

HALF-HOURS BY THE SEA
IN PINELAND.

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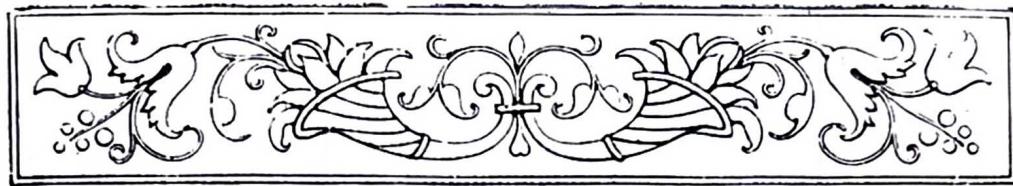
BY L. T.



THE LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,
20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.



Frontispiece—Searching for the lovely crimson seaweed.—PAGE 14.



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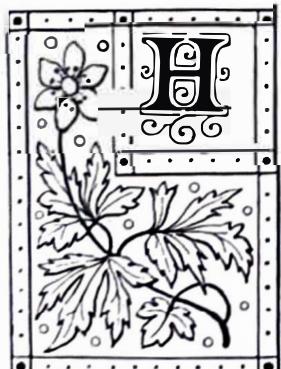




Half-hours by the Sea.

CALLING AND FOLLOWING.

“And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, Follow me.”—(MATT. IV. 18, 19.)



HALF-HOURS by the sea in Pineland! who will spend some of them with us there? But I think I can hear some one saying, Pineland! where is Pineland? I never heard of the name before! No! I do not suppose you did, dear friend, but it is a real place though, and you will find yourselves

amongst real people if you spend a few of your half-hours with us. Not that you will find the *name* of Pineland on any map, though the place *itself* is there. But as we discovered it one time in the course of our travels, we have done like other discoverers, given the place a name of our own.

And I think you will all agree that it is a very suitable name, when you know the place as we do. Come with me this lovely Autumn morning, and I will introduce you to my young friends there.

Here we are at the gate of a pleasant-looking house, that stands within sight of the sea, high up on the cliffs that stretch for mile after mile, like a vast sea-wall between the roaring ocean and the pine forests of the land. A sound of merry voices reaches us as we enter, and as we pass the thick clumps of evergreen that screen it from the road, we see on the sunny lawn the owners of those same voices—and our friends.

There, stretched on the velvety sward, lie Will, and his cousin Pat, so called because of his droll fun and mischief; that is kept within bounds though, by the boy's earnest desire to please by doing right.

Not far off, but in the shade of an old pine-tree, sit Alice and her sister Edith, and some of her girl friends. And Walter, and Len, Florrie and Ellie are just coming from the house, having lingered longer than the others over breakfast.

Now you know the names of these young people, so we will take our places under the pine. Soon we are surrounded by the whole party. The question is asked, "What shall we do first, to-day?" And most of us gladly remember that it is holiday time now. And Latin and German books, and sums, may all be quite forgotten for the time of our stay in Pineland. "Just look at those fine ships!" exclaims Will, pointing across to the sea, and there, swiftly gliding along, we see some large vessels, with the many sails glistening in the sun like the wings of the snowy sea-gulls that we often see here. "Let us go down to the shore," says Will, whose great delight it is to watch the different vessels, and who talks quite in sailor fashion of schooners, and brigs, and cutters. And as we all find the shore one of the nicest places to end our morning walk at, we are soon agreed, and a start is made at once. A few are carrying books to read on the beach, and

Edith has a basket that looks suspiciously like luncheon out of doors.

Very soon we come to a place where two paths meet, both leading to the sea, but by very different ways. One is a broad easy carriage drive, and foot-path, cut through the forest. No trouble to walk here, amid the wild azaleas, and rhododendrons, that were a blaze of beauty in the early part of the year ; and that mingle their undergrowth with the deep blue-green tints of the pines ; and arbutus trees, with their bright orange and scarlet hued fruit. But easy and pleasant as this road along the cliffs may be, it is somehow not the one we generally choose by which to get to the sea. And “let us go down by the fiord” is soon agreed to by all. And a rush is made by the boys to a place where a group of old, gnarled pines, stand like sentinels at the place where a rugged and narrow track leads down by a very steep and winding way to the beach, that lies about a mile away. The track is really the bed of a winter stream, which in the rainy season rushes down here, forming many a tiny cascade and waterfall ere it makes its final plunge into the sea. The stream dries up in the long hot days

of Summer, and leaves a capital path for us to follow. But the descent is so abrupt and steep, and needs such quick leaps from boulder to boulder, and then sometimes only a few inches of firm rock or ground to stand upon, that the few minutes it takes is a breathless and almost silent time until we reach the bottom of the gorge, where the path really is a path, with plenty of room to walk, and no danger of tumbling into the tangled mass of brambles and thorny evergreens that lie each side of the fiord. Now we come to the part where the torrent has washed down a broad bed of golden-hued sand, that seems delightfully soft and pleasant after the rugged boulders above. We are now nearly at the lowest part of the gorge, and the tall cliffs tower above us on either side, clothed to the very summit with waving bracken, and purple and white heather ; with here and there a pine-tree that has taken root on some ledge of earth, and sprung up, and is flourishing there bravely. Some of the foremost of our party have found out a cave scooped in the side of the cliff, and have seated themselves for a rest. And after our rapid dash down, a rest seems the very best thing for a few minutes.

“Hark! what is that roaring sound, over and over again?” says a new-comer. A few steps more, a turn in the path, and we see the cause. Huge columns of white-crested breakers are dashing upon the rocks that lie a little way out from the shore, and covering the beach with the snowy foam. What a splendid sea! and now for some time each one of our party is engrossed in their different ways of spending the first few minutes on the shore. Some go as close to the advancing waves as they dare, and stand there to feel the cool spray dash on their faces time after time. Some begin searching for the lovely crimson seaweed that we often find here, when the wind is strong enough to dash such breakers on the shore as we see this morning. Some scoop out a soft couch of warm dry sand, and one is writing something on a smooth bed of it that the tide has left, as if for the purpose.

What has Edith written there? Let us go and see. Ah! she has printed a text in very large letters to remind us all to whom this restless sea at our feet belongs.

And this is what the sand says now to all who will stay and read what is written there. “Who

hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span?" (Isa. xl. 12.) And I am more than glad to know that Edie and several of our young friends can give the answer to this question, and also say, "This God is *our* God for ever and ever." Can you say it too, dear friend? Thank you, Edie, you have given a song to the waves as it were; and we can almost hear them softly chanting as they rise and fall on their ocean bed, "We are His, and He made us. His, and He made us." But now some of our party have joined us again, and we are all ready for a quiet half-hour by the sea. And more than one says "Now let us have a nice little reading and talk." Who will talk, and listen with us to-day?

