’ Ask Him to make you what He would have you to be; I dare say you will often fail as I do myself, but *He will hear*

your prayer, and work in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. . . .

“I have been very ill for the last week—bronchitis. Now and then I feel as if the ‘earthly house of this tabernacle’ was fast crumbling to decay. My earnest desire is, to ‘spend and be spent for Christ.’ I only wish I had begun to serve Him earlier. It is such a comfort to me to know it is not anything I do that saves me, but what Jesus *has done*. How much of sin is mixed up in our holiest actions. If it were not for the blood ‘which cleanseth from all sin,’ where should I be? I have been obliged to give up the morning meetings this week to the Bible-woman, as I am so weak I can’t get up before the middle of the day.”

“I was sure you would enjoy your London visit. It is pleasant to be introduced to the great and noble of this world (when they love Jesus), but remember the child of God has the privilege not only of an *introduction*, but of constant-fellowship and oneness with Jesus Himself, who is ‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’ Oh, to live up to our privileges as ‘children of the heavenly King,’ more than we do! All earthly titles, and honours, and riches, and pleasures pass away. . . . Be not content, dearest M——, at having found Christ, or been found of Him. WALK with Jesus, LIVE for Jesus, TESTIFY for Jesus, *deny yourself*. ‘Even Christ pleased not Himself.’ Cultivate the plant of grace, and work, not for, but *from* salvation. . . . I have had a meeting of the pony-carriage boys—twelve were present last night, one has been converted, and many seem under conviction.”

“Dear M——, I was at Malvern when your note arrived. . . . I trust you will enjoy your Christmas holidays, and find them profitable to soul as well as body. How delightful the thought to you now, ‘I am going home,’ and how precious to us both as Christians the thought, that we are ‘*homeward bound*.’ See to it, that ‘forgetting the things that are behind’ you ‘press forward’ in the Christian race. *Do not be content with a name to live*; but strive, oh strive, after more holiness, more conformity to Jesus. Time is short, *very short*; be watchful, be much in prayer. God loves to hear His children’s voices! What I say to you I say to myself.”

“Dear M——, I write in the Oxford waiting-room, on my way home from Ridgemount, where I have been holding a series of meetings with much blessing. . . . I am busier than ever, and have not been

able to take any holiday for the last two years, with the exception of three days last September twelvemonth; but I am hoping to take a fortnight's rest in South Devon about the end of January. . . . About seventy come to the Bible-class now, and many have been brought to Jesus. . . . I must close with a word of *loving* exhortation. Beware of—watch against *soul declension*. Have frequent dealings with Jesus and His blood, and seek to live in the atmosphere of His presence. I need the same word of warning, for *it is far easier to work for Jesus than to live to Him.*”

“Dearest M——, I much enjoy receiving your nice long letters, although I am so tardy in answering them. I returned from Stamford late Saturday evening. Mrs. B——, invited me most kindly to remain and meet Mr. H——, but I have no time for holidays, only for work, therefore had to decline. On the previous Saturday, I went to the Old Hall, Wellington, returning on Monday. I spoke twice, and attended church twice the same day, and much enjoyed my short sojourn with Dr. and Mrs. C——. They are both precious children of God. I am to go again in February. Next week, I go to Endon, near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire; the following week to Ampthill, in Beds. Now I think I have told you all about my engagements. . . . I had the pleasure of meeting dear Octavia Jary in London, but not of hearing her. Lord A. Cecil called on me at Stamford. He is working with wonderful blessing there, and in adjacent villages. . . . My meetings here (in Bath) are thronged to overflowing. We think of taking a larger place. . . . Darling M——, I want to know about your spiritual growth. Are you walking as Jesus walked, living as Jesus lived, acting as Jesus acted, conversing as Jesus conversed? Oh let this be our one aim—our one desire! The Lord has taught me deep lessons the last two years. It is not sufficient to work as He worked; we must live as He lived. The Lord bless you, darling, and make you a blessing in the home-circle and out of it.

“Your affectionate friend,—G H.”

These letters were written at intervals, during the years 1862-65. When Geraldine Hooper became still more engrossed by public claims of an important character, she still kept up her loving, careful influence over this young heart. In 1866, after her large meetings

at Dunstable, where she had been speaking nightly to about 3000 people, she writes to her :—

“I will send you an account of the meetings. Your mamma would tell you of my visit to Luton. The Lord graciously blessed the Word. One hundred members were added to one chapel, and 30 to one Bible-class. . . . So you see, dear M——, I could not go to see you, much as I should have liked to do so. . . . I am glad to hear you are using up time, and I trust, darling, you are not forgetting the ‘one thing needful.’ The coming of the Lord draws very nigh! May we not be ashamed before Him! Rest assured I do not forget you.”

“I have been exceedingly busy since I saw you, and have rather over-worked myself. Yesterday I fainted frequently during the early part of the day, and how I managed to address the people in the evening I do not know, but that the Lord vouchsafes to strengthen His people in weakness. You ask about my engagements. Next week, Torquay; week after, Stamford; then Thame, Oxfordshire; then week after, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent. I shall return home every Saturday, except the 9th March.”

“Dearest M——, to-day is my first day downstairs since Saturday. I have been seriously ill and suppose I had overworked. I gave twenty-seven addresses in eighteen days. Congestion of the brain was feared, and for the last few days I have had to lie in a darkened room, seeing no one but doctor and nurse. But Jesus has been so precious, and friends so kind. My heart is overflowing with gratitude. . . . May the Lord encourage you, darling, in the instruction of the little ones. Mind you tell them of Jesus. I can’t give you much account of the Stamford, Todrington, &c., visits. At many of the meetings six or seven thousand were present, and there was manifest blessing. For the next three weeks I have not one spare day, and am not very strong. To-morrow I start for Aylesbury; Wednesday, Buckingham, and home on Saturday. I am bringing out a second edition of my hymn book, as the 15,000 are nearly all sold.”

We quote these letters, not merely as illustrating the character of their writer, but in the hope that they will recall to many a young Christian, her wise and loving

counsels to them also, and make them resolve, afresh to follow her godly exhortations.

In the winter of 1865 she visited some friends in London who were interested in an evangelistic work carried on in the neighbourhood of Notting Hill. She addressed several meetings in the Porto-bello school-room—some for navvies especially, others more general. One of those present says :—

“We were as much astonished as delighted by her thrilling addresses. The attention of everyone present was rivetted. The interest she awakened on the first occasion, and renewed from time to time subsequently, never passed away. We look forward to meeting with her in our home above, many, whom her earnest, loving appeals in that school-room, first led to think of eternal realities. She was almost unequalled in the pathetic strain. We often saw tears coursing down the cheeks of strong, powerful workmen after many a struggle to conceal their feelings, and, though we must not mistake emotion for conversion, still there *is no conversion without emotion*; and in many cases we knew those who were deeply moved by our sainted friend’s addresses, not only at Lonsdale schoolroom, but elsewhere, to be truly ‘turned from darkness to light,’ as their lives have since testified.”

At one of these meetings, in the summer of 1867 a man named George Campion was present. He had lived in London eighteen years, and for the last sixteen or seventeen had never entered any place of worship. He was a farrier, earned 36s. a week, and had his house, coals, and gas, free. Good wages are not always a blessing to the mechanic—sometimes they prove his curse. This man lavished his money on drink, music halls, and dancing saloons, and lived a dissipated and wretched life. For two years a Bible-woman had been calling weekly at his house, leaving a tract, and pressing him to go and hear the Gospel. “Come to the meeting, do,” she would say, but she always

got the same answer—"No, not to-night." At last, by the promise of a free ticket for a tea-meeting of navvies at which a young lady was going to preach, she induced him to attend this meeting. He was rather ashamed to go, having the impression that tea-meetings were "only for women," but, on seeing a gathering of men kindly waited on by many Christian ladies, he felt reassured. He got into a corner and waited, wondering which of the ladies was going to speak. After tea, Geraldine Hooper gave out the hymn,—

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto me and rest."

Her manner of reading this, greatly touched him. The prayer that followed moved him still more. Then she gave out the text,—*"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."* As she spoke, the tears began to choke George Campion, but he stifled his sobs, and buried his head in his hands. The address ended, and he heard the same voice pleadingly say,—

"O do not let the word depart,
Nor close thine eyes against the light ;
Poor sinner, harden not thine heart,
Thou would'st be saved—why not to-night ?"

We give the rest of the story in his own words :—

"As she repeated, 'Thou would'st be saved—why not to-night?' I burst into tears, and cried, 'O my God, I am a poor sinner; I will not harden my heart, if Thou wilt but save me. Oh my God, I want to be saved; but I don't know how.' She came up to me afterwards, and asked me *if I was saved?* I could not answer her a word. She said, 'Perhaps you have a praying mother?' My tears flowed afresh as I recalled my mother's kind warning voice. I went home in anguish of spirit. Next Sunday I went to Mr. Varley's Tabernacle, and his text was, 'Words whereby thou shalt be *saved*.' *Saved!* thought I

how strange! She talked about being saved—now he does the same. I know I'm not *saved*. I feel I'm lost. I'll go and hear her again. So I went Tuesday night. She was speaking on the words, 'Let us pass over to the other side.' 'You sin-stricken sinners,' she said, 'you are on the wrong side; the other side is the place where Jesus will lead you beside the still waters, and make you lie down in green pastures: come, let us pass over;' and she showed us how we must come to Jesus to get saved. I cried out, 'Oh my God, I am on the wrong side; take me, take me to the other side!' And oh, if ever any one prayed for poor sinners, that dear saint prayed that night for me. My heart was melted; joy and peace flowed into my soul. I went home a different man—a *saved* man by the grace of God."

This man has been for the last two years labouring faithfully as a town missionary at Hertford, and loves his work. He says, "Now I have no desire but to live and die for the dear Redeemer. I often think of Miss Hooper's earnestness; she spoke *as if everything she spoke about was real*; that's what won souls."





CHAPTER IV.

1866.

“I have set the Lord alway before me.”

“ADDRESS—1866.

“DEAR FRIEND,—The Year 1865 has been borne away on the wings of time and now standing on the verge of 1866 I am privileged, ‘through the good hand of our God upon us,’ once more to wish you a Happy New Year, one of which it shall be recorded, that Jesus is abiding in your heart, dwelling in your home, and manifested in your life and conversation. What home *can* be *truly* happy that entertains not Him for its Guest? what family circle complete at which He, the Elder Brother, is not present? And what friendship can be lasting, save that which is made in Christ Jesus? Dear friend, bear with me whilst I ask you if this is the experience of your soul:

Is Jesus your Saviour?

Your Advocate?

Your High Priest?

Your Friend?

If you can answer these questions in the affirmative, then, and then only, will you enjoy a Happy New Year. To you who are in Christ Jesus, I would say—Go forward prayerfully, trustfully, stedfastly, humbly; and when the cloud may lower, when the tempest is wild, and the horizon of your chequered life shall be overcast with sorrow and disappointment; when withered flowers of hopes crushed and blighted, are strewn thickly on your pathway, looking

upward, heavenward, homeward, unto Jesus, *fear no ill*. The tempest shall never shipwreck your bark whilst He sails with you : the silver lining shall be seen in the darkest cloud, and ere long the blighted flowers shall bloom again in regions where they shall never wither. Then standing in the presence of Jesus with golden harp in hand, we shall strike its sweetest, richest chords of praise, for the sorrows and the discipline of the way, which, as instruments in Jehovah's hands, weaned us from earthly idols, and led us to set our affections on things above. May this be your experience, dear friend, as I trust it may be mine.

"Yours in a precious Saviour,

"G. H."

The town of Luton, in Bedfordshire, has a population of about 20,000 inhabitants, and is the seat and centre of a manufacture of straw hats and bonnets, which employs a large number of young people, especially women. A gentleman who met Geraldine Hooper at Mr. R. Baxter's, in London, invited her to visit Luton, in May, 1866. She consented, and promised to go in a fortnight's time. He enlisted the sympathy and help of some Christian ladies in the town, and secured the use of the largest Wesleyan chapel, which seated more than 2,000 persons. The meetings were announced. No lady preacher had ever visited the town before, and a good deal of curious expectation was excited. Geraldine Hooper had no friends in Luton, but went as an entire stranger to deliver her Master's message. She was kindly received as a guest by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Seebohm, to whom, as well as to many others in the town and neighbourhood, she afterwards became sincerely attached. All were struck as she entered the pulpit with her appearance of extreme youth ; she was not well at the time, and had travelled that day from Bath, but, as was frequently her experience, strength according to her need was granted

her ; and she was enabled so to speak, that the immense congregation who had assembled to hear her were held in rapt attention, and deeply and powerfully impressed. A large number of inquirers and others remained at her invitation for prayer and praise. She held two or three services each day, during her stay, when the same scenes were repeated ; many Christians were roused and strengthened, and many waverers decided for the Lord, as well as many souls quickened to life eternal. She revisited this town on five or six different occasions, and was always most cordially welcomed. She preached in various chapels, and also in the Town Hall ; but there were always a great many who could not gain admission. People flocked in from the country round ; one dear man, who had entertained a strong prejudice against ladies preaching, went from curiosity to hear her, taking with him his wife. The Word reached his heart as well as that of his wife (who is since gone to glory), and he would never miss hearing her afterwards. If she was preaching anywhere at all within reach, he would put in his horse, drive off to the meeting, and care little if he spent good part of the night in driving home. “I have added up,” he says, “the number of miles I travelled to hear her, and find it was not less than 1,200,” and he mentions several of his acquaintance who were led to Jesus at these meetings. One friend writes :—

“I have often been surprised to hear with what interest strong, rough men will speak of her. I frequently attended the services in neighbouring places, and often after them, as I walked down the town, a countryman would stop me, and, touching his hat, would say, ‘I think I saw you at so-and-so, ma’am. Didn’t we have a beautiful sermon?’ And I think I never asked, ‘And are any good results visible in your neighbourhood?’ without being answered in the affirmative. The hearts of these men had been touched to lead

them thus to address a stranger, for generally I did not even know their names; but I always felt there was a loving Christian fellowship, good to meet with, and traced it to the power of the Holy Spirit in connexion with these services.”

On her second visit to Luton, some expressions of which she made use were regarded by some dear Wesleyan friends as too Calvinistic to suit their views or be preached in their chapel. She had been speaking from the tenth of John, about the Good Shepherd, and happened to say that “the devil would never have the satisfaction of rejoicing over a single sheep in hell that had been given by the Father to the Son.” A deputation waited on her next day and explained that the propagation of such sentiments in their chapel could not be tolerated, as they were quite contrary to Wesleyan doctrine. She said that she would abandon them and retract all she had said, could the deputation show her that she had uttered anything contrary to *Scripture*, but that while she read *there*, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life: and *they shall never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand;” and again, “No man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand,” she was afraid that, though she might preach in a Wesleyan chapel, she never could hold Wesleyan views. One gentleman observed, that though they could not be plucked out, yet they might *fall out*; and she replied, “Granted, for the sake of argument; still they can never perish, even if they do, for the *Scripture* cannot be broken.” This was not, however, “Wesleyan doctrine,” and so, greatly to the regret of many Wesleyans, as well as others, Geraldine Hooper on subsequent occasions never used the Wesleyan chapel, which, as it happened to be the largest in the place, was

the best suited for her meetings. Had she been fully aware of the strong feelings entertained by Wesleyans on this point, she would probably have avoided the subject when preaching in one of their chapels, kindly lent for her meetings. The newspapers gave pretty full reports of several of her addresses at this time, but we have not been able to procure them. Mr. Stevenson writes, with reference to her meetings in Union Chapel, Luton :—

“Never shall I forget those occasions. Her clear annunciation and musical voice made her attractive as a speaker. The chief impression, however, which she created was that she was animated simply by one desire,—to do good. Her earnestness was touching and habitual. Whilst she has been preaching, I have sometimes looked round and been struck with the rapt attention which she secured. I frequently observed some of the most unlikely persons in the town listening with awe and pleasure. The results of her labours were remarkable. All the churches in Luton benefited by them. Many were added to Christ’s Communion through her efforts.”

The Rev. W. Haslam says :—

“Once when in London I received a telegram to come to her help at Luton. The people there, at the expense of thirty or forty pounds, had covered in the space between two great factories, seated it with planks, introduced gas, and made it comfortable for her meetings. There had been 7000 there on the Sunday, and her voice had failed. I came on the Monday, and spoke to 6000, stayed with them till 11 p.m., and met them again at six in the morning, and again at noon. Then I left, she being rested enough to go on with her work for a few days longer.”

From Luton she went to Dunstable : the impression produced by her visit there will perhaps be best gathered from the following extracts from the *Dunstable Borough Gazette*. Under date 12th May, 1866, we find the following :—

“Great were the anticipations of the town respecting the visit of

Miss Geraldine Hooper, to preach three sermons on the last Sabbath and also on the following Monday and Tuesday. But these anticipations have been more than realized, and the feeling is, that last Sunday, Monday and Tuesday must be marked as red letter days in our history. All the circumstances and providential arrangements seemed specially to tend to make it an era never to be forgotten. The place erected was one for size and comfort (being securely seated and well illuminated with gas) as never was before in our time, and the arrangements altogether were such as gave universal satisfaction. The weather, which for some days previous was wet and gloomy, cleared up in the most remarkable manner, and threw a mantle of gladness upon the whole ceremony. This divine interposition should call forth the gratitude of the thousands who were favoured to be present. The number who availed themselves of worshipping in the pavilion was prodigious, and on such a scale which outstripped any meeting held in this town. The place, which will seat over 3000, was literally packed on Sunday evening, and the computation is that there were about 4000 present listening to the Word of Life. On Monday the same interest was manifested by the attendance, and the same number was again repeated on Tuesday.

“Now, to speak of the preacher and give anything like a conception of the eloquence, clearness, originality, fervour and earnestness, all of which burst upon you at the first utterance, is past our ability. On the Sabbath morning her first words, in announcing the hymn, said with such feeling and power, drew the tears from many eyes. Here we think many of our public men may take a lesson to profit. Like Miss Hooper, whatever they do, they should do it with a *whole heart* and ALL their strength. The subjects taken, as announced, were handled in a manner which showed originality of thought, a keen penetration of mind, and, not the least, a close acquaintance with Bible truths; it was of a truth, bringing out things NEW and not forgetting the old.

“The sermons were Gospel ones. There was no dealing in obtruse metaphysical doctrine, no mere ethical discourses, but the speaking out of truths of warning, of exhortation, of salvation in a way which went home to the hearts of the people. One great feature with these services was that, however prejudiced and obstinate the opponents to female preaching, their prejudices were all swept away as soon as they heard for themselves, and these antagonists proved the most earnest and enraptured listeners afterwards. As an evi-

dence of the magnetic power of the speaker's words, the persuasiveness of her manner and the mighty impression made, we have learned that several walked from near Bedford to be present at the Sabbath services. And such was the effect, the desire, the thirst within them, that on the following day they made the journey a second time to hear again thoughts which moved and words which burned. Those who carefully listened to the discourses, the manner and style of delivery, must have been conscious that they were peculiarly her own, no borrowing from anyone, an absence of anything like pedantry. It was the speaking forth of truths and doctrines which she realized and felt, which caused every sentence to fall with its full weight; and when the results are noted, the Christian part of the town ought to rejoice that the weight was such, that hearts were broken, stubborn wills gave way, and that God gave His own seal that HE was well-pleased with the labours of His servant. The Gospel under her hands is made attractive to all classes. The intellectual can listen and feel like as was said of the Messiah, that she spake 'as one having authority and not as the scribes'—for there is no submitting from fear to any class, or keeping back truths for fear of being offensive, so the illiterate may, as they listen with rapt attention, be allured to Christ. Who could but be struck with the orderly decorum of that vast assembly last Sabbath afternoon? No sleeping eyes, vacant looks, anxious enquiries respecting the time, and hoping for the period to come when the closing words should be said; but countenances which said, 'Go on, for the words are sweet, the warning's true.' And when the preacher concentrated all the powers of her soul upon that appeal,—an appeal too telling to be forgotten, it was as though an angel was speaking, warning, and pleading. The tears shed, the sighs heaved, told how the Word was going home to hearts, and when it came to depicting the scene on the outside of the door, the appeal that a father, or a mother, or a daughter would make for admittance to join loved ones,—the vast assembly was all in tears; and the further idea, the meeting of a father and son together, the conflict which ensued, the anathemas and curses which the son would heap and hurl on his father, the cause of his damnation, training him up in sin, sent a thrill of trembling through the breasts of all parents present. It was preaching, as a dying man to dying men.

“ There is not the least doubt but what our readers will be pleased

to hear that Miss Geraldine Hooper will pay us another visit on the 16th and 17th inst. It appears that Mr. Bailey was opposed to her coming, feeling the tax upon her bodily strength after taking some eleven or twelve services during the week would be such as to weaken and debilitate the body. But before the commencement of the service on Tuesday, it was put to the vote whether Miss Hooper should come or no, and to see the thousands of hands held up (for many held up two), and the unanimous voices which shouted for this second visit quite defeated the opposition, and Mr. Bailey willingly gave in to the universal desire. May this second visit be more successful than the first."

Of another visit in July of the same year, they write:—

"The number attending the services was overwhelming. From what we could learn, they began to assemble as early as half-past four, and one continued stream rolled on, until it was computed that in and around the pavilion there were upwards of 7,000 people; and such was the eagerness of the people to see and hear, that the roof was untied at one of the corners, where a few vacant seats were left, and by means of a ladder they scaled the wall and then descended on the other side. One woman, with an infant in arms, was seen to climb, handing her baby to Mr. Bailey, who stood on the wall, and held it till she safely landed in the pavilion. Though the concourse was so great, the order and attention were of the best character. The subject, 'What think ye of Christ?' awakened many a mind to think about Christ, who had never thought of Him before. The eager multitude drank in the living truth, and their moistened eyes showed how the words were touching the secret springs of their hearts. Men with brawny arms and horny hands, wiped away the tears coursing down their cheeks. Many of those present on this day, were individuals unable to attend on any day save the Sabbath; and the gratification they felt in listening to one so beloved, so anxious to benefit their souls, might be read in their countenances. The amount of good accomplished on this day, in awakening sinners—rekindling of love in believers—breaking down refuges—sweeping away prejudices—no human tongue can declare. This one thing we are certain of, the remembrances of that day will not

soon die out ; and we feel persuaded we only re-echo the feelings of our readers, when we say, God speed the time when we shall behold and enjoy another such Sabbath. The unwearied servant of Christ, notwithstanding the Sabbath labours, preached on the Monday afternoon. The desire of the people to hear, seemed to be commensurate with that of Miss Hooper to speak, for on Tuesday evening the concourse was as great as the past. The subject was, 'Marvellous Love,' which was delivered with, if possible, an increase of zeal and almost superhuman energy. The heart-felt emotions were not confined to any one class of character. All seemed to melt down under her soul-stirring appeals. That an unearthly power rested on them no one can deny. It was as though an angel had swept over the congregation, and shaking his wings, had fanned breaking hearts with ethereal breezes. No doubt, redeemed spirits lingered over that congregation. How the inspired messenger told of Harry in the prison, and his mother's look of love breaking his sin-hardened heart, and then pointed to the burning love of Christ to a lost sinner ! Who can forget—who did not weep—at the facts narrated in connection with the fashionable, accomplished and beautiful young lady, the admiration of the *élite* who throng the fashionable row in Hyde Park ? Where was the heart which remained unmoved as they heard of her, so young, so beautiful, being marked for death ? Her piteous appeal to that fond parent, 'You have taught me everything but how to die.' The lesson of those facts struck home to the hearts of parents, and accomplished a work which the consecrated ministry, with all its boasted machinery and appliances, has never done. The more we hear of the Gospel proclaimed as it has been this week, the more we want. And the cold formality, hatred to any innovation upon the old routine, must be because preachers fail to enjoy the truths they teach."

The following account is taken nearly verbatim from the letter in which one who was present at the tent services in 1866 describes the effect they had on him :—

"I was very much opposed to ladies preaching—indeed, I did not care about any preaching at all, and was quite in the world—'with-

out hope and without God.' A tent had been erected some two hundred yards from my house in Dunstable; and folks asked me was I going to hear the great preacher, Miss Hooper? 'Not I,' was my answer. But when the time came, I could not rest. 'Twas Sunday morning. I didn't wake till late, and then came down to my breakfast, not dressed in my Sunday things, nor shaved; but all in my common clothes, not meaning to go to the tent. My wife asked me to take my breakfast, but I didn't seem as if I could sit down. I went to draw a bucket of water; the well was between my house and the tent. I set down my bucket and went near enough to listen. I was ashamed to go in amongst them, but I heard enough to catch me, and make me resolve I would go in the evening. I went. Never shall I forget that meeting. The first hymn thrilled me. It was about Christ coming, and the horror of those who had not loved Him, and the joy of those who had, and telling sleepers to wake and be ready for Him, and the chorus kept on, 'Trim your lamps, and be ready for the midnight cry.' And then she gave out a second, that was worse. It was about heaven, and it said, 'Not a seat will be vacant, but shall you be there?' Then she gave a powerful address, hitting me so hard with the hammer of the Word, that very soon all my 'Don't care,' and 'Never mind,' and 'Time enough yet,' were gone! I was broken down. Next day I caught it from all my companions. 'I thought you wer'n't going to hear Miss Hooper? Ay? Going again?' But their chaff had no effect on me now. I heard her every time she preached at Dunstable, or anywhere round about; and all the time I seemed to get worse and worse. I was miserable. I heard plenty telling how happy they were, and how this man and that man, and this woman and that woman, had found peace. It seemed strange to me, for I only found misery. I listened, and longed, but could get no comfort. For over four months I waited, and watched, and read this and that; but it was all no use. I felt wounded in my spirit, but not healed. I wandered alone in the fields and byways; night after night I sat up till twelve or one o'clock, afraid to go to sleep lest I might wake up in hell. Oh the soul trouble, oh the agony I was in sometimes! I cried to God to put an end to it, and give me my portion at once, even if it were to be hell, for the suspense seemed more than I could bear. I attended chapel, and understood that deliverance must come somehow from Christ; but how I could not make out. At last, one morning I woke with the words running in my mind, 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and

will not remember thy sins.' Light from above seemed to break in and show me pardon was only by grace; that Jesus had paid my debt, and that for His sake I might be forgiven. Jesus died for me, and now I live in Him. There were many such instances during those four months of 1866, I could mention; the people were willing in the day of His power. With many, as with me, it was no trifling passing impression. Through grace I have been a Christian ever since, and am now thirty-three years of age, with a wife and family."

Space forbids us to cite similar notices of her visits to many other places in Bedfordshire. Nowhere did her ministry meet with more acceptance than in this and neighbouring counties. She visited Markgate Street, Ampthill, Leighton, Upper Gravenhurst, Wolverton, Kensworth, Banbury, Thame, Buckingham, and Olney.

A friend was driving her to Markgate one day. On reaching the town they found the whole populace had turned out to see and greet her. As they passed down the street through a lane of loving faces, her friend said, "You must feel this very flattering." "No," she said, "no! but very, very touching! It makes me weep!" The eagerness of the people to hear the truth was indeed extraordinary. One man walked twenty miles to hear her preach and twenty back again, so that he was walking nearly all night! He heard her whenever she was in the neighbourhood.

A friend says :—

"Dear Mrs Denning visited Olney twice. Congregations were large. People came for miles round, and in the hearts of not a few her memory is cherished. One night, when she reached the vestry, a man who had walked across the woods and along a country road that inclement evening to hear her, grasped her hand and told her she had been the means of his conversion at the carriage works at Wolverton. He seemed full of joy, and not careful about his return walk through the snow and mud that mid-winter night. Many, many Christians

were stirred up, helped, and quickened by her earnest working, and her happy way of doing it. Yet the devil was very busy, and there was a good deal of opposition. We had the privilege of having Mrs. Dening under our own roof, and I cannot describe the sweetness, the self-devotedness, and the Christian joyfulness, I observed in her. I am certainly indebted much to her lovely example, and good counsel as to my own work. She lives in my heart, as one of the best and sweetest Christians it has ever been my happiness to know."





CHAPTER V.

1867.

HER Watchword for the year 1867 was, “Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh,” accompanied by the following address :—

“DEAR FRIEND,

“Another Year has run its course ; its last sun has risen and set ; and now, entering upon the Year 1867, I greet you with the heartfelt wish that it may be to you ‘A Happy New Year.’ During the past year momentous events have taken place, telling us, in unmistakable tones, that ‘the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’ Let me urge you to ask your own heart—

Are you *ready* for His coming ?

Are you *looking* for His coming ?

Are you *longing* for His coming ?

This should be the position of every true believer. Is it yours ? If so, you are happy ; for you ‘death will have lost its sting, the grave its victory.’ Yet a little while, and our wanderings here will have ended ; our weary feet shall tread the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and we shall behold and ‘see the King in His beauty.’ May this be your portion.

“Unconverted Reader, thine eyes rest upon these lines—What will the coming of the Lord be to you ? An eternity of woe ; an eternity of remorse. No Sabbath-bell in Hell.—No Sermons in Hell.—No Christ in Hell.—No Salvation in Hell. Scorn it, reject it as you may, Hell is a *reality*, and you, if unsaved, are daily

wending your way towards it. I cannot save you, but Jesus can. I cannot absolve you, but He can. I cannot convert you, but He can. May God, the Holy Spirit, make you willing in the day of His power, for Jesus' sake.

“One word, in conclusion, to the dear Christian: Let each of us seek this year to walk more *consistently*; to live more *entirely* to Christ; to shun everything that will tend to the spiritual declension of the soul; cherish God's Word and closet communion with Him; avoid evil speaking of one another in *every* form, remembering that ‘for every *idle* word’ we shall have to give an account.

“And now, farewell. Pray for me. With every sincere wish for your spiritual prosperity,

“I remain, dear Friend,

“Yours, in our risen Lord,

“G. H.”

In 1867, on the invitation of a gentleman who had heard her at Torquay, Geraldine Hooper for the first time visited the ancient Conservative and Ritualistic city of Exeter, where, if anywhere, the innovation of lady preaching might be expected to raise a storm of opposition. Prejudice was strong, yet, even at first, audiences were large. On going down to the public rooms where the meetings were held, to conduct the last of the four services which had been announced, it was only with the greatest difficulty that she could effect an entrance. Several hundred disappointed persons were assembled outside, and the large room being packed, the doors had been closed some time previously. As usual under such circumstances, she promised, while making her way through the crowd, to address them at six o'clock next morning, if they liked to meet her at that hour. This so far pacified them that, though there was an unpleasant crush and hubbub outside the building all the evening, her friend and host was able to keep order. He was somewhat vexed and troubled at the dis-

turbance, however, and began to question whether he had done right in promoting the meetings. In the night a text occurred to him, which completely relieved his mind :—"In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say," &c. Such scenes could not be *evil*, however *unpleasant*, since they attended the ministry of the Master Himself. This gentleman experienced the truth of the promise, "Whosoever receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward," for one or two members of his own household were "turned from darkness to light" on this occasion.

In December of the same year, and also twice in the following year, Geraldine Hooper preached in Exeter, and many known to be now consistent Christians date their first serious impressions from these services. On one of these visits, as she was going into the hall, she received a letter signed by "A curious hearer of dry dogmas and celestial themes," who requested her to give it a public answer. She disliked controversy, and wished to occupy the attention of her audience by truth rather than error, but she delighted to bring out the divine glories of the Lord Jesus, and entertained a horror of unitarian doctrine. She read part of the letter aloud, making a few remarks as she did so. The writer asserted that the Lord Jesus Christ never claimed to be God, but only the Son of God, and that, "I and my Father are one," meant simply *one in purpose*, and proceeded to make sarcastic depreciatory remarks about "orthodox" views, and those who held them. She remarked, that the Jews took up stones to stone the Lord, because HE made Himself equal with

God, and that as the servant was not greater than her Lord, she was well content to have pebbles thrown at her for asserting the same doctrine. The writer had taken great pains to underline most emphatically, "*I am the SON of God.*" Was it for his own benefit? She had never for a moment doubted it; but she did not think a father would smile on him who denied the identity of his son's nature with his own. Was not a child part of his father? Oh that the writer would *underline them in his own heart!* "I am the SON OF GOD." As to the 'one in purpose,' she could only say that he would never improve the Word of God by words of his own miserable coining; and as to the "dry dogmas," if the Holy Spirit would only water them, they would bring forth a glorious harvest to the praise of Him whom the Socinians denied to be the Son of God. The writer begged her to remember the text, "My Father is greater than I." Yes; and so said the creed of Saint Athanasius: "Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching His manhood." These remarks so evidently commanded the sympathy of her audience, that she laid the letter aside, unwilling to dwell longer on error instead of truth.

She then proceeded to speak to them on the story of Ruth, and the following is a newspaper report of the address, which though defective, as such reports not unfrequently are, will yet give some idea of her style of preaching:

"The Book of Ruth contains the Gospel of Christ, and oh, that the Spirit of God may enable me this night to present some of the precious truths therein contained.

"We shall first notice some of the characters. Elimelech and his wife Naomi, with their two sons, left the land of Judah, and went

into the country of Moab. Naomi's character is that of a backslider—she represents a child of God leaving Jesus and going into the world. Backslider, you have left the 'fountain of living water,' and have 'hewn out to yourself cisterns, broken cisterns that will hold no water.' You have left Jesus—your best friend: you have forsaken Him who loved you and died for you: you have given up the joys that are lasting and eternal, for the pleasures of the world that are passing away. I do not say the world has not its pleasures and fascinations, I know it has; but oh, sinner, dear sinner, are they satisfactory? are they lasting? will they even afford you *substantial* pleasure now, much more in a dying hour?

"But Naomi had not been long in the land of Moab before her troubles commenced, death entered her family, her husband died, and then her two sons, and in her deep and bitter affliction in a strange land, away from her kindred and friends, and she resolves to return to her country. Oh, dear backsliding child of God, you have wandered away from Jesus: like the poor silly sheep, you have wandered away from rich pastures and gone into the wilderness; but, dear child of God, Jesus has had his eye upon you, and He will bring you back to his fold. 'I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish;' but you must be punished for your backslidings, you must be brought to feel the state you are in, and the sin you have committed in wandering away from Jesus.

"Naomi's two daughters-in-law resolved to return with her. One represents a lukewarm professor, and the other a penitent sinner. Orpah returned to her kindred, but Ruth cleaved to her mother-in-law, her language being, 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' But what did not Naomi do. She did not invite her daughter-in-law to return with her, she was silent. Child of God, do you ever speak for Jesus? Silent Christians what are you doing for that loving Saviour? Have you invited, sinners to come to Christ? Have you told them of their danger? have you told them of the love of Jesus? Oh, no, no! You have been stumbling-blocks in the way. Your name may be on the Church book, you may be in very good esteem at the chapel, and at the prayer-meeting; but what is your character before the *world*? Who would think you to be a Christian by your outward deport-

ment? In what respect are you better than the world? Nothing, nothing! A lukewarm Christian, who is afraid to speak for his Master; is a stumbling-block in the way. Oh, dear child of God, may the Spirit stir you up and enable you to work for Him.

“When Naomi returned to her own land, the people did not know her, she was so altered. O, if you would enjoy the presence of Jesus—if you would be fat and flourishing—*keep near to Him*: don’t be led away by the fascinations of the world; for as surely as you backslide, so surely will heaviness come into your soul. Oh, if you would be a happy, prosperous, thriving Christian, keep close to your loving, sympathizing Jesus.

“Ruth went into the field as a gleaner. Child of God, have you been gleaning among the reapers? have you picked up the ears that will satisfy? Oh, dear child of God, there is nothing that will satisfy your longing soul but a full, free, and eternal salvation. She goes into the field with a trembling step. ‘May I glean among the reapers?’ Oh, dear child of God, how often have you said, ‘May I partake of His grace? May I, a guilty hell-deserving sinner, find favour in His sight?’ Oh, child of God, Jesus will welcome you! Oh, that the Spirit may enable you to glean this night among the reapers!

“The master speaks to her: he knows all about her. He goes to the reapers and tells them there is a stranger in the field. Dear hearer, are you a stranger in the field to-night? Have you never listened to the sound of the Gospel before? Are you venturing for the first time into the field? Fear not! The Master will not spurn thee. Oh, no, no! He knows thee. Keep in the field: don’t go to another. Sinner, dear sinner, you have been gleaning in the world. Has it satisfied you? I know it has not. There was a young lady, an only child: her parents being wealthy, she mixed with fashionable company: she was taught to dance and sing, and had every accomplishment. One day she was riding in Hyde Park, when she fell back on her horse; the servant who was behind caught hold of her, and having obtained assistance, conveyed her to her home. She was alive, but weak and faint. The doctor was soon in attendance, and immediately discovered that a blood vessel had broken on the inside, and that she must in a short time bleed to death, and he strongly advised that she should be told of her danger; but who was to do it? The

father was in an agony of grief, and the mother overwhelmed with sorrow: they could not tell her she was dying: they could not believe that one so young, so beautiful, so accomplished, could die. At length the doctor told her that she could not recover, that in a very few hours she must die. In an agony she exclaimed, 'I cannot die! Oh, save my life! save my life! I can't—I can't die! Oh, mother, mother! you taught me to live, but you never taught me to die! Oh, doctor, save my life! I cannot die.' Soon after she died. Oh, sinner, dear sinner, don't go to the world for pleasure; but drink of the water of life, and you shall never die.

"And Boaz said, at meal-time, 'Come thou hither and eat bread.' Dear child of God, have you meal-times? The reapers go to their work, but they have their meal-times: they could not work without it; and, believers, if you are to be fat and flourishing, if you are to be strong healthy Christians, you must have your meal-times. Oh, what a refreshing meal is the Word of God! Search it diligently: it is a rich treasure; but you must not be content with looking at it, you must eat it, you must live on it: it is the bread of life. 'Thy word was sweet unto my taste, and I did eat it.' Then there is the throne of grace: Oh, what a blessed meal-time is prayer time. Christian, you know the blessedness of communion with God; you know how it cheers, invigorates, and strengthens the soul. But there are some who neglect this meal. In the morning they forget it, they have not time just then, and so it is put off! But would you serve your body as you serve your soul? Oh, no! I know you would not. Oh, that the Spirit may enable you to feed on the Word of God, and keep near the throne of grace! But the meal was taken in the heat of the day. In the season of bereavement and trial, then is the time to feed upon the bread of life. 'And dip thy morsel in wine.' There are some professors who are always dipping their morsel in vinegar: they are such sour Christians they are never in a good temper; they have never a smile on their faces. Oh, say they, 'It is nature.' Yes, of course it is. The natural temper may not be completely eradicated in the heart of the child of God; but it will be subdued, for grace must conquer. But the vinegar there spoken of was not sour—it was wine. She was to dip her morsel in wine. Oh, dear child of God, you know what it is to dip your morsel in the Word of God—you have dipped your morsel in His promises. Oh, how cheering, how soul-refreshing was it to dip your morsel in His invitations and promises.

"And Boaz said, 'Reproach her not; and let fall also some handfuls on purpose for her.' I will, if the Lord will enable me, gather up some of the handfuls Christ has let fall on purpose for thee. Sinner, are you weary and heavy laden by reason of the burden of sin? Oh, there is a handful on purpose for thee! 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Oh, feed upon it! But some may say, 'I have been a vile sinner, a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer.' Sinner, dear sinner, there is a handful for thee. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth' not one sin, not a small sin, but '*all* sins.' But you say, 'I have long neglected the Saviour—for twenty, thirty, forty years, nay, until I am gray-headed and the Lord will not receive me.' But, sinner, dear sinner, there is a handful on purpose for thee. 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' There may be a dear child of God doubting his safety and fearing he shall be lost at last. Doubting, fearing one, there is a handful on purpose for thee. 'I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any one pluck them out of My hands.' Not even the devil. Christ's chosen ones cannot perish. Ruth gathered up what remained and took it home. Dear child of God, take your religion home; don't be selfish Christians. There are some spiritual gluttons; they will feed themselves; but they care nothing about others. I beseech you to take it to your neighbours—take it to your family. Dear sinner, have you received the Gospel? Have you fled to Jesus? If not, I beseech you to come to-night! Jesus will receive you. He will not cast you away. The world is passing away, but Jesus will wash you in His blood: He will clothe you in His spotless robe of righteousness, and give you an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom.

"But there was no real happiness until there was union. Ruth became the wife of Boaz, and, oh, child of God, you that are united to Christ—you are safe, for no one can harm you. Oh, what a blessed state! 'All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ's is God's.' Oh, dear child of God, may the Holy Spirit enable you to dip your morsel in wine, and gather up some of the handfuls that have been let fall on purpose for thee!—Amen."

It must not be supposed that because Geraldine Hooper was popular and beloved by the people wherever

she was known, that therefore she had nothing to bear in the way of adverse criticism. "If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution," is still true, and any evangelist who faithfully denounces sin, not only in its gross forms, but in its more insidious *religious* forms, will be sure to draw upon himself the enmity of self-righteous Pharisees and hypocritical professors. Geraldine Hooper's Gospel-preaching was too effective and too aggressive to be at all agreeable to the world, and too broadly and decidedly evangelical to be at all tolerable to the lovers of ritual, or the advocates of sacramental religion. Enmity once aroused from any cause, a "lady preacher" was of course vulnerable at many points to criticism. The target was broad, the arrows were sure to hit, especially if launched by an unscrupulous hand. Many a cruel and bitter satire appeared in the public prints under the guise of an impartial record; but they generally contained their own refutation, and were often so glaringly false as to preclude their receiving any credit. We give the following from an Exeter paper as a mild specimen. The writer (who evidently thinks the body incomparably more important than the soul), was strangely mistaken in supposing that Geraldine Hooper's voice would be heard no more when she had "a good husband," or that her care for the spiritual needs of others made her indifferent to their bodily wants:—

"The local events of the week have not been of a particularly stirring character. Miss Geraldine Hooper has been here, has talked, and is about to go. We hope soon to hear that this zealous young lady has got a good husband. This is the best cure for preaching propensities. Whilst Miss Hooper and those who heard her were groaning and inflicting unnecessary pangs on themselves, and spending precious time in praying and talking, the committee of the Soup

Kitchen were zealously engaged in alleviating the pangs of hunger experienced by the poor in our midst. How easy, and no doubt pleasant, it is for people to consume hours in the gratification of their love for the sensational—running after Tom Thumbs, converted lawyers, and preaching females! but how much harder it would appear to be, to attend to the wants of Lazarus at our door-step! We prefer the Soup Kitchen to the preachments of Miss Geraldine Hooper; for the first is a great boon to the poor and needy, whilst the latter occupies the time of people which might be much better employed. Of theological palaver we have enough and to spare, in all conscience; but of real, practical religion, how little have we in comparison with the immense amount of religious profession that exists on all sides of us! Miss Hooper may be popular, as our Liberal contemporary says she is, but then we know that novelties and sensational products usually enjoy great popularity for a time, and that it diminishes as the good sense of the people increases. Females are admirable in their own spheres, but we cannot say we like them so well when they take the man's place.”

Of such articles Geraldine Hooper never took the slightest notice. She could afford to laugh at many; others pained her; but she took them in a spirit of meekness, and only prayed for the writers. We are not aware that articles of this kind ever appeared in either of the Bath papers. Alluding to an attack of a similar kind in a letter to her future husband, she said, “Let us never mind the scoff of the world. The smile of Jesus makes amends for all.”

The *Western Daily Mercury*, after giving a fairly accurate account of her meetings at Exeter, said, “But there was a good deal of fanaticism, directed chiefly against the sufficiency of intellect and good works, to secure salvation.” To this kind of “fanaticism” she certainly was strongly addicted, in company with every true preacher of the Gospel, from the Apostle of the Gentiles downward. Some far more adverse and severe critiques were published, and some, as she felt herself,

extravagantly eulogistic. The following is a sample of the *ordinary* notices that appeared in the papers of the cities and towns where she laboured :—

“ Miss Geraldine Hooper on Friday delivered two addresses to large audiences at the Royal Public Rooms. She is very ladylike in person, of full middle height, with good features and a fair round frame. Nature has been bountiful to her in many ways. She stood on the platform and opened the service of the morning by reading the fifty-first Psalm. She next gave out a hymn, and led off the singing in a voice of great power and sweetness. The congregation followed her lead with fervour and devotion that imparted much interest to this portion of the service. Her elocution was correct, and effective in reading. At the conclusion of the first hymn she delivered an extempore prayer in a truly prayerful spirit. It was impressive and devout. Her sermon was from Matthew ix. 12—‘ They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.’ Christ was the great physician for all sufferers, under all ailments. There was no one who did not need His aid, and no one who could say that His aid was beyond his reach. He was no fashionable physician wanting a heavy fee, no pretender to the power of healing, but the true Physician who had a remedy for every human malady, and who in His divine goodness was tenderly waiting to heal all sufferers who came to Him. She proceeded to illustrate her subject with great aptness and familiarity of style. She remarked in passing on the style of preaching which too often prevailed ; fine words and well-balanced sentences with no heart in them, and which therefore could not reach the heart of the hearer. They were like a letter written in fine language, but left without an address—they came home to nobody. We cannot pretend to give a note of her discourse, which was powerful and well sustained throughout. Some of the passages were very fine. Her picture of the funeral of the sinner was painfully touching and dramatic in form. Her speaking voice was clear and musical, and so powerful that it filled the room. Her action was the exponent of her thought—redundant, not always graceful, but perfectly free from affectation, and making-up in the force of a zealous, earnest nature, whatever it might want of the artificial polish of the schools. So true was her action to the theme of her oratory, that a deaf man might almost have followed the course of her declamation by the gesture and action in which it was

rendered. At times her fervour descended into rant, and marred the gracefulness of what had gone before. Those passages, however, may be taken as nothing in comparison with the effect of the whole discourse. She is to her sex what Spurgeon is to her father's—a powerful, earnest, and most successful preacher of the Gospel.

"This gifted lady revivalist conducted a service at the Public Rooms at six o'clock on Saturday morning—reminding one of Methodism in days of yore. Precisely at that hour the service was commenced, and was throughout of the most hearty character, the large room being quite full. Miss Hooper preached with her usual earnestness, her subject being 'The Good Shepherd.' The address was eloquent and touching, and of the usual length, notwithstanding her labours of the previous evening. On that occasion the room was crowded to overflowing, every seat and standing place being occupied long before the commencement of the service. Miss Hooper had much difficulty in gaining admittance to the platform, so great was the pressure of the multitude gathered round the doors. The lady promised the people outside that she would speak to them the following morning, upon which they gradually dispersed, and a way was made for her to enter the room. In consequence of this crushing, the service was delayed for some time. Miss Hooper's services in Exeter have been very successful—the object of her visit to Exeter has been fully attained. Notwithstanding the misrepresentations which have appeared in print, Miss Hooper has had crowded audiences, and her friends have every reason to be satisfied with the 'results' in respect to religious conversion. The surplus of the donations at the doors goes to the Exeter Home for Fallen Women."

But newspaper praise and newspaper blame are, and ought to be, alike indifferent to an ambassador for Christ. "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and to "love the praise of men," or to "seek the honour that cometh from men," is equally un-Christlike. Not in pride, but in the holy dignity of the faith that foresees the judgment-seat of Christ, every minister of God should be able to say, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be

judged of you or of man's judgment." . . . "He that judgeth me is the Lord."

It was on the occasion of her visit to Exeter in September, 1867, that Geraldine Hooper became engaged in marriage to Mr. Henry Dening, a Devonshire gentleman, resident at Pitt House, Ottery St. Mary. He had been for some time engaged in the Lord's work in his own neighbourhood, and his efforts had been owned by God to the conversion of many. His prayer for years had been that, if he married, the Lord would give him a wife who would be a help to him in Gospel labour. What wonder that when he met and heard Geraldine Hooper, he felt at once that she might be the answer to his prayer! The following circular, issued by him to collect funds for a hall at Ottery, may introduce Mr. Dening to the reader :—

"FELLOW LABOURERS IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD,—

"About four years ago the Lord laid it on my heart to go out into the highways and hedges and seek to bring sinners into His fold. I commenced by gathering together a few in a small room, when the numbers increased so rapidly that larger accommodation was necessary.

"A Service was then held each Lord's-day in a barn fitted up for the purpose, about a mile from Ottery St. Mary, as well as in a large room in the town itself. In process of time the latter proved inadequate for the number 'who pressed to hear the Word of God,' as it will only hold about two hundred and fifty.

"An appeal is now made to you to assist by your prayers and alms in building a Mission Hall, where the 'Bread of Life' may be given to the hungry multitude. At least £1,000 is required for the building. There is a population of nearly five thousand in the parish, and it is proposed, by the Lord's help, to build the hall sufficiently large to seat one thousand, and also to make it a centre of evangelistic work for the whole neighbourhood, wrapt as it is in darkness—a spiritual darkness 'that can be felt.'

"Fellow Believers, Time is short; 'let us work while it is called

to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work.’ It will not be long that we shall be privileged and honoured ‘to be labourers together with God.’ There are many signs of the Lord’s return. The footsteps of the Coming One—the Lord of Glory, may even now be heard in the distance,—the thunder clouds that herald His approach may be seen lowering o’er us. ‘Let us not sleep, as do others, but watch,’ that at whatever time ‘the Bridegroom cometh,’ He may find us *waiting* and *working*. Souls are precious; they are passing each moment into eternity—thousands upon thousands unsaved. For them we plead, for immortal beings whose everlasting destiny depends on their acceptance of Jesus as their Saviour. May we do as Nehemiah of old, ‘eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom *nothing is prepared.*’

“Our Jesus is worthy, He has purchased all of us with His life-blood, *therefore* has a right to our all. He ‘loveth a cheerful giver,’ like Himself. ‘Freely ye have received’ in providence and grace, in return ‘Freely give.’

“THOMAS H. DENING.”

Ottery St. Mary, Devon.”

Mr. Dening was not at this time devoted entirely to the work of spreading the knowledge of Christ, being engaged in farming his own estate. This he continued for a year or so after his marriage. It may be mentioned as a characteristic trait, that Geraldine Hooper’s first thought and question on receiving this proposal of marriage was, “*Would you hinder me in the Lord’s work?*” No prospect of earthly happiness, however attractive, would have tempted her to lay aside her life-work, or even to give it a secondary place.

In October, 1867, she accepted an invitation to Middlesborough, in Yorkshire. She found the journey a very fatiguing one, and perhaps (providentially) did not feel the visit an encouraging one. Yorkshire was too distant from her home to be a desirable sphere for her, nor was she so much adapted for it as for some others.



CHAPTER VI.

1867-68.

GERALDINE HOOPER visited Plymouth many times both before and after her marriage. She preached in the three towns, Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport, probably one hundred times. Space forbids a detailed account of these visits. The first was in December, 1867, when she went as an entire stranger at the Master's call and in His name; and the last was only a few months before her death. We will give a few of the numerous reports that appeared in the public journals, and then make some extracts from the letters of friends, speaking of results.

On the 1st and 2nd April, 1868, she preached in St. James's Hall, with reference to which the following report appeared :—

“The interest felt in the religious addresses of Miss Geraldine Hooper, far from being on the wane in Plymouth, is astonishingly on the increase; and it is a fact worthy of the consideration of those who watch the effect of such movements, that yesterday there were very few short of three thousand persons, of all grades in the town, who could find time, in the most business part of a market-day, to attend one of the services held by this lady in the St. James's Hall. The means, too, to be taken in attending Miss Hooper's addresses are

quite different from those to be adopted in going to hear anyone else. Those who seek to be listeners to her soul-stirring words must be content to assemble in the hall two hours at least before the time announced for the delivery of the address, and during the whole of this time and that of the service they must be content to bear the inconveniences of being made to occupy about one-half the space that in an ordinary way would be allotted to them. But there are not wanting in Plymouth those who readily bear these inconveniences. Yesterday the seated portion of the hall was completely filled fully two hours before one o'clock, the time given out for the commencement of the service, and up to the time numbers crowded in, so that the whole of the standing room and the approaches were occupied. The platform was also crowded by those privileged to occupy this part of the room. From time to time the meeting sang hymns given out by gentlemen on the platform.

"Miss Hooper conducted the service without any aid from others. She gave out hymns, prayed with great fervour, read the Scriptures, and asked the meeting to engage in silent prayer. In addressing the large assembly she chose her text from the third verse of the tenth chapter of Isaiah: 'And what will ye do in the day of visitation?' And upon it she founded a simple, appropriate, and vigorous discourse delivered with great earnestness, the audience being most attentive throughout. She is eminently fond of the employment of homely figures, in her attempts to fix the attention of her audiences to her subject, and she commenced yesterday's address by a reference to the numerous forts around Plymouth, and why, she asked, should this be? The land enjoyed peace, and the town was quiet. They were, she answered, waiting for the day of visitation; they knew not when, or how, or from whence it would come, but it was the dictate of true wisdom to be always ready. Captains of ships, generals of armies, and governors of forts, were always ready for the day of their visitation, and was it not marvellous that people generally so wise in their earthly preparations were so forgetful of their preparations for the dread day of visitation, when their eternal fate would be irrevocably sealed, when, if they did not mount to meet Christ, they would for ever suffer in hell.

"She then appealed forcibly to her audience as to their preparation or want of preparation for this visitation, and proceeded to speak of the glorious day of visitation, when Christ came into the world, ask-

ing to what end and purpose to them had been the Saviour's life of suffering. Another day of visitation was the descent of the Holy Ghost—of the Spirit which she hoped had comforted and strengthened them in their career, leading them to go on their way singing the conqueror's song. The day of visitation yet to come was the Second Advent of our Lord. Some doubted the coming of this day—doubted that Christ would come to claim His bride. But He would come, and would they be of the Bride of Christ, and were they expecting it by preparation for the event? They wondered that the Jews did not believe that Christ their Messiah had come into the world; but far more marvellous was it that those who believed He *had* come should doubt that He would come again. Miss Hooper then exhorted her hearers to be ready for the last day, wholly trusting in Jesus without believing in the efficacy of their own good works. In feeling terms she referred to bereavements and bodily infirmities as being visitations from God for the purpose of bringing them near to Him, and she trusted they would embrace the opportunity they afforded. She also made reference to the day of visitation in *death*, and pointed out its possible suddenness and the necessity for a continued preparation for its coming. In conclusion, she made stirring appeals to the devotee of the world, to the infidel, and to those who thought themselves good, and described in beautiful eloquence the glorious tranquillity of Heaven. She said, that it would not be until they got there that they would be able to see how much they owed to Jesus. After prayer and singing the vast concourse separated."

"RELIGIOUS ADDRESSES BY A WOMAN.

"[BY A MAN IN THE WORLD.]

"That ten addresses on religious subjects were delivered in Plymouth last week to audiences averaging over two thousand persons is marvellous. That five of these audiences should have assembled at an hour when ordinarily nine-tenths of the persons composing them are sound asleep, is more marvellous still. Such phenomena are worthy of investigation. Each morning meeting was so like the other, that what may be said of one applies to all. By half-past four, long before daylight, a crowd had gathered before the gates of St. James's Hall. By ten minutes after five every seat and every inch of standing room in the body and in the galleries of the Hall was occupied, and scores of persons were going away

disappointed. The capacious platform and the private boxes were gradually filled by ticket-holders, admitted by a door at the rear of the building. There was ample leisure to scan the character of the vast concourse. Two-thirds were persons respectably dressed, evidently accustomed to attend public worship. These consisted of all classes, including many who would consider themselves to belong to the upper circles. The remaining third were a motley set: soldiers, sailors, labourers, artizans, women whose energies were well nigh exhausted by the incessant struggle with want; women, girls, lads, and men, who had no nameable occupation, and a sprinkling of children and even babies. There was an hour to spend before the formal proceedings commenced; but the behaviour of the crowd was unexceptionable. No cat-calls, whistling, or unseemly jokes were to be heard; but the low murmur of conversation, interrupted ever and anon by a hymn, started by some ardent vocalist and joined in more or less generally according as hymn and tune were well known or rightly pitched. On the platform was a town councillor, with two or three friends engaged in packing fresh arrivals into seats or standing places. But half a dozen vacant chairs in the front, and a passage kept clear to one side of the stage, showed that the chief actors were yet to come. No ordained ministers were on the platform; but two or three were to be seen in the body of the hall.

"Presently, as nearly as possible at six o'clock, a stir near the door indicated the approach of the expected party, and a popular medical man of the town, his wife, daughter, and a few friends appeared, and leaning on the arm of one was a young lady who quietly advanced to the little table, and while the momentary bustle was subsiding leant upon it with head reverently bent. Turning, with ladylike agility she divested herself of an outer jacket, which she handed to a friend behind her, and advancing to the front of the platform, gave out the words of a well-known hymn, herself leading the singing, which was heartily but not boisterously joined in by the audience. Meanwhile the lady was the observed of all observers. She is above the middle height for women, seemingly about five-and-twenty years of age, of a graceful figure, a pleasant but serious and far from wild-looking countenance, with broad and prominent forehead, somewhat pale, and with large and noticeably bright eyes. She wore a bonnet and jacket, her dress altogether being such as was worn by ladies before fashion went mad.

“The hymn over, the audience were in a few well-chosen words asked to spend two or three minutes in silent prayer. Many apparently did so, others looked curiously around them. Then came an appropriate psalm, admirably read, another hymn, and the lady, standing by the side of a little table, began her address. At first her voice was pitched in an unnaturally and injudiciously high key, giving an unfavourable impression; but this was subsequently moderated or the ear became used to it, although throughout the pitch of her voice was too high. There was no symptom of nervousness or indecision, or, on the other hand, of boldness. The sermon—it was a sermon, although the speaker evaded the term, and always spoke of the assemblage as a meeting—was a little over half an hour in length. If it was recited, the intonation and emphasis was the perfection of naturalness. If it was extemporaneous and spontaneous, the command of language was even more admirable and marvellous. Her language was of no common-place order, rich with striking and classic idioms, simple and chaste, but abounding in unusual, although correct, expressions. Her style was fluent without excessive volubility, tender without affectation, impressive without effort, every word distinct without being, except at the outset, too loud, and only occasionally was her action inappropriate or too vigorous. The chief characteristic of her address was her evident earnestness and deep solemnity, with little tendency to rant, and less of denunciation or threatening than is to be heard any Sunday from the majority of pulpits. In thought there is a considerable inequality in her discourses; but ordinarily original and telling thoughts on the fundamental truths of religion are tersely and elegantly put, and her appeals are truly forcible. In narrating anecdotes, of which she is fond, she is too prolix, and sometimes her voice rises with emotion to something nearly akin to a scream, and sometimes she is manifestly illogical. But a marked absence of bigotry, with evidently a large-hearted charity, renders it impossible for it to be judged from her discourses to what particular religious body, if to any, she belongs. In nineteen out of twenty pulpits or the land, her addresses might be given without in the least degree shocking the ordinary congregations, and with few exceptions they would welcome the exchange of their usual discourses for her freshness, eloquence, earnestness, and striking ideas. Her illustrations are homely, usually the result of personal observation, and as a rule are well chosen and applied.

"Of course, much to be admired as Miss Hooper's addresses are, it is 'very wrong' that she should speak in public at all. Women are not to be preachers—obviously were never designed for it. A woman may be a musician, and attract admiration as an Arabella Goddard or a Jenny Lind. She may be an actress, and draw crowds by declaiming other men's language in sumptuous apparel or in a semi-nude condition. She may even write poetry or edit a magazine. She may christen a ship amid applauding thousands at a launch, lay the foundation-stone of a public building or fortification, distribute prizes to a rifle corps, display her jewels at a drawing-room, disport herself in a crowded ball-room, or read from the Throne a speech which some one else has written for her. All these things are in keeping with woman's true mission—to be a charming toy among the lords of creation. But to lecture or give an address the composition of which has employed her intelligence and the delivery of which develops her gifts of eloquence, to speak in earnest her own words to her fellow-creatures on matters which concern their social, moral, or spiritual well-being, is so incongruous, so indelicate, so unfeminine, so fanatical, that the representatives of the new constituencies must be called upon to repress such female spouters on temperance or religion. None but a fanatic would do it. There was similar fanaticism once exhibited at Bethany, where a woman wasted three hundred penny-worth of ointment of spikenard in a way which called forth the indignation of a large party of the leading men of that day. Only One—a 'miserable minority'—was found to recognise her love, and zeal, and earnestness, as He deemed it, and speak of it as a good work which should be told as a memorial of her to the end of time. Women are such emotional beings that they must be repressed; they are the gaudy butterflies of the world, and if they venture into outside life society must scout them, and keep them in their proper place."—(11th April, 1868.)

Such articles might be multiplied, but the above suffice to give an idea of the outward features of Geraldine Hooper's work in Plymouth. From private sources we learn more of its spiritual results. "By the power of God," souls were brought to Jesus; one of the earliest converts, a grey-headed town-councillor, said, while the tears coursed down his cheeks, "Tell her an

old man blesses her, and will to all eternity bless God she ever came to Plymouth; tell her the last twig of self-righteousness broke with me to-day, when, like Zaccheus, I came down, and sat at the feet of Jesus." This was in allusion to an address on the subject of Zaccheus which she had given, and in which she mentioned that, conversing once on the story with a clergyman, he took the tree into which the small-statured publican climbed as a figure of the *ordinances* by means of which a sinner may get a better view of the Saviour. Geraldine Hooper replied, "But then you see Zaccheus had to come *down out of the tree* before he could get to the feet of Christ," and dwelling on this thought in her discourse she urged those who were trusting in ordinances and in their own righteousness to "come down—down from the topmast twig, down from the lowest,—down, right down, to the feet of Christ." "So I had to let go twig after twig," said the old man; "all that I had been trusting in all my life! I never had such a fall!" He did indeed come down; but it was to receive Christ, who has ever since been his guest.

Another old man who had been a confirmed drunkard, and who had a wife addicted to the same terrible vice resolved merely from curiosity to go and hear the "lady preacher," and he persuaded his wife to accompany him. They had to set out very early from their own home, as the meeting commenced at five o'clock in the morning. He was greatly struck by the singing of the hymn, commencing—

"Call them in, the poor, the wretched;
Sin-stained wanderers from the fold."

His spiritual darkness was so great, however, that when, in the course of her address, Geraldine Hooper said very

solemnly once or twice, "Jesus is here," he thought that she meant that He was actually and bodily present, and looked around with awe. Both he and his wife were deeply impressed, and on their return home each sought a place for prayer. The man never from that day bought any more drink. The neighbours were astonished at the change. They both became happy believers in Jesus. The man witnessed a good confession for more than a year. On a subsequent visit to Plymouth, Mr. and Mrs. Denning went after a meeting late at night to see him. He was dying. The poor wife said, "I never could have believed there was such wondrous love for old sinners like us! There's my blessed husband, he's going to heaven, and I shall soon follow." Mrs. Denning sung his favourite hymn to him once more, and he earnestly thanked her as the means of his salvation. He spoke of Jesus to the last and entreated his wife to "keep on the same track, and resist the devil if he came to tempt her. His last words were spoken in a whisper, "Jesus! make haste! I want to be gone—Jesus—make haste." The widow had expected a pension. When she heard that it would not be paid her, she was panic-struck for a moment, but quickly recovering the shock, said, "My blessed Jesus has helped me thus far; He won't leave me now!"

A clergyman from a distance was present at these meetings and derived great blessing from them. He returned to his home, "determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; brimful of joy and peace realized in his own soul, and finding it impossible any longer to preach from his written sermons." A letter addressed to Geraldine Hooper after she left the town says,—

“Many souls were set at liberty that night. We are struck with the great joy visible in the young converts. Fourteen of them came to my Bible-class. . . . A young girl was anxious to speak to me about her soul. I appointed Monday. She was to bring her sister, who was also anxious. Five others who heard of this, came with her. She is now happy in Christ. Several backsliders date their restoration from the meeting, where you spoke from, ‘My sheep hear my voice.’”

Another friend writes,—

“I was cheered to-day at hearing of two gipsies and an old man who never went to church, who were converted through hearing you. Many of the Unitarians are also uneasy. A clergyman in Cornwall has publicly told his people you were the means of bringing him from darkness to light.”

Owing to the excessive pressure to hear her in Plymouth, Geraldine Hooper found it needful to hold meetings for certain classes, to which others were not admitted; and on all occasions, admission had to be by ticket (free). Two thousand five hundred tickets were issued for each meeting in St. James’s Hall, Plymouth. Sometimes they were given only to dockyardsmen and their families—sometimes to fishermen only—at others to soldiers—at others to shop-assistants.

“All denominations of people—Jews, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, as well as Churchmen and Dissenters, flocked to hear her, and numbers received lasting blessing. She was very indifferent to her popularity. She said it was so cold, so empty, so fleeting; and when asked, did she feel nervous at the thought of speaking to so many, she said, that if kept waiting in an ante-room, she sometimes trembled a little; but once before the audience, perishing souls—souls perishing filled her heart and mind.”

The *Western Daily Mercury* of Tuesday, April 2nd, had the following account:—

“The great body of the artificers employed in Her Majesty’s dockyard, Devonport, and in the factory, at Keyham, having expressed an intense desire to hear Miss Geraldine Hooper, intimated that

they would willingly hire a room if she would address them ; last Monday evening was set apart by the kindness of that lady, when she spoke to them on the passage in the Book of Genesis—‘ Adam, where art thou ? ’ Miss Hooper, in forcible language, showed what a coward sin has made of man, and the tender love of God, who came down to seek his lost child, that he might restore him by His own wondrous and gracious plan of free salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ It is superfluous to say that Miss Hooper’s address was listened to throughout with deep and rapt attention. Some of the officers of the yard were on the platform, and after the address returned thanks to Miss Hooper ; since which the men themselves have written the following paper, numerously signed by them, which has been forwarded to that lady :—‘ Devonport, April 3rd, 1868.—We, the undersigned, employed in Her Majesty’s dockyard and factory, for ourselves and families desire to express to Miss Geraldine Hooper our most grateful and heartfelt thanks for the very solemn address which she delivered to nearly three thousand of us at St. James’s Hall, on Monday evening, March 30th, 1868. Our prayer to God for her is that her valuable life may long be spared to be a great blessing in this country, in alarming the impenitent, awakening the careless, and stirring up the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ to care more and more for the souls of others. We beseech this dear young lady to be very careful of her health, which must be much tried by her earnest labours. And we pray that the blessing of God Almighty may rest on her and on her work, and enrich her through our Lord Jesus Christ. To His name alone be the glory.’ ”

The great day alone will reveal the results of her labours in Plymouth and the adjoining towns. Many letters similar to the following were received :—

“ As I cannot, I am sorry to say, attend the meeting, I send my mite, and wish it were more. Nothing can ever express the gratitude I feel I owe you. I bless God you ever came to Plymouth, and that I ever heard your voice. That you may enjoy a long and useful life is the heart-felt prayer of one saved through your preaching.”

A young sailor’s wife, who had been converted at one of the meetings in 1867, and whose husband had

subsequently been brought to know the Lord, writes rejoicingly, yet asking prayer in the prospect of being left with five children while her husband was at sea in a man-of-war. She says :—

“ I called my youngest little girl after you, as, thank God, you were the means of bringing me to Him. I still sing from my heart :—

‘ Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.’ ”

Geraldine Hooper visited Torquay for the first time in February, 1867, when she stayed at the residence of the late Mr. Yorke Moore. She preached at the Bath Saloon, and at the Assembly Rooms, and produced a powerful effect in the town. Thousands followed her wherever she went. Churchmen and Dissenters, Protestants and Romanists, High Church and Low Church, alike attended her ministry ; and all who had heard her once, desired to hear her again. Audiences were overwhelming, the rooms being filled to overflowing fully an hour before she commenced.

The late Rev. R. Graves, of Hanford, Staffordshire, was then staying with his friend Mr. Wise at Hillesden. He had been the instrument of a wonderful revival during his short career of five years at Hanford. He had never seen Geraldine Hooper, but met her at lunch at Mr. Yorke Moore’s, and accompanied her to the subsequent meeting. He took her on to the platform, and introduced her with a few words on the objections popularly urged against woman’s work in the Gospel, saying that his own experience had been such, when he lived at Mitcham, and knew the work of Miss Marsh and of some others, that as a clergyman of the Church of England he hailed such assistance.

Mr. McDowall Grant, of Arndilly, was also then staying in Torquay. He and Geraldine Hooper held meetings together, he speaking one part of the day and she another. She intended to have remained only three days, but while sitting at breakfast on the last day a special message came from several in the town who had met together to beg her to speak once more. So urgent was the entreaty that she should prolong her stay, that she telegraphed to Bath to get her meetings there supplied, and consented to remain over the Sunday, and do what at that time she never had done—give an address on Sunday. She had avoided it from the wish not to disturb regular congregations, and give unnecessary offence to the clergy. But on its being represented that there were no services in the afternoon, and that many could attend then who could not do so on a week evening, she consented to speak. When the time came, so dense was the crowd that filled the Abbey Road waiting for admission, that danger to life and limb was seriously apprehended. As soon as the doors were thrown open, there was a terrific rush, and in a few minutes the room, holding 1,800, was filled from top to bottom, the stage and every inch of standing room being occupied. What solemn feelings filled the heart of the young evangelist as she gazed on these multitudes! "Give ye them to eat," resounded in her ears, and yet, oh how small her resources—"the five barley loaves and the two small fishes." But the Great Giver, who has but to "open His hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing," was her stay, and in dependence on Him "she did what she could" to feed them. Col. Martin, Mr. Ayshford Wise, and Mr. McDowall Grant, were with her on that occasion, and had to exert themselves to relieve the

pressure from the crowd. She was fairly driven off the platform, but retained perfect composure, and, when quiet was obtained, spoke with great power.

Next morning, at seven, she gave a thrilling address from the words, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "The place seemed lighted up with the Spirit of God," says one who was present, and of this address the effect was most decided. It was a crisis in the history of souls—a moment in which the solemn choice, "We will serve the Lord," was made by many.

A deep impression was produced on the minds of all who heard her at this time. Mr. Grant, among others, had entertained a strong prejudice against woman's ministry, but when he heard her, and saw for himself the results of her labour, he felt convinced that God was with her, and, not only on this, but on subsequent occasions, he co-operated cordially with her. The help of this holy and experienced Christian elder was invaluable, and Geraldine Hooper fully appreciated it. Meekness and humility were characteristic features of Mr. Grant's character, and they shone out beautifully on this occasion, as His own labours in Torquay had disappointed him in their results. No Christian person could come under his influence without feeling its hallowed and sanctifying character; but he was, perhaps, *too* heavenly to be popular. When he saw the people flocking to these meetings, he rejoiced, and said, "The Lord has been pleased to set His old servant aside, and send this young girl to set Torquay in a blaze." Geraldine Hooper was pained more than once in the course of these services to observe, that she had more influence with the people than this aged and honoured servant of God. He was speaking to a person in an after-meeting on one occasion

when she was passing near. The woman, without intending to be rude, said, "But I'd rather speak to the young lady, sir." She was so grieved and indignant at the circumstance, that she would not subsequently stay to the after-meetings at all. She never lost her deference for true ministers of God, but was always most modest and unassuming in their presence.

Shortly after these meetings Mr. Grant was driven by a cabman, who, when he offered to pay him, withdrew his hand, saying, "Oh no, sir, no, sir; I can't take any money from you, sir. I had—a prodigal Harry, and—he's come home." The words were uttered with emotion, but Mr. Grant was puzzled. The man explained, "Ar'n't you the gentleman as was with that young lady that preached in the room, sir?" Mr. Grant assented. "Well, sir, you see, I had a prodigal son; my Harry, sir, *was* a prodigal; but he heard her, sir, and now *he's come home*. He's saved, sir! I can't take no money from you, sir; 'tis I that owe more than I can pay!"

After her first visit, Mr. Yorke Moore wrote to Geraldine Hooper:—

"It had been my intention to wait a little longer, to see whether the continued call for your return to Torquay so soon was merely the development of a certain amount of excitement, or truly the mind of the Lord, ere I troubled you again on the subject; but the sober earnestness of, I may say, all Torquay, and the marvellous work which is still going on, seem to indicate the will of God that you should once more breathe forth the words of life to the hundreds 'lying dead in trespasses and sins' in this town. . . . I was encouraged in my view by a conversation with Mr. Grant. . . . Numerous rich and precious fruits have been gathered for Jesus. You ought to know some of the cases. Mrs. M. will probably write."

After her second visit he writes:—

“The ladies contemplate a tea-meeting for the new converts, and have requested the names of those known to each who have been privileged to speak to any.”

We learn from one of these ladies that the proposed tea-meeting was held, when about two hundred converts were addressed by Mr. McDowall Grant, and others. The object of the meeting was to bring the new converts to be acquainted with Christian friends who would take a personal interest in each individual. Mr. Moore continues :—

“I was glad to hear of the gardener, wife and children. Did time permit, I think I may say *scores* could be named, even to our knowledge, who praise God for sending you as His messenger here, and extended is the cry for your return.”

In a subsequent letter he says :—

“The work stands well. A meeting for prayer and praise has been instituted, some days as early as six a.m., for thanksgiving to God for His blessings on Torquay, and prayer for a continuance of the same. It is close by, at Torre.”

Another friend wrote :—

“Many who became anxious about their souls on hearing the message from your lips have found peace, and are going on their way rejoicing.”

On subsequent visits she preached also at Newton Abbot and Mary-Church, in both of which places many were awakened from the apathy of spiritual death to seek and find salvation and life through Christ.



CHAPTER VII.

1868.

THE year 1868 was to be an important one in the experience of Geraldine Hooper. During its course she was to receive from her heavenly Father that best of all earthly gifts to a loving heart like hers—a true and tender Christian husband—a companion and protector for the rest of her earthly pilgrimage. During its course she was to be removed from Bath, the scene of her childhood and youth, the place of her conversion, and the sphere of most of her early labours, to another home and another circle. She was already engaged in marriage, as we have said, to Mr. Dening, of Pitt House, Ottery St. Mary; but the prospect, the sweet, bright prospect of earthly happiness, did not distract her heart from its main object, the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

She held a watch-night service, as had been for some years her habit, and presented to those present, as well as to others, the following Watchword for 1868 :—

“ ‘THE TIME IS SHORT.’

“ Passing onward, passing quickly,
But I ask thee whither bound ?
Is it to the many mansions
Where eternal rest is found ? ”

On the reverse of this card was the following brief address :—

“ ‘LOOKING OFF UNTO JESUS.’

“ DEAR FRIEND,—It has been my privilege hitherto to greet you on the threshold of each year with a few words of Christian sympathy and counsel, and through the ‘good hand of my God upon me’ I am permitted again to address you.

“ The mantle of Time now enshrouds 1867—the remembrance of it alone remains. To some hearts the retrospective view is precious. Tears may have bedewed the pathway of the past year ; the pall of sorrow perchance has draped your home in the garment of mourning ; but these trials have been instruments in the Lord’s hands of leading you to Jesus, and you have realized the precious truth that they were ‘blessings in disguise.’ Now let me affectionately offer the word of exhortation to your heart and mine. If we know somewhat of Jesus let us seek for grace daily to know *more* of Him, and for this end let our watchword be *Looking off unto Jesus*.

Looking unto Him as our sin bearer,
Looking unto Him as our Guide,
Looking unto Him as our Advocate,
Looking unto Him as our *one* High Priest.

In these days of error, infidelity, Romanism, and Ritualism, it is well that the Lord’s children should be on their watch-tower guarding the citadel of their hearts from the invasion of the enemy. Sifting times are approaching the Church of Christ, therefore need *we* grace to ‘*stand fast* in the LORD.’

“ Unconverted reader, these words awaken *no response* in your heart ; the name of Jesus, His cause, His truth, have no fragrance for you, and why ? because *you* are a stranger to Him *and His grace*. The veil which now hides the old year from your view reminds you that *this* is not your rest. May I ask you whither bound ? Where will you spend ETERNITY ? You must spend it *somewhere* ; your

bark has been launched on life's ocean for perhaps ten, twenty, or fifty years; will it cast anchor in the Haven of Eternal rest, where Jesus himself shall bid you welcome? Have you been led by the Holy Spirit to the cleansing fountain of His blood? or are you a devotee of the world, worshipping at its shrine and led captive by Satan at his will?

Is your heart a Christless heart,
Is your *home* a Christless home,
Is your *life* a Christless life,
Will your death be a *Christless* death?

Then *nothing* but a *Christless ETERNITY* awaits you! Ponder these momentous truths, and may the quickening power of the Spirit so apply them that in answer to the question, ‘Where will you spend ETERNITY?’ the response of your heart may be, *with JESUS*.

“And now, in conclusion, I breathe an earnest prayer that 1868 may be to each one a Happy New Year, bringing with it new hopes, new affections, new desires, all centred in Christ. May the blessing of Israel's covenant God rest upon us evermore!

“I remain, yours in our coming Lord,

“GERALDINE HOOPER.”

She had the power of adapting her addresses to the capacity of her audiences, which is so essential to the success of an evangelist. Children delighted to listen to her, because she said nothing they could not understand, and they felt that she *meant* all she did say. On the 15th January, 1868, a quarterly gathering of mothers and children was held in connection with a mothers' meeting, in Grove Street, Bath, and she was asked to speak to the children. A young friend present happened to make a few notes of the address she gave. She took the Good Shepherd as a subject, and, after a little catechetical instruction on the typical history of David, first a shepherd, and a *good* one, and then a king, and a *great* one, she said:—

“Well, now, Christ keeps His Father's sheep, just like David; and

Christ's sheep have enemies, just like David's sheep had. I am going to tell you about some of these enemies first, and you shall tell me their names over again when I have done.

"First, there is the *wolf*. He is not like a bear, you know. He comes so quietly, so stealthily; he steals secretly round and round the flock, and then, when he sees a good chance, he suddenly pounces on some poor little lamb, and off he runs! Now, what enemy have Christ's sheep that is like the wolf? I will tell you. *The world!* The wolf is the world. The wicked world is just such an enemy to Christ's sheep. It creeps up, oh so stealthily! This little pleasure—that little amusement—this trifling vanity—that enticing snare—the 'harmless' game on Sunday—the merry dance—the amusing theatre! Oh, these are the pleasures of sin that are so attractive, that, too often, without their knowing it, they lure men and women, and children too, to destruction, just as the stealthy wolf destroys the sheep. Now what is the name of this enemy? And the children all shout, 'The wolf!' And what does it represent? 'The world!' Yes, the world! Beware of the wolf, dear children!

"The next great enemy is the *bear*. Now, how do you think the bear attacks his prey? He hugs it. Yes; *he hugs it to death!* The bear is *self*; and you are in danger every day from this enemy. Don't you often feel that dreadful thing, *self-will*? and that other dreadful thing, selfishness? You like to have your own way, I know. And when mother tells you to do something you don't like, or to leave off doing something you *do* like, you feel the strength of the hug of the bear of *self*. Your little heart says, 'I don't want to do it, and I won't;' or, 'I do want to do it, and I will.' 'I'll do as I choose, and have my own way.' 'I won't give up this nice thing to my brother or sister; I'll keep it myself.' Ah, take care, take care; the bear is hugging very hard now! Remember, he hugged Adam and Eve to death, just like that! They would have their own way; they would not give up their will to God's will, and you know what came of it! Oh, take care of this enemy! What is its name? 'The bear!' And what does the bear do? '*He hugs.*' And what does he represent? '*Self.*' Yes, self.

"But there is an enemy worse than the bear—it is the *lion*. Oh, what a terrible foe is the lion to sheep! The lion is *Satan*. He is called a 'roaring lion,' and he is always seeking some precious soul to devour and destroy. Sheep can't fight lions, and we can't conquer

the devil. He is too terrible. But there is One that can. There is another Lion stronger than the devil—‘The lion of the tribe of Judah’—Jesus Christ. He can destroy the devil, and He did when He died. When you are afraid of the strong lion, Satan, cry out to the stronger than he, Christ! Never foolishly dare the lion; never risk your precious souls, dear children. You can’t think what your souls are worth! If you had stood by some death-beds I have witnessed lately, it would give you some idea of the worth of your souls.

“Well! now Christ’s sheep hear His voice. If you hear your mother call you, you go at once, don’t you? Yes. Well, Jesus calls you. He is calling you now by my voice. He is saying to you, ‘Come to Me, My sheep; follow Me. I will deliver you from the wolf, and the bear, and the lion.’ Do you *hear* His voice? Will you follow Him? Do you say, ‘How can I?’ Why, when mother calls, you don’t sit still, do you? You jump up, and run to her. When the time for this meeting at which I had promised to speak to you came, I did not sit still in my house, and say, ‘O, yes, I’ll go; I’m going,’ and yet never move! No, I got up, and *came*. But, I fear, some of you hear the voice of Jesus, and say, ‘Yes, I’ll come!’ but never move at all, only sit still where you are! This won’t do: you must *come*; you *must* come to Jesus. He says, “My son, give Me thy *heart*.” It is with your *heart*, not with your feet, you must run to Jesus. You must love Him with your heart, trust Him in your heart, give your whole heart and life to Him, because He gave Himself for you. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. You must come to Him *now*—in your young days, and so give Him the best of your heart—the best of your life. It will never do to say, ‘I’ll come presently;’ to spend the best of your young days serving and following Satan, and then to give the dregs of your life to Jesus, who died for you! Oh, this is ungenerous! This is not loving, this is not kind. You would not act so! Would Jesus accept this? O, no! Don’t leave it to the last illness, the last hours. Come now!