Let us go back in thought to an hour when, by the shore of an inland sea in the lovely land of Judæa, a voice was heard by two poor fishermen as they were casting their nets into the sea. It was a voice of infinite majesty—but also of tenderest grace and love. And if you and I had been on the shore of Galilee's waters, on that wondrous day, I do not suppose that we should at the first glance have seen what a marvellous Person was

there, nor anything very unlike what is around us to-day. "But the people would look different," Gracie says, "because the fishermen here don't wear long robes or sandals, nor turbans, as I have seen in the pictures about Palestine."

No, our fishermen would rather have their own dress, I suppose. Though the long robes if worn at all then, would be bound up out of the way, or more likely laid aside altogether.

But we should have seen a sandy, shingly beach ; boats lying hauled up on the shore, or anchored close by. Groups of fishers here and there, and grand purple-tinted mountains in the distance. Just such a scene as may be looked upon, on many a beach to-day.

Yet that was a different scene from any before or since.

For the voice, that said to those men that day "Follow me," was the voice of One who has the right to call to His service every living being and thing in the whole universe. And yet that very same One is speaking now, but in a different way. Peter and John really heard the voice of the Lord Jesus down here, and they saw Him as He walked by the sea. You and I

cannot do as they did, our eyes cannot look upon Him, yet if we are only willing to listen we may hear that Voice,—

“The mightiest, yet the gentlest
That ever spake on earth.”

On that far-off day by Galilee’s deep blue waters, the call was heard, and no sooner heard than obeyed. For what did those fishers do when they heard the words “Follow me”? “Followed Him at once,” says Florence brightly, as though she knew for herself what that meant.

Yes, they did. And do you think that they ever for a single instant felt sorry that they had followed? I do not think they regretted for a moment that they left their nets and their ships, and followed the One who called them. Not even when it led them to danger or death.

For beyond the danger, beyond the death, lay all the glory of the Prince of Life to whom they belonged. And just as really as that call, “Follow me,” came to Peter and his brother that morning we have read of, so it comes to each of us to-day. Some of us heard it long ago, perhaps. Did we?

And Mary says quietly but decidedly "I did ;" and Florence too joins in assent, and Edith, and more than I can call by name, but so many that I am delighted to find out how many that Voice has reached. But there are some of you who look away, and begin picking the stones up from the beach where we are sitting, as if you were not listening, and I am afraid you cannot tell me that you have obeyed the call! Perhaps you never thought it was a call to you, did you? And Ernest says frankly, "No, I never thought of it like that." Well, I hope you will now. You see you have all read the story of the Lord's amazing love for us. You all know how He lived down here to teach us what God was. A God who loved us well enough to give up His own beloved Son even to death for us. You all know this. But now I want you to do something more. Ask yourselves what it is to *you*. For those who have heard and followed, it is to *go on* following. For those who hear it for the first time to-day, to begin to follow at once.

Shall I tell you of a girl, of whom I once read, who heard this call, and followed the Lord? Well! she was not like most of you.

She did not know what it was to have a happy home where she was well cared for. She was an orphan, and so poor that she would most likely have perished from hunger and cold. But the One who said, and says to-day, "Suffer little children to come unto me," was watching over her, and little Faith as we will call her, after a time of great misery, was found out and rescued from the miserable, wretched place that was the only home she knew ; was taken care of and taught, by a kind christian lady, who tried to shew her that the kindness she found all around her in her new home, was only a faint shadow as it were, of the mighty love of God. That it was He from whom all good things really came to her ; and they were all proofs of how much He loved her ; but Jesus Himself was the one great proof of that love, for He was given as a Saviour for even little Faith.

I cannot tell you how long Faith stayed at the happy home she had been taken to. It was long enough for her to learn that the Lord Jesus was calling her to follow Him—to trust Him, to give herself to Him. And she learnt to know this, that in trusting Him she was quite, quite safe,

wherever she was, for He kept her ; and so every day of her life here was like a milestone passed on her journey to the bright home above, prepared for all who follow Christ.

One day Faith was told, that she and some other girls who had also been taken from misery and poverty, were to go on a long journey, across this same wide sea that we are listening to to-day. A home in far off Canada was waiting for her, where it was hoped she would find plenty of happy, healthy employment, and make others happy too. Poor Faith ! I dare say her heart was troubled a great deal. For she was to leave the home where she had found such kind friends. But then I have no doubt she would remember, that now she had a Friend who would never leave her. For God Himself has said to all who trust Him, “ I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” (Heb. xiii. 5.)

At last the day came. How soon the girls woke that morning, how strange it seemed to know that they would wake up to-morrow miles and miles away from the pleasant little rooms they called their own ! Breakfast must be rather hurried over, for they must not be late at

the station. And tearful good-byes are said, and a last look at the dear old home is given ; and then they turn away to a new life.

The huge steamship is reached at last, their first experience of supper on board ship is over ; and then the queer little sleeping-places, that they call their berths are clambered into, and they begin their first night at sea.

Very rough weather soon came on, and the terrible sea-sickness was felt even by the children. But there were happy little times in between the gales, and fogs, when they sang the hymns they had learned "at home," and read the verses and chapters that some of them loved.

One night a very terrible storm arose, the ship creaked and strained, the storm grew fiercer and wilder, and the huge waves swept the deck with fearful crashes. And then the children began to ask, "Is the ship sinking?" The lady who was with them was one who herself loved the Lord, so she was able to quiet them by repeating a verse from the Bible ; then a sweet little voice began to sing, in the midst of the raging storm—

"A Saviour, a Saviour, a Saviour ever near."

Thus they passed the long hours until the night and the storm were over.

The next day, a gentleman on the ship asked our little friend if she had felt very frightened in the storm. Now what do you think she said in reply to his question? When I read of her answer I could not help thinking how very happy it was, although rather funny; but you must remember that Faith had not been taught all her life as you have, and so you must look over the quaintness, and see the trust, and the confidence in God that there is in her words.

The gentleman said, "Were you not much afraid last night?" And at once came these cheery words, "No, heaven is better than Canada any day."

Now, dear young friends, do you think any of you could have been as happy as this in the face of great danger? Should you know that if you were suddenly taken out of this world, you would go direct to the Lord Himself?

If you have heard and believed that Jesus the Lord is calling you, if you are seeking to follow Him, then you too would be quite sure that, whether in a storm at sea, or quietly sitting here

on the beach, you are equally safe. For He who "measureth the waters in the hollow of his hand," is the same one that says, "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 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 pluck them out of my hand."

Is it not worth a great deal then, to be able to say from your very heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd"? But remember, you have nothing at all to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, unless you have heard and obeyed His voice. None of the joy, none of the happiness, and nothing of the radiant glory ahead, belongs to you, if you are not one of His sheep or lambs.

Some little time ago, a friend was speaking to some people, and trying to shew them that they were quite mistaken in thinking that they must do anything to help save themselves, and he said to them, "God does not want your good resolves, or kind deeds, or anything you think you can *do*. *He wants you.*"

I was delighted to hear him say this, for it is just what so many people forget, and I am sure he

will forgive me if I take his words as my closing message to you in our half-hour by the sea.

And so I repeat it, dear young friends. The Holy Son of God is seeking *you*, He wants *you*. Your hearts, your lives, yourselves for Him.

Have you ever thought of what it cost the Lord to be able to say to you to-day, "Follow me"?

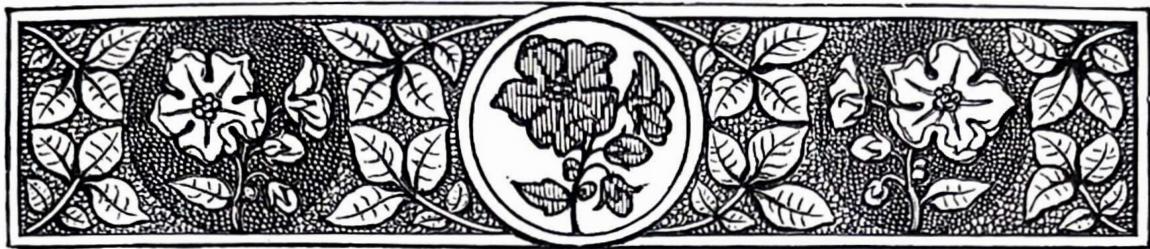
Ah! it cost Him the agony of Gethsemane, the sufferings of Calvary. For

"Ours is a pardon bought with blood."

And we can never sufficiently estimate the mighty cost to God of a sinner's ransom. Won't you let Him redeem you?

"For none of the ransom'd ever knew,
How deep were the waters cross'd ;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord pass'd through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost "





CHAPTER II.

THROUGH STORM TO CALM.

“And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves ; but he was asleep.” (MATT. VIII. 24.)



HOW many of my young friends are ready for another half-hour on the sands ? Most of those, I hope, who were with us last time. And though it is rather stormy to-day and we get only glimpses of the sun, yet we shall find the shore is sheltered, because the wind blows off the land, and the cliffs make a first-rate screen for us ; and we can rest safely there and see how the stormy gusts of wind toss the sea into wild, white-capped billows,

that give us a slight idea of what a storm at sea would be like.

There are not many boats going out this morning, only a few fishermen will venture. For if the sea is so wild here, in the bay, it must be still more so farther out. Will says that in winter here the Lifeboat often goes to the help of vessels in distress. And we look with new interest at a lame man in a sailor's dress who passes us, as we remember that Owen, as we call him, is one of the Lifeboat crew ; his leg was broken when they were out with the boat one wild night ; going to the rescue of some poor ship in distress. Although he has been lame ever since, he will not give up his place in the Lifeboat. A brave man must our friend Owen be, and I do not wonder that he wants to keep his place.

While I think about him, I wonder if he has a place in the only Lifeboat that will never founder or wear out.

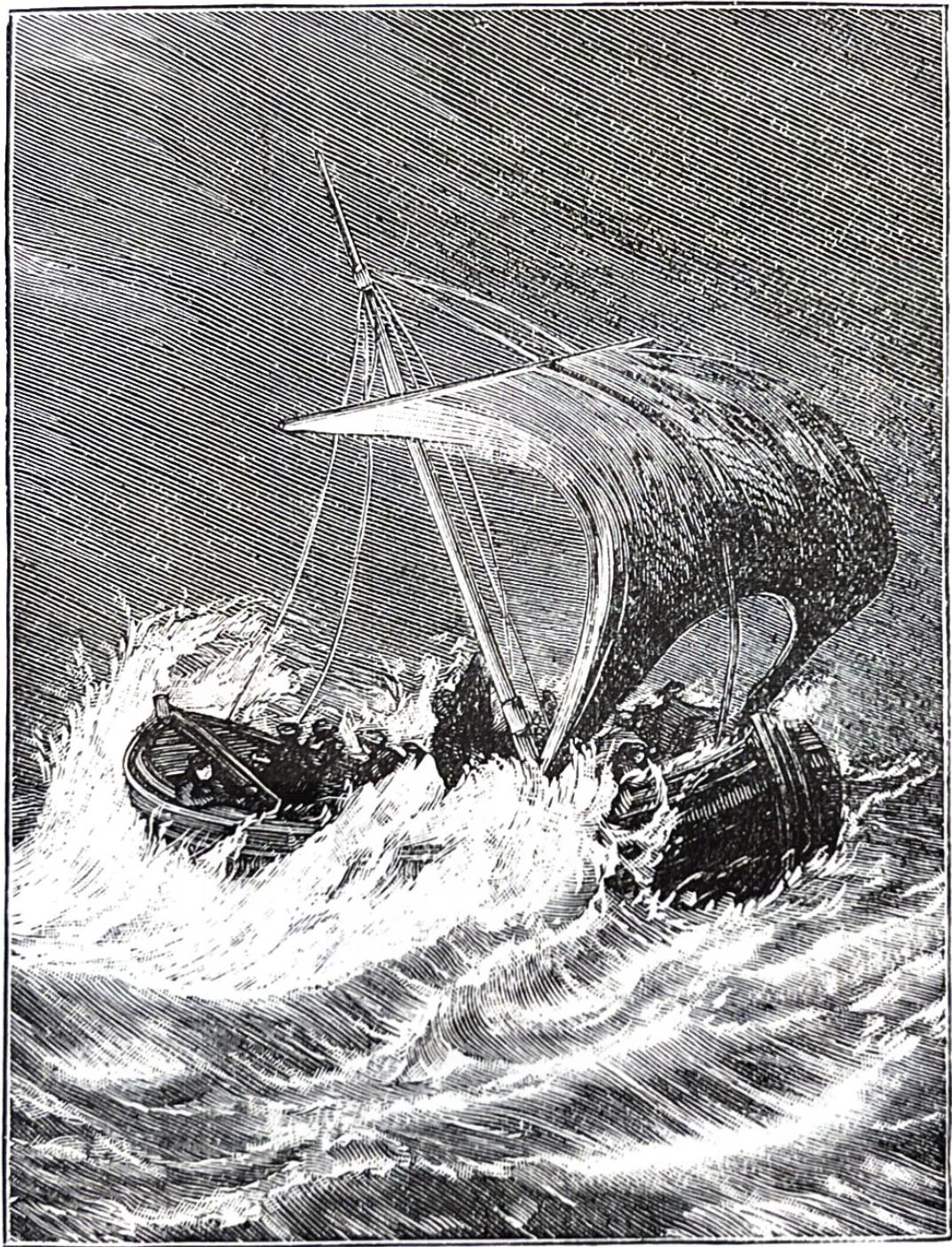
I am very glad to think I have a place in it, and many of my young friends too.