“A little while ago I was in Norwich. I went into a shop to buy a dress. When I had selected one, and was paying the young person who had served me for it, I said, ‘Now you’ll be sure and send me this dress?’ ‘Oh, yes, ma’am.’ ‘You’ll send it me now, at once, to-day?’ ‘Certainly, ma’am.’ ‘You won’t take it and

wear it out first, and then send it to me when its worn out, will you ?' The young woman seemed quite hurt and offended. 'Why, you surely don't know our house, ma'am; this is one of the first houses in Norwich: of course we should not dream of such disgraceful conduct! I never heard of such a thing! 'My dear young friend,' said I, 'are you not serving the Lord Jesus Christ so? Are you not wearing out your precious life, which He bought and paid for with His own priceless, precious blood, in the service of the world and self, and sin and Satan? Have you given Him what is His own by right of purchase? *You* are not your own; *you* are bought with a price! Have you given yourself, body, soul, and spirit to God?' The young woman burst into tears, and said, 'Oh, ma'am, no one ever spoke to me about my soul since my mother died.'

"Now, dear children, Jesus has bought you. You must not cheat the Lord, and act as if you were your own. You must give your hearts to Jesus. None of you are too young to do that. I once knew a dear little boy, only four years old. He died of scarlet fever. I used to go and sit by his bed-side, and talk to Him about Jesus, and tell him of all He suffered because He loved us. One day, another friend went in, and he said, 'Oh, do you know, Miss Hooper has been telling me all about Jesus, and how He loved us, and how He let them drive great, big nails right through His hands (and here he showed up his own tiny white hands), and through His feet, and they crowned Him with thorns, and the blood ran down. Oh, how Jesus must love us!' Another time I was sitting by his bed-side, and I said quietly to his mother, 'He is dying,' when he suddenly roused up, and said, 'Oh no! Georgie is not going to *be dead!* Georgie is going to be with Jesus! and he repeated the words a second time with much earnestness. Then he said, 'Do you see that little white coat? Do you see those pretty flowers? Georgie is going to have them!' There were neither flowers nor coat in the room, but his eyes saw what we saw not! That dear child went to be with Jesus; that dear child heard the voice of Jesus, and followed Him. He was young, very young, but he was old enough to understand that Jesus had loved him.

"Now, I must not keep you. But I want to make one more remark. There are some animals that love dirt and love to roll in the mud; they are never happier than when they are rolling in the mud.

But *the sheep hates mud*; he can't bear it; he avoids it. And God's children hate mud; they *can't bear sin*; they can't love sin. Oh, no! The sheep is a nice, clean creature, not like the filthy swine in its ways. Now, wouldn't you like to be a nice, clean sheep? a nice, white little lamb in Jesus' flock? (The children: 'Oh, yes, yes!') Then come to Jesus now, and may God bless you for Jesus' sake.”

At the end of January, and again early in February, she spent four or five days in Torquay, staying at the house of the late actively benevolent and christian-spirited J. Ayshford Wise, of Clayton Hall, Staffordshire, and Hillesden, Torquay, who took a deep interest in her, and highly appreciated her ministry. He has since fallen asleep in Jesus, and his widow finds many texts marked in his Bible on which Geraldine Hooper preached. Mrs. Wise says of her :—

“When she was staying at Hillesden, or indeed, wherever she stayed, those in the house saw little of her, for the people would come at all hours to speak to her about their souls, or else she had appointments to visit invalids who could not venture into the crowded assemblies; and then (slight as were her preparations for *speaking*, never more than a few notes in the margin of her Bible), she would never enter on her public engagements without a considerable time of devotion.”

Her meetings this year were held in the Royal Assembly Rooms. The attendance included all classes; the gay and fashionable and the humblest of the poor alike listened with intense eagerness to her appeals. The local journals remarking on the thousands attending her meetings said :—

“There is something almost mysterious in the influence exerted by this gifted lady: the large room has been crowded an hour or more before the time for each service, the platform (admission to which was gained by half-a-crown donation towards the expenses),

was crowded with ladies, and the general audience were strikingly orderly and exceeding respectable."

She spoke on this occasion from the words "Stretch forth thine hand;" also on the Queen of Sheba,—which was a favourite subject of hers,—and on Benhadad.

Mrs. Yorke Moore, at whose house she stayed on her next visit to Torquay, writes respecting them :—

"The Lord alone knows how far and wide the blessing has spread through the power of the gift He bestowed upon her. She hid not her talent away, but let her light so shine that God was glorified, and souls were saved, wherever she spoke. It is but little I can tell you, as I never make notes of individual cases, having with many others a fear of bringing praise to the creature rather than to the Creator. This I believe was our beloved friend's own motive for not keeping any accounts of the work the Lord wrought by her. . . . The prejudice among Christians of our own class was very great at first, but the power with which she preached the Gospel, combined with her meekness and simplicity of manner, showing her great object to be the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, by degrees disarmed prejudice. It was a glorious time—many were convinced of sin and many converted. My dear husband was then in the habit of holding regular Thursday evening meetings in our own house, and many who received the truth through her, continued regularly to attend. Constantly also, during her visits and long afterwards, he had anxious inquirers call on him during the morning, evincing an earnest desire to know more of the precious Word of Life. The love of the people was most wonderful. It was with difficulty the carriage could move along. Little presents were constantly being sent her as tokens of love. Many bitter letters were also received, attributing to her evil motives: these she used simply to put aside, saying, 'I must use the gift God has committed to me;' and when Christian people enlarged on what she ought *not* to do, she would say: 'Time is short; they had better be working themselves than wasting it in criticising me.' "

Mrs. Dening visited Kingsbridge twice after her marriage, but her first labours in the place were as Miss

Hooper, in March, 1868. She had only a few days to spare, and desiring to make the most of the opportunity, she preached on the evening of her arrival, twice the next day, and again at four o'clock the following morning, so as to be able to start by an early train. Her first-service was announced for seven o'clock. Soon after six, the large room was completely filled, and before the appointed hour, the gallery and every available place were crowded. She preached on the words “*not saved*” (“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are *not saved*”). After depicting a prisoner awaiting the verdict of the jury, at the close of a trial for murder, and the feelings of all when he was pronounced “guilty,” and “not saved,” she dwelt on *what salvation* was, and *who was its author*. According to the reports of the local journals, with intense earnestness, and in thrilling accents she explained the way of salvation, and then proceeded :—

“Ritualism will not save you. Forms and ceremonies, sighs and tears, frames and feelings, are all worthless—cannot save you! All your good works, all your self-righteousness, is insufficient—it is worthless! Jesus alone can save the guilty: Jesus has paid the debt, and it is by the blood of Jesus, poured out on Calvary’s Cross, that a sinner can be saved. Oh, sinner! dear, dear sinner! Jesus can and will save if you go to the foot of the cross, and ask Him to make you one of His children and save you.

“But there are many in this congregation who are *saved*, many who are Christ’s children. What are you doing for Jesus? What are you doing for Him who left His throne in glory, the songs of angels, and became a babe in Bethlehem, was ‘despised and rejected of men,’ was forsaken by His friends, ‘sweat as it were great drops of blood,’ was arraigned at Pilate’s bar, and died on Calvary’s Cross. Oh, Christian! cannot you do something in return for all this love for you? Is there no unconverted sinner to be reclaimed? Is there no lost one in that back lane, at the corner of yonder street, that is

not a follower of Jesus? There are some who say: 'Oh! God can convert who He will, when He will, and how He will.' I know He can! Of course He can; but as a child of God, there is something for you to do. Oh! work for Jesus! Go and tell the lost ones that Jesus has loved them; and although now under condemnation, the blood of Jesus can save them! All the works done by an unconverted man are worthless—dead men cannot work. But the living soul can work for Christ. He can tell of the love of Jesus to poor sinners, and the salvation of a sinner adds glory to Christ.

"Believer, you have your trials and difficulties; but, remember, Jesus has loved you—you are one of His children, and you are as safe now as you will be when you join the redeemed host in glory.

"But the *not saved*. The not saved! Oh friends, what a tremendous state you are in! Not saved! Then eternal misery must be your portion for ever! But you may be saved! Jesus has shed his blood, and if you ask Him to save you, He will save you with an everlasting salvation."

Then, it is stated, alluding to some recent wrecks at Brixham, she added:—

"Two men left the sinking ship, and began to swim towards the shore: they had not gone far when one of them said: 'I can go no farther; I have no strength left,' and his hands fell helplessly by his aide. The other said: 'I will try. I will trust to my swimming;' but he sank before he reached the shore. The man who had given up all hope in his own exertions was carried in an helpless state by a wave to a rock, and he was *saved*. The man that trusted to his own exertions was *not saved*. Oh! dear, dear sinner! trust not to your own doing; but go to Jesus and say, 'Lord save, or I perish,' and He will save you!

"The ship was wrecked a short distance off the shore; the men were seen in the rigging. The shout was raised: 'Man the life-boat!' And in a short time the life-boat was alongside the vessel. The cry went forth: 'Jump into the life-boat!' Many accepted the invitation, and were *saved*. But others in the rigging stuck fast to the ropes; they trusted to their own exertions, and they went down with the rotten ship. Poor sinner! don't trust to thy own self-

righteousness; but fall down into the life-boat, and you will be *saved*!

“A poor woman from her cottage window saw a man struggling in the water below, she instantly made a rope by tying certain things together, and then by placing a weight to the end threw it to the man. He saw the rope, felt his danger, he caught hold, and was saved.

“Dear child of God, there is one incident more, and that is one for you to follow. Those on shore who were anxious that the crew should be saved, took even their furniture to make a fire to warn them of their danger. Christian!

“‘Go and tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour you have found.’

“Warn them of their danger: invite them to the Saviour, so that at the last day they may be amongst those that are *saved*, and not amongst those that are *not saved*.

“There had been opportunities, but they had been neglected: there had been the summer; there had been the harvest; but it was over and past, and they were not saved. Oh, sinner! dear sinner! may the Lord open your blind eyes, and save you for His name’s sake!”

Deep interest was awakened in the town by this meeting, and that held on the following morning, when she spoke on the woman of Samaria.

As the time for the evening service approached, the crowds begun to assemble outside the Town-hall. By five o’clock, a congregation, larger than the building could accommodate, were assembled in the street, and waited patiently till the doors were opened soon after six, when there was a rush to obtain places. When she arrived an hour after, the entrance halls and street were so thronged, that it was with the greatest difficulty she succeeded in getting into the room. After singing,—

“There is a fountain filled with blood,—

She read part of the eighth chapter of Romans, and then

preached from the words, "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

"Last night my subject was '*not saved*,' to-night it shall be *Christ able to save to the uttermost*."

"God has several books. There is the book of providence, the book of creation, the starry heaven above, the world of flowers around, the pealing thunder and the flashing lightning. These are beautiful books. They tell of God, tell that the 'hand that made them is Divine.' But neither of these books speaks of redemption—neither tells how man is to be saved from condemnation, neither tells of a dying Saviour, of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. But the Bible tells the lost, the guilty, that by believing in Christ they may be saved, and that through the blood of atonement they may be rescued from eternal wrath, and join in the songs of the redeemed throughout a never-ending eternity."

The preacher then dealt very severely with the Socinians, the Ritualists, and the self-righteous. Her object was to show that "*none but Christ*" could save the soul. She proceeded:—

"You may be zealous in your attendance at church or chapel, and yet not be saved; you may fill offices in the Church of Christ, and yet be lost; you may attend to the sacrament, it is of no avail. On your death-bed you may send for the priest or the parson to administer the sacrament to you, and you may die with the bread and wine in your mouth, and be lost, lost! for ever and ever! The Lord's Supper is for Christians, for those who are made alive by the Spirit of God, not for those who are dead: not for those who have not accepted Christ. Oh, sinner! dear sinner! Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Come, then, to Him, and He will save you. Christ can save to the uttermost; He will never turn away one who asks in faith to be saved.

"But you must come empty to be filled. You must come just as you are. You cannot purchase heaven; but Christ has purchased it for you: He has paid the debt you owe, and if you will go to the foot of His Cross and ask for mercy, you will be saved. Jesus will never turn away the empty soul. When the famine was in Canaan, Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt to buy corn—they took *empty* sacks, but

they took money with them. When they came to Joseph he filled their sacks ; but he sent back the money. The next time they took the empty sacks, and double money with them. The sacks were again filled and the money again sent back ; and dear, dear sinner ! you must go to Christ empty—without any works of your own, any self-righteousness, don't trust to anything you have done ; but trust entirely to Jesus, who is able and willing to save to the uttermost.”

Such was the *strain* in which this dear servant of God ever spoke. “Christ first, Christ last, and midst and without end,” was ever her theme.

At the end of the service, she said, that as so many were disappointed and unable to gain admittance, she would gladly, for her part, speak to them next morning, if they would assemble as early as four o'clock, but she could not manage it later. It evinces some zeal to turn out of bed at three in the morning, and face the March winds before day-light, to hear a Gospel sermon, but at that early hour on the next morning, (Saturday,) lights were gleaming in many a window of Kingsbridge and Dodbrooke, and soon the people were wending their way to the Town Hall. By three o'clock the crowd was assembled again outside the door of that building, and before four, the large room was once more densely crowded. Men and women, young and old, religious and careless, Sabbath breakers and Sabbath observers, the Pharisee and the Publican—there they were waiting, for what ? Was it the Queen ? Was it some favourite actress ? Was it some amusing spectacle ? No, no ; but a messenger of glad tidings from heaven, who had touched their hearts, and made them feel that her message was for them.

Once more she ascended the platform and besought them to bow in silent prayer, and then read to them the account of Peter's fall and denial of his Master. Very touchingly did she describe the *One Denied* · dwelling on

the love, the condescension, the charms, the excellences of Jesus in captivating and heart-stirring words. Then she depicted *the one who denied Him*—His apostle, His intimate and beloved friend, who had made such fair professions, and been so confident in his own fidelity. Earnestly and eloquently she appealed to backsliders, and warned Christians against running into temptation, and against hiding their colours, instead of nailing them to the mast, proceeding :—

“Oh there are so many ‘nice Christians’ but they never say a word about Jesus! Oh, dear no! You can be in their company ever so long, and never hear a word about Him! Oh, dear, dear backsliding hearer! Don’t follow the Saviour afar off! Don’t be ashamed to own Him, who left His throne in glory, and bled and died for you. Jesus was not ashamed of you. Believer! don’t be ashamed of Jesus.

“Peter then followed Him to the house. Oh, dear friends! don’t trifle with temptation, always keep outside the door. There are some professors who will say, ‘What harm is there in my going to the theatre, to the ball, to the scenes of pleasure, if I do not mix with the people that are there? Cannot I do some good by my presence without injuring myself?’ Oh! backslider! backslider! keep, I beseech you, outside the door. There was a poor drunkard who spent most of his life and money at a public house, and one day whilst I was preaching he came in, and he was converted; I did not convert him. Oh, no. God alone can convert a poor sinner. Being converted, he left the public-house; and the landlady, having lost a good customer, made inquiry after him. Days and weeks passed away, still he did not go *inside the door*, and one day whilst selling some hymn-books he passed the public-house. The landlady was standing at the door, and she inquired very kindly as to where he had been for so long a time, and if he would only step inside how glad the company would be to see him. But the man said, ‘No. I am selling hymn-books, and I cannot go in.’ ‘But,’ said the landlady ‘I will buy one, and no doubt you could sell half a dozen to the customers.’ ‘Well,’ said the man, ‘if they are so anxious for the hymn-books, perhaps you would kindly oblige me by taking them in,’ and so saying handed her the books, and walked away to the other side of the street. The landlady finding she could

not get him inside, threw the books after him into the street. Dear friends! follow the example of this man; and *keep outside the door of temptation.*

“But Peter went inside, and warmed himself by the fire that was kindled by the enemies, the murderers of his Lord and Master. There came a maid and charged him as he sat by the fire with having been with Jesus. His fall was now complete. He had arrived at the last step, he denied his Master, and said, ‘I know Him not.’ Oh! Peter, Peter! what a fall to deny thy Lord and Master; but the cock crew, and Peter remembered the words of Jesus, and he turned his eyes towards Jesus, and Jesus looked upon Peter, and he was forgiven.

“Oh, backslider! take warning by Peter, and now return, and come back from thy wandering. Look again to the Saviour, and He will restore. He will pardon thy backsliding and love thee freely.

“Dear sinner! perhaps we may not meet again until we meet at the judgment seat of Christ. Oh! I beseech you! I intreat you, come to Christ! Come now! He stands with outstretched arms ready to receive you! Oh! poor sinner! Jesus loves you! Oh! why do you not love Him? But dear, dear sinner! if you *will* reject the Saviour, if you *will* continue in sin, and set Him at nought, I tell you that Jesus will be glorified in you still; if He is not glorified in your salvation, He will be *in your destruction.* ‘Because I have called and ye refused, I will laugh.’ Yes, laugh! Christ is never said to have laughed at any one: but, oh, sinner, dear sinner! if you reject Jesus, God will laugh at you! Oh, it is a terrible thing to be laughed at by God! Men do not like to be laughed at even by one another! They would rather be sworn at! What will God’s laugh be when He mocks thee in derision, and laughs at thy calamity? Oh, sinner, sinner! once more I point thee to a loving, bleeding, dying Saviour. Come to Him now, and thou shalt reign with Him in glory. Thou shalt tune thy harp to sing His praises. Thou shalt mingle with the ransomed throng, and join in the everlasting song to God and the Lamb. Oh, Lord! open Thou the blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, and unloose stammering tongues, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

These services were blessed to the awakening of many. She was earnestly pressed to revisit the town, but could

not at that time promise to do so. A fortnight after she left, a lady wrote :—

“We want you to join us in prayer, that if it be not God’s will to open your way for a second visit this spring or summer, He will graciously show us what to do, and how to confirm the work He assuredly sent you here to begin. . . . Numerous proofs are constantly reaching us that your words have penetrated hearts hitherto impenetrable. . . . One clergyman who had affectionately warned his flock that they ought not to hear you, as it was unscriptural for a woman to preach the Gospel, now says, that after witnessing such signs in his own neighbourhood of the efficacy of your words on the utterly irreligious and vicious, he is obliged to believe it a work of God. Another old inhabitant says the place has never had such a shake since Whitfield preached here. But I must not lengthen my letter to tell you of the eager inquiries of rich and poor, worldly commercial men, and some who used to be lifeless Christians, ‘When will she come again?’

“A poor mother just now brought me ‘such a beautiful letter,’ from her daughter, who is in service at Plymouth, and has been converted under your ministry, beseeching her father, mother, sisters, and brother, to seek the Saviour she had found.

“I think you ought to be informed of the cause of the unpleasant disturbance at the door on Friday evening. A company of rope-makers, and another of shipwrights, had worked hard all day in order to finish in time to be present, and on reaching the hall were told they could not enter. You must forgive their too loud expressions of disappointment.”

Eighteen months after this, in September, 1869, Mrs. Dening, accompanied by her husband, revisited Kingsbridge. It was thought by many that the novelty being gone, and the preacher being now a married woman, she would no longer attract the people in the same way. The result proved the reverse. The newspapers remarked that since Whitfield’s preaching on Square’s Quay, no one had ever drawn such congregations. Her first address on this occasion was on the Good Samaritan.

"Who is my neighbour?" From the newspaper we take the following sketch:—

"The question was put by this young man in the pride of his heart: he believed himself to be righteous; he trusted to his works. But Jesus knew his heart and motive for putting the question. Dear sinner, you can do nothing—the very best Christians can do nothing to inherit eternal life. You may be very regular in your attendance at church or chapel; you may be moral in your characters: but that will not save you: Jesus, your neighbour, alone can and will save you.

"But see how the Lord answers this self-righteous man. Oh, the kindness of Jesus! He will always listen to the inquiries of sinners. Jesus is never in a hurry when sinners ask Him a question. This young man knew his Bible; he had intellectual knowledge; he knew what was written in the law: 'This do, and thou shalt live,' said Jesus. But could he do it? No! Sinner, dear sinner, can you love the Lord your God with all your heart? You do not; you cannot. Christians cannot do it, and this young man knew he could not.

"But he wished to justify himself, and how many among you wish to justify yourselves? You confess you are 'miserable sinners' Sunday after Sunday; but if any one were to tell you that you were 'miserable sinners,' you would be greatly offended. You make the confession with the lip, but in your heart you do not believe it. But the Christian confesses his sins: he knows and feels that he is a hell-deserving sinner. 'And who is my neighbour?' said the young man. And Jesus answered the question by a parable. 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.' This points out man's original sin. Adam was created holy: he lived in Paradise. One law was given him—only one—'Thou shalt not eat of the tree of life;' but he did eat, and fell. He fell from holiness to sin, from Paradise to misery, and there he lay, helpless and ruined.

"'And by chance.' The word in the original means 'coincidence.' Dear hearer, there is no such word as 'chance' with God; but all is determined by His eternal counsel.

"'A certain priest came that way.' There is a good deal of talk about priests and priestly power in the present day; but can the priest pardon sin? Oh, no! The great High Priest has made

atonement for every believer's sin. No earthly priest can convert the soul. Nothing but the Holy Spirit can change the heart of man.

"Then came a Levite. He looked on him, and passed by on the other side. The sacrificial offerings under the law, the shedding of blood, could not wash away sins: it only brought to their remembrance that they had broken the law.

"But a good Samaritan came where he lay. Oh, the love of Jesus! Oh, the kindness, the compassion of the Saviour! Jesus looked over the battlements of glory, and saw His Church lost and ruined. From the height of glory he beheld man lying helpless and ruined; but did He let him remain there? Oh, no, no! He left the glories of heaven, the adorations of angels, and 'His own arm brought salvation.' He did not ask the man to come and meet Him half-way, but He went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil. If wine is poured on a wound it causes a smarting pain, and when the Spirit of God convinces a man of sin—oh, the agony of spirit, the sleepless nights, the tears that are shed! Some have deeper conviction of sins than others; but those who have the deepest conviction, those who have felt the burden of sin the heaviest, keep nearest the Saviour, and feel the greatest confidence in Jesus. But He does not leave the soul in that condition—He pours in oil. He cheers the drooping spirit, He binds up the broken heart, and pours in the rich consolation of a full, free, and present salvation.

"He took him to an inn. What Jesus begins, He finishes. He never leaves His work incomplete. Oh, dear sinner, I want you to be saved! Jesus has left His throne of glory for you, and will you not now love that Kind Neighbour who loved and died for you?

"Christians, lazy Christians, I have a word for you. What are you doing for Jesus? Are you seeking out the lost, and telling sinners of the love of Jesus? A poor drunkard has been reclaimed. Do you go to help him? Do you strengthen and encourage him? Oh, no! You say, 'I hope he'll stand.' And so he will if you don't push him down. You keep aloof from him, and should he fall, you say, 'Oh, I thought he would,' and that is all you care about it.

"Dear sinner, who is your neighbour? Is it Jesus? If some people call on their neighbours, the answer is, 'Not at home;' but

Jesus is always at home, and waiting to receive you. If any one were to tell you your house was on fire you would feel alarmed ; but you are careless and unconcerned about your soul and the flames of hell.

“ Some neighbours never invite more than one at a time, but Jesus invites all ; and if every one in this room were to go to Him at once, He would receive you. He will never turn any away. Dear hearer, I want you to know this neighbour of yours ; but oh, if you reject Him, He ‘ will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh.’ A young man, who had led a gay life, was taken ill, and vowed that, if he recovered, he would become a Christian. He did recover, but he forgot his promise. Again was he taken ill, again was the promise of repentance made, and again he followed the world. One evening he was at a public-house where they were playing at ‘ puff and dart : ’ it was a tube with a needle blown through it. The young man blew the needle, but it stuck fast. He drew up his breath in order to blow with greater force, and in doing so he drew back the needle, and it went down into his lungs. Death stared him in the face,—his sins came to his remembrance,—he was in an agony of distress. He had despised Jesus, he had not accepted his invitation, and in distress he died.

Newspaper accounts of religious addresses generally convey an imperfect impression ; but even a verbatim report of those of Geraldine Hooper would entirely fail to give an idea of their power. It lay not so much in the thoughts or words, as in that indescribable something, which we call *unction* ; it lay in the Spirit of Christ, which shone out by power and love in every sentence she uttered, and in the earnest sincerity that carried her words home to every heart.

This series of meetings was also closed by an address at four a.m., thronged as before. One of the local papers has the following :—

“ The question is being asked by many, Will the good impressions made on saint and sinner by these addresses prove like ‘ the morning

cloud and early dew ?' We believe not. We think that addresses so full of Gospel truths, delivered with such zeal and earnestness, with such burning love for the conversion of souls, by one who, without controversy, has been called to the work and qualified by an Almighty Power, cannot be delivered in vain. It is impossible ! The professing Christian world is in a cold, dull, lifeless state, and such preaching as Mrs. Dening's is calculated to arouse it from its slumbering lethargic state."

In January 1871, a third visit was paid by Mr. and Mrs. Dening to the town, when precisely similar scenes ensued.





CHAPTER VIII.

1868.

TOWARDS the close of January, 1868, she visited Fenny Stratford a second time, preaching in the Baptist Chapel, first to backsliders, from the parable of the Prodigal which she was fond of using in this way, and subsequently on “the Great Itinerant” who “went about doing good.” She had been asked to state in public what led her to become a preacher, and very simply and modestly she did so as follows:—

“I longed to do something for the St. Giles’s of Bath—Avon Street, and so I gathered a few in a house, three or four storeys high, each storey being rooms occupied by separate families. The occupants would all come down into the lower room, and then I would read a portion of God’s Word, and speak a few words about it. Here God was with me to help and bless the Word.

“While thus labouring I was taken ill, and my kind physican said I must not speak any more. But having to visit an invalid in another part of Bath, I passed through a street which might be termed another St. Giles’s. My heart again yearned for the people, so I determined to hold a meeting, and God blessed the Word. I first had the meeting for women; then they said, ‘Can’t our husbands come?’ I therefore consented to hold a meeting for them. The first, for the men, was as early as six to half-past six, and for the women from half-past six to seven, in the morning.

She then briefly related the results of her visit to Norfolk, and alleged a few of the reasons that made her consider that women were not excluded by God from the ministry of the Gospel, ending by saying, "But if you still think me wrong I hope you will pray for me, that I may be set right." The newspaper chronicler said in reviewing her labours :—

"If such in the providence of God be the result of Miss Hooper's preaching, we would say 'Go on.' Men may cavil, but very soon He who is greater than man will say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' Oh that many more with her spirit might be raised up to preach the Gospel; for if such was the case we should not hear of that cold spirit which reigns in so many of our congregations."

On the 23rd of January she went to Luton, and preached on a Thursday evening in the "Union Chapel," at noon and in the evening of the following day, and again at seven o'clock on the Saturday morning; returning to Bath the same day, for her Sunday and Monday meetings, and leaving on the Tuesday morning for Torquay. Speaking of these and other meetings, a lady resident in the town who attended them, says :—

"She never visited us without hearts being gathered to the Lord, and not a few being received into Christian fellowship at various churches. There was in her preaching such fervour, and so much that was suited to every state, that one always felt a special blessing from above was present with us.

"Our beloved friend was one unquestionably called by her Lord and Master to the work; otherwise she could never have edified all classes as she did. Experienced Christians were comforted and cheered, weaker ones encouraged and strengthened, and the careless were so aroused and drawn to Christ, that many have been changed characters ever since. My idea is, that our loved friend was the blessed instrument of more conversions than any minister whose services I have been privileged to attend. And it was not only in her public services that she loved to speak of her Saviour—full of vivacity and humour

as was her private conversation, it was ever being turned to the topic nearest her heart, and she had a word in season for every one.

"Her loving ways won the hearts of all who met her. There was a rivalry even amongst the servants in our families, for the pleasure of waiting on her. Whenever she preached, the people flocked in from miles around, and much seed was scattered far and wide, of whose growth we have often evidence. The poor have a most loving recollection of her, and heard with deep sorrow that they should see her face no more.

"Her catholic charity was conspicuous: members of every congregation in the town attended her services, and in many cases she entirely overcame the prejudice felt by so many against lady preachers."

Early in March, she paid a second visit to Woburn, and preached three times in the Independent Chapel, to large and attentive audiences. One of her addresses, on "Making light of Christ," will long be remembered. Large numbers of young men from the surrounding villages came in to these services, and her powerful appeals went home to many hearts. The paper recording these meetings concludes thus ;—

"After becoming acquainted with such facts as these, to say nothing of the numerous instances of usefulness to men sunk in vice and sin and misery, one can scarcely dispute that such an agent carries with her indisputable credentials that she has been raised up of God for an especial and glorious work of evangelisation."

Leaving Woburn early in the morning, she got back to Bath in time to take part that evening in a workmen's tea-meeting, to which only those had been invited who were not in the habit of attending any place of worship. They were a little constrained and uncomfortable, not much liking evidently the tone of the meeting. When she rose to speak to them, at once the sun seemed to burst from behind a cloud and illuminate every face, and as she spoke to them of the young Carpenter of

Nazareth, their hearts seemed to warm towards Jesus, and many anxious souls remained for conversation after the meeting.

At the end of April she visited Cheltenham for the first time. She preached four times in the Town Hall (which holds 1000 people) to overflowing audiences. On the evening of her arrival, she spoke on the story of blind Bartimeus. Next day she preached both afternoon and evening, and her closing address, which was delivered at six o'clock next morning (at which hour the large hall was already filled), was from the parable of the Good Samaritan. The general feeling respecting these meetings was, that they were exceedingly valuable, that her addresses were marked by much power, wisdom, and deep feeling. The poor were charmed and delighted in listening to her—her words found their way to *their* hearts, though some of another class criticised cruelly. It was peculiarly the case with our dear friend, that “the common people heard her gladly.”

In August of the same year she was urged to revisit Cheltenham, and did so, staying at the house of Colonel and Mrs. Wm. Ward. Her labours on this occasion were much blessed. The addresses were “splendid,” to use the expression of a Cheltenham friend, who was present. She spoke on Tuesday evening after her arrival, again on Wednesday afternoon and evening, and finally at six o'clock on Thursday morning, previous to her departure. Many were deeply affected on this occasion. Among other results, her words found their way to the hearts of some young and thoughtless worldly girls, who wept and trembled under a sense of sin as she was speaking of Peter's fall; and who were, it was hoped, led to the Saviour. The Christian gentleman who invited Miss

Hooper to Cheltenham, himself received blessing through some words she spoke at this visit, on the subject of prayer. They gave him a degree of enlargement and enjoyment in prayer, for which he felt grateful. He received many a visit after she was gone from those who had received Jesus, and had given their hearts to Him. He was stopped in the street and thanked by total strangers for having introduced Geraldine Hooper into the town; and frequently, on entering a shop, was recognised as one identified with these blessed meetings, and heard tales of spiritual life and joy received by means of them. On one occasion a young woman in a shop told him, that she had been deeply moved by the solemn warnings of the preacher against procrastination—that it had driven her to Jesus, in whom she was then rejoicing, and that she had applied to a Baptist minister in the town for the solemn ordinance of believers' baptism. Miss Hooper had not, of course, said anything on this subject; but it is an instance of the desire of an awakened conscience to obey what it recognises as the will of God.

There was an aged and suffering clergyman in Cheltenham at that time, drawing near the bounds of the better land. Ever since Miss Hooper's first visit it had been his delight to hear his wife sing one of her favourite hymns, to the air of "Home, sweet home":—

"They stood around the throne,
'Mid the palaces of light,
They took their harps of glory
With raptures of delight;
And sounds of sweetest melody
Arose upon the breeze:
'Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
To Thee be all the praise.'

“They stood around the throne,
In garments white as snow ;
They drank the crystal fountain
Whence living waters flow ;
And they sang the song of Moses—
Of Moses and the Lamb:
‘Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,’
Through heaven’s arches ran.

“They stood around the throne,
The crown is on their brow ;
They have passed the dreary desert,
They rest with Jesus now.
And the conquerors’ song of triumph
Resounds from shore to shore,
‘Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,’
We praise Thee evermore.”

One morning he asked for this hymn once more. His wife immediately complied ; the old man smiled with joy—he seemed very, very happy as he listened. So enraptured did his countenance become that it seemed as if he saw the innumerable white-robed multitude standing around the throne. The melody went on, the sick man’s face grew still more radiant ; but at last his wife stopped, the smile seemed so *fixed* that she was startled. Could it be ? Yes ! the soul had fled, and the aged pilgrim himself stood with the rest “around the throne.”

In May she visited London, Stoney Stratford, Cardiff, Woburn, and Newport Pagnell ; but space forbids our giving particulars. In June she was at Swansea, and also in Northamptonshire and elsewhere ; and in July again in Bedfordshire, as well as at Exeter. In August she preached at Hemel-Hempstead, Banbury, and Gravenhurst ; and on the 19th September held her farewell meeting in Bath, at the Assembly Rooms, prior to

changing her name and taking up her residence in Devonshire.

On the 28th a meeting was held in the lecture-room in York Street, of those to whom for so many years she had week by week proclaimed the Gospel message, to present her with a testimonial of love and esteem, on the occasion of her approaching marriage. It consisted of a silver tea and coffee service with other articles of plate, and a china tea and coffee set. The inscription on the plate was, “Presented to Miss Geraldine Hooper, by affectionate friends, as a public expression of esteem and regard. Bath, 1868.” Mr. Sheppard, who made the presentation, accompanied it with a long and kind speech, from which space forbids our making extracts. He spoke in the name of the many whom he represented, with the warmest appreciation of her work, the manner in which it had always been conducted, and the results which had flowed from it; and expressed earnest and affectionate desires for her future happiness and usefulness. We take from the newspaper Miss Hooper’s reply:—

“Dear Friends,—When I entered this place this evening, at the request of the kind friend who has so gracefully presented me with this munificent testimonial of your Christian love and friendship, I thought I might be able in some measure to express my thanks to you; but I find no words to convey how I appreciate and admire the costly gift which greets me. Eloquently does such a pledge of your friendship testify to my heart, that the name of Jesus, which it has been my happy privilege to proclaim to many of you during the last five years, has been fragrant to your hearts. You had never testified your esteem for the messenger so richly, had you not loved and valued the message she has been wont to declare to you.

“How little did I imagine, when I first commenced my evangelistic work in the little kitchen of a house in Holloway, that I should be called to address larger meetings; or that the work to which I

felt the Lord had called me, would grow as it has done. But the door was opened by Himself, and all that I have had to do was merely to go in and work; and truly I can say that His grace has been sufficient, and His strength has ever been made perfect in weakness.

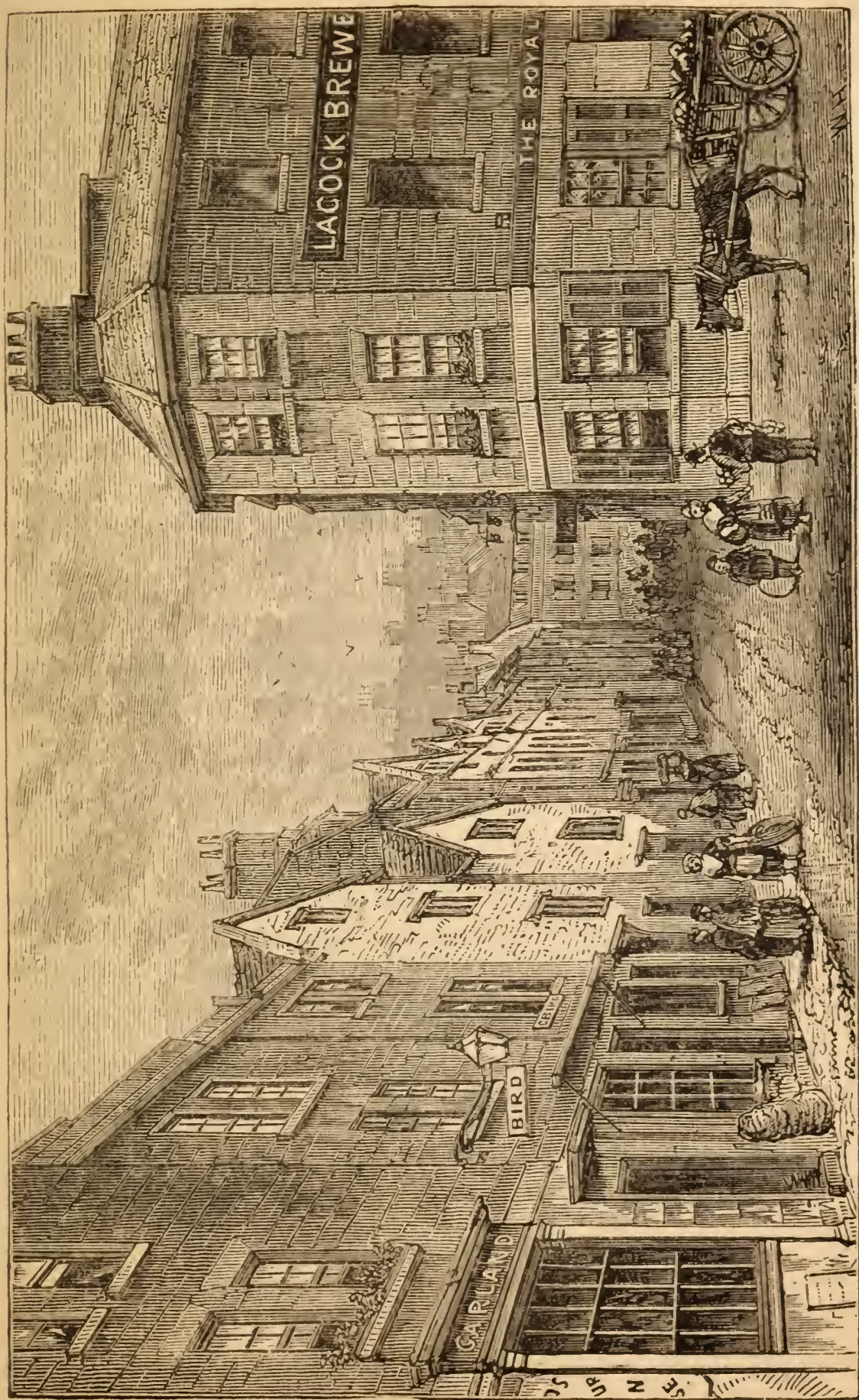
“I did not come here this evening with the intention of giving you an address, and yet, when I gaze upon your gifts, I seem to read a sermon in each one, and cannot forbear once again proclaiming the old, old story. The silver reminds me that it was not always thus beautiful: it had first to be dug out of the earth, then placed in the crucible that the dross might be consumed, then moulded, and lastly the mark of its genuineness had to be impressed thereon. And thus it is with the Christian: he is first dug out, as it were, of the mine of sin; then the Lord places him in the furnace of trial, temptation, sorrow or poverty, that the dross of earthliness may be separated from him; and although he may be placed again and again in the fire, the crust of earth *alone* perishes, and the silver seven times purified comes out unhurt. And so, dear friends, whilst I thank you for your elegant gift, let me earnestly and affectionately ask each one, Has the Lord sought and found you, and do you bear the mark of genuine silver—the pure metal in your daily walk and conversation? Are you so polished that the Refiner’s image is reflected by you?

“Again, when I see the exquisite tea service, I cannot but be reminded that there was a time when to all appearance it was but useless clay, which the passers-by would have left unheeded; but the potter has power over the clay, and the mean substance in his hand was prepared and moulded into these vessels, to the praise of the maker’s name. It is even thus that God deals with the sinner.