Both Pat and Nellie look puzzled as they listen, but I see a smile of intelligence on many a face, as they realise that they, too, are in the only Life-

boat that will out-live all the wild storms of this sea of life, upon which we are all sailing. You don't quite understand me, do you say? Then suppose we look at a picture of a real storm, that God Himself has given us in His word. What were we talking about, last time we were here? A chorus of voices gives the answer, "Peter and his brother following the Lord Jesus." Well, if you look at the story of the storm I mean, you will find that these two brothers had followed their Master into one of the little ships, that, I suppose, were the fishing boats they used, and they had been caught in one of the sudden storms that so often sweep down upon the Sea of Galilee, when, if the sailors are not very quick and expert as to the way in which they manage their vessel, they may soon be in great danger. In this tempest that we read of, the disciples seem to have given up all hope of their being able to keep their boat afloat. "The ship was covered with the waves," we are told. If any of you have been on the sea in a storm, you know how the waves dash into an open boat, and would soon sink it. Thus we must not wonder at the terror of the disciples. I was once out in a yacht, when

a gale sprang up, and the waves dashed on the cabin with tremendous force. I did not like being in this cabin at all, it was dark and dismal, and I thought that the storm there would seem worse than being really out in it. It was a beautiful yacht, and I knew the captain understood how to manage it, and often had I admired the way in which a touch of his hand on a rope would alter the course of it in an instant. So I was not at all afraid. Leaving the cabin to others, I got one of the crew to give me a sail-cloth, and, covered up in that, I was able to see how quietly and swiftly our little yacht breasted the waves. Though dipping, at times, to the very brink of the wild white billows, the next instant it rose buoyantly on their crest. And though many a wave washed over the side, and might have endangered a less sea-worthy vessel, our brave little bark out-lived the storm, and brought us safely ashore.

But here in our picture of the storm on Galilee, no trust could be put in the ship any longer; so they go to awaken their Master, feeling that their only resource is in His power. Now that they can do nothing to save themselves, they



The Yacht in a Gale.

are to find out that if the Lord is with them, they are as safe in their frail little fishing-boat as ever they were on land. His presence is enough to transform it into a Royal Lifeboat. In startled, awe-struck wonder, they look on, while, at the sound of that Voice, whose power they knew a little of, they behold the angry white-crested surges sink into tiny ripples and wavelets, and the roaring winds hush their wild voices to gentle whispers, and the great storm gives way to a great calm.

I think, too, that Peter and Andrew, and the others, learnt, that day, more than they had ever done before, what a glorious thing it was to be following such a Master.

A storm at sea, if He were in the boat with them, would never terrify them so again. Do you think it would?

For that day had taught them that not only had their Master the power to cure the blind and lame, and dumb and sick, but the very winds and waves owned Him as their Lord, too, and obeyed His voice ; they would never have known this as they did now, if they had not been in that storm.

You and I, dear friends, who have started on this road of following Christ, will find the same thing. We may meet with a "great storm," too. But we shall always find, whatever the storm may be, that our Lord is Master of it. He may not always calm it at once, as He did on that day. But He will always keep it under His control, so that we shall be quite safe. That is what I meant by having a place in the Lifeboat.

"That wildest ocean, tries in vain to sink."

There are different kinds of storms in this sea of life that we all are passing over. It may be the loss of one's relatives, perhaps, a dearly loved mother or father. And this is a rough storm, indeed.

I remember, now, a dear young girl, whom I knew some time ago, who thus lost her mother. In losing her, the poor child lost, as it seemed, all interest in life. She grew thin and pale, and dark circles around the large dark eyes, so sad and weary-looking, told a sorrowful tale of bereavement and grief. Poor little Fanny, as I will call her—it made my heart ache to notice

the far-away look in her eyes, the first time I saw her. And the quiet, listless way in which she would look on at her companions' games or work, without caring to join them, was most touching. Her mother seemed ever in her thoughts at home, and nothing could make her forget it. At last, a kind friend invited Fanny down to her country house, where there was a large family of healthy, happy children for her to mix with, and though she made a sorrowful little picture at first, in her deep mourning dress, that made her pale little face look all the paler, yet, after a few weeks, the sad eyes looked a little less sad, and a tinge of colour came into her pale cheeks. At last she went to school with her new friends, and there she heard of One who loved her even more than her mother could have done. One who had indeed died, too, but died to save poor sinful people, of whom she was one. She heard, too, that this One was alive again for evermore, and was calling both old and young to Himself. Ready to forgive every sin, to wash them all away, and make all who would follow Him fit for the bright beautiful home above, where He had Himself gone. Whether Fanny ever did

really start on the way to follow the Lord Jesus, I do not know ; but, as the days went on, she grew brighter, and listened most attentively to the Bible reading with which school always opened. And it was hoped that she was one of those who heard and obeyed the words, “Follow me.” After she had been in the country about three months, she went home, and her papa thought she looked so much better that he might safely keep her at home, so I have not seen her since. But she knew what a storm bereavement is.

Then ill-health is a very rough wind to bear ; to have to give up all the walks and drives that are so pleasant, the long rambles in the fields in summer, or the quick run along the hard, frosty roads in winter. To lie still and let others wait upon us, when we like best to help them, is often very hard to bear ; not to speak of long, weary hours of pain and weakness, and dark, dreary nights of wakefulness and suffering. But this storm, too, can be weathered in peace and safety, if we have Jesus with us in it. He knows every throb of pain, every wakeful moment ; and not one can come to either of us, except by His permission, and only because He sees it is the

one needful thing to train us for the Home that every moment brings nearer to us.

To become poor, when we have been used to have plenty of every good thing, is another kind of storm, too. And there are many others. But each one knows what it is that most tries and pains us. For each and all, Christ is as sufficient to-day as He was at Galilee. Do you know that there is such a thing as quieting the violence of the waves in a storm at sea, by pouring oil upon the waters round the vessel that is in danger? I heard of such a thing some months ago, and it was very interesting. "Oh! do tell us all about it," says more than one pleading voice. So we will find out a little of this new power for moderating the force of the waves in a storm.

The ship I heard of as being saved from foundering, through oil being poured on the sea, was called the *Nordcap*, a Norwegian vessel, on its way to Buenos Ayres, with a cargo partly of oil. After a few days at sea, a hurricane swept down upon them, and, before very long, the bowsprit was carried away, and then the foremast.

An intensely dark, stormy night followed that day, and officers and crew worked all night

to save the vessel, and when the first rays of morning broke over the sea, with its welcome light, the wreckage that had strewed the deck was cleared away, and with the mainmast and one lesser one, the crew tried hard to keep the vessel on its track. But with no head sails, this was found to be impossible. And during the day, the mainmast fell with a dreadful crash.

And now the poor fellows on board began to feel how unlikely it was that they would ever see land again.

But their captain was a brave, resolute man, and over and over again, when the worn-out sailors lay down in their bunks to die, as they said, he would rouse them again to their work of keeping the wreck afloat.

A very heavy sea was running, and the water poured into the hold, so that some of the crew had to be always at the pumps, to prevent the ship sinking. Day after day passed in this way. Not a ship was sighted, and when another hurricane arose, it seemed impossible to live through it. But now the captain thought of the oil in the cargo. He would see what that would do for them.

Gradually this oil was thrown upon the huge

billows that came rolling up to the vessel, and to the immense relief of all on the wreck, "as the great billows, crested with foam, came curling up to the bark, as if to seize and drag her down, they were turned into smooth and oily hills of water, as high as ever, but without their dangerous crests." The night was one of intense suffering and exhausting work at the pumps, but the oil on the troubled waters saved the bark. But for over a week still, had the poor fellows to drift about on their wrecked ship, before they were seen and rescued by a passing vessel. And I think they will never forget their voyage in the *Nordcap*, for although their lives were saved, the vessel was nothing but a hopeless wreck, and had to be abandoned.

Thus we see what a wonderful effect the oil had upon the waves. And in this way it may tell us of the calming power of a few words from our Master, when we are in a storm. We may be in great dread of what a certain day may bring to us, but when the day comes, a few words from Him will calm our fears, and enable us to go through the trial in a way that may surprise even ourselves.

I knew a girl, some years ago, who was led to follow the Lord. She had been a gay, careless, pleasure-loving girl, caring only for the things of this life. But like Andrew and Peter, she was to hear the Master's voice; and she did, and was only too glad to seek to follow Him. Some few months after her conversion, she had to go to stay for some months in the family of a relative. None of the family were converted, and Nellie, as we will call her, felt rather afraid of what they would think of the change in her.

And when the day came for her to begin her journey, she was feeling very sorrowful. But as she sat alone in the train, thinking of her approaching meeting with her cousins, a few words came flashing into her mind, with such force, that it almost seemed as if some one had spoken them aloud. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." She had no idea in what part of the Bible these words were to be found, and she had no recollection of reading or hearing them. Of course, she must have done so at some time or other, and though she had forgotten them, they came to her as a most precious word of encouragement from the Master,

whom she had learnt to love. All her dread of the future left her, and the rest of her journey was passed happily in thinking how good the Lord was to send her such a message, just then.

I have often heard her say how true it was. For though she was sometimes laughed at, and had rather hard things said to her at times, yet nothing of what she had feared came to pass. And, even if it had done so, she would have found out that the One who was able to say to her, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee," would also say to her, "My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) And getting a word like that from such an One, is a spring of joy and rest; far greater than can be known when everything around us goes on smoothly and pleasantly. I think that this was one reason why the Lord allowed that tempest to come down upon the Sea of Galilee. He knew that gales far rougher than that must come to His poor disciples; times when, to their poor hearts, everything would seem gone, unless they knew and remembered that He was the Almighty Son of God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and this day, when the raging tempest was stilled in a moment by a few words from His lips,

was one of the lessons they had to learn, before that day, when He who stilled the storm for their sake, should Himself go down into deep waters to save them. They had followed their Lord when He called them, and now they proved His power to shelter and shield them.

And it is just the same with us, dear friends. So do not get dismayed or afraid, when you get into a storm. Think of it as a fresh lesson that your Master is teaching you, one that will make you more able to go on and do your work here, so as to please Him more. You will not mind a few days, or weeks, or months of trial for that, will you?

One of my brothers made a canoe for himself, once, hoping that it would do for him to go on a canoeing trip with some friends. He was very particular that all the wood and iron he used should be the very best he could get, and he spared no pains to make it the smartest little craft in the neighbourhood. But when the last nail had been driven home, and the name was flying on a brightly worked pennon at the stern, what was the one thing needful before he could vouch for its sailing powers? It looked very

beautiful as it lay there on the grass by the side of the river, but its good looks went for nothing in the question as to its sea-worthiness! What was needed, was a *trial* trip. The canoe must be launched before he knew whether he had succeeded. And, not until the moment came when it was taken down to the brink of the water, and springing into his place in it, he felt it dip into the waves, and then, rising buoyantly upon them, float like a sea-bird on the surface; not until then did he know that now he could trust the canoe to carry him safely. But when he had spent days and weeks in that same canoe, and had encountered a tremendous gale in it, and found it outrode the storm without a seam parting; then he knew, better than ever, how safely he might trust it. The more he tried it, the greater became his confidence.

And the more we find out the love and care of our Master for us, His power to help and sustain us; the greater will be our trust in Him. But we must learn it by going through those times that bring out the love and power. For it is only in this way that we can bring glory to Him. And we all want to do that, do we not? When

we remember what shame and suffering has been borne for us, by the One who might have stayed in all the bright glory above, if He had not loved us as He did, and so come down to take our place first, to bear all the awful anguish of the dread judgment that we deserved ; that He might be able, after that, to call us up to His own place and glory. When we think of all this, how can we help wanting to please Him ?

I often think of a sentence I once read in the account of the cruel persecutions of the French Christians, in the Cevennes. Many of you may have heard how they were hunted from their homes ; living for years in some of the deepest and gloomiest recesses of the wild mountains, “ sometimes finding a hiding-place with the bats and lizards in the holes and rocks, sometimes taking refuge with the frogs in damp grottoes, amongst the reeds.”

Ah ! sitting here, in this day of liberty for God’s word and God’s people, we little understand what following the Lord meant, in those terrible times. In the description of the suffering of these Huguenots, in the Cevennes, the writer speaks of a lad, who was in an agony of distress when he

heard of the arrest, and then sentence of death that was passed upon one of his dearest friends.

He had urged some of the brethren to seek to rescue their friend, who had laboured for years as a pastor among them ; but when he was told that God's word forbade such a resistance to the law, and they could do nothing—he sadly exclaimed, "my heart will break, my heart will break ;" receiving in reply these noble words, from one of the sad-faced, persecuted men around, who loved the pastor as dearly as any : " It matters little whether my heart break, or your heart break, but it matters everything that our God be honoured."