“You have alluded to my work of faith and labour of love, but believe me, dear friends, I have ever considered it a great privilege to meet with you from week to week, to testify amongst you the unsearchable riches of Christ; and you have rendered the service very sweet by the Christian sympathy and love you have evinced towards me, in thought, in word, in deed. It has been very refreshing to my own soul from time to time to feel the warm grasp of the hand, while one and another of you have testified that the Word has been to your souls ‘the savour of life unto life,’ and my earnest prayer is that you may be my crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. Although the occasion of my leaving you is not one of sorrow, yet I cannot but

regret parting from those among whom I have laboured for so long, and from whom I have received so many proofs of love and esteem. Wherever my lot may be cast, I shall remember my dear Bath friends with deepest gratitude and Christian love. Were my tongue ‘the pen of a ready writer,’ I would be better able to express the emotions and feelings of my heart at this time; but I do ask you to accept my warmest thanks for this proof of your appreciation of my poor services, and to remember me, where I shall ever remember you when time and distance sever us, even at the ‘Throne of Grace.’ ”

The time which had been fixed for her marriage was now fast approaching, and it was well that it was so, for she was greatly needing rest. Besides her two regular meetings in Bath each week, and frequent special ones, she had visited this year before the end of August upwards of twenty different towns, several of them more than once; she had preached over two hundred times, besides travelling several thousand miles, in the Master’s service. Those who loved her best were anxious to see her under the care of a wise and loving husband, who, without hindering her usefulness, might so far moderate and regulate her zeal as to induce her to avoid risks which endangered both her physical and mental well-being. *They* felt that she was over-working, but she did not seem conscious of it herself. She quickly rallied from a sense of fatigue, and did not sufficiently realize that in making so severe and long-continued a strain on her powers of body and mind, she was using up not only interest, but capital—a course which, though not difficult for a short time, can never last long. So many engaged like her, in the blessed and glorious work of seeking the salvation of immortal souls, are, like her, tempted to overwork, and suffer in consequence, that we offer no apology for introducing some wise counsel, addressed to Geraldine Hooper by her friend,



HOLLOWAY, BATH.



Dr. Forbes Winslow—an authority on such a subject. Had his advice been followed, humanly speaking, it would not have been our sad task to write a memoir of one who *was*; but experience often comes too late. The race-horse runs fast, but not far; the candle burned at both ends may give double light, but it is only for half the time. Dr. Winslow wrote:—

“Do not forget my medical cautions. You must not ignore this fact, that *the brain cannot bear with safety a long and sustained pressure. It is your duty to resist the temptation to speak when you feel mentally and bodily fatigued.* It is madness for you to exhaust prematurely your powers. Do husband your strength, and then God may in His mercy give you a long life of usefulness. If you violate the laws of health, *you must suffer in mind as well as in body. Do not let* injudicious though well-meaning friends induce you to over-tax your strength; if you do, *you will break down, as others have done.* Have the courage to say, ‘No, no, no,’ to all who try to induce you to act imprudently.”

Then, after alluding to four or five cases of evangelists who had broken down from overwork he continues:—

“Do listen to this good advice in time. Your constitution is not a strong one. Your nervous system is excitable, and your mind too active. Pray be *wise*, and exercise the wonderful power with which our precious Jesus has endowed you, in moderation. ‘Let your moderation be known unto all men.’ ”

She did not leave Bath much during the month of September, being occupied with needful preparations for her marriage, and for quitting entirely the scene of her early labours. Many were sorrowing at her departure, for there was then no thought that she would ever return to reside at Bath.

The wedding took place on the 2nd of October, in a simple, Christian style. It was my privilege to spend the early hours of that day with my precious friend;

and when all arrangements were completed, we had a quiet hour for that communion with the Changeless and Invisible, which alone can stay the soul in seasons of outward excitement and change. To a woman, her wedding-day is always one of very mingled emotions; and gladness itself cannot check the tears that will spring from the deeply stirred fountain of feeling. But only joy and peace shone in Geraldine Hooper's countenance, when, having arrayed her in her white silk dress and covered her with her bridal veil, we led her down to the carriage that was to convey her to church. Loving friends lined the whole route, and as she walked up the aisle of Trinity Church, which was densely crowded, her bearing of calm, modest dignity, and her gentle, delicate beauty, struck every one who observed her. The rector, the Rev. J. M. Dixon, officiated on the joyous occasion, and her bridesmaids were the Misses Dixon, Dening, Perstone, and Parker. On returning to Green Park, the company assembled in the drawing-room for a hallowed hour of prayer and praise, before the “*déjeûner*,” according to the precept, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

A characteristic little incident recurs to memory as we write. When, after breakfast, the health of the bride and bridegroom had been drunk, some one playfully proposed that the bride should return thanks. She shook her head, saying merrily, “Oh, no, no! did you never read, ‘let your women keep silence’? Besides, I have made one speech to-day which will last for my life (alluding to the ‘I WILL’ of the marriage service). You wouldn’t expect me to say any more after that!”

They left soon afterwards for Brighton, while the Abbey bells were blithely ringing. Who would have dreamed

that in less than four years, those bells would ring a muffled peal at the funeral of that young and happy bride?

A fortnight after her marriage, she wrote to a friend :—

“ We have not been idle, nor are we. Henry held three meetings at St. Leonard’s-on-the-Sea—two on the Grand Parade, and one at a gentleman’s house. Much power and unction accompanied the Word, which was blessed to the conversion of two to whom I had the privilege of speaking afterwards.

“ While there, we met Col. S——, who heard me at Bedford, and whose brother, Capt. S——, lives at this lovely place, where they are seeking to spread abroad the name of Jesus. He was anxious we should come over, and that I should give an address on Thursday. So we came, intending to proceed to Brighton on Friday; but we have felt constrained to stay on, and are holding services each day. . . . So you see our ‘honeymoon’ is, as I trust *our lives* may be, spent in the Lord’s service.

“ You do not know how sweet it is to me to be united to one who so tenderly and zealously sympathizes in the work and in the truth. We are fellow-labourers, and, I can truly say, ‘the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places.’ ”

On the 28th October, Mr. and Mrs. Denning went to Wolverton, where the latter, when Miss Hooper, had been on two previous occasions. The congregations were larger than ever, and her last address was heard by upwards of 3,000 persons. Her text was, “Look up” (Mark viii. 25). The papers report it as follows :—

“ We have an instructive incident brought before us, dear friends, in the text I have read in your hearing, from which we may deduce many practical lessons. In the first place we will consider the blind man, then we will consider his friends, and then consider the one to whom his friends brought him. Let us notice the character of the blind man. He may not necessarily be a drunkard, nor is it requisite that he should be a blasphemer: a blind man may be a very harmless sort of man, harmless in his neighbourhood, in his family, and in the place where it has pleased the Lord to place him. Now there are

sinners in the present day whom the blind man may very justly typify. They are not great sinners, they do not go to the same length and breadth of iniquity that others go to, they are what they call themselves—respectable sinners. They owe no man anything, they do their best to get on in the world; their children are nicely clothed, their wives may not have to bear the drunkard's blow, or hear the swearer's curse, and even their neighbours like them; and if you ask who were the people who bore the highest character in the city, or village, or town, where they lived, these would be the ones, it may be, that the world would point out as the best sort of people. But yet they are blind—ah! and the rich man and the poor man, the queen upon her throne and the peasant in his hovel, if they were blind they could not see the sunbeams, they could not see the flowers that bloom around their pathway, they could not see the birds that carol their notes of praise to their Maker's name; whatever their rank, or position, or name might be, they would be blind to the things of creation. Oh, sinner, it is thus with you to-night—you are blind to the Sun of Righteousness, blind to the promise in God's Word, blind with regard to things that belong to your eternal welfare. You have a name to live it may be in your church and in your chapel, but in God's sight you are blind, born blind, living 'without hope and without God in the world.'

“Let us notice what his friends did. Who were they? They were Christ's disciples, and they had seen Him perform all His mighty miracles. They saw this blind man, and they did what you Christians ought to do with your blind friends,—they *brought him to Jesus*; not to the priest or minister, but straightway to the Master himself. My dear friends, what are you doing for the Lord? Do you bring sinners in the arms of prayer and faith to the Lord Jesus? Not long ago I was turning out some drawers at home, when taking up a dress which I had not worn for some time, and putting my hand into the pocket I pulled out a shilling. I could not tell what it was, I thought it was a farthing; but I soon found it was a genuine silver coin, tarnished and having the appearance of a farthing. I thought it was too much like many Christians at the present day. They look like farthings, not shillings. The shilling had lain by, it had not done my pocket, or me, or the household any good, it had lain there quite useless. You are exactly like that shilling, doing nobody any good. You don't look like being converted, you don't act so, you don't do your house any good, or your neighbours, or your parish any good. I don't care who

you are ; if you are lazy Christians, tarnished from want of use, you are just like my shilling. May the Lord help you, dear hearers, to hoist the standard of truth, to unfurl your colours, and do as the disciples did—bring souls to Jesus ! I don't say you ought to work as I am doing, but the Lord never called you to be idle in His vineyard. He never gave you even one talent to bury in the earth, but he left you here to be a witness for Him, and to proclaim His truth to others. Go home to-night and ask yourselves, 'What good am I doing to others ? To whom have I ever spoken of Jesus ?' Some people say, 'I like Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so very much, for they are not a bit different from other people.' What a compliment from the devil ! My dear friends, I hope you will be different to other people. If we are the Lord's, we ought to be. Every one should take 'knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.' If you are not contrary to the world what change has your religion wrought in you ?

" 'And they brought the blind man to Jesus and besought Him that He would touch him.' I wonder if any of you fathers or mothers have brought your children to the Lord Jesus and besought Him to touch them. If we would be saved we must come in contact with Jesus, He must touch us, He must open our blind eyes, He must unstop our deaf ears and unloose our stammering tongues.

"Now mark how Jesus received him. 'And He took the blind man.' He laid hold of him, He led him out Himself, He performed the cure alone. Some of you know what it is to have the Lord take you by the hand. You remember when the Spirit of the living God strove with you, how conviction rolled in upon your soul, how Jesus took you by the hand. He singled you out, He spake to your soul, saying, 'Thou art the man ;' and you realized that none could save but Christ. You went into chapel a blasphemer, a swearer, one who had trampled His laws beneath your feet ; but Jesus the King of kings, Jesus the Lord of lords, took you by the hand. Your father, your mother and your friends had prayed that He might touch you, and that prayer was answered. You will never forget that night. Oh, may it be so with you sinners to-night as you listen to these words—may Christ lay hold of you, may He single you out, may you feel that you are the only sinner that needs salvation, may He break down your wicked imaginations, and may you be led by His Holy Spirit to cry from the depths of a broken and contrite heart, 'Jesus, Master, save me, or I perish !'

"Now mark, Jesus took him out of the town, He took him, as it were, out of the world; and when Christ calls His people, He calls them out of the world, not into convents and nunneries. You all know the story of the man who determined to be a hermit, that he might not put himself in the way of sin; that by living alone he might get rid of his evil heart. So he lived in a cave in a desert, and he had only a pitcher of water and a bit of bread; but the second day of his hermitage he got into a rage with the pitcher and knocked it down, because he had nothing else to quarrel with. He began then to see he could not get rid of his evil heart. The publican knew where *his* sin lay—he did not smite his head, but his breast. Although Christ does not call us out of the world to live alone, He does call us out of it as regards its sin, its fashions, its worldliness. He led him out of the town! Have you thus been led by Him? 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' You cannot love the world and Christ at the same time. You cannot serve the world and Christ. You cannot serve your own will and your own desire, and then try and serve Christ with the little that remains! If you are saved to-night, you will be led to follow and worship Him. My dear hearers, it is one thing to talk about being a Christian, it's another thing to *be* a Christian. This is a religious age; it's fashionable to be religious and to talk about religion—to talk of the signs of the times. But do you believe in the coming of Christ? Are His footsteps heard on the threshold of your doors? Is the sound ringing in your ears? Do you believe that the chariot-wheels are heard in the distance, and Christ is on His way to claim His bride and land her safe for ever in the land beyond the tomb? Are you ready to be led out? Are you serving Jesus? Are your talents consecrated to Jesus? Have you a broken and a contrite heart, which He will in no way despise? My dear hearers, you shall never have to say, I lulled you to repose on false hopes, that I called 'peace when there is no peace.' 'Ye must be born again,' must be regenerated, if you would be saved. Let me ask you—is it thus with you? Can you say, He has led me out, He has saved me, He has opened mine eyes—'Whereas I was blind, now I see.'

"Let us notice the means He used:—'He spat on his eyes.' The world says, 'The idea! why didn't He use some fine ointment? He ought not to have used such means!' So they call the Gospel a simple plan of salvation, too simple for them. Ah! they forget the price it cost, they forget the

suffering of the Lord of glory, they forget Pilate's judgment bar, they forget Calvary's rugged hill, they forget the agony on the cross when the Saviour cried, ‘ My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ? ’ It cost the Lord of glory His life, it caused Him to leave His throne above, to lay aside the glory He had with His Father, to take upon Him our humanity, to make Himself sin for us who knew no sin. Oh, sinner ! don't call it *too* simple, not all your tears, all your wealth could buy one inch of heaven. There is one Gospel, one Advocate, one High Priest, one Mediator, one Way ; and if you pass by that, you perish everlastingly. The Lord Jesus will never make a second atonement ; He will never improve the Gospel for you. It's the naked truth, whether you like it or not. ‘ Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. ’ Don't make a mistake ; if you are not willing to give up your sin, you *perish*. But Christ will save you as you are, save you from its power and dominion, and will give you grace, ‘ To be more than conquerors through Him that loved you. ’

“ Now let us look at the question Christ asked : He said, ‘ Do you see aught ? ’ Some of you Christians were exactly in this man's case. The blind man could see something ; there was a little light dawning, just sufficient to show that Christ's touch had been effectual. Oh, how my heart bounds within me when sinners come and tell me they ‘ see men as trees walking. ’ You begin to see you need Jesus, you see the evil of your own heart, you begin to see your own righteousness won't cover you, that there must be a propitiation for your sin.

“ The man looked up—that is what you have to do. Christ touched him again. Ah ! and the more you come to Christ the more clearly you will see. Don't run away from Christ because you cannot see distinctly. He will touch thee again and will say, ‘ Look up ! ’ That's what Christ wants you to do. Christ says, ‘ Look up ! Look up to my wounds, to my thorn-crowned brow, to my bleeding side, and look up ! ’ He is no longer in the grave, but is sitting on high ; He ‘ has led captivity captive, received gifts for men, ’ the ‘ sure mercies of David. ’ You are now seeing a little. I tell *you* to look up. You will never get good from looking into your heart ; the more you look at it by the light of God's Spirit, the more black, the more vile you will see it. But the Master knows it better than you, and, in spite of it all, He says, ‘ Look up. ’ If you cannot see clearly, look up again.

“ Assurance is not necessary to salvation : assurance is not salva-

tion, but it will give you comfort if Christ is your surety to know it. Remember that assurance is never said to be necessary to salvation. Only *Christ* is necessary, faith in Christ, faith resting on Christ's finished work. Some people say, ‘Trust the Lord where you cannot trace Him!’ That's faith. Faith looks beyond the things that are seen to the things that are not seen, and resting on Christ and believing on Christ, faith wings its way into the inheritance incorruptible. The man can say, ‘Christ is mine and I am His.’ Ah! my friends, don't be afraid to trust Christ in the dark. He is one you *may* trust even when you cannot see Him. If your prospects are clouded, if your way is dark, still trust Him, still look up.

“And, dear friends, when Satan would harass you, when he would distress you, when he would make you doubt your true relationship to Jesus, look up! look up! each minute, each moment of your life on earth, and by-and-bye you shall not look up on earth, but look up in heaven, and see the Lamb who hath redeemed you, and sing to His praise, ‘Unto Him that hath loved us and washed us in His own precious blood, to Him be all the glory.’ May you sing that song and may speaker and hearer meet together in those realms for Christ's sake! Amen.”

The following extracts from the letter of a young lady who heard her at this time convey a good idea of the effects produced :—

“Now for Miss Hooper's services. How shall I attempt to describe them? I never knew anything like them! Oh, what a blessing attends her ministry! She has been the means of bringing many to the cross of Christ! I shall not soon forget the sight in the crowded Independent Chapel, at Newport Pagnell: such a sea of serious faces—*such* silence!”

“The people have so pressed her to go to Olney, also to Wolverton again, that she has promised to do so. The Railway Company have again placed their large carriage shed at her disposal.”

In a subsequent letter, describing the meeting held there, she says :—

“They had the shed warmed with hot-water pipes and more jets of gas laid on. A new railway truck was wheeled out into the vast space for her to preach from, and nicely fitted up and carpeted, as were

also the steps leading to it. We sat with her in this truck. The quiet and attention of the immense multitude was wonderful. Many of the workmen had not gone home to tea; but came just as they were, from work. Many were much affected. Numbers gave her such a hearty '*God bless you, Miss,*' as she left the place. Her subject on Wednesday was, '*Withholding corn*' (Prov. xi. 26). She showed how the Romanists (many of whom were present) withheld the bread of heaven, in keeping the Bible—God's Word—from the people; how ministers who preach another gospel, which is not another, do so; how unconverted teachers and ministers must do so, since they cannot hand to others what they do not themselves possess. She then contrasted their conduct with that of God, who *gives*, and gives '*without money and without price*' the precious bread from heaven; and urged that He only gave to a certain class—those who had need, who had nothing of their own, no righteousness, no good works to plead: those who came empty handed, in the spirit of the hymn, '*just as I am.*' She closed with such an earnest appeal to all to come now, and accept a present salvation!

"Her last address, on '*What wilt thou do in the day of visitation?*' was the most solemn I ever heard. . . . I cannot attempt to tell you of all the separate conversions under her preaching which have come under our notice. One poor Catholic was led to see in its true light his delusive religion; and a poor man who had not been to church for twenty-five years, now attends regularly. A farmer, who was a great drunkard, was convinced under her preaching a year ago, signed the pledge, and has kept it. He came over to see her last night, having driven twenty miles, and said he should not be at home again till 1 a.m. The servants here have been much impressed. . . . I like her more than ever: she is so loving and gentle, so artless and engaging, and so full of peace and joy. No one who saw her playing at croquet, or chess, or imitating the sounds of different animals to please the children, would think she could so earnestly address thousands."

Her marriage was an exceedingly happy one; all her subsequent letters breathe a spirit of deep and tender thankfulness to her heavenly Father, for giving her such a congenial, kind, and helpful husband. It, however, took her from Bath, which had so long been the sphere of her

labours, to a rural district of a very different character. She never felt settled at Ottery St. Mary, which proved also not to suit her health ; but she lost no time in getting to work there. In December of the same year, only two months after her marriage, she wrote to a friend :—

“ My Bible-class is thriving. We meet at half-past six on Saturday evenings, and I already have about forty. My Monday evening meeting is thronged. I do trust there will be much blessing. Pray for me, dear friend, that I may be able to glorify God in my new position. This is my aim, but alas ! I feel my own weakness.

“ I could not have a better nor more considerate husband ; he so thoroughly *lives out at home*, the truths he preaches abroad. Each day I have reason to praise my heavenly Father, for giving me to one with whom I have such perfect communion and sympathy.

Mrs. Dening combined in a remarkable degree intellectual and practical ability. It might have been supposed that her constant mental activity and frequent public engagements, would have prevented her being very clever in domestic arrangements and practical matters ; but this was not the case. Her house was not only well kept, but elegantly appointed in every little detail. Her attention was visible in the smallest particulars. Flowers were never lacking on her table, arranged with exquisite taste by her own fingers, and her servants were taught to be as careful in every trifle on which the comfort or pleasure of others depended, as in the weightier matters of truth and honesty. She used to tell them of the girl, who, when asked how she knew she was converted, replied, “ Well ! for one thing, *I always sweep under the mats now*, and I never used to before ! ” and she succeeded in imbuing them also with something of her own spirit of glad alacrity in service.

After her marriage a number of those who had been benefited by her ministry in Torquay and Marychurch

subscribed for the purpose of presenting her with a testimonial. The working-classes as usual were anxious to contribute their full quota, for none are more sensible of the feeling of gratitude. A handsome copy of Bagster's "Commentary wholly Biblical," bound in three volumes and fitted into a red morocco case, was procured. It was presented to Mrs. Denning at Ottery by a deputation from Torquay, with the hope that it might "often in future years remind her of many friends who would ever hold her and Mr. Denning in the highest regard, and who cordially trusted that it might please God long to preserve in health and happiness lives so eminently useful, and so earnestly devoted to his service." In a letter acknowledging this gift Mrs. Denning said,—

"It is a fragrant remembrance of those whose friendship and esteem I value, hallowed as it is by the sweet assurance that it is for Christ's sake. I feel deeply grateful for such an expression of Christian sympathy in my work of faith and labour of love. As I gaze at this splendidly bound copy of the Word of God, my earnest prayer is that the truths it contains may be more and more engrafted in my heart, and manifested in my life, and in the hearts and lives of those to whom it has been, and will, I trust, continue to be, my happy privilege to testify of Jesus, as the alone way of salvation."

In the quiet retreat of her new home, she exercised the same beneficent influence as she had in more public spheres. She held a meeting on Monday evenings, (as she formerly had done in Bath) in Mr. Denning's hall, at Ottery. She often gathered together upwards of one hundred young women in her Bible-class on Saturday evenings, preached in neighbouring towns and villages, sometimes in the large room of a public-house, when no better place could be found; and in a few months resumed, in company with her dear husband, her former itinerating work.



CHAPTER IX.

1869.

GERALDINE DENING never forgot her dear Bath Bible-class. At the beginning of 1869 she addressed to them the following letter :—

“ TO THE TRINITY BIBLE CLASS.

“*1st January, 1869.*

“ Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.”

“ MY DEAR FRIENDS,

“ Although absent from you in the flesh, I am continually present with you in spirit, and at this season I am especially reminded of you, and cannot allow it to glide past without a few lines expressive of the continued interest I feel in your spiritual and temporal welfare. May 1869, upon which we have now entered, be to each one of your hearts a year of peculiar and abundant spiritual blessing, proving in the best acceptation of the word, ‘ A happy new Year.’ May you be

‘ Happy ’ in Christ’s love,

‘ Happy ’ in His work,

‘ Happy ’ in His paths,

‘ Happy ’ in keeping His commandments, and

‘ Happy ’ in the glorious anticipation of His second Advent.

“ Then *will* it indeed prove a ‘ Happy New Year.’

“ It has much gladdened my heart to hear of the progress of the Class, and of the numbers that still continue to attend. Pray much

for your *present* teacher, that his 'labour of love and work of faith, may not be in vain in the Lord.' Pray much for your *former* teacher, that she may be made the instrument of blessing to souls *here*, as through grace she has been made in years gone by to some of you.

"Let our Watch-word for this year be, 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.' These are not days for sloth or slumbering, the cry to each one is 'Awake.' Never was the enemy of souls more active in sowing tares among the wheat, than at this time. The perilous times of the last days are dawning. *Heresy in the camp*, as well as outside, is lifting up its head in varied forms, seeking to deceive if it were possible even the very elect themselves.

"Let us 'who are of the day' 'beware of dogs,' false prophets, whose bite is poison and under whose tongue is the venom of asps. Let us seek to *muzzle* them, by God's unadulterated Word, and by *living out* in daily life the truths it contains.

"Farewell now, dear Friends.

"With truest Christian love, and earnest heartfelt prayer for your continued growth in grace,

"Believe me to remain,

"Your faithful Friend and former Teacher,

"GERALDINE DENING."

"Pitt House, Ottery St. Mary."

In April, 1869, Mr. and Mrs. Dening paid a visit (her fifth) to Torquay. Mr. Yorke Moore had some months previously been gathered to his eternal rest, but they stayed with his widow, in whose sorrow the happy young wife tenderly sympathised. The meeting formerly conducted by Mr. Moore on Thursday evenings, in his own house, was continued by friends; and many new converts were added to it as the result of Mr. and Mrs. Dening's preaching on this occasion.

She held services in the neighbouring village of Marychurch, in the Furrow Cross school-room, lent by the clergyman who had invited her. The rapt attention of the large assembly during her heart-searching address

on the New birth, was most striking ; and proved that plain speaking on the most momentous of all themes, is more congenial to the people than anything else, as well as more edifying. The paper remarked :—

“There is a famine for the Word of God in the present day apparently, and while some seek to satisfy this cry for bread, by offering a stone,—stone altars, stone crosses, stone images (too sure symptoms of the stony hearts of our priesthood),—it is refreshing to see others raised up by God to ‘break the bread of life’ to the hungry multitudes, and to hear all mere formalism, whether of Church or Dissent, denounced so scathingly as Mrs. Denning does. May God bless her !”

Early in June, 1869, Mrs. Denning, accompanied by her husband, visited Tavistock, and gave two addresses in the Town Hall. The attendance was large, numbers being unable to gain admission. She spoke about the white-robed multitude before the Throne : somewhat in the following strain, to judge by the newspaper reports :—

“The beloved disciple was banished to the Isle of Patmos ; but whilst there he had a bright vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the Lord Jesus revealed Himself in a glorious manner. Dear hearers, when in affliction and trouble, Jesus reveals Himself, and speaks words of consolation to the troubled spirit. The subject is not the Judgment-day. Then all the world will be gathered together, and some will be on the right hand of the Judge, and some on the left ; but our text this morning has reference to the blessed—to those who are the ransomed of the Lord. Dear hearers, are you among that number ? Oh, that the Holy Spirit may open your eyes, and make you meet to be partakers of the heavenly state.

“ ‘ Whence came they ? ’ ‘ They came out of every nation, people, kindred, and tongue.’ ‘ They are the redeemed from among men.’ They were saved *out* of every nation, and *parts* of families will be there. Oh, dear, dear sinner, if you wish to join the ransomed host above, come to Jesus now, and glory will be yours.

“ ‘ Whence came they ? ’ ‘ They came out of great tribulation.’ There is no tribulation like soul tribulation. When the soul is con-

vinced of sin by the Spirit of God—when the sinner is brought to feel his misery and wretchedness—oh, the pain! the anguish! When the soul is brought to Christ, then the conflict begins—then commences the warfare between the flesh and the spirit. Dear hearers, do you know anything about soul tribulation? If not, you will be lost—lost for ever! They came out of sorrow and affliction; but they have done with sorrow now, and are ‘for ever with the Lord.’ They came from Calvary. Every redeemed soul came from Calvary. All came from the ‘place called Calvary!’ They stood at the foot of the cross, and gazed by faith on the crucified Saviour. You may be a member of a Christian community, and look with supercilious disdain on others; but unless you have stood at the ‘place called Calvary’ you must perish. Oh, sinner, dear, dear sinner, come to Jesus, and He will wash you in His blood, and put on you His robe of righteousness.

“ ‘What are these which are arrayed in white robes?’ They are not confined to any class or condition of men—princes and peasants are there—the learned and the ignorant. They are there, not because of their works, not for what they have done; but because they are saved by grace, by the blood and righteousness of the Lamb that was slain. Oh, dear sinner, will you be among the number clothed in white robes? Then leave the delusive pleasures of the world: come to the Saviour, and you shall be arrayed in robes spotless white. They are conquerors. As soon as you were converted your warfare began, and it is now a daily conflict; but through the blood of the Lamb they triumph—they are conquerors.

“ ‘They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.’ The priest may tell you there is such a place as purgatory, and that by paying them a certain sum, your souls may be purified; but there is no such place. If I really believed in purgatory I would get the souls out for nothing; I would not make a charge. They were saved not by merit, but by the blood of the Lamb, and they can say, ‘He loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ Dear, dear hearer, can you say, ‘He loved me, and gave Himself for me?’ If you can, you shall sing ‘unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.’ Sinner, dear sinner, will you be there? They sing a new song. The music of heaven will be perfect: there will be no discordant notes. Oh, the rapturous songs that will be sung by the heavenly host! It is a song of which you will never grow weary.

Oh, the delight of the ransomed throng whilst they sing, 'Salvation to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' Many join with the saints in singing His praises on earth who will not join the heavenly choir. Dear sinner, do you wish to sing the song of the redeemed in heaven? If so, your heart must be turned now.

"'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' This is a world of tears—none are exempt. From the cottage to the throne there are tears. They are the fruits of sin. Dear hearers, you have had your sorrows and bereavements, and your eyes have been filled with tears; but in heaven the tears will be wiped away by God Himself; not even the angels will be employed, but 'God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.' But, child of God, if you could weep in heaven you would shed tears over your lukewarmness, and the little you had done for Christ. Oh, let me entreat you to be active and diligent in the cause of Christ. Sinners are going to destruction! Oh, tell them of their danger! Tell them of the love of Jesus, and may the Holy Spirit bless your 'work of faith and labour of love.'

"I once went into a draper's shop, where I was offered some handkerchiefs. As I did not require them I did not purchase any, but I learnt a lesson from the great variety offered to me. The devil has a variety of handkerchiefs, which he uses for wiping away tears. Young hearts, you wish to go to heaven to see your friends who are there, but you want a little more of the pleasures of this world, and the tears begin to fall. The devil then wipes away the tears with a handkerchief on which is written in one corner 'to-morrow.' Dear sinner, now is the accepted time; come to Jesus now! I was told a circumstance that occurred some time since, which I believe to be true, and which illustrates the danger of using this handkerchief. There was a family of three daughters: the two eldest were converted; but the youngest was gay and thoughtless. Often did her sisters talk to her on religious matters, and entreat her to become a Christian; but she replied that she intended to become a Christian when she had enjoyed a little more of the pleasures of this world. One morning, when she came down to breakfast, her sisters observed that there was something amiss, and inquired if she were ill. 'Oh,' said Annie, 'there is nothing wrong. I have had a dream; but it is only a dream!' Her sister said, 'Will you tell it to me?' Annie replied, 'I will; but it is only a dream! I dreamt that I died, and was

carried away to a beautiful place: such a place as I had never seen before. There was a great white throne, and He who sat on it had a smiling countenance. Around the throne was an innumerable company, clothed in white robes, and they danced and sung; but I did not know the step, neither did I understand the music. I had not been there long before the King left the throne, and came towards me, with His features lighted up with smiles, and asked me why I did not join in the dance and music. I replied that I had not learnt the step, neither did I know the music they were singing. In a moment his countenance changed from smiles to frowns, and in a loud voice He cried to those who were standing by, ‘Bind her hand and foot, and take her away! Take her away! Take her away, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!’ And as they were taking me away, I awoke. But it was only a dream.’ Her sister then lovingly urged her to cast the world aside, and follow Christ. Annie replied, ‘Well! I shall go to the ball to-night; but it shall be the last.’ ‘Oh, Annie, do take this warning from God,’ said her sister. ‘Oh,’ she replied, ‘it was only a dream! I have made an engagement. I cannot break my word; but it shall be the last. To-morrow I will become a Christian.’ In the evening she went to the ball, and joined in the giddy dance, when all of a sudden there was a cry that ‘Annie —— had fainted.’ The usual restoratives were applied, but all in vain. She never spoke more—*she was dead!* Oh, sinner, dear sinner, don’t put it off till to-morrow; learn the step now! Learn the music of heaven now, and you shall join the ransomed host in bliss.

“The devil has another handkerchief, on which is written ‘Good resolutions.’ Oh, dear hearers, how many good resolutions have you broken? How often have you determined to seek Jesus? Oh, let me entreat you to decide for Christ.

“There is another handkerchief, in the corner of which it is written, ‘Too late!’ The devil has persuaded you to put off salvation until to-morrow; to break your good resolutions; and, now you are old, and begin to shed tears, the devil wipes them away with the ‘Too late’ handkerchief!

“Child of God, be up and doing; be devoted to the cause of Christ. Your tribulations will soon be over; your sorrows and trials will soon be gone! Only a little longer, and you will be arrayed in white robes, and join the ransomed throng in singing, ‘Glory and

honour and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.’

“Dear, dear sinner, will you be there? Will you join that happy throng? Will you shout, ‘Salvation to God and the Lamb?’ Oh, then, come to Jesus! and then, in the bright realms of bliss, he will wipe the tears from your eyes, and you shall join the everlasting throng in singing, ‘Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, to Him be glory, dominion, and power, for ever and ever.’ Oh, that the Holy Spirit may enlighten your understandings, and unloose your stammering tongues, for Jesus’ sake.—Amen!”

It seems to have been during this visit to Tavistock that she wrote the following hymn, on hearing of the dying words of Lady Kennaway, (who had lived a short distance from her new home,)—“I am complete in Christ, I am without a care” :—

“‘Not a care’ is hovering o’er me,
Not a shade is on my brow,
For my soul is stayed on Jesus,
And my trust is in Him now.

“Yes, sweet Saviour, Thou art with me
And I revel in Thy love,
For I know, ‘*complete in Thee,*’ Lord;
I shall dwell *with Thee* above.

“Many dear ones I am leaving,
Yet I part ‘without a care,’
For *I* pray—whilst *they* are grieving—
That they *all* Thy grace may share,

“That with me in yonder glory
They may see Thee face to face;
And with multitudes adore Thee,
For Thy free and wondrous grace.

“‘Not a care’ is hovering o’er me,
For I am ‘complete in Thee,’
Soon I’ll sing the rapturous story
Of Thy matchless love to me.”

“8th June, 1869.”

In 1869, Mr. and Mrs. Dening preached in Plymouth and Kingsbridge. They also visited Wellington and Taunton, Luton, London, and Norfolk (where a large tent was pitched for the meetings), Bridport, Dunstable, Wolverton, Budleigh-Salterton, Uffculme, Prescott, Torquay, Tavistock, Ilchester, and Cheltenham.

There is of necessity much sameness in the work of an evangelist ; the story to which he confines himself is the "old, old story" of the Cross; the results which he seeks, are the same, the conviction and conversion of sinners. It would neither be interesting nor edifying, therefore, to dwell more at length on these visits, as they were very much repetitions of those already described.

The experience of the time that had elapsed since his marriage had led Mr. Dening to decide on giving up his agricultural pursuits in Devonshire, and devoting himself entirely to the work of evangelization. He felt it impossible to attend to both works properly, and, if *one* was to be sacrificed, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness," left no question as to *which* ought to be given up. They decided therefore in August, 1869, to reside at Bath, which was a convenient and suitable centre for their wide-spread work, and took up their residence in the house in Green Park, which had been the home of Mrs. Dening's childhood. Her health, which was not good in Devonshire, improved after this, and in June of the following year, her only child, a daughter, was born.

On returning to reside at Bath, Mr. and Mrs. Dening felt the need, which others had often felt before, of a good-sized hall, which could be used at a moderate expense as a centre of evangelistic effort. No such building existed in the city. The Assembly Rooms were

too expensive, the Guildhall could not always be had for religious meetings, and though there were churches and chapels in abundance, they did not meet the case. In every large city there is a class that will not enter them, and this is just the class who most require to be reached by the Gospel. They are best reached by open-air preaching; but this means is only available at certain seasons, and as to a large extent they may be gathered into an undenominational Gospel-hall, Mr. and Mrs. Denning resolved, with the Lord's help, to erect one.

A suitable site was found near the Great Western Railway Station, at the poor and populous side of the city, and close to the then lately erected Roman Catholic Church. Some old warehouses were standing on the ground, the main walls of which were capable of being turned to account in the construction of the hall. Mr. Denning secured the property at a cost of £1,275, and a circular was issued inviting contributions towards the erection of the building. Collections were also made in some other towns, and £562 having been raised, Mr. Denning advanced the remainder of the requisite sum, and the work was commenced. The total cost was £2,400, and Mr. Denning holds the building until the sum advanced by him is refunded, when it will be vested in the hands of trustees for the permanent benefit of the city, as a perpetual Mission Hall.* It is a plain, but comfortable, capacious, and cheerful building; the dimensions of the large hall are 100 feet by 50, somewhat too long for its width, but the use of pre-existing walls prescribed these proportions. It is closely seated, and affords convenient accommodation for 1,000 persons. At a crush, 1,100 or 1,200 can find room in it. The hall consists of a nave, with clerestory and two aisles, and is

* See Page 157.



FRONT VIEW OF THE RESIDENCE OF MR. AND MRS. DENING,
GREEN PARK, BATH.

lighted by eight windows in the clerestory on each side, and one at either extremity of the building. At one end of the hall is a simple platform, $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet high, with steps on each side, and capable of seating six or eight persons ; a breast-high screen with a reading desk rising in front. The building Mrs. Dening wished to be named St. James's Hall, some of her happiest and most successful meetings having been held in a hall of that name at Plymouth.

Like every thing else she undertook, the erection and furnishing of St. James's Hall were accomplished quickly and well. Eight months after the appearance of the circular, on the 2nd June, 1870, the opening services were held. The Rev. Prebendary Kemble, M.A., Rector of Bath, the Rev. J. Murray Dixon, M.A., Rector of Trinity, the Rev. H. T. Cavill, M.A., the then Incumbent of St. James's (in which parish the hall is situate), the Rev. Prebendary Tate, M.A., Vicar of Widcombe, the Rev. S. A. Walker, M.A., of Bristol, the Convener of the Clifton Conferences, R. O. Heywood, Esq., Mr. Dening, and others took part in the proceedings. Mrs. Dening never spoke when ministers were on the platform ; but as it was felt that the opening services would not be complete without an address from her, who had been, with her dear husband, the originator of the work, a tea-meeting was held next day, at which both she and her husband gave addresses. She spoke from the words, "Continue in prayer," and closed with an earnest appeal to all.

"Oh, continue in prayer, that God's blessing may rest on this hall, built for the glory of Jesus. Pray that souls may be converted here. Pray that earnest and faithful labourers may be sent here from time to time to gather sheaves for the heavenly garner. Pray that unity

may reign among us. We have been hearing about Christian unity : oh, pray that we may be not hearers only, but doers of the Word; that we may be practical Christians, and show by our lives that we are united to Christ, and in Christ.”

At first Mr. Dening preached on Sunday afternoons, and Mrs. Dening on Monday evenings, according to her old habit before she left Bath. The hall was taken by the clergyman of the parish for Sunday evenings, for six months. Subsequently, when he no longer wished to continue this service, Mrs. Dening took a Sunday afternoon service, and her husband preached in the evening, since which arrangement the hall has been well filled on both occasions.

Many consider, and perhaps rightly, that the duty of an evangelist is not *exclusively* to seek the salvation of sinners, but that it extends to teaching converts to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded; that is, to plant churches wherever his labours are blessed. Undoubtedly, in a heathen country, or one where only an apostate form of Christianity prevailed, this would be the case. An evangelist would have to inculcate a due observance of the simple ordinances bequeathed by the Lord Jesus to His Church, and so unite His disciples in Church fellowship. But in a Protestant country like this, where in most places gatherings of evangelical Christians and godly ministers, who love the souls of men, are to be found (in spite of all the apathy, error, and coldness that prevail), an evangelist who has been blessed to the conversion of many, in places where he himself cannot linger, can have little difficulty in committing the wandering sheep whom he has found in the wilderness, to the care of some faithful shepherd, when he goes to seek more in “*the regions beyond,*” which

are his true sphere. But when, in addition to such itinerant work, he forms a permanent mission station in some populous place which affords room for constant evangelising, he has to consider a solemn question not altogether free from difficulty. Is he, when a considerable band of converts are the result of his labours, to unite them and form a Church, or is he to urge them to unite themselves with Churches already existing? Conversion, of course, makes them one with the true invisible Church; but that unity must be expressed by an actual union with some assembly of Christians. This is essential, alike for obedience, growth, and discipline.

The peculiar circumstances of each special case must guide an evangelist as to the right course to be pursued: no rule is, or can be, laid down. In many instances a strong *esprit de corps* exists among converts brought to the Lord under one ministry, or perhaps in one season of revival. They cling together like a family, and feel strange, comparatively, to others; they are warmly attached to the individual who has been made a means of blessing to their souls. He may be well adapted to merge and mingle the evangelist and the pastor, possessed possibly of gifts fitting him for either office, and there may be an absence of any decided indication that he would be better employed in itinerating. All these things might indicate the formation of a new Church to be the most expedient course. In other cases the absence of these features, and the presence of others (as, for instance, the existence in the place of one or more lively earnest churches, able and willing to receive and cherish young converts), might point in an opposite direction. Thus the existence of an evangelistic mission in a place may or may not give rise to the formation of a new

Church. In the case of the Gospel services carried on now for many years at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, London, and at the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, they have not done so. In the case of those carried on in Merrion Hall, Dublin, they have.

At the commencement of Mrs. Dening's work in Bath this question did not, of course, even arise ; for a woman could not *scripturally* form, or guide, or govern a Church (the Queen of England, notwithstanding!). Prophetesses and deaconesses are recognized in Scripture, but *shepherdesses* never. A female pastor would be an ecclesiastical monstrosity indeed ! After Mr. and Mrs. Dening's return to Bath, however, they had of course to consider this question ; as the assembling of a large regular congregation involved responsibility on the point. They felt that their work was too decidedly that of itinerant evangelists to admit of any doubt on the subject, but whilst not wishing or intending to form a Church, what *were* they to do, as to the Christians in attendance on their ministry ? Mrs. Dening used not unfrequently to urge on the converted part of her audience their solemn *duty* of connecting themselves with *some Church or other* : what Church she left it to their own conscience and judgment to determine. She felt *her* mission was not to discuss points of Church government, or debated questions of doctrine or practice, but to preach “Christ and Him crucified.” Her own preference for the Church in which she first found the Lord was very decided. “I must speak well of the bridge that carried me over,” she would say ; but she never tried in any way to influence others to join it. She would urge them to attend a *converted* ministry and a soul-feeding one, but whether at church or chapel was in her judgment of little moment. In order

not to form a Church that was not a Church—not to lead people to attend the hall *exclusively*, it was arranged to have *no service there on Sunday mornings*.