Those words come back to me sometimes, and help me. And I hope some of you may remember them too, especially if ever you are tempted to do that which dishonours our God, who has and does love us with such a manner of love. And if it does help you in this way, then our talks by the sea will bear fruit to His glory, that we may be unable to estimate, but from which He *will* gain honour and glory for ever. Certainly, a Christian boy or girl who does not honour the Lord, is of very little use to Him. Do you think they are ?

So let us make up our minds that trouble and

storm may come to us ; but that He to whom is all power given, is ever with us, dark days or bright days—long days or short days—He is with us through them all, if we are His.

But, I fear I am speaking to some who have never yet taken the first step in following the blessed Lord Jesus—never really listened to Him ; perhaps, until now, you have not thought much about it—not taken any trouble as to this most important question. You see, dear young people, you, every one, have within you a soul, that will live for ever. Now, you sometimes hear of people moving from one house to another. Some of you have done so, perhaps. If you have, you know how carefully your parents looked over the new house, how they thought over the size and number of the rooms. Perhaps, you were allowed to go over the house too, and you rushed up the stairs, and danced round the rooms, and looked out of the windows, and peered into the cellar, and, very likely, decided that it was a great deal nicer than the old house ; just because it was new to you.

But papa had to think of a great deal more—whether it was healthy, and convenient, and all

that sort of thing, that concerned you all very much. Why ? Because you were going to *live* there, perhaps for many years. And it would never do to take a house and not know what sort of place it would be to live in, both in winter and summer.

You all see the need of care in choosing a house to live in, don't you ?

And yet *you* are going to live on and on and on, and still on, for millions of millions of centuries, and have never spent an hour, perhaps, in thinking *where* you will live.

Do you not think you have been very foolish ? You see the need of being careful as to where you will live for less than a hundred years, yet never trouble as to where you will live for eternity.

It remains with you to choose. Listen to the word of the Lord Jesus. Come to Him for the salvation He offers. Follow Him as your Lord and Master ; you then choose, and will get, the bright glory of heaven, with Him, as your everlasting home. And Florence and Edith joyfully exclaim, "All that for us." Turn away from Him, follow your own pleasure--and you choose the lake of fire for ever and ever. But what is Mary saying, now ? Listen !

“I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘Come unto Me and rest ;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast.’
I came to Jesus, as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad ;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.”

“That hymn was the cause of my hearing, and following the Lord Jesus,” Mary says. “It was when I went to the Sunday school, and I had learned it to say to Miss M—. After I had repeated it to her, Miss M. began to talk to me about the hymn. And she asked me if it was true of me—that I had heard His voice? And I had to say ‘no.’ And then she told me that He was speaking to me again by it, and wanted me to belong to Him—to trust Him.

“I knew how He had died to save sinners, but I had never thought of it for myself; but after Miss M. had talked to me about it, I just saw that it was all for *me*. And I did ‘Come to Jesus,’ and He has made me glad. And I know, too, He will take care of me, for ever.”

Thank you, Mary, for letting us hear this. A

real little story like that, from a *real* school girl, who still knows all the pleasures and trials of school life, is worth a great deal to us. For we all like to know others who have heard the same call as we have.

Florence and Edith are fast friends at once with a girl who is not afraid or ashamed to own to whom she belongs; though it was very timidly and shyly done, too. But, here, in pleasant Pineland, we are all friends.

By-and-by, we shall all be separated, and some, like our friend Mary, will go back to school, but all—go where we will, whether into stormy waters or quiet journeyings—will be followed by the love and care of the One we have been thinking of, in our chat down on the beach.

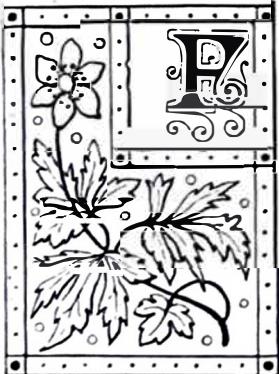
And now, it is quite time for us to start for our homeward walk. Let us take the Upper road, and as our visitors see the sweet-smelling pine forest, through which we pass, and the varieties of pine-trees on every side, I think they will all agree that they are really staying in Pineland.



CHAPTER III.

A PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

*“His eye seeth every precious thing.”—
(JOB xxviii. 10.)*



OUR whole days since we all went down for a morning on the beach ! But Edith looks as though she did not intend it to be *five* days—if she can help it—before our party is gathered there again.

But the weather has been very hot, and there has been no sea breeze to temper it, for the last few days, and some of our friends are not quite so strong as they hope to be after a month or two in our lovely Pineland ; and so they have not gone far from the place where the huge old pine-tree casts its welcome shade over the lawn, at



Under the Pine Tree.

home. But it is really cooler this morning, Edith tells us, and those who do not wish to go down the glen way, can be taken, in the carriage, by the upper road. And so, at last, most of us start for the sea. And only one will go in the pretty little carriage that we soon hear on the gravel drive leading to the house.

Soon we are all enjoying a leisurely walk through the sweet-smelling forest, where the path, in many places, is a most elastic, springy carpet, formed by an immense thickness of fallen pine-needles, where our feet press out the refreshing smell of the spines, at every step.

Only one or two people do we see in the course of our walk, for we are not near the town, and only a few visitors get so far as our beautiful Pineland. We are not at all sorry, for we like the feeling of quietness and rest over everything here, and noisy crowds of people would soon alter all that.

But now one of our visitors comes to a sudden pause at the place where a break in the belt of trees around gives a full view of the sea, below. And many exclamations of delight, and deep-drawn breaths in speechless admiration of the

lovely view lying before us, tell of the enjoyment of our friends, in our morning walk.

But what *can* that be, that rises up from the sea, so dazzlingly bright, almost on the horizon, and looking like an immense pearl against the deep blue of the waves? As this question comes from one of our visitors, Edith tells us that this gleaming pearl, so brilliantly clear and dazzling, in its snowy whiteness, is the little island of T—, whose white cliffs seem to gleam in the sun like polished silver; and the intervening distance, and haze, give it the striking resemblance to a pearl, that we have often noticed. It is almost reluctantly that we turn away from the beautiful scene; all the more beautiful to us, because we remember that we belong to the One who formed the beauty we have been looking at. And we think, as we finish our walk, if our God has prepared such loveliness for this world as He has, that we see round us, in sea, and sky, as well as on land; what will it be like, when this earth has lost every trace of defilement, and has become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

But now we are once more on the beach, and a

soft couch for all is soon extemporised, by digging the sand out, and piling up a dry heap at the back. And very pleasant it is to sit there, and see the waves ripple up to the high-water mark below us. No white-crested breakers to-day, and the sea is as smooth as a mill pond, glancing and sparkling in the sunlight, just as if the wild tempests of winter, and their sorrowful tale of wrecked ships, and wrecked lives, too, were all a dream. Just such a morning must it have been, I should think, when a vast crowd was gathered on the beach, at Galilee, listening to the voice of the divine Teacher, who sat in the little ship, moored close to the shore. (Matt. xiii.) Just think of what a scene that was ! The King of kings—the Jehovah of Israel, veiling all His royal and heavenly glory, and as a Man amongst men—coming down to their deepest need, and in gentlest, tenderest grace, teaching them, day after day, of the heavenly truths He wanted them to learn a little of then. For He knew that not until He had in that dark day before Him—gone down into the very regions of death for them, would they understand Him, as He longed for them to do. Still His love never wearied,

and it never wearies now. Let us look for a minute or two at the wondrous lessons they heard that morning.

First, the Great Teacher speaks of what must have been familiar to all there—of the sower, who was sowing seed broadcast—as they always do still, in the East, I believe. And how vividly it comes before us. The seed cast from the man's hand, some falling by the wayside, some on the rocks, or among thorns. But that which fell on *good* ground, alone brought forth fruit.

I wonder how many of us would have known what the Lord meant? Not many, I fear. But when we get the Lord's own explanation, we see at once how beautifully simple it is.

The seed is the word, God's word, this word that we are all familiar with. But as He looks down at us, to-day—here, on the sunny beach—to which class of hearers does He see that we belong?

Do we read or hear our daily chapter, and then forget all about it? We are like the seed that fell by the wayside, if we do. And, if we do not really forget it, if we think of it enough to be very glad that this word speaks to us of a

Saviour, if we get no farther than that, we shall only be like the seed on the rocks : it had no root. And, like those who allow their pleasure or work to make them forget God, we shall bear no fruit.

But now we come to the seed on good ground ; and I will tell you what I think that is like. We will suppose that you have never heard this word of God before. Well ! you hear that God says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) You say, "Yes ; I own that I have, and I can do nothing else. The more I try to be good, the worse I am." You hear the message still goes on to say, that even those who have so sinned, "are justified freely by his grace." You say, "Oh, that is what I want—free forgiveness for all. I do thank God that is for me. But how can it be so ?" Then you hear the rest of the message, that explains how it can come to you : "Through the redemption that is *in Christ Jesus*." Then you see, this glorious message is true for you, because Another has taken the punishment for the sins—has given up His life for yours ; and so, can offer redemption for all who will have it.

I think this gives us a glimpse of the seed

on good ground. And as I look round, I see many a face, ah ! and hear words that tell me that many know for themselves what the seed on good ground means.

Then, the Lord goes on to tell them, how, in this world, the good and the bad seed will go on growing together—those who are His, and those who are not, until He comes ; but never to be associated in life. Always distinct. But we must notice that the Lord only tells the disciples the meaning of the parables—only to those who follow Him. And now, we come to something I was reminded of when we were looking at the pearly island, on our way here. “A pearl of great price,” is the beautiful and costly gem, to which the Lord compares the kingdom of the heavens—or, in other words, the people whom He has bought at the cost of giving up His own life. He was the Merchant ; and has He not paid a “great price” for the pearl—for His people, whom He has washed from every stain, and made whiter than snow ; and clothed them too in His own beauty, so that He can compare them to the gleaming pearl of great price ? Does it not make us feel that we long to keep ourselves

unspotted for Him? If He sees such beauty in the one great company of the redeemed, to whom we belong, then we must try, each one for ourselves, to answer a little to it.

I was once at a place which had a very fine and large harbour, and this harbour was generally crowded with vessels, either taking in or unlading cargo. The vessels there were all in service, all useful: doing the work for which they had been built, and rigged, and then manned. And a busy, cheerful scene this harbour was! Even Will would have had ships enough. But not many miles away, on the same coast, I used sometimes to see what, to me, was a very sad sight. For some long distance, the beach was crowded with vessels, of every kind and size. Schooners, yachts, brigs, cutters, and a few huge three-deck ships, all lay there, hauled up high and dry out of reach of the tide. Scores and, may-be, hundreds of vessels were there. "What is it?" I inquired, the first time I went that way. "Why are all these lying here unused?" What answer did I receive, do you think?

Will considers for a moment, and then says, "Perhaps they were all there for repairs." But as

the others listen to hear whether he has guessed rightly, I have to reply, "No! there was no idea of repairing any of them." And some of them looked, to me, quite good and freshly painted; some were very weather-beaten; and others were mere wrecks, with masts and decks swept away.

But now, more than one voice will say, "What was the reason they were there, then?" And I will give you the answer that my friend gave me, when I asked the same question.

"They have been *condemned*, and sent here to wait until they can be broken up."

Condemned! That fine-looking schooner, with every mast standing, and paint and varnish still fresh? Yes! as much condemned as that wretched-looking hulk, that no one would think of risking his life in. There had, some little time previously, been a government inspection of craft, in the different ports of England, and this was the result. Not one of those fine ships could stand before the searching examination of the judge who had been appointed to the work.

And now, there they lay. Whether it was the varnished yacht, or the grimy collier, or the stout cutter, all they waited for now was the execution of

the sentence. They were all equally condemned, and, not many days after, I saw a number of men, beginning rapidly the work of destruction on one of the largest vessels.

Does not this remind you of something, in this book, of which we have read a little this morning? And soon, Edith's voice reads out, "He that believeth not is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) Many a life has been lost at sea, because they had sailed in a ship that was worthless. And so, when the storms came, it foundered; and wives were made widows, and children became orphans, because the fact that the vessel was not sea-worthy had either not been known, or else not believed. And many souls are lost because they do not believe they are "*condemned already*." If they *did* believe it, they would take the only way of escape. And then, they would leave the condemnation behind them for ever.

I saw a picture once, called, "A Wintry Watch." It was a ship on a stormy sea, in a snowstorm. The man at the wheel was grasping one of the frozen ropes, as if to steady himself

against the icy wave that dashed over the bulwarks, as the ship scudded before the gale,

“Through the blinding sleet and snow.”

And it made one thank God that real as such pictures often become, in the wintry months, on many a sea, yet the same One that taught the crowd on Galilee, long, long ago, is watching still. And when sometimes, such pictures as that work into our own lives, and the watch seems longer than we can bear, and the storm wilder, let us remember the One who rules every wind ; and just the remembrance will be to us what a light, gleaming from some friendly lighthouse, often is to the worn-out sailor on the watch, at night.

Glad is the sailor to see the cheerful light, from the tall tower, streaming over the waves, when the sea is quiet and the vessel glides swiftly along. But how precious it must become, when the thunder crashes through the darkness that the vivid lightning flashes make all the darker ; when the wind lashes through shroud and sails, and, may-be, sweeps away the compass from the deck.