That the blessing of God has been richly bestowed on the services at the hall, cases too numerous to mention testify. We have glanced over bundles of letters addressed at various times to Mrs. Dening, full of thankful affection for spiritual blessings received through her ministry. Many of them are out-pourings of troubled and sorrowful hearts, which had been touched by the tender sympathy of her manner, and emboldened to tell their hidden griefs. Very sad are some of their stories. Perchance it was the knowledge thus gained of the deep heart-sorrows of many amongst her audience, that enabled dear Mrs. Dening to speak so many appropriate and wise, as well as tenderly loving, words of consolation. One letter is from a young man who had been intending to devote himself to the work of the ministry, but had been deterred by the fact that, if he did, the opposition of friends was such that he would lose a considerable amount of property. He tells her how her words of admonition had reproved and aroused him,—how he had been led to resolve in the strength of God to face all the opposition, and make the sacrifice,—how he had entered the college, passed his examination, and was then preaching Jesus. Another is from a teacher in a school, who, rejoicing in a newly found Saviour, tells how she longs to be a blessing to her little pupils,—how she reads the Scriptures with them, and would *like to pray* with them, but is afraid to trust herself, and asks advice as to whether she should use a form or not. Another is from a heart-broken young creature, who had been induced to marry a gentleman for whom she had the greatest respect, but found five weeks afterwards

that he was already a married man ! She tells of the bitter hatred that took possession of her heart against him and everybody,—how she clung to the child that was born to her, till God took it away,—and of her purpose then to put an end to her miserable existence, till a woman in whose house she was took her to the hall, where the loving words she had heard melted her heart, and made her feel that perhaps there was one in the world who would still love her ; and that the hope she had once had in Christ might yet be restored to her. Another is from a poor girl who for ten years had been devoted to the soul enervating practice of novel reading, which had enabled her again and again to drown conviction. She had been invited by a companion to go and hear the lady preacher, and went only hoping she should not drop asleep, as she generally did in a place of worship. She heard announced the text, "And He must needs go through Samaria," and she "wondered what it could have to do with the people in the chapel that night ; there seemed to be no sense in it." But the address founded on it, had been blessed to her soul's salvation, and at the time she wrote, many months had passed since she had abandoned all light reading, her one grief being, that by lending the "London Journal," and similar trash, to her companions, she had imbued many of them in time past, with a taste which was now too strong to be overcome by any persuasions of hers. Another is from a poor mother who had asked for prayer on behalf of three sailor sons, and they had been prayed for in the meeting a year and a half previously. The mother thankfully tells how God had delivered two in eminent danger of shipwreck, and how the third had been converted on the coast of Africa, to the joy of her heart. She adds, "I hope all mothers will go

on praying for their children." Another is from the barmaid of an hotel, a backslider restored to peace and joy by an address on the Prodigal Son.

Some of these letters are strangely expressed, but they bear the most unmistakable evidence of simple sincerity in their expressions of new-found faith and love and joy. Some are from servants who have removed to distant places, but who write with warm, filial affection and gratitude to her who had been their spiritual mother. Others are from strangers, who, hearing her accidentally in passing through Bath, were vividly impressed, and write begging sometimes for advice and sometimes for her printed addresses, and often that she would go and preach in their towns also. Many of these contain expressions of spiritual benefit received. One youth, who signs himself "A fellow-worker among the neglected poor of London," writes from the busy vortex of the great and wicked metropolis, regretting the Monday evening meetings which had been made a blessing to him, and begging her to remember that a brother of his would be present for the last time at her next service, awakened but not converted; and saying how he and his mother yearned over the lad and longed to see him quickened to eternal life. Another, dated from a distant city, is from a young shopman in a house where every appearance of piety was scoffed at, who tells how he was on the point of giving up in despair the godly habits he had brought from his quiet Christian home; but that her words had led him to "the cleansing fountain," and brought peace and joy and comfort to his heart; how he had been able since to witness a good confession, and begging for a letter of advice and encouragement. One is from a minister who had heard her, and who writes that some

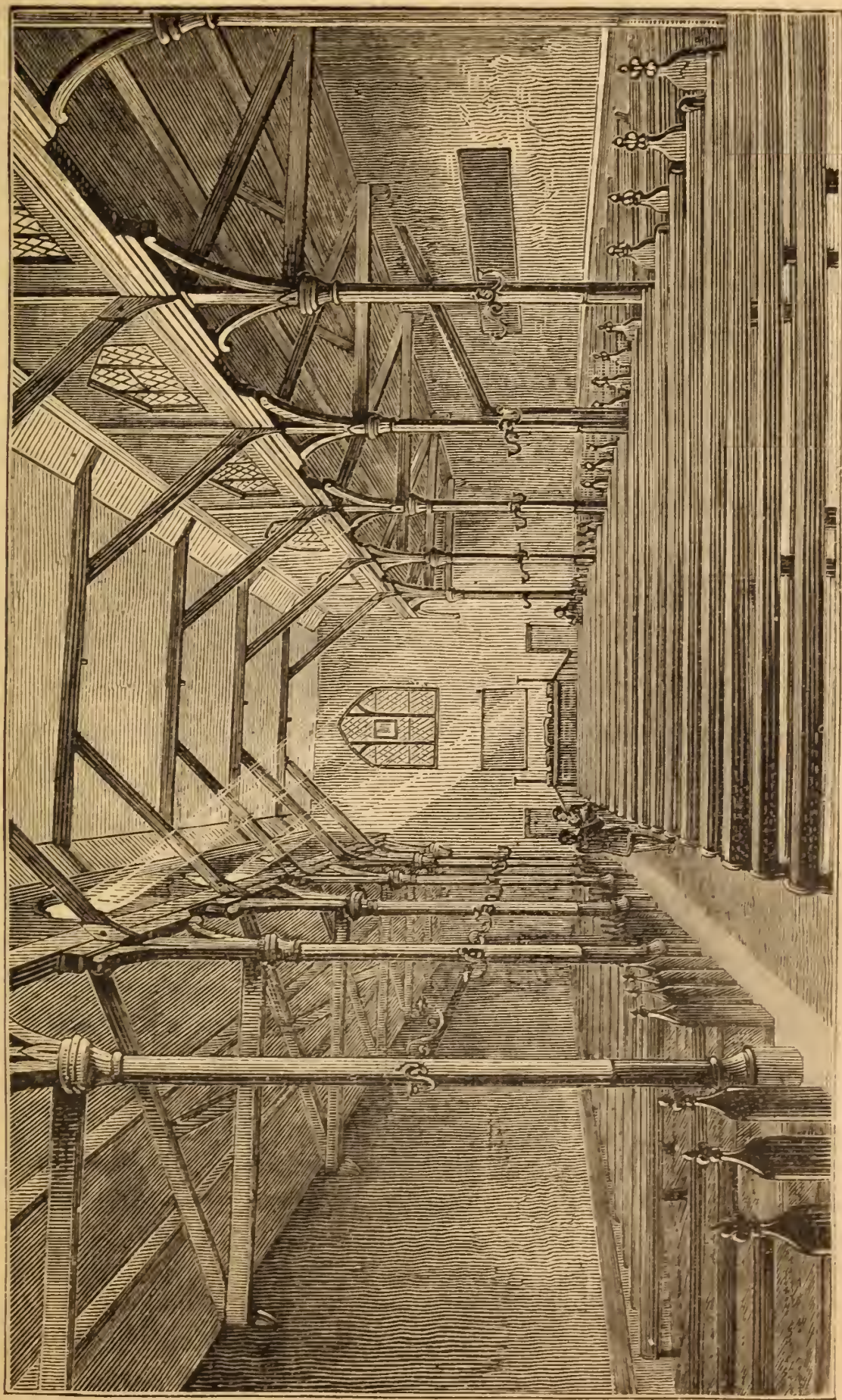
of her remarks on the subject of pride had come home to him : " Proud of my gifts, proud of my success, proud of my position among my ministerial brethren, proud of my people's affection and esteem, oh, how often have I been taken captive by that monster, Pride ! Thank God for the hornets ! I do believe old Pride is stung to death ! "

Some of these letters breathe the heart's love and gratitude in warm and touchingly spontaneous expressions. . One young woman writes :—

" I can't bear that you should go away and not know my gratitude. I am ' plucked as a brand from the burning.' I was sinking into the gulf. I felt myself going day by day. I trembled to think what the end would have been, when you came. Oh, bless you for ever and ever ! May God keep you from every peril, sickness, care, and sorrow ; and fold you for ever in His everlasting arms ! Your face is to me ' as the face of an angel.' I bless you from my heart, and you must, yes, you *must* let me love you, for you can't help it ! "

Some bear witness how prejudice against women's ministry melted away from the minds of those who heard her. A clergyman writes :—

" Let me thank you most sincerely and fervently for the address you gave us on that occasion. I confess I had been prejudiced against women's giving addresses in public, even on the all-important subject of religion. We have in our neighbourhood camp meetings, which often, I fear, lead to great disorders ; but in what I was privileged to hear last evening, all was so perfectly according to the inspired apostle's exhortation, ' Let all things be done decently and in order,' that I cannot but rejoice that the Lord has been pleased to raise up such an instrument, to proclaim the message of mercy and salvation. ' Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name give glory.' May I ask your prayers, my dear friend, that I may be enabled to speak the truth more simply, powerfully, and lovingly, than I have ever yet done ; and, if it please Him who has all hearts in his hand, with more success. "



INTERIOR OF ST. JAMES'S HALL, BATH.

Another clergyman, at a distance, asked her in a kind spirit for the grounds on which she justified her course, saying that, as far as he then saw, it seemed to *him* unscriptural; but that he was open to conviction, and he stated the ordinary popular objections. We have not her reply; but, in acknowledging it, he says:—

“I hasten to thank you most heartily for the reply with which you have favoured me to the inquiries I ventured to address to you. It pains me to think how much trouble I have given you in the midst of your busy and useful life. At the same time, I am delighted to be in possession of a letter of such excellence from you. On Wednesday next we have a meeting of the clergy of this portion of the county, and it will give me great pleasure to give you the opportunity of speaking through your letter on our appointed subject, ‘*Do praying and prophesying any longer appertain to a woman’s ministrations?*’ Thank you again for a letter which will make me regard your work with additional interest.”

We may add that St. James’s Hall is let for lectures and meetings on week-days, and that last winter it was used as a dining-room for some hundreds of children once a week, a fund having been raised by public subscription to give food to hungry “little ones.”

NOTE.—Should any Christian friends feel disposed to aid in the extinction of the debt on St. James’s Hall, which is a heavy burden to Mr. Dening, contributions will be thankfully received by him, 20, Green Park, Bath. If every reader of this Memoir would send *one shilling’s worth* of stamps (if they can spare no more), the thing would be done, and the building would become a memorial hall indeed. Let no one say, “It is not worth while to send such a trifle.” “Many a mickle makes a muckle,” as the Scotch wisely say. “Many hands make light work.”

“ Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Form the mighty ocean,
And the pleasant land.”

Let each one who takes an interest in evangelistic work, do what they can to lighten their brother’s burden, and secure this hall for the poor who throng its 1,000 free seats.



CHAPTER X.

1870.

MRS. DENING'S Watchword for the year 1870 was the solemn question, "How long have I to live?" followed by this address:—

"DEAR FRIEND,

"The tide of time has ebbed out with the year 1869, and now flows in bearing on its waves and billows 1870. That the New Year upon which we are permitted to enter, may be fraught with the Lord's richest blessings to you and yours is my earnest desire. In order that these may be yours, let me affectionately urge upon your notice the following questions:—

How long have I to live?

How am I living?

How will my life bear the light of eternity?

Perhaps the question of the Patriarch is an unwelcome one to you. You care not to ask yourself it. You may be *young*, fancying that there are many years of health and happiness in store for you. Are you *certain* of this? You may be *aged*—the eye is growing dimmer, the pulse is growing feebler; you don't like to think of the shroud, the mattock, and the grave. Is this wise? You may be *middle aged*, and your thoughts wholly engrossed in adding house to house, and land to land. Will *these* satisfy you in a dying hour?

"Now let me notice the second question. 'How am I living?'

Votary of the world, you answer, 'I am living in pleasure.' Ah, know you not that 'He who liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth?' Professor, your reply is, 'I am living a very respectable life; I attend service and meetings, I am no profane person, and, upon the whole, I am quite satisfied with my own righteousness.' Know you not that there is a class who 'have a *name* to live,' while they are '*dead* in trespasses and sins?' Child of God, how are *you* living? Let each of us search our hearts faithfully. Are we *abiding* in Christ? A dear friend of mine once said, 'Satan can follow me to the Throne of Grace, he can follow me to my Bible, he can follow me to the means of Grace;—there is only one place where he *cannot* follow me, that is *into* Christ.' Is that our position continually? Then if so, what are we doing for Him in His vineyard? Are we seeking to testify of Him, not merely in word but in *our walk*. Are we *jealous* of His character, and are we desirous of exalting it by our own *lives* before the eyes of the world? Are we living in *secret* communion with Him? It is one thing to pray in *public*, it is another to pray in *private*. May He enable each one of His children to lay the subject to our hearts!

"And lastly—How will our life bear the test of eternity? Worldling, will the gods whom you worship now, yield you comfort and peace then? Poor professor, will the cloak of religion avail when, stripped of every *false refuge* of lies, you stand quivering in every limb before your judge? *Only* the righteousness of Christ will stand the test of that day; and may He incline your hearts to seek Him while He may be found, that His righteousness may be found upon you, and that clothed in it you may be enabled to bear the light of eternity.

"Yours in a risen Lord,

"GERALDINE DENING."

"Green Park, Bath."

In the course of this year, Mr. and Mrs. Dening visited Brent, Ilchester, Plymouth, Wellington, Taunton, London, Syresham, Bridport, and Ottery, scattering the seed thus far and wide, whilst still continually sowing and reaping in Bath also.

In December, 1870, they stayed with Mr. Monro Binning at Teignmouth, and for the sixth time visited

Torquay, preaching in the different chapels, as the Assembly Rooms could not be had, and prejudice had so far given way that various ministers freely offered their places of worship. This was also the case on their seventh and last visit, in December, 1871. Mrs. Denning's last address in Torquay was from the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you." It was a most solemn appeal to professors, and contained also an impressive warning against besetting sins. The meeting was crowded. Many Christians who had previously stood aloof, were present, and evinced real sympathy with the work. Mrs. Moore, who knew perhaps more of it than any one now living, says, "God surely sent her to sow the everlasting seed in the hearts of thousands in this town. Little did I think our next meeting was to be in glory." It is remarkable that not only Mr. Yorke Moore, but Mr. Ayshford Wise, Mr. McDowall Grant, Mr. Graves and Mr. Pitcairn, who all took so kind an interest in her work at Torquay, had preceded her to paradise, and were ready to welcome Geraldine Denning to her eternal rest.

Bridport is a market town in Dorsetshire, and a seaport. Mrs. Denning visited it twice, the second time in April, 1871, when a fair was going on. We have no record of these visits, save newspaper notices, which treat of the outward and accessory only, like the following:—

"While hundreds of persons, juveniles and adults, were beholding with curiosity, if not pleasure, the tomfoolery going on in front of some of the shows on Thursday afternoon, a scene of a very different description might have been witnessed but a few paces off in the Town Hall. Here, about three o'clock, a large and evidently deeply interested audience, principally composed of the fair sex, assembled,

their object being to hear an address from a lady, whose spirit-stirring appeals to the masses on religious topics, and whose zealous labours, in the highest and noblest of all causes, had created a deep and most favourable impression. On this occasion, she experienced, from an assemblage which filled every available seat, a reception which must have proved gratifying in the extreme, and convinced her, if such an evidence were needed, how highly and generally her efforts for the evangelisation of the people were appreciated. That this well-known lady should have won such golden opinions may be partly accounted for by the fact that she is, in every respect, a pleasing contrast to the typical strong-minded feminine ranter, which caricaturists are so fond of depicting. So far from this being the case, she is in appearance, dress, and manners, the perfect lady. With regard to costume, she seems fully to realise the fact, that beauty unadorned appears adorned the most, wisely shunning all extravagances in the form of bulky, artificial head excrescences, &c. &c., and contenting herself with a well-fitting morning *toilette*, simple in the extreme, yet nevertheless rich and becoming. Medium in height, her graceful proportions were finely displayed by a beautiful black dress of watered silk, while black kid gloves, and a neat little bonnet, which suited admirably the contour of a *petit* oval countenance of delicate pallor, completed the preaching attire. Though Mrs. Dening has now been engaged in preaching the Gospel for a considerable time, her voice, though constantly strained to the utmost, not only retains its natural sweetness and strength, but even when raised to the highest pitch employed in the most powerful declamation, is yet pleasing and irresistibly moving. Another feature which adds greatly to the effect of her delivery, is the knowledge she possesses of the 'mystic language of the eye and hand,' and the skilful, yet natural and unaffected manner in which she utilises it to the best advantage, her words melting even the most obdurate and hardened to tears. In short, she evinces a thorough familiarity with the secret springs of the varied emotions which move the soul, and with a master hand can 'play upon each and all.'

A friend writes of these visits to Bridport:—

"They were always anticipated with great joy by all. Crowds of people flocked to hear her—many who did not generally go to hear the Gospel anywhere. In numerous instances, those who went from

curiosity, careless and indifferent, came away deeply concerned ; or having found Jesus on the very spot.

“A little girl whom I know went to one of the services in the Drill Hall, and the Holy Spirit carried home the sweet, loving words of Mrs. Denning into her soul. Mrs. Denning dwelt on *The Dying Thief*, and the dear child was led to give her heart to Jesus *there and then*. Her own simple words were, ‘I love Jesus, and He has forgiven my sins.’ She is very soon going to confess Christ before the world, by baptism. She rejoices in Christ, and tries to lead her little friends to Him also.

“A young woman, who before had trusted in forms and ceremonies, attended one of these meetings, when Mr. Denning gave the address. The Word awakened her soul, but she was overwhelmed with anxiety, and did not know how to find relief. She said, ‘Could I but have a word with Mrs. Denning, I think she would say something from Jesus to me.’ But weeks passed, and she was still dark and miserable, until one evening, on another visit from those dear servants of Christ, she found peace in believing. Hers were tears of joy then.”

Mr. and Mrs. Denning revisited Norfolk in May, 1871, when they stayed with Mr. Hamond, of Fakenham. On this occasion they delivered sixty addresses in the course of three weeks, at Buckenham, Dereham, Lingwood, Norwich, Tunstall, Swaffham, Freethorpe, Burlingham, Fakenham, Walsingham, Wells, South Creake, and Yarmouth. Space forbids our giving any particulars of these meetings.

Mrs. Denning was singularly prompt in action ; with her a thing was no sooner decided on than steps were taken to carry it out. One day, about the middle of December, 1871, she read a clever little tract, entitled—“Aunt Tabitha’s Charity Box.” It made her weep *and act*. The same day she suggested that a tea-meeting should be given to 700 of the poorest and most needy people in Bath on Christmas-day. Next day she announced it at the hall. The funds came in freely, and oh, how busily she drove about to arrange it all in

time! She forgot nothing, and left no stone unturned to make the occasion "a feast of fat things" to both body and soul, for the hungry guests. Efficiently aided by her dear husband, and assisted also by many friends, she spent the whole of her Christmas week in active labour, decorating the hall, providing the apparatus, &c. All was ready, but only just in time; then, taking a hasty dinner in the vestry, she took her station near the door as the poor folks began to arrive, and received and seated each one with a kindly greeting. The fare was bountiful and good, each received six slices of bread and butter and a pound of cake, with tea *ad libitum*. Many of the Avon-street people had hardly seen her since her marriage, and did not know her husband. We remember one old lady, who pulled our dress as we passed by, and said, "Do'ee tell me now, what's the *name o' the man our Miss Hooper's married!*" She was informed, but did not catch the name, "Ah!" said she, "'t ain't no difference; we do call her Miss Hooper down our way still."

In April, 1872, Mrs. Denning, accompanied by her husband, went up to London, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Booth (who were both out of health, and laid aside from active labour), to hold some meetings in the People's Hall at Whitechapel. It was the first time she had preached in the East of London, and her name was not known, but the people got interested as the meetings went on, and towards the close the congregations were large. Both Mr. and Mrs. Denning spoke at each of the three meetings on Sunday, and the people listened without wearying for two hours at a time. In the afternoon tea is provided for those who come from a distance. Mrs. Denning was in the midst of her address

when she perceived the tea hour was come. She told the people so, and was going to close when, “Go on, go on, hallelujah! never mind the tea,” was shouted by many voices; so, repressing a smile, she went on. They pressed lovingly around her in the entry as she was leaving after the last meeting, begging she would come again.

She was to have visited Taunton at the end of the month, to address the militia, but a severe cold on the chest prevented her, and Mr. Dening went alone. She went however in May and spoke twice, and proceeded thence to Plymouth—her last visit to the town where she was so deeply beloved. It was a time of very painful anxiety to her, and she was not at all herself. A serious accident to a friend, in whom she was much interested, had occurred only a day or two before, and Mrs. Dening would not have left Bath had she not been announced for some time previously. It cost her a severe struggle to keep her appointment, for she was not sure she would find her friend living on her return; but she never allowed her private feelings to interfere with the claims of the Lord’s work, and so she went with an aching heart and a somewhat distracted mind.

The last of her many journeys on her Father’s business was to Ashburton and Totnes, at the beginning of July. One of her addresses on this occasion was on the love of God, and it moved many to tears. She spoke first of *love giving*, taking the babe in the manger as its great manifestation; then of *love acting*, Christ’s life of beneficence and obedience; of *love weeping*, His universal and tender sympathy; of *love suffering*, Gethsemane; and of *love bleeding*, on the Cross. So her last testimony at a distance from home was still the same, “Jesus Christ,

and Him crucified." The lady at whose house she stayed on this occasion hardly knew how to credit the tidings that reached her only six weeks afterwards, that the voice which had pleaded so tenderly with immortal souls on that occasion was silent in death.

A visit to Bridport had been promised, and one to Westbury, Wilts; but Mrs. Dening did not intend leaving home much during the remainder of 1872. She had fully purposed to yield to the wishes of her friends, and take a little rest and a little care of herself, as another life was now again dependent on hers, and experience had proved the need of caution. Her work in Bath was arduous enough to employ all the strength she had to spare, and she had resolved not to undertake much at a distance. But her times were in her Father's hand; and while *she* proposed a brief and partial rest in her own home in Bath, *He* had appointed for her perfect and eternal rest in the mansions of His home, above. *She* thought to pause in the race and take breath, *He* saw the goal close at hand. *She* thought to "stand at ease" for a time; *He* saw the victory all but won. *She* meant to cast anchor for a moment; *He*—and oh, shall we say Alas! or shall we say Hallelujah?—was steering her right into the eternal haven!





CHAPTER XI.

CHARACTER.

GERALDINE HOOPER was often unintentionally the means of doing much good in the way of provoking others to love and good works. The silent teaching of example is very mighty. She rarely criticised the ministry of others; when she did, it was to praise what was good in it, rather than to notice what was defective; she would have been the last to speak of the efforts of others as cold, lifeless, or ineffective. And yet, in listening to her, how often have others felt their own efforts to be such? One lady, a fellow-labourer in the Gospel, says:—

“I met her first eleven years ago at an open-air meeting in a village, where her powerful and beautiful voice led a hymn, the chorus of which was,—

‘Fear not, but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may’st be.’

Some time after I met her in Bath. She was agitated by a rumour, which had just reached her, of the death of a dear friend (which proved, however, to be false in the end), and felt unfit for the meeting to which she was going. She asked me to address the people. I did so to the best of my ability. When I had done, she, having recovered her calmness, spoke herself on the words,

‘Consider the rod, and who has appointed it,’ which she told them they would find somewhere in the Bible, though she could not tell them where. I had never heard her speak before. I was overwhelmed. My feelings were indescribable during her powerful address. Often, very often, had I proclaimed to others the Gospel, but I felt then that *I had never preached in my life*. I had laboured far *longer* in the vineyard than she, and yet she was already a skilled workman, and I a mere beginner. O what a restless, unquiet night I passed! How I mourned and prayed over my nothingness, and sought help from the Lord, that I might be more earnest, more useful! Some time after she left Bath for a month, and asked me to take her meetings, then held twice a week at the Temperance Hall during her absence. On her return she laughingly told me that some of her congregation had said to her, ‘Why, ma’am, you would not know it was the same person that spoke to us one day in Holloway,’ and in truth she had been an instrument in God’s hand, mightily to stir me up.”

Many similar instances might be mentioned. On one occasion a clergyman came to her after a meeting, and, thanking her for the edification he had derived from a series of services he had attended, he added, “I have laboured for many years to produce two carefully written sermons every week. I am returning now to my distant home, and from this day forth, by the grace of God, I will speak to the people as you do—straight from the heart.” It was mainly this, the heartiness of her addresses, that caused them so to touch the heart. As compositions, they possessed little skill, and, like Whitfield’s, they do not *read* so well as those of far less effective preachers; but, delivered with the energy and fervour of a glowing zeal and tender affection, as they were, they possessed a power to touch the heart rarely equalled. We have seen audiences who have listened attentively and with solemn interest, yet unmoved to other speakers, at the first few sentences uttered by *her* moved

to tears. A strange pathos was in the tones of her voice; it brought one heart to heart with her directly. Many a time she would, even in private, so relate some simple little incident, as to draw forth involuntary tears, when she would suddenly stop and say, with a look of pained surprise, “But I didn’t mean to make you cry,” and then she would quickly call up a smile by some witty speech in strange contrast to what had gone before.

She was of a cheerful, joyous nature, and yet she was often sad; grieved at heart by the sins and sorrows of others; a Christ-like temperament surely! It is want of love, careless apathy about others, and lack of zeal for the glory of God, that enable us to pass through the world so easily as we do. We are clad in garments of indifference, covered with selfishness as by a coat of mail, which defies the thorns that pierce at every pore a soul divested of such sinful attire. He, the loving and the Holy One, was like a man unclothed walking through briars. He suffered and bled as He traversed this sorrowful world. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” *then*, though now He is the “blessed,” the *happy* God; and one dare not associate sorrow with the thought of *Jesus as He is*. And thus, joyous as she was by nature, and is now for evermore, Geraldine Hooper was very often sorrowful in the days of her sojourn here. She was “moved with compassion,” and compassion is the child of sorrow and love.

Yet there was in her the strangest mixture of this deep pathos, with the apparently antagonistic element of an innate love of fun. Her ready wit was remarkable and most amusing. The constant sparkle of her conversation made it impossible to feel dull in her company. The quickness with which she caught the droll side of

a subject, her sudden and intense perception of the incongruous, or odd, in persons and things, made her laugh and cause others to laugh so often, that those who knew her only superficially, might have attributed, and sometimes indeed did attribute to her, a degree of levity which they conceived inconsistent with the Christian character. She was conscious of the danger in this direction, and watched against it, but did not believe that the disposition was in itself sinful. If exhorted, as she often was, on the subject, she would say: "Why should I not laugh at what is laughable? Is there any sin in laughter? Has not God implanted the power to perceive and enjoy the ludicrous, as well as the beautiful or the noble? I can't help it. I must shut my eyes and ears if I am not to laugh." If it was objected: "But people may misunderstand," she would reply, "Well, you would not have me *try to look good* when I am not? I don't want to appear more sober and demure than I am." She considered that even in a meeting a passing smile did no harm, but the contrary—tended to give a feeling of naturalness and reality,—to set people at their ease, and increase their sympathy with the speaker. If there happened to be a funny point in a story she was telling, she would not consequently suppress it; though she never went out of her way to create a smile.*

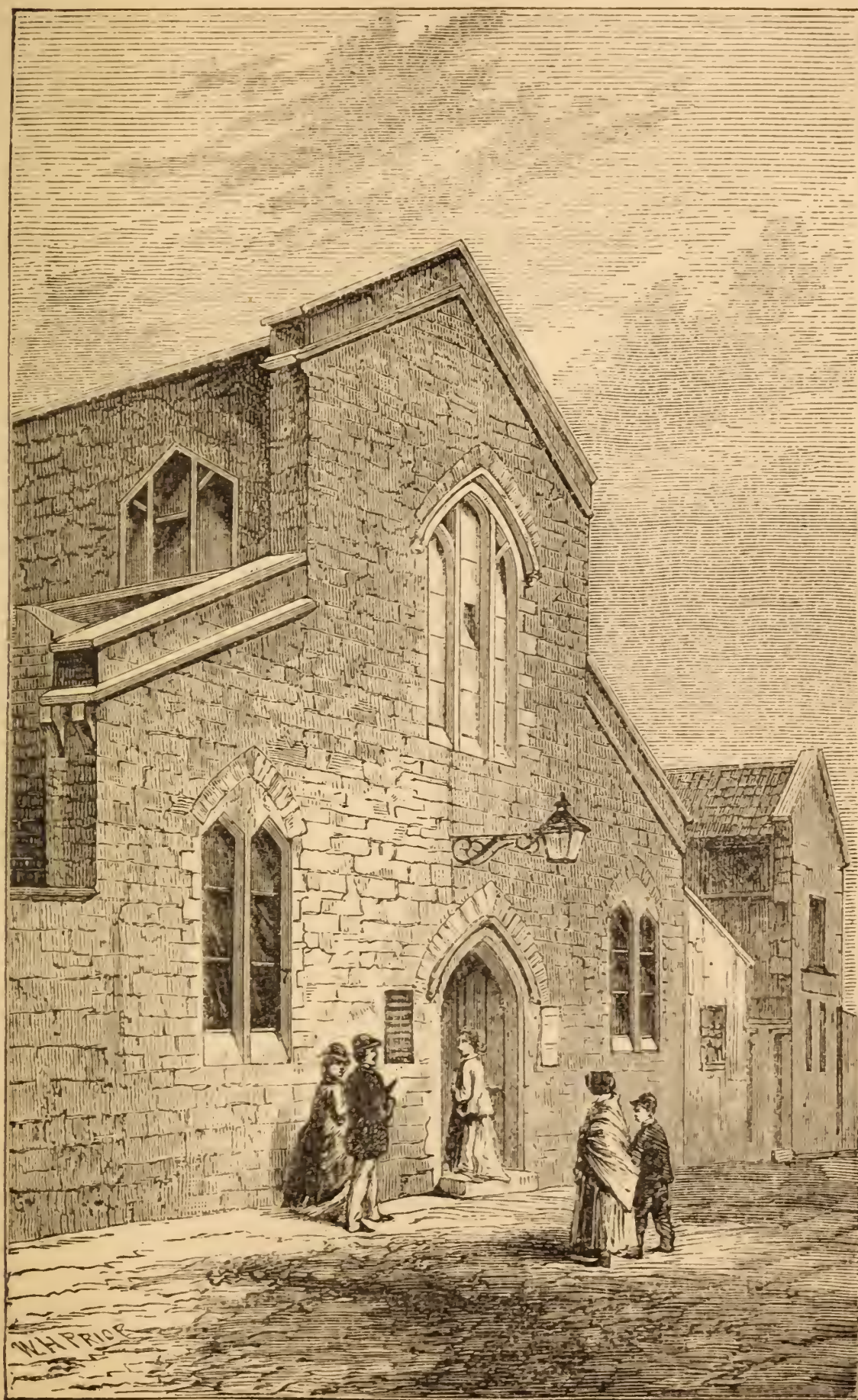
* Just after writing the above, we met with a review, by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, of the Life of the Rev. E. T. Taylor, for forty years pastor of the Seamen's Bethel, Boston, from which we extract the following, commending it to the consideration of those who object to a smile in a religious meeting: "The ludicrous was allowed considerable play in his discourses, and we think rightly so. Many count the use of humour to be unlawful in the pulpit, but

Her quick, clever repartee was remarkable from her earliest years. When a child, her father on one occasion asked her to pull down a blind, which she did so vigorously that the cord broke. Her father, in chiding her, said, “You have too much zeal, my dear.” “Well, papa dear! it was *blind* zeal,” she replied instantly, “so you must forgive me!”

To a friend who was lamenting that he could not sing at the Clifton Conference, she said, “O, well you must comfort yourself with the second part of the text; it is written, not only, ‘O come, let us *sing* unto the Lord,’ but ‘let us make a *joyful noise* to the Rock of our salvation.’”

When St. James’s Hall was being built, the architects proposed cutting the likeness of Mr. and Mrs. Dening in a block of stone to be inserted over the entrance. She instantly objected, saying, “No, indeed! If we did that, people *would* have good reason to say we were two *blockheads*!”

our belief is that the exclusion of it is far worse. There is no more sin nor virtue in a laugh than in a cry. To the pure mind, none of the powers of our manhood are common or unclean. Humour can be consecrated, and should be. We grant that it is a power difficult to manage, but when it is under proper control it more than repays for all the labour spent upon it. Children do sad damage with gunpowder, but what a force it is when a wise man directs its energy. Mr. Taylor made men laugh, that they might weep. He touched one natural chord, that he might be able to touch another; whereas some preachers are so unnatural themselves, that the human nature of their hearers refuses to subject itself to their operations. O ye who are evermore decorously dull, before ye judge a man whose loving ministry conducted thousands to the skies, think how immeasurably above you all he soared, and remember that, with all his violations of your wretched regulations, he was ‘*one whom the Lord delighted to honour.*’”



[EXTERIOR OF ST. JAMES'S HALL, BATH.



To the close this continued a very noticeable feature in her conversation. Even in her last illness, when on a Sunday morning the doctor bound her eyes in cotton wool, she said, with a smile, "I shall certainly be blind to the vanities of the world to-day." This quickness of mind to perceive the various aspects of a word or thought, frequently came out in her preaching, and often under all sorts of circumstances stood her in good stead, and sometimes enabled her to turn an adversary's flank very cleverly.

Thus on one occasion, when preaching in Avon Street, she took for her text the signs of the five public-houses in the street, with their suggestive titles :—

"There's 'THE FOUNTAIN!' A pretty fountain it is! A fountain—a fountain of sin and misery. Oh, how its poisonous streams have deluged, defiled, and destroyed some of your homes! How have its deadly waters slain some of your souls! I'll tell you of a better fountain! 'A fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness'—a fountain of life!

"Then there's 'THE SHAMROCK.' A sham rock, indeed! Some people build their hopes for eternity on the sham rock of self-righteousness, &c., and some false professors mistake the sand for a rock. But there is a true rock—the Rock of ages! Let me tell you about that. . . .

"Then there's 'THE LAMB.' I should like to know if its frequenters are much like lambs, after they've been there awhile? Certainly they are as foolish as sheep to be led there! But there is a Lamb, dear friends, to whom I would fain lead you all: the 'Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.'

"And next we have 'THE ODD FELLOWS' ARMS.' Alas! alas! very odd fellows, indeed, are they who resort thither! Fellows that can drink up their wives' clothes and their children's shoes, and their household furniture, and their own good character, and all they have in the world! Fellows that like to be beasts better than men! Fellows that can beat and kill the woman they swore to love and cherish! God save the poor women that have such odd fellows for

husbands! If you will be singular, be singular for goodness, not for badness. . . .

“And then there’s ‘LORD NELSON’ and his memorable watchword: ‘*England expects every man to do his duty!*’ A pretty state most of those who come out of that door are in for doing their duty! What one duty can a drunkard fulfil? God expects ‘every man to do his duty,’ and his duty is *to be a man*, not a brute; his duty is, ‘be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.’ England will expect in vain that her sons should do their duty, either as soldiers, sailors, or citizens, while they give way to the mania of drink. What fills our gaols and our convict stations, our hospitals, and our graveyards? I need not tell you! . . .

“And, lastly, there’s ‘THE GARIBALDI!’ Hail noble patriot, great lover of liberty! Dost thou consent to have thy face and form decorate a place frequented only by *slaves*? Slaves of their own passions, slaves of sin and Satan? No, friends! Liberty comes not thus! Liberty to sin and be miserable is no true Liberty. There is but one real freedom, ‘If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed.’ If you would be Garibaldis, fight, as he fought, every enemy that would enslave you: drive from the throne every tyrant, lust and appetite; be your own masters, and as he fought his way to Rome, the goal of his heart, so fight ye your way to heaven. . . .

“One word more: the *place* of the sign-board is the best place for you—OUTSIDE THE HOUSE. Why! the awful announcement over the door is enough to deter any well-disposed man from entering—‘licensed to be DRUNK ON THE PREMISES!’ If I was a magistrate, I’d never grant any one a licence to get drunk! You say it means the *drink* not the men! I’m very much afraid it *means both*; but, whatever it means, if I were you, I’d never cross the threshold of such ‘premises,’ lest I should get ‘drunk’ as well as the beer!” . . .

Travelling once with an old general, she entered into conversation with him about his soul, and he asserted that he was all right, because he had been made a Christian when he was baptized in his infancy. She asked him if he was doing or had done anything for Christ. “O no!” he replied. “Now, what would you think, General, of a soldier who, when the order to charge was given on a

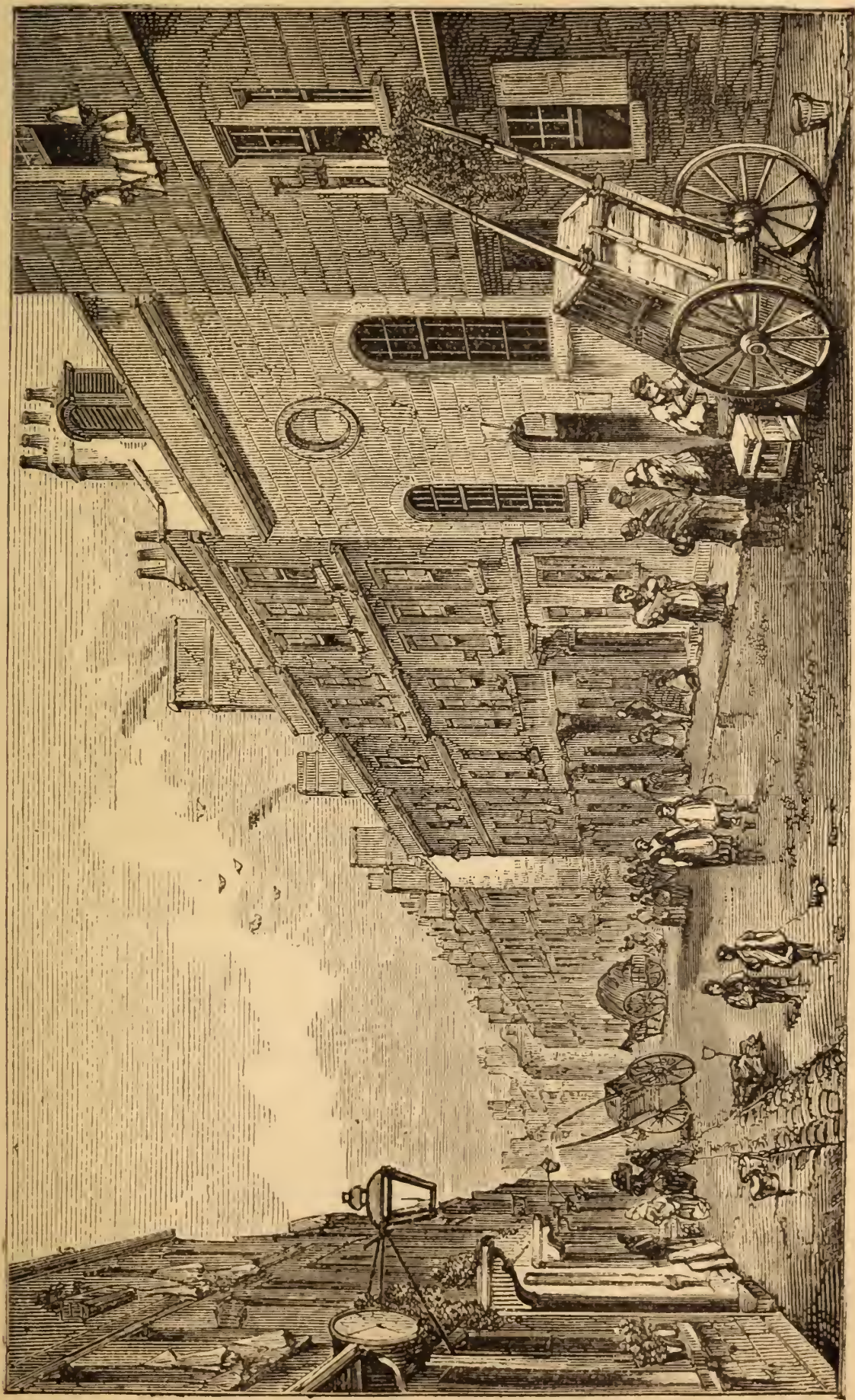
field of battle, should turn round and say, 'It is true I am a soldier—I was made one when I enlisted, but I never intended to fight !' What would you do with such a one, General ?" "Tie him up to the cannon's mouth, as an example to the rest, to be sure !" "And that is what the Lord will do with you," she solemnly replied, "He will drive you for ever from His presence, unless you get a new heart and lead a new life, through the grace of God ! You say you are a Christian, and yet by your own confession you have never used your time or talents in the service of Jesus Christ." He was not offended ; but looking seriously at her, said, "I never thought of it in that light, my young friend, but I will not forget your words." The train stopped, and as he left the carriage he thanked her for her faithfulness. On another occasion, she had been conversing with a ritualistic clergyman for some time in a railway carriage. He evidently did not appreciate the sentiments she expressed, and turned away to the other compartment, saying, "You are very Low Church." "No, indeed !" she exclaimed, "not I ! I am High Church !" Drawing a little nearer, he said, "I should not have thought it from your conversation ; are you really High Church ?" "Yes ! really High Church," she replied ; "but perhaps our definition of high and low may differ. I consider myself High Church, because I build on Christ, the Rock, and there is *none higher than He* ; they are *Low Church* who build on the sandy foundation of forms and ordinances."

She was as quick in seeing what to do, as what to say. Her ready, practical tact, often came usefully to her aid. When the dinners for hungry little ones were first started, in the winter of 1871-2, the applicants for tickets were far more numerous than had been ex-

pected. On driving down at the appointed hour to the hall where distribution was to be made, we found a vociferous crowd waiting at the wrong door, and some of the neighbours much annoyed at the disturbance they were creating. There was no one to keep order, and the boys would not go, as they were told, to the other door, but surrounded the carriage with, “Gi’e us a ticket, please; gi’e us a ticket, ma’am!” Standing up in the carriage, she suddenly plucked off a few hats and caps, and threw them behind her into the carriage. “Ill take the hat of every boy that doesn’t go to the other door,” she cried; “and see if you don’t catch it when you get home without your hats!” The effect was instantaneous—in two minutes the street was clear!

Once, when entering with difficulty a crowded hall at Plymouth, a man who disapproved of her work for the Lord, or who was anxious to distinguish himself by insulting a lady, cried out, “Miss Hooper, you’re cracked to go on like this!” She turned quickly, and, looking at him kindly and brightly, said, “Well, every nut must be cracked before you can get at the kernel, must it not?” A burst of laughter and applause came from the crowd, and the objector decamped.

As she was going to preach in Avon-street one Sunday morning, some of her Bible-class met her, saying, “Oh, ma’am, the landlord of the —— public-house has thrown a lot of water all over the place where you are to stand; he says he won’t have you preach there, because it interferes with his custom.” She went on; and there, at his own door, with a scowl on his brow, stood the antagonistic publican. With her exquisitely graceful manner she bowed, and said, “Thank you, Mr. ——; how *kind* of you to think of laying the dust for us this sultry



AVON STREET BATH.

‘morning! I am sure we are much obliged!’ The landlord made no further attempt to disturb the meeting, and when shortly afterwards his wife was taken ill, he would have no one but the “lady preacher” to come and see her.

On another occasion a policeman, recently appointed to the beat, who did not know her, told her she must not stand there—it would interrupt the traffic. She appeared not to hear his remark, but, offering him to look over her own hymn book, said, persuasively, “Would you help me to sing this hymn? I am not feeling strong this morning,” with which request he instantly complied, and by his presence kept order during the rest of the service.

Her courage and presence of mind were often of singular service to others. One day she met in the street some people who were carrying a poor boy on a shutter to the hospital. She observed that the blood was flowing freely from a wound he had received, and, stopping the bearers, she at once bandaged the part securely with pocket handkerchiefs, cheering the poor lad the while with encouraging words.

Another time she was in the midst of speaking, when suddenly the gas went out, and the audience were plunged into darkness. All efforts to re-light it failed. She started—

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,”

which all could join in singing without books, and then, as soon as a candle was brought, took for her text, “*Our lamps are gone out*” (Matt. xxv. 8), from which she preached a solemn and effective sermon, that was blessed to the salvation of at least one poor man.

Constantly in this way she turned in her preaching

passing incidents to good account, and she would seize on any little incident that arose in daily life, or that she met with in reading, to use as an illustration of spiritual truth in her addresses. She strongly realized the need of illustrations to make the truth clear, especially to the young and ignorant; hence they often remarked how much better they understood her than any other minister.

There was no feature in her character more noticeable than her *love of serving*. It was impossible to spend a day in her company without being struck by it. The Christ-like desire to minister to others betrayed itself not only in the general tenor of her life, not only in that she spent and was spent for others *in the main* in caring for their spiritual interests, but in the smallest details of every day life. Her quick eye caught sight of a need she could meet, a wish she could gratify, a service she could render, before others were conscious of such for themselves; and she no sooner perceived an opportunity of serving in *any* way, then she grasped it with the joy with which a miser would grasp gold. And the exquisite delicacy and tact with which she presented these free-will offerings of her heart was such, that the receiver of the benefit, almost felt as if he were conferring a favour by his reception of it. “Is there *nothing* I can do for you?” often fell from her lips with such a tone of sadness, that one was constrained to invent a service to satisfy her desire to serve. Nor was this confined only to those she loved—her affection for whom would naturally make service a pleasure. It embraced all; strangers and casual acquaintances as well as friends and relatives, and especially any who were inclined to be enemies. It reached the poor as well as

the rich—the little child as well as the aged. She would stop the chaise and take up a way-worn woman carrying her baby up a steep hill, give her a lift, and talk to her the while of the Saviour who freely and out of pure love and pity would lift the weary and heavy-laden to heaven itself. She would sit up with a sick child; ransack the city to find grapes, when out of season, for an invalid; she would remember the slightest wish expressed by a friend, and do her best to gratify it. She hears that some former servant is going to be married; forthwith her wardrobe is turned over, and a nice little addition to the wedding outfit packed and dispatched. She hears a friend is to start late in the evening for a night journey. She is at the station to meet them, a foot-warmer ready prepared, refreshments nicely put up, and a wrapper, in case it is needed. A poor woman is ill, the doctor orders nourishment and wine; dinner from her own table and wine from her cellar are taken day after day, and week after week, by her own hand. Instances of her helpful, considerate kindness will occur by the dozen to anyone who watched her daily life for however brief a period; indeed, her life was *composed* of acts of service—from the soul-saving sermon on the Lord's day, to the most inconspicuous help, in the most trifling matter. Her Bible bears witness to this passion of her heart; a few little leaflets are securely attached between some of its leaves. One runs thus :—

“ Love makes drudgery delightful. It forgets self and lives for others. Love outruns law, and leaves it far behind. Not to be able and permitted to serve is a penalty. The question is, not What must I do? but, What may I do? *To give pleasure is its joy; to grieve its object, is to grieve itself.* Love is the secret spring of the

believer's life, and this makes him often pass in the world for an enthusiast. It stops at nothing; mountains are no more to it than plains. . . . Love has a joy of its own which a stranger cannot understand. . . . Ours should be the spirit of martyrdom, delighting in loving, self-denying service.”

Another of these leaflets is the sweet poem, entitled “Love's Lesson,” of which she was peculiarly fond, and of which indeed her life was a beautiful illustration. The “Lesson” had sunk deeply into *her* soul; we give it here in full, hoping that by God's blessing it may sink as deeply into the soul of many a youthful reader, and so redeem many an opening life from the *blight of self-seeking*, hallowing and brightening it instead, with the lustre of loving self-sacrifice.

“Still in loving, still in loving, more than being lov'd, is joy:
 Here there lurks no disappointment, here is peace without alloy.
 Not in having, or receiving, but in giving is there bliss;
 He who has no other pleasure, ever may rejoice in this.
 Be it health, or be it leisure, be it skill we have to give;
 Still in spending it for others, Christians only really live.
 What in love we yield to others, by a charm we still retain;
 For the lov'd one's acquisition, is the lover's double gain.
 Yet we know in love's increasing, is increase of grief and care;
 For the pains of those around him, pained the loving heart must bear.
 Love and sorrow dwelt together in the blessed Saviour's heart;
 And shall we, His lowly followers, wish that they should be
 apart?
 Love and sorrow walk together o'er this sin-beclouded earth:
 Love and gladness sing together in the country of our birth.
 Wheresoever sorrow wanders, love should go and raise her up;
 At the many wells of Marah, love should stoop and share the cup.
 Let the careless seek their pleasure; give, if e'er they give, their
 pelf:
 But the loving, truly loving, gives, and loves to give, himself.

Happy if by his endeavour,—by his suffering, others gain :
If some comrade o'er his body, may a wished-for height attain.
Secrets here of love and sorrow, if in meekness we shall learn ;
Secrets soon of love and gladness we in heaven shall discern.
In the light, so all-pervading, of the spirits' home above,
We shall trace the perfect meaning of the saying,—' God is love.'
And transformèd to His likeness, we, oh blessed thought, shall be
Loved and loving, loved and loving, through a bright eternity."

- An extract from the letter of a friend, presents this feature of Geraldine Hooper's character in a sweet light:—

"In the spring of 1863, we had scarlatina in our house ; seven out of ten were ill at one time. Her kindness and attention then, only those can know who, like yourself, have experienced them. No human creature could be kinder ; from six in the morning till twelve at night, and sometimes all the night through, she helped my anxious and weary wife—a God-sent angel of kindness and sympathy, and a most clever and efficient help. When our little son died, her love and attention were beyond all praise ; she helped us in every possible way. When we were moving house subsequently, she was equally efficient ; she sent us a carpet, and *helped to put it down* herself. Indeed, in a thousand ways I cannot name, she was to us a ministering angel."

Most fully can we endorse the above statements from an experience which brings many a tear as memory now recalls it. At the end of April, 1872, the wise providence of God permitted a serious accident to befall the writer, which, for eight or ten weeks, caused incessant and severe suffering, and left her comparatively helpless up to the period of her friend's death, four months later. It is difficult to convey an idea of the constant and tender kindness this trial called forth : she seemed herself to suffer all her friend suffered, and even more ; but she never showed a sign of this in the sick-room. Daily, and at times twice and thrice a day, she cheered

it with her sweet, bright, helpful presence. She sent off the telegram to summon the absent husband; she perceived the pain caused by noise, and, unasked, had tan laid before the house; she brought every day the food she thought most tempting or suitable; and often, when conversation could not be borne, she whiled away the early hours of the sleepless nights by soothing hymns sung in the lowest warble. She watched for the children's half-holidays, to carry them off, that the house might be kept quiet; she seemed a very fairy of help and encouragement, and when the despondency induced by sleeplessness and nervous exhaustion made all the world look black, and the grasshopper feel like a burden, her voice and her smile seemed to bring back the sunshine, and make all easy. She was a wise and clever nurse; a most ready and efficient helper under all circumstances; and the very tenderest and kindest of friends. When returning strength permitted the writer to sit up, and after a time to go out, it was still the same. The thoughtful consideration that anticipated every want, arranged everything for the best, and spared neither time, nor trouble, nor money, to do good and give pleasure. It is inexpressibly touching to recall that this sweet thoughtfulness continued to the very last; for when, during the early days of her own fatal illness, she heard that her friend was at the door, she sent the nurse from her bedside to see that refreshment was partaken of, and to say that she entreated no risk might be run by any attempt to mount the stairs on crutches in order to see her. As long as reason retained its throne, that kindly thought for others which made her through life the most unselfish of beings, was prominent and paramount.

A friend says, in speaking of her character :—

“What mighty powers are faith, hope, and love ! And how true is it that the greatest of these is love ! It was the deep well of overflowing love which was in her soul that made Geraldine Hooper so irresistibly attractive to all who came within the sphere of her influence. It was not her gifts, though they were wonderful ; it was not the pathos of her natural eloquence, though no one could listen to it unmoved ; it was not the sweet music of her voice, though that thrilled all who heard it ; no ! it was *herself* that charmed and won the love of those who came near her—it was her warm, loving *heart*. Every one felt they had access to an ear ready to listen in tenderest sympathy to their sorrows and cares, and able, from its own wealth of affection, to soothe, and help, and cheer.”

And she was not only full of love, but strong in faith. She had a heroic confidence in God that strengthened the natural energy of her character, and impelled her to acts in His service which to feeble faith and more timid natures seemed rash and imprudent.

The well-known and actively benevolent Captain Justice, now gone to his rest, found her one day very early in the morning making the bed of a poor man who had small-pox, in a room where one child was lying ill of the same dreadful complaint, and another who had died from it was in its coffin. He remarked how dangerously unpleasant the room was. She replied, in her bright way, “Is it ? Oh, I don’t observe it.”

Her uncle coming in early one morning, heard her singing, and said, “How bright you seem this morning !” “Yes,” she replied, “I’ve been sitting up all night with a girl that is dying in Avon Street, singing hymns to her ; it made her so happy, that it makes me happy to think of it.”

When others feared for her health, and would have held her back, she trusted for strength, and went forward ; and never would she shrink from doing what she

thought ought to be done, because there were difficulties and obstacles in the way.

Hope, too, was always uppermost with her. She never would look on the dark side of a subject. She lived in the sunshine, and seemed to carry it with her wherever she went. Her bright, witty sayings, and playful humour, made even the sorrowful glad. “I often thought,” says a friend, “of the old nursery rhyme in connection with her, ‘She shall make music wherever she goes.’ She did indeed make music, sweet creature! and often brought into harmony the discordant notes of many a poor unstrung soul. She brightened hope in others, and created much thanksgiving to God, as she went about fulfilling her mission of mercy on earth.”

And yet the heart that made music for others was often sad itself. The bright being that was an object of love and admiration to multitudes, felt lonely, deeply lonely, amid it all. She used to say, that in the earlier part of her course, all the kindness and affection so freely lavished on her did not in the least satisfy her heart. She felt essentially solitary in the largest crowd; for at this time, though she had many acquaintances, she had no *friend*; and her nature was one that craved intimate friendship and close and constant association with her friends. What she suffered from this cause up to the time of her marriage no one knows but the Lord. The following hymn, written in 1865, seems an expression of this feeling of loneliness—loneliness none the less painful because it was loneliness amid multitudes:—

“ When my heart is sad and lonely,
With sin and grief opprest,
I come to Thee, sweet Jesus,
And Thou dost give me rest.

I know Thou carest for me,
With a love that ne'er can die,
And that Thou art preparing
My home above the sky.

“ Though the way is rough and thorny,
Yet Thou art ever near ;
Thine arm of power sustains me,
Thy voice alone can cheer.
Keep me, my Saviour, keep me
Close to Thy riven side :
And then I'm safe and happy,
Whatever may betide.

“ Oftimes I'm weak and wayward,
I'm weary e'en of life,
I long to quit the battle-field,
The conflict and the strife.
I yearn that Thou shouldst come, Lord,
To claim Thy blood-bought Bride ;
And land her safe for ever
In her home beyond the tide.

“ And Thou art coming, Jesus !
Thy chariot wheels draw near ;
Soon as a King and Conqueror
In clouds Thou wilt appear :
I am watching for the morning,
Lo ! the shadows break away ;
Then faith shall be exchanged for sight,
In realms of cloudless day.”

Her bright manner sometimes caused her to be misunderstood. Often, when her heart was most sad, her manner would be most cheerful. She once overheard a remark about herself by a stranger, in a crowd, to the effect that she was a “heartless girl.” It pained her—she sighed in spirit—“the heart knoweth its own bitterness,”—and soon after wrote the following lines, dated 27th May, 1866.

- “ They deem me ‘heartless’—but they do not know
The past, and its sad page of silent woe ;
They deem me ‘heartless,’ for they see me smile,
And they are strangers to my grief meanwhile.
- “ They deem me ‘heartless,’—Ah ! they cannot tread
The way by which my footsteps have been led ;
They deem me ‘heartless,’—but they have not traced
The grief from memory never yet effaced.
- “ But, Lord ! thou dost not ‘heartless’ deem Thy child,—
Thy loving, sympathizing heart so mild.
Thy weary one can bless beneath the rod.
Thou wilt not fail or leave me, gracious God !
- “ What if Thou breathe upon my cherished flower,
To bid it droop and wither in an hour :
Shall I not trust in Thee whate’er my way ?
Wilt thou not be my Guide, my Friend, my Stay ?
- “ Then let them deem me ‘heartless !’ I can smile :
The grief, the sorrow in a little while,
Shall vanish quite ; for oh, ’ere long shall dawn
The bright, the glorious resurrection morn.”

Popularity such as hers is a dangerous experience for a young Christian. Its tendency is to puff up with pride. A child of God, led of the Spirit, cannot but be conscious of this, and must tremble in consequence ; but he need not be led into sin by it. It is not only to the flesh or natural mind of a preacher that popularity is pleasing ; it is even more so to the spiritual mind. The pleasure it affords is *natural*, for he who does not like to be beloved, approved, and admired is not a man. It is also *spiritual*, for what true preacher does not exult, from Godly and pure motives, in the sight of an immense audience earnestly attentive to the message he has to proclaim ? “ Fain would he sound it out so loud that all the world might hear,” and the more he can reach the

better. *Not* to like popularity would consequently be both unnatural and unspiritual. It enlarges a preacher's sphere, and attests his excellence. The danger with which it is attended is only to the individual, and *may* be averted by prayer and watchfulness, while the benefits it secures may affect countless thousands, and can hardly be estimated. It is, therefore, a hyper-spirituality verging on misanthropy, that says, with a sorrowful shake of the head, "Depend upon it, the more popular a preacher is, the less spiritual and faithful." It is a sufficient answer, that no preacher was ever so popular as Jesus Christ. "The common people heard him gladly," and His audiences were more often numbered by hundreds than by tens. If He secured popularity, those whose preaching most resembles His will do the same.

When Geraldine Hooper first became aware of her own remarkable talent for public speaking, by seeing the manner in which her words swayed and moved men's minds, her first feeling was, "What an awful responsibility it is to possess such a power! God has committed to me this talent, not that I may bury it, or use it for my own ends, but that I may turn it to account for His glory and for the good of souls. I am then bound to seek opportunities for the exercise of this gift—bound, *not* to lead a life of domestic ease and tranquillity, as other Christian women consistently may, but to seek in 'the regions beyond,' listeners who may hear words 'whereby they may be saved.'" Acting in harmony with this conviction, she soon found herself *immensely popular*. She had not sought to be so, she did not expect to be so. She was at first *oppressed* by the sense that she was so. Popularity brought to her, as it must to every Christian who enjoys any measure of it, the painful consciousness

of utter insufficiency, weakness, and nothingness. "Who and what am I, that I should feed these multitudes? How and wherewith shall I convey a blessing to their souls?" Often did she intensely feel a shrinking like that of Moses and of Jeremiah. She sometimes described this experience, and told how it drove her to the Lord in prayer, and how she seemed constantly to be directed to such passages as, "Say not thou art a child, for thou shalt go to all to whom I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak" (Jer. i. 6, 7).

"Use is second nature." She afterwards became so much accustomed to unbounded popularity that it seemed the natural thing; but during her whole course she was constant in prayer to be kept humble, and inscribed on the fly-leaf of her Bible is the petition, often embodied in her public and private supplications:—

"O send me forth, my Saviour,
O send me for THY glory,
Let not myself,
My carnal self,
Self-seeking self,
Come 'twixt me and Thy glory.
O magnify, O magnify,
Thy blessed name, my Saviour.
Lift high the banner of Thy cross,
And in its folds conceal
Thy standard bearer."

During the last four years of her life, her popularity was a trial to her in another way. She was united in the sweet bond of marriage "in the Lord," to one, whom she not only tenderly loved, and with true wifely pride admired, but one whom she revered, and in honour preferred above herself. She was both inclined and resolved ever to award to him the first place, and would

herself have taken in all things the second. It sometimes pained her and made her indignant to find former friends who did not know him, and who were not therefore aware how well he deserved this, trying to force *her* into a precedence which she abhorred, and which she uniformly declined. Where [he is known, Mr. Dening's popularity is not less than was that of his gifted wife ; *and he* always made allowance for strangers to *him*, who knew *her*, assuming that he could not as a preacher be her equal !

To say that the unusual favour she found wherever she went, with old and young, rich and poor, in no way injured her at any time, would perhaps be going too far ; but we are safe in citing her as an illustration of the fact, that a Christian may by grace be preserved through long years of unusual and undiminished popularity, humble, teachable, amiable, and gracious.

Her friend, the Rev. Dr. Octavius Winslow, remarked in his sermon on the evening of her funeral,—

“That he had known her for many years, having been associated with her in many sacred services, and having felt the influence of her loving sympathy amidst the endurance of the bitterest cup in life which God had given him to drink, and he had never met with a more perfect specimen of real Christianity, lovely religion, and earnest, unreserved consecration to Christ.

“He recollected one of her first discourses in this city, in the little kitchen of which mention had been made, as marking the commencement of the evangelical work which had risen to so great a result. On the steps of that little kitchen he had sat, unobserved by her, listening to her loving, tender eloquence, as she spoke from the sweet words, ‘Consider the lilies,’ and he could never forget the address which she then made, the lowly commencement of her evangelical work, and how she had since been kept humble, meek, lowly, tender, loving, and uninjured, amidst almost unparalleled popularity and attention.”

Perhaps her unremitting diligence in labour, may have been one means of averting the spiritual damage that might have accrued from her great popularity. Satan, who easily finds mischief "for idle hands to do," is often foiled by honest industry. She was driven to her knees continually, by the constant claims upon her; and if each appearance on the platform had a tendency to puff her up, the quick recurring preparation for the next, had a tendency to keep her down. To approach the throne of God in supplication, we must kneel on the footstool of humility.

Her charity towards others was a conspicuous feature of her character. She was very rarely heard to express a harsh judgment of any one. In one or two exceptional cases in which she did so, it was in the endeavour to undeceive some who were, she felt sure, being duped; and the event proved her right. But as a rule she always looked on the lights of a character rather than into its shadows, and in conversation invariably extolled what excellences existed, never criticised defects. Perhaps she carried this almost to a fault in apologising for erroneous views and inconsistent conduct, but, if so, the fault was on the right side. Where she had nothing good to say of a person she would be silent, and hence her most intimate friends never heard her speak of certain episodes in her experience, or certain characters in her acquaintance. Nothing roused her indignation more, than to hear Christians picking holes in each other's reputation. But though she would never converse over the faults of others, she would, whenever she thought faithfulness demanded it, kindly and affectionately speak to them about anything she deemed wrong; and she liked to be so spoken to herself. An elderly and

esteemed minister suggested to her, only a few months before her death, that she used too freely and familiarly the name, "Jesus," in speaking of our blessed Lord. "We give even a peer his title, how much more it behoves us to give *His* title to the King of kings and Lord of lords." She felt the force of the remark, thanked him for the hint, and from that day invariably said, "the Lord Jesus."

On one point she was often spoken to by Christian people whom she respected, *her dress*. About this she used sometimes laughingly to say, "If I followed all the advice I get, I should be like the old man and his donkey." She consequently followed her own judgment in the matter, but never resented exhortation, and respected those who sincerely gave it. Her dress had become more inconspicuous of late years than it was formerly, and had she been spared would probably as she grew older have become less expensive also. She always dressed in black or black and white when preaching, but used handsome materials, and had things well made. Her attire would not have attracted attention on another person, but her tall and graceful figure set off everything she wore, and made it look stylish and remarkable. She was, it must be admitted, open in measure to the charge, not of "adorning herself with gold and silver and plaited hair," but of using "costly array." Yet its costliness lay *mainly* in this, that she gave away her things so freely that her wardrobe often required replenishing. Such was her generosity, that to her it was impossible to see another want a thing which she possessed, and *not* to impart it. She certainly did not bestow much time or attention on her dress. She would order or select an article in less time than most people, and her toilet preparations for

public meetings rarely detained her five minutes. She used often to say, “I never think anything at all about my dress as it is, but if I were to put on anything ugly, or shabby, or peculiar, I should be thinking of it all the time!” Ear-rings, and flowers, and feathers, and “chignons,” she utterly abhorred, and she never followed any fashion but her own. She wore very *long* dresses even when others wore short, partly from taste, and partly by her husband’s desire. She generally removed her cloak or jacket in preaching, feeling cramped and encumbered if she kept it on; though, unlike many others, she retained her gloves.

She possessed much of that irresistible charm of *manner* which springs from self-forgetfulness, sympathy, and love. Every one felt she was interested in them, and that she was thoroughly *accessible*; she never stood at a distance or kept others at a distance, but set every one at their ease directly they addressed her. “La! ma’am, she used to come in and sit down in my poor place, like as if she was my sister,” said a poor woman, with tears of sorrow at her early death; “there wer’n’t *not one bit o’ pride in her*. I did love her, though she was a lady, like one o’ my own.” She would receive at the door the poor people as they came in to a tea-meeting, with the same graceful politeness and winning sweetness with which she would welcome her friends in her own drawing-room. To the young she was peculiarly kind, winning the hearts of both boys or girls, and seeming to have an intuitive comprehension of their feelings.

Though a warmly attached member of the Church of England, in which the Lord called her by His grace, as a Christian she was thoroughly large-hearted, and loved all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,

no matter how widely their views might differ from her own, nor how strongly opposed they might be to women's ministry in the Gospel, and consequently to her own course. She not only loved and admired all that was good in those from whom she differed, but she liked to attend and profit by what was excellent in their ministry. There was no sect whose *ecclesiastical position* she considered more unjustifiable than that of the exclusive "brethren;" but she loved and appreciated some of them very highly, and she would frequently avail herself of the opportunity of profiting by their expositions of Scripture. Mr. Andrew Miller, and Mr. Macintosh she especially esteemed; and if she observed others inclined to avoid them on account of their exclusiveness, she would say, "Oh! I disapprove their course *too strongly, to follow their bad example!*"

She greatly disliked anything *unnatural*. Once, when introduced to a clergyman whom she knew to be a strong millenarian, but who, as she had been told, thought it almost a sin to smile, after a little conversation in which the frigid gravity of his countenance struck her as painful, she said, abruptly and incredulously, "Are you *really* looking for the speedy coming of Christ?" "Certainly! Why do you doubt it?" was the grave reply. "Because you *look* much more as if you were expecting Antichrist, or Satan himself," she replied with a mischievous smile, and then set herself to make him laugh, and succeeded so well that the ice of unnaturalness was soon completely thawed; and yet no offence was given.

In preaching, thoughts and words both flowed quickly; she was never at a loss for either. If the thoughts did not come quite in a right order, she uttered them in a wrong order, and if she could not light on exactly the

right word, at the right moment, she took the best substitute that occurred to her; never aiming at absolute perfection, either of logic or diction. She never liked to speak much either of her preaching or her mode of preparation; but she would sometimes say, “I generally have three or four divisions of a subject in my mind beforehand; but I never make a point of *keeping to these “heads,”* for if I do I lose *my own!* To try and recall what I *meant* to say, would prevent my saying anything, and there is always plenty to be said; so I say what comes to me at the time.” She reached the soul through the avenue of feeling, more than through those of intelligence or conscience; though she did address herself to both with much force, at times. She had a good deal of natural eloquence, (one of the best definitions of which is *the power of persuading,*) but the great charm of her addresses lay in their loving earnestness.

If it be asked, and the foregoing facts can hardly fail to suggest the question to those “who are wise and observe” God’s dealings, “Why did the Lord select a woman, and a young woman, to accomplish such results, and be the instrument in saving so many souls, when multitudes of good, and learned, and experienced ministers sigh to see no fruit of their toil?” We would suggest one or two possible reasons. May it not have been partly to draw attention to a neglected instrumentality, a latent resource, which might prove of more value to the Church of God than she has ever dreamed, if she would only develope and employ it. While we are evermore praying that the Lord would “send forth labourers into His harvest,” we have only of late begun to perceive that we should encourage rather than repress the attempts of women to evangelize. They evidently

have a peculiar adaptation to do a work for God and for souls. Without their becoming such public preachers as was the one of whom we write, might not the deep, tender love, and the enthusiastic ardour that mark many a young female convert, be turned, by wise and judicious guidance on the part of her minister and friends, into channels where it might be fruitful of immense good, instead of being, as it so often is, pent up in confines so narrow, that it overflows irregularly and does damage instead? And when *gifted women*, like Mrs. Dening, are constrained by the love of Christ to devote themselves to His service, should they not be encouraged to evangelize more publicly either in the home or foreign field, instead of being repelled by prejudice and chilled by indifference and opposition? Some few, like Mrs. Dening, may have the force of character to face this, and go on notwithstanding, but the majority will not. Denied the opportunity of devoting themselves as they feel called to do, they are too often driven to take refuge in speculations, and criticisms, and controversies of a religious character, and the very talents that ought to have been a blessing, become a curse. Such women may become, and often do become, troublers in churches and torments to their ministers, instead of inestimable blessings to all around. If aroused by a sufficiently arduous and important call, they could do, and dare, and endure much for the Gospel's sake; but when only easy and trivial tasks are put before them, they languish and do nothing. Many a bright and talented daughter of a godly father, who once seemed an earnest Christian and exhibited the fervour of first love, and who, if set to absorbing and important work for the Lord *then*, would in all probability have grown into an invaluable evangelist, has been left

to lie inactive, dwindled into spiritual decay, and perhaps turned aside to the world for want of any sufficient interest in the Church. Christians cannot thrive without spiritual exercise any more than without spiritual food. We must *do* if we would *grow*, and we must do what we are fit for, if we are to do anything well. Does not the existing state of feeling in the Church condemn too many women to spiritual inactivity? The propriety of women's public ministry of the Gospel will, however, be touched on by-and-bye.

And, secondly, does not the blessing so richly poured by God on the labours of his hand-maiden repeat a lesson which the Church has been slow to learn—that the office of *evangelist* can no more be dispensed with now than in apostolic days (Eph. iv.). We dream not of doing without pastors to *shepherd* the flock; why have we permitted evangelists consecrated to the entirely different work of *soul-seeking* to become obsolete? God in His mercy has awakened His Church to her sin and folly in this matter, and reminded her that, though the world is no longer called heathen, yet it is still true that “it lieth in wickedness,” and that it needs *a special aggressive ministry* to deliver men from it. A pastor has a hundred claims that forbid his being entirely consecrated to this one work, but soul saving is, or should be, *the exclusive object of the evangelist*. He who does one thing only, is likely to do it effectually. “A man of *one idea* is terrible.” Itinerant evangelists are the aggressive agents of the Church, the light skirmishers or recruiting sergeants of Christ's army. Where they are dispensed with, conversions must not be expected to anything like the extent to which by this agency they might be realized. Oh that God would raise up many such, and that the Church would more cordially receive and co-operate with them!



CHAPTER XII.

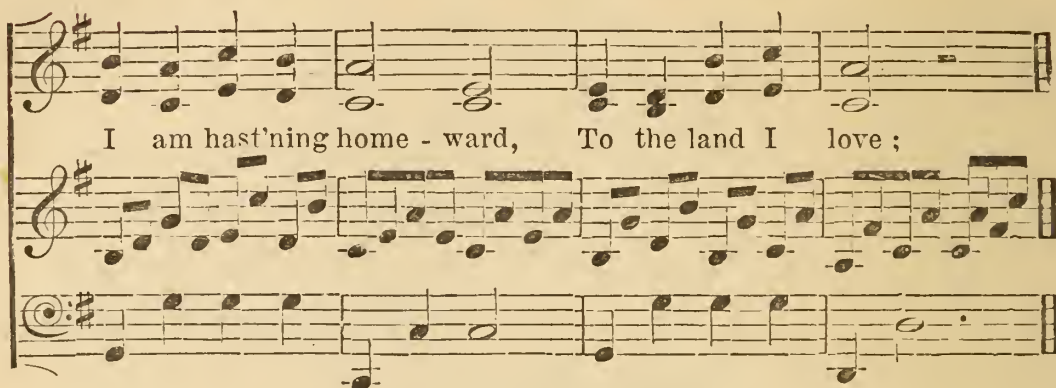
CLOSING SCENES.

UNUTTERABLY precious to innumerable hearts have been the tender words of Jesus, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How many a weary *sinner* has been sweetly drawn by this loving invitation, to cast his burden at Jesu's feet, and rest on His gentle bosom! Does the weary *saint* sometimes hear the words breathe through his soul, and invite him to rest of another kind—rest from his labours of love—rest from the fight of faith—rest from the journey of life? Our beloved departed friend would appear to have done so; and not only the faith that sees the unseen, and the love that yearns for full communion, but also a certain sense of weariness, seem to have made the call, inaudible to others, a welcome one to her. The following lines, found among recent papers in her desk, roughly written and uncorrected, were evidently penned but a few days before her last brief illness, and breathe a conviction that her time was short:—

"I am hastening homeward."

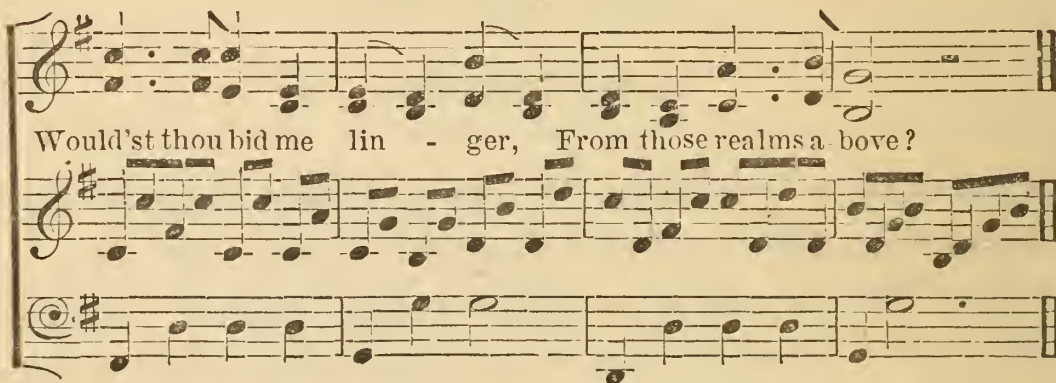
Written by Mrs. DENING, just before her last illness.

Music by Mrs. THOMPSON (Holywoodra'h).



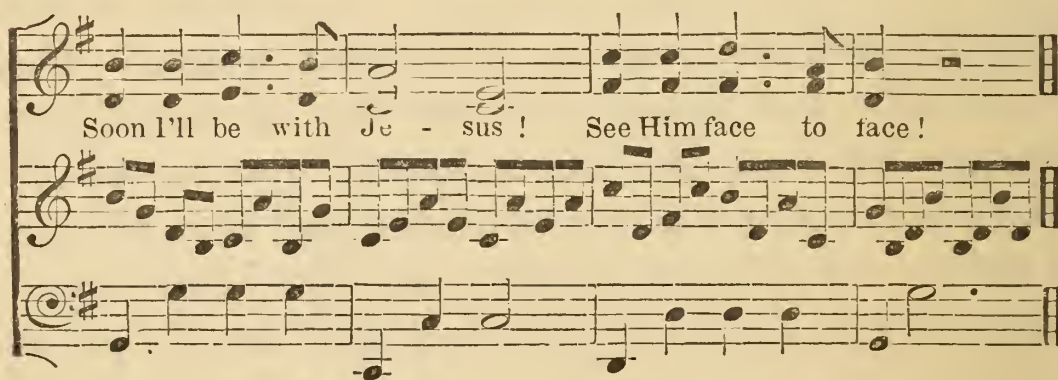
I am hast'ning home - ward, To the land I love ;

The first system of musical notation for the song. It consists of three staves: a treble staff, a vocal staff (soprano), and a bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the lyrics are placed below the vocal staff.



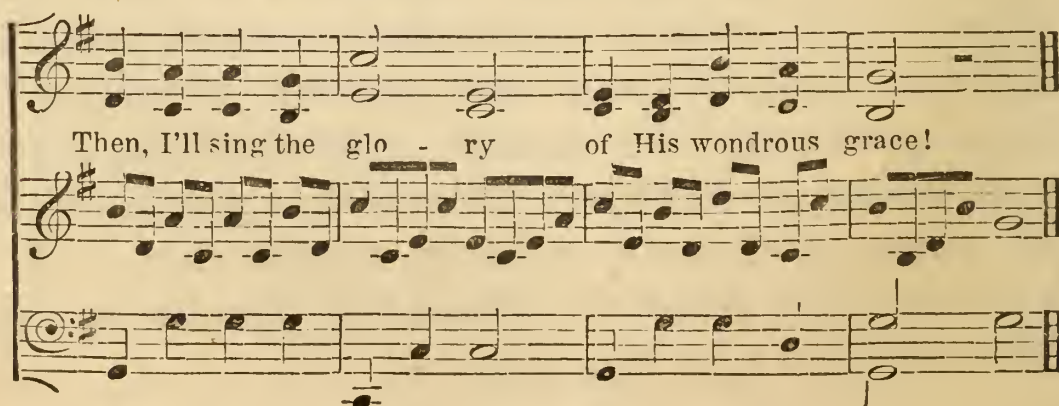
Would'st thou bid me lin - ger, From those realms a bove ?

The second system of musical notation, continuing the melody and lyrics from the first system. It also consists of three staves (treble, vocal, and bass) in the same key signature.



Soon I'll be with Je - sus ! See Him face to face !

The third system of musical notation, continuing the melody and lyrics. It consists of three staves (treble, vocal, and bass) in the same key signature.



Then, I'll sing the glo - ry of His wondrous grace !

The fourth system of musical notation, concluding the song. It consists of three staves (treble, vocal, and bass) in the same key signature.

"In His presence standing,
I my voice shall raise
In a sinless anthem
Of eternal praise,—
Praise to Him who brought me
From darkness into light,
Put away transgression,
Clothed my soul in white.

"Here I have had sorrow,
There, shall be no more ;
Hushed is ev'ry wavelet
On yon glorious shore :
One by one they're gathering
Home, from every land ;
Soon I'll pass the desert,—
Join their happy band.

"Why, then, should I murmur ?
Though the way be rough,
Jesus, He will guide me—
Is not that enough ?
Then let clouds o'ershade me,
Still I need not fear ;
His strength shall sustain me ;
His sweet voice shall cheer.

"Therefore I will hasten
Homeward on my way,
Singing as I journey
To the realms of day.
Ever shall my song be
Through eternity,
Of His love so matchless,
Yea, His love to me."

Like all those who, without having much physical power, throw themselves with intense earnestness into the work of evangelization, who feel every address they deliver, and are themselves mightily moved by the

truths they proclaim, Mrs. Dening was liable at times to a sense of exhaustion and physical depression. She rarely spoke of it or permitted others to perceive it. Her natural vivacity was such that few suspected it; the entrance of a friend would rouse her at once to her usual sweet gaiety of manner; but those who knew her best were aware that she accepted this painful feeling as one of the sufferings entailed by the work to which God had called her; and they perceived its operation in her love of silent communion with those nearest and dearest to her. She would come in from a meeting with a full heart and with an intense desire for sympathy in the feelings of the moment; but she did not want *words*—she neither talked, nor cared to be talked to. The silent clasp of the hand; the expressive language of the eye; the deep-meaning embrace; the yearning sigh; the restful, loving, heavenly smile; the solemn stillness; these replaced the words she was often too weary to utter. Perhaps this feeling had increased of late, perhaps, indeed, it was the natural source of the remarkable anticipation of speedy removal which marked her last days. The following scrap, written apparently about the same time as the foregoing, and left unfinished, seems to be an attempt to comfort other mourners with the comfort wherewith she herself had been comforted of God, at such seasons:—

“O why is thy heart so weary?

O why is thy brow so sad?

Is nothing left here to cheer thee?

Nothing to make thee glad?

“Are friends thou hast loved departed?

Has love thou didst prize grown cold?

And dost thou feel broken-hearted?

And burdened with grief untold?

“ Ah ! dear, weary, child of sadness,
 There is yet a friend for thee ;
 Yes, *One* who can turn to gladness,
 Thy grief and thy misery.”

The same tone of weariness pervades the following unfinished fragment, found with the others, which seems the utterance of a heart longing for purer and brighter things, and fain to fly away and be at rest :—

“ I am weary, Lord, of dwelling
 ’Mid the passing things of time ;
 I am weary of the sadness
 Of death’s funereal chime.

“ I long to dwell in heaven,
 Where flowerets never die,
 Where brows are never shaded,
 Where hearts ne’er breathe a sigh.

“ They tell me Thou art coming,
 Art speeding on Thy way,
 That soon the night of weeping
 Will end in joyous day.

“ But my heart, meantime, is weary,
 And my spirit shrinks within,
 From the daily, hourly, conflict
 With the world, the flesh, and sin.

“ Dear Saviour, come, then——”

and there the pen was laid aside, and we know not that it was ever resumed. They may have been the last words her hand traced ; the tears which filled our eyes as we read them were stayed by the sweet remembrance that such aspirations are for ever satisfied, such sorrows for ever past ! The prayer was answered in spirit if not in the letter. The Saviour for whom her soul longed had called her to Him, if He had not come for her, she was where she desired to be, “ for ever with the Lord,” in the heaven where change and death and sin cannot enter.

On the 22nd of July Mrs. Dening accompanied her husband to pay a last visit to an uncle who lay at the point of death. Having spoken to him for a short time, she left, saying, “Well, uncle, we shall soon meet among the white-robed multitude. What a glorious meeting that will be! Good-bye *till then* ;” and she left the room much affected. He died next day: we little thought how soon she was to follow.

Sunday, the 28th, was the last Lord’s-day on which she spoke in public. She had been for some days suffering from a cold on the chest, and was unable to lead the singing as usual; but her afternoon address, on the marriage-supper of the king’s son, was marked with peculiar power and solemnity. She spent an hour with the writer before the evening meeting, and was evidently feeling unwell, but not seriously so. Yet, on this occasion, as on many others, she expressed, in a few passing words, the conviction that her time was short. Whether this conviction arose from the sense of bodily weakness to which we have alluded, or whether it was an inward premonition of the purpose of God to take her to Himself, we know not. Certain it is that, for some time, she had had it very strongly. She used to say she never expected to see her little girl grow up. Many a time, in speaking of the dear child’s future, her education, &c., she would say, “Ah! *her training will not devolve on me* ;” and often, when exhorted to rest, she would reply, “There will soon be plenty of time for that!” Sometimes, when we have spoken of the danger of loving too dearly the creature, so as to interfere with the supreme claims of the Creator, she would say, “Don’t be afraid of loving me; *you will not have me long to love*,” with such a tone of

absolute certainty, that it thrilled one with a sudden pain; and yet, oh! how little we believed it! How impossible it seemed to believe it! She was so peculiarly full of life; so intensely animated; so full of energy and force; so youthful looking, that it seemed as if death must be far, far away. Wisely and kindly is the earthly future, the knowledge of which would paralyse exertion and destroy hope and happiness, concealed from us; and only to the great future, which stimulates and cheers, are our eyes directed.

On Monday, July 29th, Mr. Denning had to leave home in order to attend his uncle's funeral in Devonshire. His dear wife drove him down to the station and afterwards came to see the writer. She was looking poorly, and had a cough, but took her evening meeting as usual. The address—the last she ever delivered—was from a passage in Nehemiah. Her prayer particularly struck some who were present. She had been requested to remember a servant who was ill, and did so in earnest petition. Her heart seemed drawn out for the whole family. She prayed for the mistress, who was in sorrow from a recent bereavement also, and with such tender sympathy that all were constrained to join in the supplication. Her feeling of weakness, perhaps, suggested the hymn she then gave out, the last she sung on earth, one of her special favourites:—

“Leaning on Thee, my Guide, my Friend.”

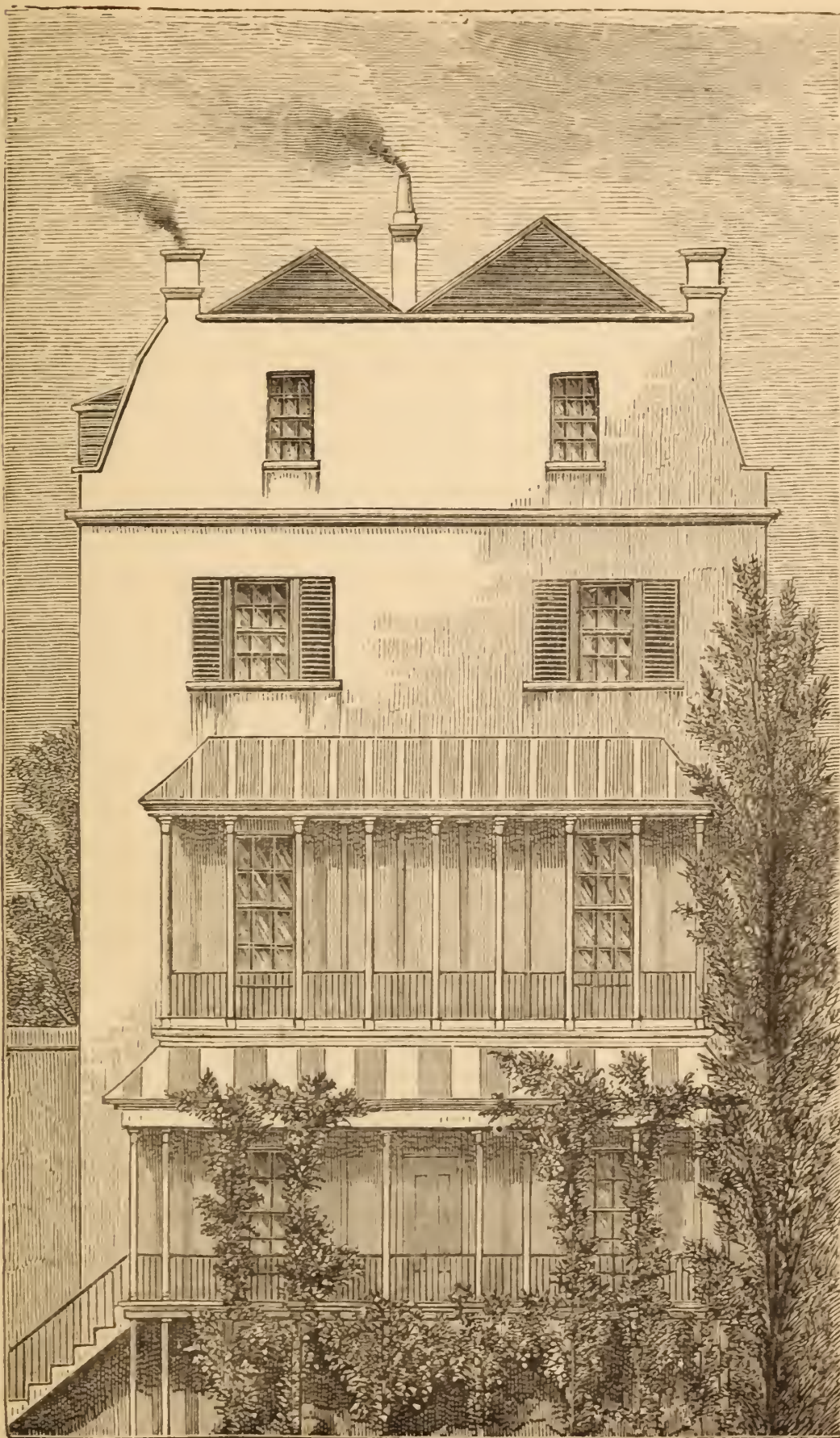
The second verse of this hymn runs thus:—

“Leaning on Thee, with childlike faith,
To Thee the future I confide;
Each step of life's untrodden path
Thy love will guide.”

And the whole hymn has a remarkable tone of self-surrender.

On the following day we drove out together. She was then suffering from the first slight symptoms of the complaint which was our Father's messenger to summon her home — erysipelas in the face. She attached no importance to these symptoms at the time, however; and a brother-in-law, to whom she was much attached, having sent a telegram to say he should pass through Bath that morning, on his return from India, she went to meet him at the station, and kept up all day. Towards evening, however, when the hour for her usual weekly Bible-class drew near, she felt too ill to take it; and, as it was too late to find a substitute, she begged them to hold a prayer-meeting, which they did. She went to bed feeling ill; and the disease gained ground in the night. Next morning one eye was a good deal affected. The dear patient should have remained in bed; but, with her characteristic loving activity, she would drive down to the station to meet her husband on his return from Devonshire; and she even attempted, in the afternoon, a second drive to Combe Down, where her dear child was spending a week or two for change of air. Feeling suddenly worse, however, when half-way there, she requested Mr. Denning to turn the horse's head. We drove home immediately, and she went straight to her room. As her husband assisted her to mount the stairs, she said to him, very decidedly, "Darling! I shall never get over this!" He tried to cheer her by saying she felt weak, but that, no doubt, rest would restore her.

No, dear! I think not," was her reply. She went to bed at once; the bed from which, alas! she was never to rise. The doctor came; she asked, after he had examined her, if she should recover. He said he "saw



GARDEN FRONT OF THE RESIDENCE OF MR. AND MRS. DENING,
GREEN PARK, BATH.



no reason why she should not," but her own prophetic opinion never altered. For some days there were no symptoms of immediate danger to life, but the inflammation attacked the eyes with great violence. Her sight was endangered, and the active and excitable brain also. More than once, to the deep distress of those around her, though they did not at the time share the impression, she repeated that she should not get over this attack. On the 7th August she expressed her belief that the disease would soon affect her brain; and, asking her husband if any one besides himself was in the room (for the eyelids were then so swollen as to render her quite blind), she said, "Dear husband, I shall not get better; let us once more unite in prayer at the throne of grace." Fearing the excitement to the brain in her extremely critical state, he would have dissuaded her, but she would not give it up. He knelt by her side, and she poured out her soul in earnest entreaty that God's blessing might rest on her beloved husband and on her precious child; that He would comfort and cheer them if she were taken from them, bless them, and make them blessings. Her husband then prayed, and, when he arose, bitterly weeping at the thought of separation from her who had been "the light of his eyes," and the joy of his life, she said, tenderly, "Don't weep, darling! You have been such a good husband to me! I have been so intensely happy since we were married, and it will not be long before we shall meet again." After a pause, "I shall not die the sooner for telling you where you will find your letters to me and certain keys;" she then enumerated two or three things, till weakness prevented her saying more. Her

medical adviser observing an increase of fever and head symptoms, wished a consultation. She took this as a confirmation of her own fatal anticipations, and on the 8th frequently repeated that she thought the erysipelas would soon affect her brain. On the morning of the 9th she said to her husband, "I have had such a vision; I saw General O'Halloran (a friend lately deceased); he was looking, oh so well!"

The Rev. J. M. Dixon, her friend and pastor, and spiritual father, entered the room at one time. She did not see him, but, catching his name, said, "Is it my dear rector? tell him I am very ill; tell him we are gathering home one by one." She expressed a wish for her mother to come to her, but was wandering a little apparently, when she did so. She said, "Mamma, we will leave on Monday; we will all go together." The Monday following *was* the day of *her* leaving this vale of tears. On her husband saying, "My dear wife, do you see me?" she replied, "No, dear, but I can love you."

During those early days of her illness, when much depended on her being kept perfectly quiet, the writer did not see her. Little dreaming the complaint was so soon to take a fatal turn, we acquiesced in the opinion that, for the sake of avoiding the slightest excitement, it was better that we should not meet. A friend sent her, in a letter, the following lines, written by an interesting bed-ridden Christian girl, who, full of hope for hereafter, is hopeless of health in this world. They touched a sympathetic chord in Mrs. Dening's heart, and exceedingly moved her. She wept much over them, and requested her husband to give them to the writer, and to say that they exactly expressed the feelings of her soul at the time. Fearing

evil results from such excitements, Mr. Dening resolved to read her nothing more until she should be better. It happened, consequently, that these lines were the last she heard before she became insensible. A copy was distributed, after she was gone, to each of the mourners at St. James's Hall, and will be prized by hundreds as a precious memento :—

“ I know not what the future dim may bring—

Weakness or strength ;

If I have nearly reached my Father's home,

Or if a length

Of road remains o'er which my feet must tread,

Upheld by Christ, the Church's Living Head.

“ I know not what may lie within my path,

But Christ is mine ;

And so I rest my trembling hand in His,

And all resign ;

He knows whatever is the best for me ;

The end from the beginning He can see.

“ Then why do shrinking fears and doubts remain

To vex my soul ?

Why do I weakly quail, because round me

The billows roll ?

Why am I ever troubled and opprest,

When Jesus says, ‘ Come unto Me and rest ’ ?

“ Oh, faithless, doubting heart, be strong in Him ;

He is thy stay !

Ere long the clouds will break, the Lord will come,

And chase away

The shadows which oft hide the glorious light

Of His own presence, changing day to night.

“ ‘ He doeth all things well ’—He calms the storm,

Saying, ‘ Be still ! ’

And, come what may to me of pain or ease,

I love His will :

The tears will come, but Jesus will not chide,

He knows my weakness, yet for me He died !

" 'A little while,' and I shall be with Him,
Then let me rest
'Mid storms, and this uncertainty of mine,
Safe on His breast :
I know not why, but I can trust His grace,
Till I in glory see Him face to face.

"The 'everlasting arms' are underneath,
I cannot fall ;
He is my sure defence, whate'er may come,
My 'All in all ;'
My Saviour, and my never-failing Friend,
Who, having loved, will love me to the end !"

On the evening of the 9th delirium came on, and communication with her spirit became impossible. The dear eyes had been closed soon after the commencement of the illness, by the violence of the inflammation. It was intensely sad to the loving watchers by her bed, for the last three or four days, to feel that she was no longer there. No glance, no word, expressed to their loving hearts what was passing in hers. It was a bitter addition to the sorrow of losing her to have no parting words, no sweet expression of spiritual joy or strength, in the hour of bodily extremity. And yet, when they remembered the testimony of her life, they felt that they needed no more ; and when they further recalled the exquisite sensitiveness of that affectionate, unselfish heart, they were content to lose the farewell for which their souls longed, so that she might be spared the pang of witnessing the anguish they were enduring. Yet, hour after hour, they watched and listened, hoping in vain for any intelligent utterance. She spoke often, but alas ! only in delirium ; and soon effusion took place on the brain, and delirium changed to unconsciousness. Speechless, and motionless, and blind, she breathed a

little longer, but that was all. It was consolation to know that she suffered not; it was joy to believe that her spirit might be already beholding brighter things. Were not the golden gates even then unfolding before her all but emancipated spirit? We know not. One little gleam seemed to indicate it. With apparent intelligence she said at one time, at short intervals, "I enjoy it—I see—bright light—exquisite—Jesus." But though the shades of the mysterious border-land that lies between life and death are not to be penetrated by those who watch the passage, the following lines, traced by her dear hand very shortly before it stiffened in death, and unseen by any eye till she had already crossed the river, show how she felt in the anticipation:—

"I have been to the brink of the river of death,
But from bondage and fear my soul was free,
And exultingly could I have yielded my breath,
And gone homeward, O God of my life, to Thee.

"For I feared not its waters so dark and deceitful,
I feared not, though lonely and cold, the grave;
I knew I believed in a living Redeemer,
I felt He was with me, and mighty to save.

"And I gazed on its tide with emotion profound,
As I thought how He breasted its stream for me,
How He tasted, in tenderest love, of death,
From its power and its curse to set me free."

He who granted her to feel thus, when standing in imagination by Jordan's banks, doubtless made good to her these anticipations when in reality fording its stream.

So passed the Saturday. On Sunday morning a gleam of hope was raised by a slight improvement, which, alas! was quickly followed by relapse. From noon it

was evident she was sinking. Much prayer was made in the churches and chapels; profound sympathy existed in the city where she was so well known and so sincerely beloved. A fresh bulletin was posted outside the gate every few hours, and eagerly read by the large numbers who came to enquire after their friend, and who turned away with sorrowful countenances as they read the mournful tidings. At St. James's Hall, the anxiety and sympathy reached a painful pitch. Mr. Guinness spoke in the afternoon from the words, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;" and in the evening from Jer. xii. 5, "What wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" A special prayer-meeting was held subsequently; but He, whose purpose was to take His handmaid hence, did not grant the spirit of faith in supplication for her recovery. It was right to ask; for we are commanded to pour out our hearts before Him; but there was by this time no hope, save in "God, who raiseth the dead." The mourners in the chamber of death could not even ask that she might be spared; to their eyes she was already far on the way to Paradise. They watched, and wept, and watched again; they pressed in silence the beloved hands, still burning with the fatal fever; and they consciously realized that angels were sharing their vigil, and awaiting the moment of emancipation to escort the ransomed saint to the realms above. They united in commending her spirit to the God who had redeemed it, giving thanks, with gushing tears, for all He had done for her, and by her, and in her, and entreating that the dark valley might be illumined with heavenly light, and that the end might be perfect peace.

An anxious crowd assembled outside the house when the various congregations broke up. The long summer evening passed into darkness; the hours of the night rolled on; sad, and silent, and prayerful, they waited to learn the latest tidings; longing continually for a fresh messenger, yet dreading to hear his message. Midnight struck—the spark of life was rapidly waning; one dear relative and another arrived from afar, and shared the last moments of the solemn watch; and as it was verging towards morning, without a groan or a struggle, the end came: a few breathings—each feebler than the former; and then *one* in no way different, save that it was *the last*. She was gone; she was “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” and the anxious inquirers at early dawn read the notice affixed to the gate:—

“At a quarter-past two o'clock this morning,

Mrs. Dening fell asleep in Jesus.”

“BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD.”

“She is not dead, but sleepeth.”





CHAPTER XIII.

FUNERAL.

It is difficult to convey an idea of the shock conveyed to the large circle of her loving friends and spiritual children by the tidings of Geraldine Dening's death. The state of feeling in Bath on that 12th August, 1872, was not unlike that which existed in Rugby on the memorable morning, when from lip to lip passed the unexpected and incredible tidings, "Dr. Arnold is dead." Many had never even heard she was ill: they listened to or read the words, "Mrs. Dening is dead;" but at first few took in the meaning of the announcement, or felt able to believe that it conveyed a fact. Dead? *Mrs. Dening* dead? Could it be? Impossible! They listened and looked again; and as the truth flashed upon them, oh, how many felt their hearts stand still, and their breath stop for the moment! They were stunned by a blow for which they were utterly unprepared; and even those who were aware of her dangerous illness, had never thought it would have a fatal termination. The grief in Bath was universal and intense. Many a young heart seemed half-broken. The girls of her Bible-class, the young friends who had learned from her to love the Lord to whom she was now gone, the

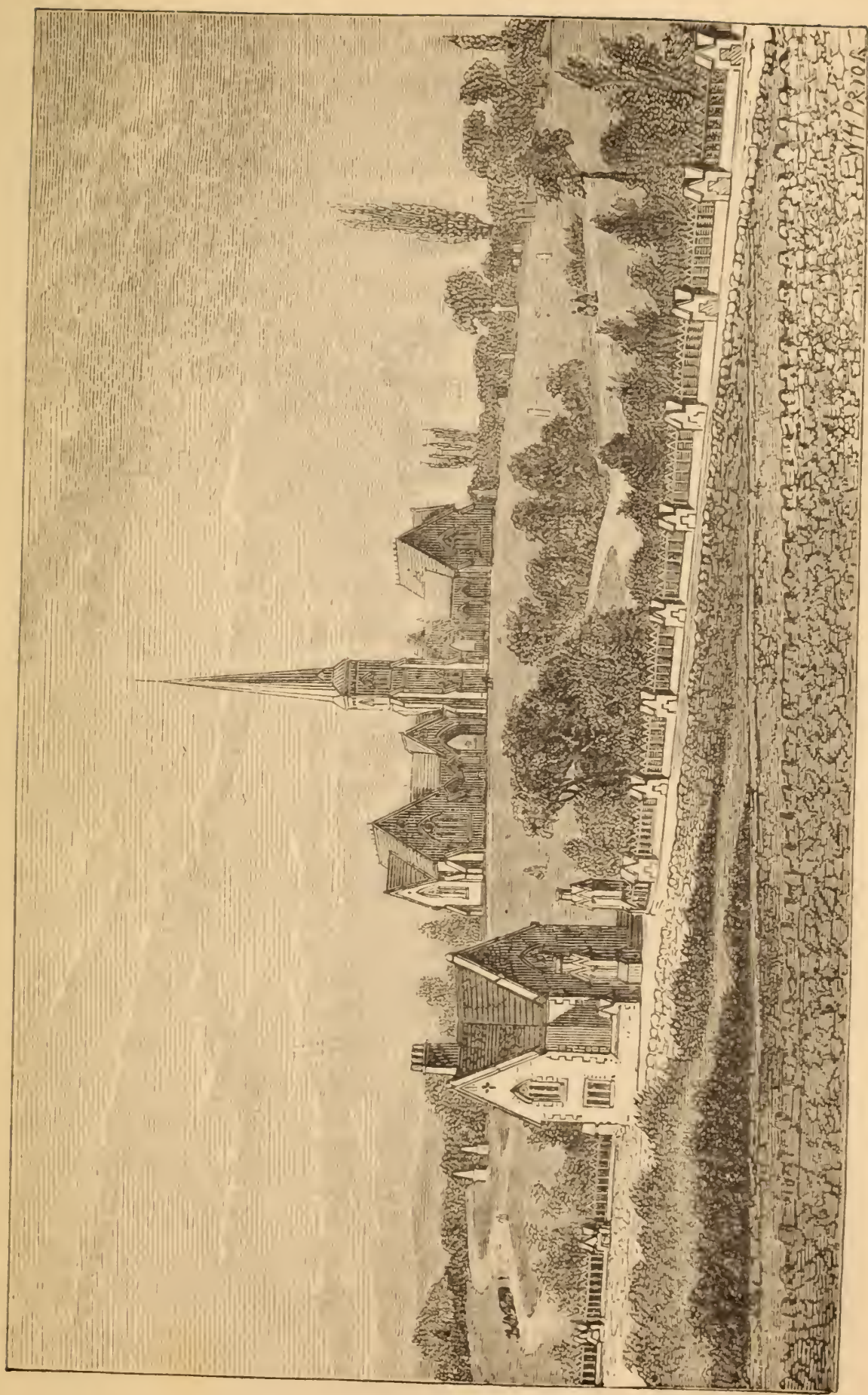
poor to whom she had been so true and tender a friend—all, all mourned in common, a loss they felt to be irreparable! Rarely does a death cause such widespread and real grief as did this! And oh, who shall paint the anguish of *some* hearts? If the city where she lived, mourned; if the congregation to whom she had ministered, grieved; if her acquaintances and friends were dumb with astonishment and pain; oh, how did *they* feel with whom she had been linked in bonds of closest, tenderest intimacy? There is a grief too deep to be described, over which we draw the veil. God only can fathom it, Jesus only can soothe it. More than one heart that day, experienced the truth of dear Lady Powerscourt's words:—

“Jesus, my sorrow lies too deep
For human sympathy,
It knows not how to tell itself
To any but to Thee.”

At eight o'clock in the evening, the hour at which for so many years the voice now mingling with angel choirs had been wont to proclaim the way of salvation, St. James's Hall was filled with a mourning multitude, to whom Mr. Guinness spoke from the words, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” He tried to improve the sad and solemn occasion for the good of precious souls, and to urge home on hearts tender with grief the lessons taught by this painful and unexpected providence of God.

Often, in days of health and strength, Mrs. Dening had expressed the wish, if she should be taken away before the Lord came, to be borne to her grave like Stephen, “by devout men,” by those to whom her ministry had been made a blessing. When, at the close of the

service at St. James's Hall, this wish of the dear departed saint was mentioned, and any who desired to be bearers were invited to give in their names, far more than could be accepted came forward. Upwards of forty Christian men desired to be of the number privileged to render this last service to one to whom they owed so much. The funeral was fixed for Friday, the 16th August, at five o'clock in the evening. The precious dust was to be interred in Locksbrook Cemetery, in a sweet spot, visible from a window of the room in which Mrs. Dening used to sleep. No funeral pomp or display was permitted to mar the solemn ceremony, yet never was such a funeral witnessed in Bath. Hireling mourners there were none, invited family mourners there were few, but spontaneous uninvited mourners innumerable were there. Never was a more touching spectacle! The aged and the young, the rich and the poor, mingled their tears in sincere sorrow over the loss of one who was dear alike to all ages and all classes. Long before the hour at which the funeral was to take place, Green Park, in which Mr. Dening's residence is situated, was filled by the crowd. The adjoining streets were also thronged, and the whole length of the road to the cemetery was so densely crowded that the efforts of the police were needed to clear a way for the procession to pass. Not less than 6,000 persons obtained admittance to the cemetery, and a far larger number were, greatly to the regret of Mr. Dening and his friends, shut out. The whole number who either witnessed or joined the procession was variously estimated by the newspapers as from ten to fifteen thousand persons, and, judging from appearances, *the large majority of these were true mourners*;



LOCKSBROOK CEMETERY, BATH.

an expressive indication of the hold the dear departed saint had had on the hearts of the people. All wore not mourning ; but all were mourning. All could not afford the black dress, for multitudes of the poor, and even the very, very poor, were there, but none could suppress the gushing tear, and many a face bespoke a bursting heart. The public sorrow seemed as sincere and intense as if every one had lost a personal friend. It was inexpressibly touching to those who had loved her best to see how she was beloved ; the silent solemnity of the immense multitudes, the look of real pain and bitter consciousness of bereavement, were a wondrous tribute to the one *they* mourned so deeply : and a touching tribute also to that Gospel for whose sake she was thus beloved.

Oh ! it is a false accusation, sometimes made against the working classes, that their hearts are inaccessible to the Gospel, and that their absence from our churches and chapels is to be accounted for by the fact. Here they were by thousands, weeping, in unmistakeable sincerity, for one whom they knew mainly as a *preacher of the Gospel*. It is true she had sympathised in their family sorrows and ministered to their temporal needs, but how many a Christian lady has done that ? Wherein lay the difference ? Generous, nobly generous as she was, it was *not* for her *gifts* that they loved her, it was not mainly for the temporal assistance she had ministered to them. Oh, no ! This strong flood of sorrow sprung from a deeper fountain. She had loved their *souls* ; she had ministered to their deep spiritual necessities ; she had been the means of leading numbers of them to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. They loved her

because she had told them of the love of God; they loved her for her “WORK’S SAKE.” Oh, that every preacher of the Gospel would read the lesson taught by that scene! It showed how largely hearts may be won, and how deeply they may be influenced, by *the truth preached in love*. For wherein had the preaching of the frail, delicate young creature about to be laid in the tomb differed from the preaching of others? Why did thousands of mourners follow *her*, with tears, to the grave? Was it that she was more learned in theology than other preachers? Was it that her sermons were masterpieces of diction, or unanswerable argument? Oh, no! Her preaching had been *simple enough to be understood; loving enough to be felt*. It *had* been felt, deeply felt. Those thousands *knew* she had loved their souls; *knew* she had longed for their salvation; *knew* she had laboured for their eternal well-being; and there is no bond more true and lasting than the bond of spiritual gratitude. “Oh, sir, I’d sooner have seen Bath Abbey burned down than see this sight,” said an old man, out of the abundance of his heartfelt grief.

And so it passed along, that plainly-panelled oak coffin bearing the simple inscription:—

“GERALDINE DENING, died August 12th, 1872. Aged 31.”

borne by six Christian men, who were quietly relieved, from time to time, by six others, and followed by the relatives of the deceased; by the sixty young women of her Bible-class, all in black; and by a very long train of general mourners.

The first halt for a change of bearers was made opposite the Trinity Infant School, where she had so long held her Bible-class. The procession passed along

Charles-street, and by the upper Bristol-road, all the way to Locksbrook, through an unbroken mass of spectators standing three or four deep on both sides. Shops were shut and blinds drawn down along the route. The men employed at the gas-works, to whom she had often spoken the Word of Life, stood in a body at the entrance of the yards, and, with uncovered heads and sad countenances, watched the long, long procession pass. The cemetery was reached at last : its gates were thrown open, and through a thick lane of spectators, who had already gained entrance to the grounds, the body was borne to the chapel, where it was met by a group of the clergy. The Rev. J. M. Dixon conducted the service, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Winslow and the Rev. W. Wait. But a fraction of the immense multitude could gain entrance to the chapel, but they all gathered round the, as yet, empty grave, so that it was with difficulty the space was cleared for the remainder of the service. As the glorious words of the closing portion of the Liturgy, "We commit her body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ," were solemnly and impressively uttered, the emotion of the audience became profound, and many a heart felt, as it never felt before, the exceeding preciousness of our hope in Christ—that He will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," when, by the archangel's voice, He shall summon His sleeping and His living saints to meet Him in the air, and be for ever with Him.

The Rev. Dr. Winslow then came forward, and said :—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"Suffering from a severe cold, I fear that I shall not be able to make myself distinctly heard by this vast concourse much

beyond the limit of this grave. But a voice more powerful and far-reaching than mine issues from its solemn depth : it is the voice of her, whose precious remains we now commit to its faithful trust, until the trumpet sounds, and the ‘dead in Christ shall rise first.’ With that voice, in its living power, many of you, doubtless, were familiar. You have often heard its silver tones, its Scripture truths, its persuasive appeals—now trembling with impassioned earnestness as it denounced sin, and implored the sinner to flee from the wrath to come—and, anon, subdued and tender as the love of Calvary, inviting the penitent, the guilt-burdened, the broken-hearted, to look to Jesus and be saved. Perhaps, for awhile, convinced by her arguments, persuaded by her appeals, subdued by her pathos, and by her tears, you resolved that you would begin a new life, forsake your sins, give your heart to Christ, and henceforth live to God. But, alas ! you returned to the world, relapsed into sin, stifled all your serious thoughts and impressions ; and your goodness, ‘like the morning cloud and the early dew,’ passed away. Approach this open grave, and listen to her voice speaking in tones with which it never spake before ; imploring you, by all that is real in life, solemn in death, and awful in eternity, to consider your sinfulness as a creature, your accountability as a steward, your danger and destiny as an immortal being. Oh, that *that* voice, whose appeals the most careless cannot repel, whose arguments the most sceptical cannot gainsay, whose pathos and solemnity the most hardened and impenitent cannot resist, may to-day be heard to the salvation of many souls.

“I implore you, let her not be a swift witness against you in the great day of the Lord, when the results of her ministrations will be closely scrutinized and fully known. By the hallowed recollection of her gospel teachings and faithful appeals ; by her tender yearnings and winning addresses ; by the Jesus she ceased not to name among you, night and day, with tears, I implore you return not from this grave, until you have resolved, by Christ’s grace, to follow her in life, in death, and in eternity, as she followed Christ her Lord.

“She is not here, she is risen ! We commit but the shattered temple of the Holy Ghost to its silent resting-place, until Christ the Archangel shall gently wake her from her peaceful

slumber, perfected in His likeness, and satisfied with all the past dealings of God. This dust is *hers*, not *her*. *She* has soared to Christ ; her happy spirit, passing beyond the region of sin, and suffering, and death, is now resting on the bosom of her glorified Lord. That Saviour whose loveliness she portrayed in forms so attractive, whose love she proclaimed in tones so winning, whose glory she depicted in hues so glowing, she now beholds, no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face. I can only think of her as faith follows her within the veil, beholding her faultless before the throne of God and the Lamb.

“What a homage to her personal worth, her devoted piety, and her Christian usefulness, is the spectacle of this vast and mourning assembly ! A greater homage still to HIM of whom she ever spake in her Christ-exalting, spirit-stirring, sure-aiming addresses.

“And oh, are we who believe, witnessing for God, labouring for Christ, striving for holiness, and so living as with death, judgment, and eternity before us ?

“We now commit her redeemed body to its final rest. ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.’ Jesus will watch over it. The graves of all the ransomed are guarded by Him who never slumbers nor sleeps. Not a particle of this precious dust, essential to its identity, shall perish. But when the morning of the first resurrection dawns upon this tomb, and the trumpet of the Archangel and the voice of God shall wake this body from its sleep, it will rise from its lowly couch ‘a glorious body,’ fair, beautiful, and vigorous ; fresh with the dew of immortal youth ; radiant with the glory of resurrection-life ; a meet abode of the enraptured spirit that shall then tenant it again ; with every limb and every muscle, and every feature moulded and fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body, and fitted to sustain the eternal weight of glory which will be her endless portion.

“Unsaved souls ! I implore you with all the solemnity and earnestness I can command, fly to Christ. At this grave, give your hearts to the Lord Jesus, that you may live unto *the Lord*, and die unto *the Lord*, as died she who now rests therein. Her only hope was in Christ ; as a lost sinner, she trusted in His blood and righteousness ; and lived looking for His glorious

appearing. God grant that we may all meet her in heaven, with all those whom she was instrumental in leading thither, who will constitute her 'joy and crown of rejoicing' in the day of Christ !"

The hymn* on pages 228—231, which had been a favourite of the dear departed one, was then sung, with many a tear, by the immense concourse, led by the members of Mrs. Denning's Bible-class.

As the final strains of this hymn died away, the mourners drew near to take a last look at all that remained on earth of one so beloved. A feeling of painfully strong sympathy pervaded the crowd, when the bereaved and bitterly-sorrowing young husband held their little girl, two years old, to look down into her mother's grave. The unconscious infant, wondering to see so many flowers cast into such a place, turned with an innocent enquiring smile to her father, who could only answer with his tears. The child is a living miniature of her mother, and the sobbing prayer "God bless her," rose from many a lip.

Special services were held in the evening at Trinity Church and St. James's Hall. At the former, where not four brief years before Mrs. Denning had stood a happy bride, her valued friend, the Rev. Dr. Winslow, preached. At the latter, where many hundreds of her bereaved hearers had assembled, Mr. Guinness conducted a prayer-meeting. Oh ! blessed, blessed ordinance of prayer ! what would the sad and sorrowful, the sinful and the sore-hearted, do without thee ? Prayer which pours the burden out ; prayer which permits the balm to enter in ; prayer which

* As the particular tune sung at the grave, although tolerably well-known can hardly be deemed very suitable for the words, two other tunes are inserted, both of which have been specially composed for this exquisite hymn.

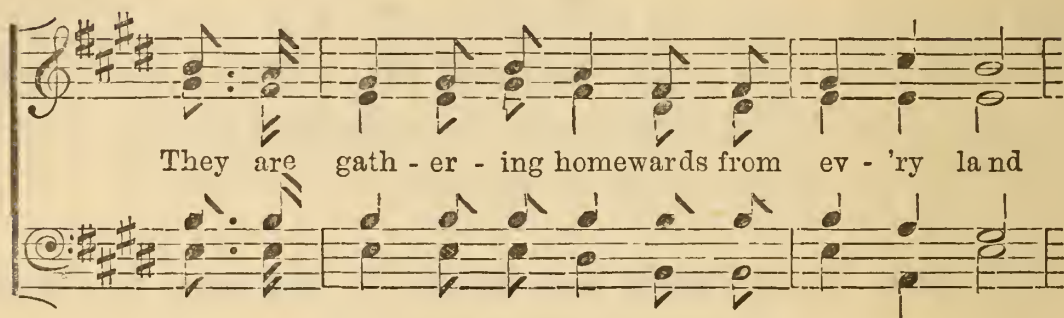
utters the soul's grief in the ear of the God of all comfort and consolation; prayer by which the Comforter breathes peace into the spirit; prayer which ascends from a death-darkened earth to the bright immediate presence of the Lord of life and glory, and links the weeping sufferers with the sympathising Saviour, with the once tempted High Priest, so easily "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," so ready to "help in every time of need."

"They took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus."—Matt. xiv. 12.

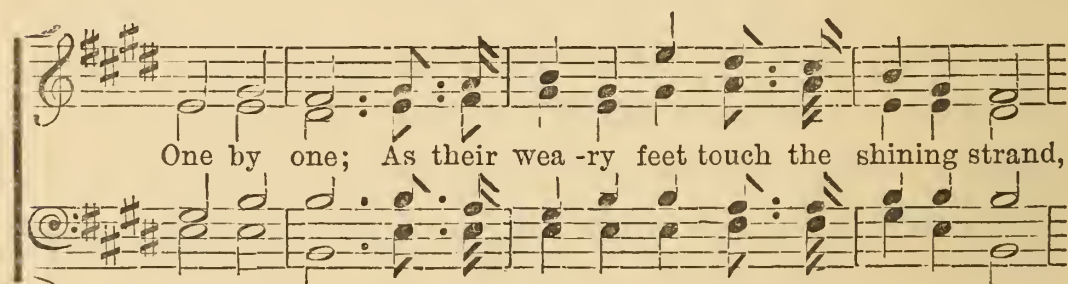


Florence,

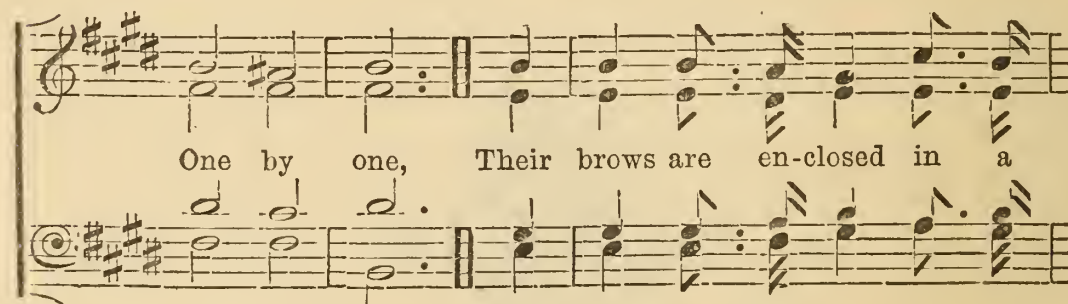
HY. T. LESLIE, Mus. Doc., Organist at St. Mary-le-Port Church, Bristol.
From *Tunes and Chants for Home and School*.



They are gath - er - ing homewards from ev - 'ry land



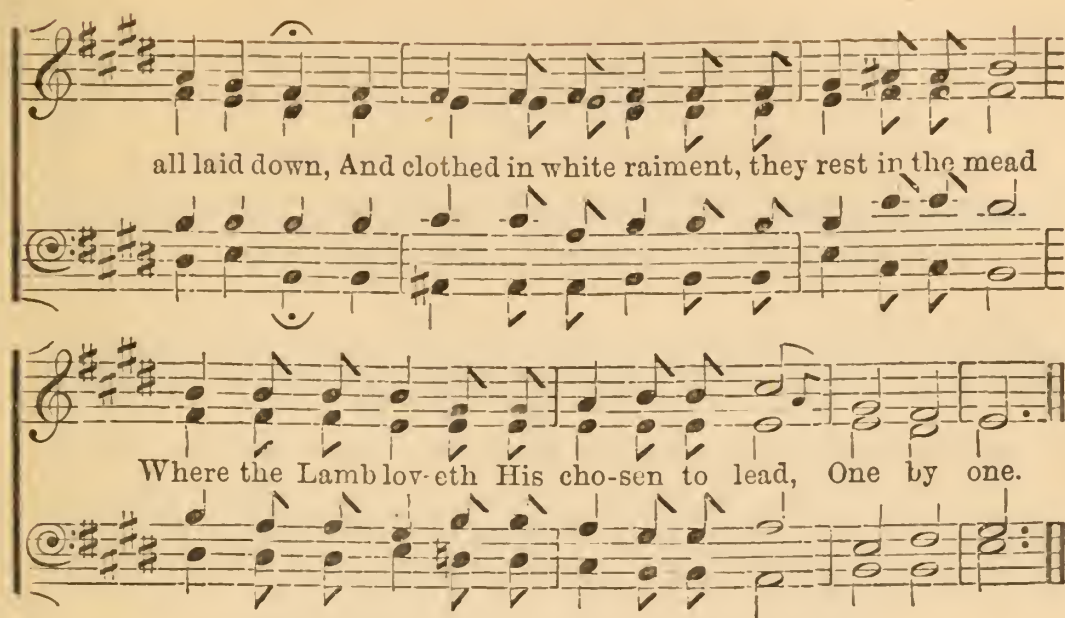
One by one; As their wea - ry feet touch the shining strand,



One by one, Their brows are en-closed in a



gold - en crown, Their tra - vel-stained gar-ments are



Before they rest, they pass through the strife,
 One by one.
 Through the waters of death they enter life,
 One by one.
 To some are the floods of the river still,
 As they ford on their way to the heavenly hill;
 To others, the waves run fiercely and wild;
 Yet all reach the home of the undefiled,
 One by one.

We, too, shall come to the river's side,
 One by one.
 We are nearer its waters each eventide,
 One by one.
 We can hear the noise and dash of the stream,
 Now and again through our life's deep dream;
 Sometimes the floods all their banks o'erflow,
 Sometimes in ripples the small waves go,
 One by one.

Jesus, Redeemer, we look to Thee,
 One by one
 We lift up our voices tremblingly,
 One by one.
 The waves of the river are dark and cold,
 We know not the spot where our feet may hold;
 Thou who didst pass through in deep midnight,
 Strengthen us, send us Thy staff and Thy light,
 One by one.

Plant Thou Thy feet beside as we tread,
 One by one.
 On Thee let us lean each drooping head,
 One by one.
 Let but Thy strong arm around us be twined,
 We shall cast our cares and fears to the wind.
 Saviour, Redeemer, with Thee full in view,
 Smilingly, gladsomely, shall we pass through,
 One by one

MISS MARY LESLIE.

Home.

ALBERT LOWE, Organist and Choirmaster, St. Stephen's, South Kensington.
From *Tunes and Chants for Home and School.*

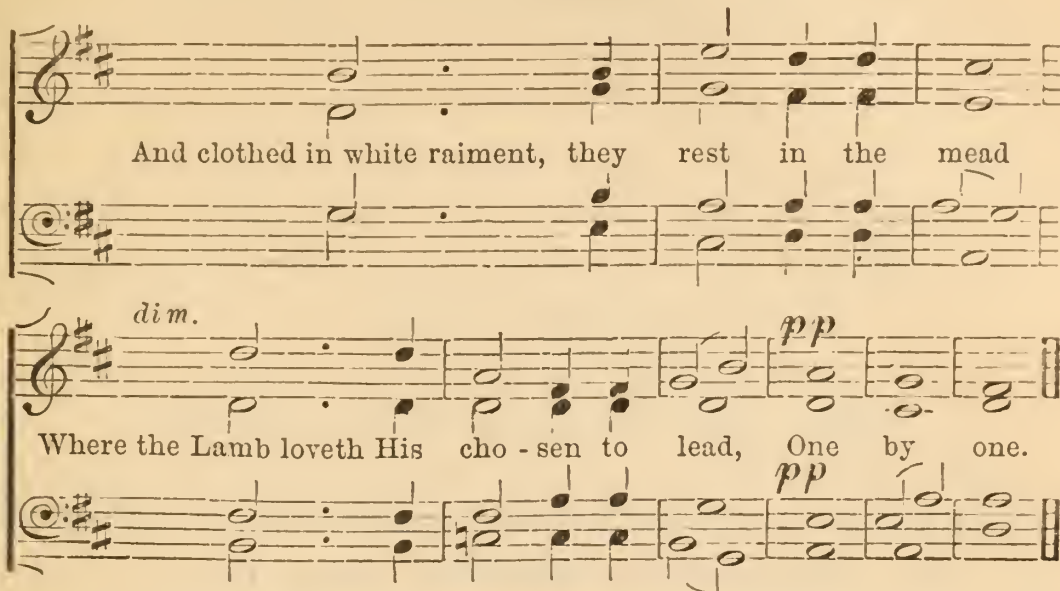
They are gathering homewards from ev - ry land One

by one; As their weary feet touch the shi-ning strand,

cres.

One by one, Their brows are enclosed in a gold - en

crown, Their travel-stained garments are all laid down,



Before they rest, they pass through the strife,
One by one.

Through the waters of death they enter life,
One by one.

To some are the floods of the river still,
As they ford on their way to the heavenly hill;
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Plant Thou Thy feet beside us as we tread,
One by one.

On Thee let us lean each drooping head,
One by one.

Let but Thy strong arm around us be twined,
We shall cast our cares and fears to the wind.
Saviour, Redeemer, with Thee full in view,
Smilingly, gladsomely, shall we pass through,
One by one.

MISS MARY LESLIE.



CHAPTER XIV.

POEMS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

FUNERAL sermons were preached on the following Sunday ; but space forbids our inserting them here.* A very large number of poems also appeared in the public papers, and in other forms, both in Bath and elsewhere. If poetry be the overflow of the heart, too full to contain its emotions, the number of these effusions, is a touching indication of Mrs. Dening's place in the affections of many—even of some who knew her only in public. We can find space here for two only of these poems :—

“ GOD'S ACRE resteth peacefully beneath the tinted sky,
And earth seems almost to have caught a glory from on high ;
Sweet flowers their patient vigils keep o'er weary hearts at rest,
And bloom o'er many a folded-hand, and many a tranquil breast.

God's Acre clothed in loveliness—and happy are its dead
Who sleep beneath the living flowers, and hear not where we tread.
Oh calm dead hearts ! to ache no more—to feel nor chill nor blight—
Oh sealed eyes ! to weep no more, as ours must weep to-night !

Must weep for one they hither bring to lay amongst you low
Who walked in life, and love, and light, scarce one short moon ago.
Amongst earth's gifted children all, she shone more gifted still,
A star undimmed, a flower unsoiled, amidst a world of ill.

* Some of them may be had, as also Mrs. Dening's Addresses, of Pearson, Bath, of the Bristol Publisher of this Volume, and all book-sellers.

A woman with a woman's heart, but with a hero's soul—
And with a courage worthy of the saintly martyrs' roll,
For those who dare to scorn the world must suffer at its stake—
So she endured its gibes and sneers, and all for Christ's dear sake.

'Well done!' ah! human tongues would say, far better than well done,
She has left off, all honour-crowned, where few have yet begun.
But what are mortal words, such noble praise as hers to speak—
I can but chafe at my poor speech, so impotent and weak.

I never touched her hand—alas! I never heard her voice—
Yet there was that upon her face which made my heart rejoice.
What was this blessed gift by which she swayed all hearts with mine?
Not human grace and beauty only—rather grace divine.

And now I stand with others here, beneath the setting sun,
And watch the sadden'd mourners as they gather one by one;
Until by hundreds soon they count, and more than hundreds now,
And silence is on every lip, a cloud on every brow.

And now a bell tolls slowly forth, like sound of muffled drum,
And up the hill with solemn steps, and ling'ring feet they come.
They bear her to the sacred porch where, with uncovered head,
Stands one whose gentle voice, world known, welcomes the holy dead.

We watch them bear her in—once more into the house of God,
Where oft her pleading accents rung—where her glad feet have trod:
They bear her in—ah me! it is the first time and the last
That ever with uncager feet its portals she has passed.

God's Acre resteth peacefully, and now beside the grave,
Where still the gentle flow'rets spring, and fairy grasses wave,
There look the mourners now their last, hushing their very breath
Lest they should break her stillness there—life waiting upon death.

'Ashes to ashes—dust to dust,' oh God and must it be?
Is this the end of hope and love, of all they promised me?
So wails he in his grief and pain, that mourner standing there,
Who from his darkened life has lost, what made that life so fair.

Oh! shield him in his agony! shut out the vulgar stare,
And let us listen to these words, borne on the summer air,
The last few words of tender praise, of simple earnest love,
The warning voice that bids us rise, and follow her above.

It is all over now—the last sad bitter words are said,
 And even *he* must bid a life-long farewell to his dead.
 But first within his trembling arms their little child he takes,
 And then from out the heart-stirred crowd, a mighty sob there
 breaks.

His child and *hers*—with face as angel's fair and free from guile ;
 She looks at him with wond'ring eyes, and with a sweet, sad smile,
 Then gazing in the open grave begins to marvel why
 Such pretty flowers should there be tossed in that dark hole to lie.

Ah ! little child with golden hair ! the years shall come and go,
 And some may bring thee gladness, and more will bring thee woe :
 But fashion thou thy life by hers—be honest, good, and true !
 And be thou unto others, what she would have been to you !

God's Acre resteth peacefully beneath the moonlit sky,
 But since the morn is one more grave o'er which the night winds sigh ;
 And my sick heart feels sad and sore, stirred with a nameless pain,
 For a life so far above me—a death so sweet a gain.

Oh woman true ! oh faithful friend ! oh lady loved and lost,
 Thou hast escaped in summer time before life's wintry frost :
 God saw the grain was ready, all golden at its prime ;
 'Twas ripened for His garner, might He not know the time ?

God's Acre resteth peacefully beneath the sunset sky :
 Among the dead we leave her there—yet can she never die !
 And let us seek and treasure up each link her life can give,
 And from her hallowed grave to-night, let us learn how to live."

"E. E."

"LINES IN MEMORY OF THE LATE MRS. HENRY
 DENING.

" 'They are without fault before the throne of God.'—Rev.
 xiv. 5.

"Thou art gone from us my sister—there is dust upon thy brow,
 And coldness in that kindly heart, that ne'er was cold till now ;
 And sweet and undisturbed thy rest beneath the sacred stone,
 Where loving hands thy couch have spread, and thou art all alone.

Thou art gone from us, my sister—all thy cares and labours done,
When to our short-reaching vision they seemed but just begun ;
And long before its eve was reached, thy heaven-enkindled ray
Was lost, as stars by sunlight fade, in endless cloudless day.

Thou art gone from us my sister—and our hearts are bleeding still,
Yet, taught by thee, in silence bow to God's all righteous will ;
And bless the grace which to thy life such heavenly radiance gave,
To cheer us while on earth we walk, and light us through the grave.

Thou art gone from us my sister—yet we have no tears to shed,
For we know that thou art numbered with the blessed, holy dead ;
And in that "continuing city," to which we fain would come,
Hast found, through faith in Christ our Lord, a welcome and a home.

Thou art gone from us my sister—and the poor will mourn thine end,
Thou wast to them a teacher, their kind and faithful friend ;
And while with pure and heavenly wheat their souls were richly fed,
Did'st not forget the body's need—the clothing and the bread.

Thou art gone from us my sister—but thy mantle will remain
That robe of Christ-like zeal and grace that shone without a stain ;
And draping yet another life—thine own reflected love,
Shall still preserve thine image here 'till perfected above."

"Brighton, 24th Aug., 1872."

The following hymn written by the author of this memoir for dear Mrs. Dening only a short time before her death, is adapted to the beautiful air, "Under the willow she's weeping," an air Mrs. Dening much admired, but to which she had no words that she cared to sing. Her removal has imparted to it a sad, unexpected significance, and it is included here in the belief that many who have wept over her falling asleep will find a sad pleasure in singing the chorus (a chorus often warbled by the lovely voice now sounding before the throne), as well as a sweet relief to their sorrow, in anticipating, by faith, that resurrection morning when tears will be all wiped away :—

"Turry not, Lord, any more, we pray,
Come for us, Saviour in glory ;
Hasten the long looked for break of day,
Finish the night's dark story !
Oh come and call us home,
Raising Thy saints that are sleeping ;
Come, Lord, and take us home,
Ending for ever our weeping !

Weary are we of our sin, dear Lord,
Weary of grieving Thy Spirit ;
Panting for purity, light, and peace,
Yearning the rest to inherit.
Oh come and call us home,
Raising Thy saints that are sleeping ;
Come, Lord, and take us home,
Ending for ever our weeping !

Hopeless we gaze on the chaos round,
Strife, sin, and sorrow unending ;
Vainly we wait for the promised sound,
Thy shout when from heaven descending.
Oh come and call us home,
Raising Thy saints that are sleeping ;
Come, Lord, and call us home,
Ending for ever our weeping !

Help us to cling to the promise, Lord,
Patient, with faith all unshaken ;
Help us to strive for the bright reward—
Help, till from earth we are taken !
Oh come and call us home,
Raising Thy saints that are sleeping ;
Come, Lord, and call us home,
Ending for ever our weeping."

"Tarry not, Lord."

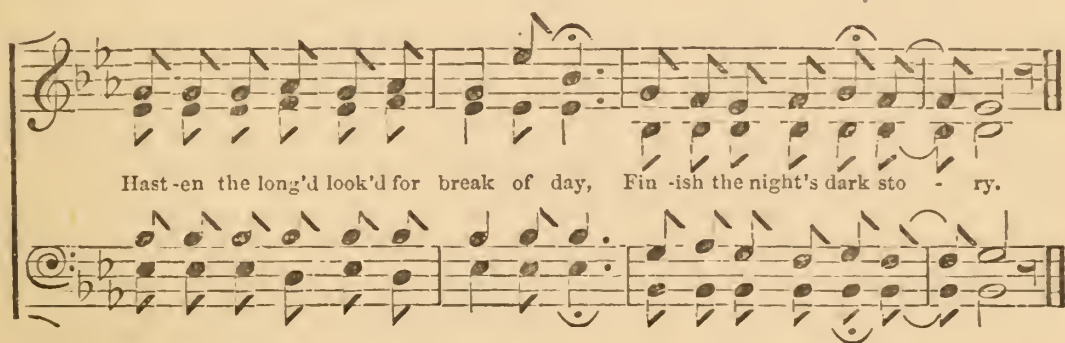
Written by Mrs. GRATTAN GUINNESS.

Music by S. C. FOSTER. (Inserted by permission of Messrs. Chappell & Co.)



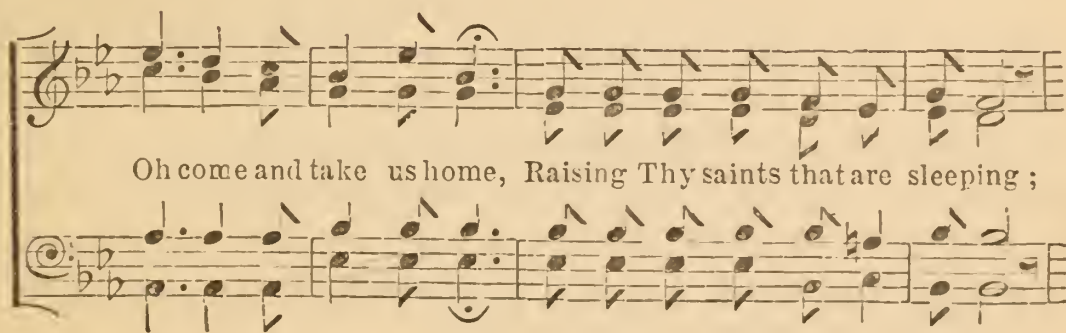
Tar-ry not, Lord, a - ny more, we pray, Come for us, Saviour, in glo - ry;

The first system of musical notation for the hymn. It consists of two staves, a treble staff and a bass staff, both in 6/8 time and B-flat major. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the staves.



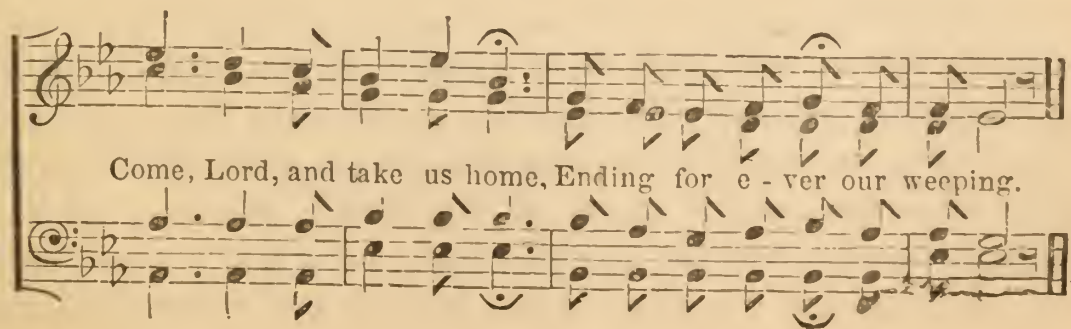
Hast-en the long'd look'd for break of day, Fin-ish the night's dark sto - ry.

The second system of musical notation. It continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics are written below the staves.



Oh come and take us home, Raising Thy saints that are sleeping;

The third system of musical notation. It continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.



Come, Lord, and take us home, Ending for e - ver our weeping.

The fourth and final system of musical notation on this page. It concludes the hymn with a double bar line. The lyrics are written below the staves.

From the many kind and comforting letters addressed to the bereaved husband, we append a few extracts. The Rev. S. A. Walker, M.A., was in France, at Fontainebleau, at the time of Mrs. Dening's death. On hearing of the mournful event, he thus wrote :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"You may judge of my anguish this morning on receiving Mr. Dixon's letter inviting me to preach the funeral sermon of your dear departed one, when I tell you that it was the first intimation I had had even of her illness. I could not understand the letter; for a time I would not understand it; but by the help of a few lines written by Mrs. Walker, the fearful truth at length broke on my mind; and I said, 'Geraldine, my beloved friend, is no more!' I am not given to weeping, but I wept; I weep now; my dear, dear friend, so kind so loving, so true. Alas! I feel I have indeed lost a friend. And you, my dear brother, have lost a tender and loving *wife*—to you the blow is heavy indeed!

"I was struck this morning as I read the iv. of 1 Thess. (which came in the course of my reading) with the coincidence between the sentiments in the latter part of the chapter and my feelings in reference to the dear departed one and you. Surely I thought the Lord has sent me a word of information regarding her. She 'sleeps in Jesus!' and when He comes I shall see her all radiant with the brightness of His love and holiness, and she shall know that she has not laboured in vain in His service. Is there not a sweet word of comfort and encouragement for you, especially my dear brother in the Beloved? You shall see her, and she you, both wrapped up in the glory of Jesus, and you will remember with joy your journeyings and labours together in His service. . . .

"I can scarcely bear to think of the coming conference, at which she will not be present. Ah! what a solemn reflection for all who assemble there,—one sweet voice missed from the chorus of praise, one happy face radiant with Christian and sisterly love, will not be there! But oh, shall we not think of that voice swelling the angelic chorus that heralds the coming of the King? Shall we not look, and look successfully, for that dear face, more bright, more lovely still, as it reflects the glory of the Eternal, and contemplate with

loving adoration the Bridegroom, for whom she can forget and forsake even you.

“God bless you, my dear friend! May the Spirit, the Comforter, bring ‘all things to your remembrance,’ that shall form your support and consolation in this your dark and dreary hour of sad, sad bereavement.”

Mr. Andrew Miller, of London, whose ministry the dear departed one much enjoyed on his occasional visits to Bath, wrote to Mr. Denning:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

“On my return home this evening I found a Bath paper awaiting me. But oh, the contents—how overwhelming! How my heart turned to you my brother! Your broken, and bleeding, and desolate heart, I know well! As one that has passed through the same valley of the shadow of death, I most truly and tenderly sympathise with you. But no human sympathy or tenderness, however real, can touch the depths of your great sorrow. He, and He alone, whose tears mingled with the bereaved sisters of Bethany, can penetrate to the depths of your grief, and bind up the bleeding wound. . . . The period of your separation is brief—it will soon be past! ‘A little while,’ is the divine measure of that dreary period, but the end is all bright; and during that little while there are many, my dear brother, that will join you in singing these lines:—

“‘Loved ones are gone before
Whose pilgrim days are done:
I soon shall greet them on that shore
Where partings are unknown.’

“ We frequently followed each other in our evangelistic missions, and I had met many of her children in the Gospel before I had seen herself. But from the time I first met with her in St. James’s Hall my heart was much drawn to her, and I was more than pleased to see her and yourself last February at the noon lectures and evening preachings. So much did I long to know more of her that I had intended calling to see you when next in Bath. But all that is over! I shall see her ere long, and that with brighter face and sweeter voice than when I last saw her in the Assembly Rooms; and others too that were there, and one that was parted from me eight years ago, and yet

another, with whom none can compare—we shall see *Him* ‘face to face.’

“‘No shadows yonder, all light and song;
Each day I wonder, and say how long
Shall time me sunder, from that dear throng?’”

The Rev. H. Barne, Vicar of Faringdon, wrote :—

“I cannot receive the intelligence of the sad loss you have sustained in the death of your beloved wife without offering you my heartfelt sympathy. The change to her is indeed exceeding and everlasting gain. She rests from the labours so cheerfully sustained in the service of her precious Lord, so greatly blessed to divers souls, and her ‘works do follow her.’

“The conference at Clifton will lose one of its greatest charms to me, by the absence of the one who sweetly and graciously led our hymns of praise, and whose faithful and most experimental addresses went by the Divine power to so many hearts, and were so appreciated by myself in particular. . . .

“He who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who redeemed your beloved one and yourself by His precious blood, will not leave you, nor forsake you.”

The Rev. J. Furnival wrote thus to Mr. Denning :—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,”

“I cannot delay for one moment the expression of my deepest sympathy in your present well-nigh overwhelming affliction. I say *well-nigh*, because I know the hand that sustains you, the hand of One who not only sympathises with the broken-hearted, but who can heal them. How often has your dear departed wife poured this oil of consolation into the broken heart, and would now, if she could speak, pour it into yours. I cannot realize the fact that that sweet energetic creature I so admired and loved is now a silent corpse; lovely, I doubt not, even in death.

“I now call to mind the marked attention she ever paid to my poor pulpit ministrations at Esco^t, and the kind and affectionate respect with which she seemed ever to regard me. This in addition to her ardent but simple piety, her engaging manners and her brilliant talents, secured not my admiration only but my affection; and the same applies I may say to my daughter Christine, who from the first could not help loving and admiring her. We were therefore quite

overwhelmed with the tidings which your black-edged envelope conveyed. . . .

“She has appeared and disappeared like a comet, but in traversing her eccentric orbit she shed light into many a dark heart, and cheered many a drooping spirit. She has now passed into the bright heavens, and her purified spirit is only now waiting to rejoin her purified and glorified body ‘to be changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.’ Be not ignorant then concerning her now that she is asleep; ‘sorrow not as others which have no hope.’ ‘For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.’ ”

Mr. J. Denham Smith wrote :—

“Dear, lovely, both in nature and grace, was your precious wife. Were you not a Christian, she would naturally have been your pride and joy. God made her one of His chosen vessels to hold and to convey to others His treasure: the vessel and the treasure how meet they seemed to each other!

“My first knowledge of her was her singing at my meeting in the Public Hall at Bath; her soul was so manifest in the hymns we were singing. She was from her very birth—her birth from heaven—an evangelist. She not only knew the love of Christ, but it constrained her. She not only knew the value of souls, but she had a heart yearning for their salvation. He would have been a bold Christian who would have stopped her from preaching—woman, child almost, as she was! But the Lord has taken her to Himself, as if that were far more her place than any longer with us. How bright now her spirit! Yet *this* she was, as His disciple here; so bright that wheresoever she was she at once formed a contrast with the poor dead earthly ones around her.

“Dear Friend, my heart enters into your grief, but ‘the peace of God’ rules in your heart: does it not? . . . Precious, magnificent Christianity! When did Paganism or Infidelity ever give thanks at a grave. The Lord did this. Remember the grave of Lazarus! *You* can do this, over the spot where your loved one rests; no! not herself! the vessel, not the treasure. The grave is the safe wardrobe of the saints, where the garments are laid until the morning of the resurrection. The blessed Lord bought body as well as soul. ‘The body is for the Lord.’ The Holy Spirit has dwelt in them, and ‘the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the

dead, shall also quicken' those mortal bodies! How blessed that day! What re-unions! What communion!"

Nor was it such friends only who felt her loss. All classes mourned with a grief equally sincere. The following letter from one who signs himself a "Mechanic" simply is a touching testimony to this fact:—

"DEAR SIR,—

"Please excuse my writing with pencil. I have not a pen and ink at hand. I am only a mechanic, but I have deeply felt for you, and I have feared for you, lest the late heavy blow should shake your trust in God. But, dear Sir, trust on. Her living work may be done, but not her dead work. I myself read within a few hours of her funeral the account of it, and as much of Dr. Winslow's sermon as I thought prudent, to a lot of navvies, under heaven's canopy. They saluted me at first with obscene language, but listened attentively, and thanked me when I left.

"I hope a monument will be erected to her memory, and that the working-classes will be allowed to contribute towards it. It should be laudatory, but not too much so. The text, 'Let your light so shine,' &c., would be a guide. But we must give the glory to God, for the light and love that emanated from the departed. To-day I picked what I enclose—a trefoil leaf, and while looking at it I thought of the text, '*I in them, and Thou in me.*' That is it. The inscription must be in good taste, but it must express the source of her strength, and be useful to the living.

"I humbly ask your prayers. I have been too much of a Mr. Fearing in religious matters, but am none the weaker for seeing such a striking fulfilment of the promise, 'Them that honour me, I will honour.'

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"A MECHANIC."



CHAPTER XV.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE GOSPEL.

THAT the subject of this Memoir was an evangelist few will deny ; the foregoing facts prove that she had as good a right to the title as most that bear it. She loved her Saviour, and longed after the souls for whom He died ; she rejoiced in the glad tidings she had to convey ; devoted her life to the proclamation of them ; and was used by God to the salvation of countless sinners. She had a strong inward vocation for the work, extraordinary capacity and gifts for it ; she had unmistakeable providential guidance, and unusually large openings for her efforts. Her work was both disinterested (for she never took a penny in payment for it) and abundant, as these records, imperfect though they are, testify. She was a true and very successful evangelist, and yet—she was a woman ! a member of that sex excluded by custom, and many suppose by Scripture, from the duty and privilege of preaching Christ and Him crucified. We can hardly therefore close this sketch without a brief consideration of the subject of women's ministry in the Gospel.

It will not do to argue—*In this case the results were good, the practice must therefore be a right and Scriptural one.* To take such ground would be illogical, for God often overrules evil for good. What have been the results of the Crucifixion of Christ? And yet what was the deed itself? We assert rather, *the practice is right and Scriptural, and therefore the results in this and other cases are glorious.* And yet in a modified form there may be something in the other argument also. An evil tree does not bring forth good fruit, and God would not, could not, pour His blessing for ten or twelve years consecutively on a course of disobedience and sin. Though He overrules evil for good, He does not reward evil-doers for their evil deeds; but it is written: “They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”

Large and long-continued success of the highest kind in the work of God proves him who enjoys it to be a “fellow-worker with God.” Under the old dispensation the Lord did, it is true, employ as instruments men who as regards the general tenor of their lives were in sinful opposition to Him and to His laws; but under the Gospel economy He acts very differently. His messengers are inspired by an *indwelling* Holy Ghost. The words of an ungodly man may occasionally be applied with saving effect, but it were little short of blasphemy to assert that a succession of cases of conversion such as is here recorded *could* occur as the result of a career of rebellion and sin. If God had desired to mark His *approval* of woman’s ministry in the Gospel, how could He do it more evidently than by thus crowning a woman’s labours with a blessing richer than that which He vouchsafes to the labours of most men?

Though therefore we do not justify the practice because it is successful, we hold that it would not be successful were it not justifiable.

Nor would we maintain that women are *equally* called to the work with men : we believe, on the contrary, that the *rule* is men—the *exception only*, women ; and that, as always, the exception only proves the rule. Nature, revelation, and experience alike indicate men as the proper occupants of public spheres, and women of private ones. But it does not follow that every man must shun private work simply because it is private, nor that every woman must shun public work simply because it is public. The rule is general and universal, but, like every other such rule it admits of exceptions. Beyond a doubt few, *very few*, are called to a path of service similar to that trodden by Mrs. Denning ; *but a few are*, as her case and some others prove.

Superficial opponents sometimes say, But suppose every woman were to do so ? We reply unhesitatingly, *It would be awful confusion* ; but there is no danger ! Suppose every minister were to follow the example of David Brainerd or of William Burns, and devote themselves to the good of the heathen ? The Church would be left pastorless—the results would be most disastrous ! But there is no danger ! and their singular devotion was not sin ; their course, though exceptional, was justifiable, and, perhaps, peculiarly “ well-pleasing to God.”

We go further, and admit freely, that it *may* be, if things were in a right and normal state, if every professed minister of Christ were actually accomplishing his Master's business, women would not be called of God to public ministry. And yet, we make this admission with a doubt, for Pentecostal power and apostolic

order did not exclude “daughters” that prophesied. Paul tarried many days in the house of an evangelist, whose four daughters were all what, in modern phraseology, would be called “lady preachers,” and we do not hear that he rebuked either them or their father.

But the Church is not in Pentecostal power, alas, now ! And that which was admissible even then, is far more than admissible now ; it is desirable. In days of delusion, disorder, and deadness,—in days when labourers are few, and fields white, when summer is nearly over, and harvest all but ended, we need not wonder if, in the merciful providence of God, exceptional cases multiply. Women are often called to work the pumps in a shipwreck, though when danger does not press the duty falls to the share of men. Who among the wounded on a field of battle would reject the hand of help, because it was not that of a surgeon, but of a woman ? When so many ministers of the stronger and wiser sex are useless or worse than useless in the work of soul saving, and preach for years without being instrumental in a single conversion, *is there not a cause* for woman’s ministry ? As we once remarked in a letter to the beloved subject of this Memoir, had Barak better played the man, Deborah had better played the woman. Had Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, been more faithful warriors, the youthful David need never have slung the stone. Had the disciples tarried longer at the sepulchre, Mary need not have been the first proclaimer of the resurrection of our Lord. Had Balaam been a more faithful prophet, the ass need never have opened *her* mouth.

But when, through its own imperfection, the natural instrumentality fails to accomplish the purpose of God, ‘He is the Lord of all,’ and will prove that he is so, by

using one that is not natural. "If these should hold their peace, even the stones would cry out." Faith rises superior to established order in such cases, and feels its liberty to do things which might at other times be unlawful; and Christ approves it, as witness His comments on David's eating the shewbread, which "it was not *lawful*" to do.

Very much has been written and said on this subject, which is not much to the point, and strong prejudice has been raised by unwise advocacy. It is a question not of "women's rights," but of women's responsibilities; and can be decided of course only by Scripture. Those who take opposite views of it, can each allege passages apparently in their favour. When challenged to justify her course, Mrs. Dening, for instance, could say, "Women may preach and pray in public, for St. Paul directs them how to dress when they are doing so, speaks of those women who laboured with him in the Gospel, and salutes in the 14th of Romans more women fellow-labourers than men."* Those who disapproved her course could reply, "But St. Paul distinctly says, 'Let your women keep silence,' and 'I suffer not a woman to teach.' Both have a show of Scripture authority, but both cannot be right: the alleged contradiction must be only apparent. If both would give their full and fair weight to the passages that oppose their own view, the controversy would soon be settled by a compromise.

Space forbids anything but the briefest possible summary of the leading arguments that seem to justify, at any rate, an exceptional Gospel ministry of women.

* See her somewhat amusing address on the subject, delivered by request, in St. James's Hall, Plymouth, entitled, "Woman's ministry in the Gospel." (Bath: Pearson, Milsom Street. One penny.)

I. The universal Christian duty of loving one's neighbour as one's self, of caring for souls, of “holding forth the Word of Life,” &c., obliges a Christian woman, *who has such gifts and such opportunities as Mrs. Dening had*, to preach the Gospel. She is bound to seek, to the *best* of her ability and to the *utmost of her power*, the salvation of souls, and for her preaching in the most effective way. “*Power to its utmost limit, implies responsibility.*”

II. Scripture speaks with approval of “prophetesses,” as well as of prophets, and “to prophesy” is to do what preachers of the Gospel do, “speak to men to edification and exhortation and comfort,” to bear “testimony of Jesus” (1 Cor. xiv. 3.; Rev. xix. 10). Scripture mentions :—

1. Miriam (Ex. xv. 20; Num. xii. 2; “Moses, Aaron, and Miriam,” Micah vi. 4).
2. Deborah (Jud. iv. 4—9).
3. Huldah, who spake the Word of the Lord to king Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 22).
4. Anna, who spake of Him (Luke ii. 38).
5. The woman of Samaria, who evangelized the *men* of her city (John iv. 28).
6. Mary, who proclaimed to the Apostles themselves glad tidings (John xx. 17).
7. Philip's *four* daughters who prophesied (Acts xxi. 8).

And, besides these ten definite cases of female prophets or preachers, the fact is recognized in Ezekiel xiii. 17, that so common was the office of prophetess in Israel, that there were false prophetesses as well as false prophets.

The correct translation of Ps. lxviii. 11. (as admitted by Young, Clarke, Congleton, and others,) is :—“The

Lord gave the word, of the female preachers there was a great host." The noun refers to *women*.

Nothing but the most unfair criticism can make 1 Cor. xi. 5 mean anything else than an approving recognition of the fact that women preached and prayed in public at Corinth. The inspired apostle *regulates*, but does not prohibit the practice.

III. To exclude women's ministry entirely and always, is to forbid the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. In its primary and partial fulfilment at Pentecost, women unquestionably had their share. (Compare Acts i. 14, and Acts ii. 1.) In its second and plenary fulfilment, in these last days, they must needs have it also, for "the Scripture cannot be broken."

IV. The standard objections do not bear examination :—1. 1 Tim. ii. 11 and 12, is a general rule for women as such, not for prophetesses, who by their very office are exceptions. To strain the passage and insist on its universal applicability, would forbid mothers to teach their sons wisdom, or mistresses to rule their men-servants. A mother and a mistress by her relation to others acquires a right to rule and teach ; and so perhaps a queen to govern (though *not* the Church of God) ; and a prophetess, by her relation to an audience, does the same. Besides the word here used means husband, not "man" in its more general sense—the wife is not to exercise authority, but the husband. To deny this evident limit is, to make Priscilla a sinner in instructing Apollos. The reasoning of the context confirms this. The secondary origin of woman prescribes for her a secondary place. She was *made for her husband*, therefore she ought not to "lord it" over her husband. She was not made for other men, therefore no argument for her sub-

jection to men in general can be drawn from her origin. It is a question of *authority* between husband and wife. Then as to *teaching*, the precept that a woman is not to teach is based on the same original history. The serpent *deceived* the woman; she sinned under a delusion or in a trance (such is the force of the word *deceived*). Adam was not deceived, his understanding was stronger. He sinned with his eyes open to the nature of the act and its consequences, being *persuaded* by his wife. Inference—Woman being easily deceived, weak in understanding, is a poor teacher, and ought not to teach; but, having great powers of persuasion, is a good evangelist to beseech men to be reconciled to God, and, when gifted to do so publicly, is not out of her place in attempting to *preach*.

2. The command (1 Cor. xiv. 34) forbids a woman to speak in the churches or assemblies of saints, as the whole context as well as the expression itself proves. Now a command to be silent under certain special circumstances implies liberty to speak in others; and a precept to be silent *in the church* can by no ingenuity be made to impose silence *in the world*. Gospel preaching is for the latter, not the former. Besides this, the Greek word used for to “speak,” does not mean to speak in ministry, but to talk or chatter, which *may* indicate that the silence commanded even in the church has limits. But this is not so clear, and is irrelevant to our point.

3. The argument based on the teachings of “nature itself,” is perhaps more cogent than any that can fairly be drawn from Scripture; but it is easily answered. Nature itself often drives people to overcome nature itself, and grace or the new nature does so still oftener; how else shall we explain the heroes and heroines of profane history,

or the confessors and martyrs of sacred history? An instinct of nature itself led Joan of Arc, for instance, to love the pastoral solitude and seclusion to which she had been all her life accustomed; but a stronger, higher instinct of the same nature—patriotism—drove her to take the lead of armies, and to act archbishop in crowning a king. Nature itself moved Abraham to spare his son, “his only son,” whom he loved. But a higher nature,—the love that would not disobey and the faith that could not doubt God, led him to seize the knife to slay his son. So, though beyond all controversy “nature itself” teaches that *home* is woman’s proper sphere, and though experience declares that it is her only really happy sphere (as, if her God-appointed one, it of course must be), yet our higher nature records a verdict, notwithstanding, in favour of Elizabeth Fry, and Florence Nightingale, and Miss Marsh, and others, who, led by a Christ-like philanthropy and compassion, sacrificed home and all its endearments for the sake of the suffering and the helpless. “Self-preservation is the first law of nature;” but how often are we moved to admiration by the deeds of those who are led by a higher nature to violate that law? And so, though “nature itself” undoubtedly prescribes the parlour as a fitter place for a lady than the pulpit or the platform, does no higher nature, as we retrace the life of Geraldine Denning, exclaim, “*Thank God, she did not spend her evenings in a parlour!* Thank God she was led by grace to overcome an instinct of ‘nature itself.’”

We conclude, therefore, on grounds of deliberate judgment, what most who heard her concluded by intuitive perception,—that Mrs. Denning’s course was a right, though an exceptional one; and that it would not have been well-pleasing to God had she resisted the call of which she

was conscious, and which she *alone* could hear; buried the talents Christ had committed to her; confined herself to a private sphere of action, and spent her life in the quiet domestic duties which befit most Christian women. We do not hold up her career as a model which all Christian women should strive to follow. Far, far from that. To any one similarly gifted, similarly guided, and similarly circumstanced, we would say, “Go and do likewise;” and remember, she proved her vocation and her gift by years of patient continuance in well-doing in a secluded sphere, and amid much sorrow, ’ere she was fitted to fill the public sphere she afterwards did. But to Christian women in general we would say, “Try to catch the *spirit* of her life, seek not to copy its form: *that* was essential, *this* accidental. Be loving, be zealous, be unremitting in your diligence, whatever be your work; so shall you be equally well-pleasing to Him, who accepts ‘according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not,’ to Him who said ‘*she* hath done what *she* could.’ ”

But we believe that, judging her life as she now does, with the perfect mind of Christ, her ministry of the Gospel is that part of it which Geraldine Denning least regrets. We cannot conceive, that as her spiritual children from Norfolk and from Bedford, from London and from Bath, from Torquay and from Plymouth, clustered around her at Heaven’s gate, and led her with loving eagerness and glad songs of praise to the dear Saviour whom they learned from her lips to love, that she sighed and said, “Alas! that I was not a keeper-at-home!” We cannot conceive, that as they joyously acknowledged that it was by means of her self-denying labours they learned the way to their eternal home in those mansions of bliss, that she mourned because she

had not taken better care of her own health, and left others to perish in their sins. We cannot conceive, that as the bright jewels of her crown of rejoicing cluster therein in the day of Christ, she will weep for shame that she did not "keep silence," and refrain from telling "the old, old story." No ! she may regret opportunities lost, but not opportunities redeemed. She may, and doubtless does, regret every act of selfishness the pure light of eternity has detected ; but *not one single act of self-sacrifice*. In the presence of Christ Himself we firmly believe she does not blush to own that her labours of love cost her *life itself* ; and it may be, that though men may call it waste, HE does not condemn her for THE ALABASTER BOX OF OINTMENT VERY PRECIOUS BROKEN FOR HIS SAKE.

To all who would coldly criticise a course they could not take, and cannot understand ; who can esteem ordinary piety, and approve the expenditure of the "three hundred pence" on "the poor," but who dislike and disapprove extraordinary exhibitions of love to Christ, we would say in His own words, "*Let her alone, she hath done what she could : it shall be spoken of for a memorial of her,*" and we would add : "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come who will make manifest the counsels of the hearts," and give every one his due award of praise ; but pray, oh "pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest ;" and remember, that, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty ; that no flesh should glory in His presence, but that he who glories should glory in the Lord ?"



NOTE.

To many who feel a deeper interest in the work of the Lord itself, than in any one special instrument used to carry it on, the questions will naturally occur, "Who will carry on Mrs. Dening's work in Bath?" and "Is such help as hers lost to the many places she used to visit?" We are deeply thankful to be able to reply that there is every reason to believe that "the mantle of Elijah rests on Elisha," and that "a double portion" of her spirit is conferred on him who stood nearest and dearest to her on earth. Mr. Dening, through the grace of God, possesses a very kindred character, and very similar gifts, to those committed to her who now sleeps in Jesus; and, what is equally important, his purpose, "his earnest expectation and his hope" is, to carry on to the utmost of his power, the work bequeathed to him by his dear wife. His allegiance to Christ forbids him to think of dropping it; his love for her who is gone urges him to develope, extend, and continue it, as would have been *her* desire; and the clinging affection, and warm sympathy of the people themselves, make the duty a pleasure. God has chosen him in a furnace of affliction, taking from him "the desire of his eyes;" but only that

he may "care for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord" more effectually. Reviewing the bright past, and turning from the sad present, he adopts the language put by the poet into the lips of Ezekiel, when "the desire of his eyes" was taken away at a stroke :—

" He knew my soul ; He knew she was in truth
My heart's desire.

As the waters cool
Which flow from Lebanon, to meet the hot
And thirsty valleys, so she came to me ;
And from that day she was my heart's delight
And comfort for a little, little while
Until God took her.

Son of man, behold
I take from thee this day thine only one,
Thine heart's desire !

I could not say Him nay,
Or question Him ; I laid my sacrifice
Upon His altar, not denying Him
Mine only one.

I bent to kiss her cheek,
And blessed her softly in the name of God,
And bade her Go in peace. Yea, with a smile
Which God had given me, I loosed my hold,
And suffered her to rise and go to Him.
And now at even time, when all the stars
Keep watch along the battlements of heaven,
She bendeth from the palace-walls to watch
For my home-going step.

I must fulfil
My stormy day ; once more the clouds of God
Do compass all my path with visions dread
Of gloom and glory. By my ruined home
I stand to speak for God, and stretch my hands
Emptied of their sweet treasure, in God's name,
To all the people. And the Lord alone
Himself doth comfort me."

In the brief time that has elapsed since he stood thus bereft of his "sweet treasure," he has proved both his purpose and his power to take her place as far as it can be taken ; and the blessing which has already rested on his labours, encourages the hope that God will, in answer to many petitions, make the death of Geraldine Dening as fruitful of good to others as her life. That such may be the case, and that this little Memoir may be one means to that end is the Author's earnest desire!




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