Then, invaluable is that bright light, that tells the sailor where he is, and warns him as to his course. And more than ever that friendly light can be to the sailor afloat, is this precious word of God, to those of us who have escaped the condemnation. We may find the voyage stormy, the night watches often dreary ; but through them all, if we can thank God that we are not like those poor useless, *condemned* vessels, on the beach, but saved by His grace, then we shall go happily along. For He knows just what is best for each one of us. And the ice and snow of winter lead on to the sunshine and fruit of summer.

“ Like wind and rain of winter,
Our earthly sighs and tears ;
Till the glorious summer dawneth,
Of the endless year of years.”

And there is another thing, too : we should get very little in the way of harvest, of any kind, without the frost and cold of winter—in our country, at any rate. For a wonderful work goes on in the soil, during the frosts of December and January ; a work that greatly affects the quality of the crop in spring and summer, and

right on to the golden autumn, too. And when the sheaves of yellow corn are gathered, or the harvest of rosy apples stored up, we have to remember that not only the sunshine has been at work, to produce the grain and fruit, but storm and cold had their part, too. And it has its part in bringing forth fruit in our lives. But what is Will saying? He would like to hear about the canoe in a gale, of which I spoke last time we were here.

Well! there is not much to tell, and I am not sure I remember it all. But I will tell you what I can.

It was when my brother was a graduate at the University. He and some of his fellow-students and friends, had agreed to go on a canoeing trip, during the long vacation, on some of the vast rivers and lakes of America.

My brother had an idea of his own as to the kind of canoe most suitable for the excursion ; and, as I told you, he made one for the purpose. At least, I am not quite sure that he actually *did* it all himself, but he did a great deal, so as to have it just as he had planned it. For, in this trip, they would have to carry with them all they

needed for some weeks ; excepting fresh provisions, milk, and such things. And, as they intended to "camp out," as they called it, each one took a tiny tent for sleeping in ; as they meant to travel by day—haul the canoes up on the shore at night, and make a little camp of their own, with their different tents. Among the things that my brother's canoe was to hold, was a portable stove, to cook by. It only looked like a small black box, but it was so nicely fitted together, that, when unpacked, it was transformed into a sufficiently large stove to cook for the six of them. And it held quite a stock of stewpans, each fitting one into the other, so that not an atom of space was wasted. Then, there was the tent, just large enough for one to sleep in ; and a water-proof coverlet of some kind ; a few tins of preserved meats, tea, coffee, sugar, &c., and one or two books. One of the friends who went with them was a doctor, so he had his small medicine case, I dare say, in case of accidents.

As they had no servants with them, and would be gone for some weeks, it had to be settled what part of the work each should take. The cooking was the worst part ! Who would do

that? Canoeing is hungry work, and they would never get on unless they had some good breakfasts and dinners! At length it was agreed that my brother should be cook; and one of the others was to be his helper, to wash the dishes and plates, and stewpans, &c.—a sort of kitchen-maid, you see. Then another was to put up and take down the tents; another to collect wood for the fire, and keep the fire going as long as it was needed; and the doctor, I think, and the other student, were to go off foraging for provisions. For as they could not carry all with them, they had to depend upon finding some farm or cottage, where they could buy bread and meat, and eggs and milk, &c. And quite a long way they would have to go, sometimes. But they generally managed to get all they wanted. And, as my brother had prepared himself for his work of cook, by a private study of a good cookery book, he often surprised the party by the sumptuous dinners he would give them—even making puddings out of some of his stores in the tins. I dare say they often look back now, and think how they enjoyed the breakfasts and dinners out in the open air.

After they had been camping out in this fashion for some time, they reached one of the vast lakes that America is famous for—an inland sea almost more than a lake. And here they encountered their first and only storm. They were (as far as I remember) a long way from the land when the gale sprang up, and, I suppose, they all saw the danger, and tried to make the shore at once. But, after a long time, this was found to be out of the question. I do not think they could even keep their canoes close enough to speak to each other, and the waves ran so high, that at last they were quite hidden from each other's sight, except for a glimpse now and then. And if a seam had parted—a plank given way then—well ! they would not all have reached home and friends again, as far as they could tell.

At last, when getting exhausted, one of them saw he was being carried near a tiny island. The surface of it was only a foot or two above the water, but it was large enough to form a kind of little harbour on the side sheltered by it from the wind. A glance was enough to take this in. And then, at the instant that he would have been swept past the island, a tremendous

effort turned the canoe out of the current, and into the comparatively calm water at the foot of it, where a few seconds was enough to leap on the flat shore, and drag the canoe out of danger of being carried away. And here, after a time, the whole of them found safety from the waves.

After their first feelings of thankfulness, for even such a shelter as that, they began to find out they were all getting faint from want of food. But what were they to do?—miles from land and houses, and on a ledge of ground where the waves sometimes dashed right over them. But a rummage in the cooking canoe brought to light a few odd things and a tin of vegetables, I think. So the stove was got out ; a fire of charcoal, which they happily had in case of emergency, was soon burning, and before long they were eating dinner, and drinking cups of hot coffee, as cheerfully as if the gale was not still raging around them.

It was some hours, I believe, before they could leave the little island that had been such a good friend in need. And very glad they were to get safe to land, where they “camped,” as usual. Very grateful too, I hope ; at least, one of them was, for his escape from danger. Very thankful

for that Hand that had sheltered them : the same Hand that shelters you and me to-day.

Now let us look back a little. We have seen seed on good ground, bringing forth fruit ; being helped in that by many a stormy watch night, it may be. We have seen the vessels that are doing good, brave work, and those so sadly "condemned already." And we have had a glance in the pearl of great price, of what the value is that God Himself puts upon those who are wholly trusting in Him. And as we say good-bye, for a little while, to some of those who have been with us to-day, let us ask ourselves to which of these different classes we belong. If, through His grace, we have a place with those who are washed in that blood that cleanses from all sin, then let us seek to remember more constantly the teaching of our Lord, in the chapter we have been looking at. But if any have to own that they are "condemned already," then, I say, there is still time for you to leave that place, and to become a part of the pearl of great price. Only do not delay until it is too late.





CHAPTER IV.

POWER FOR TRIUMPHANT WALK.

“The ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.” (MATT. XIV. 24, 25.)



OT a bright clear morning now, radiant with the peculiar brightness of the Eastern sunshine, and blue Galilee is not sparkling, and flashing in the golden sunlight; till the surface of the waters looks like myriads of diamonds. No! it is night time—a wild stormy night too. And there would be few boats put off now. But in the midst of the foaming waves, a little fishing smack is tossing up and down, now on the very crest of the billows, now

half hidden as it sinks into the trough of the sea. A few men are in it, and they are plying their oars with all their strength to keep their bark afloat, they think.

But just at the darkest hour—the hour before the dawn; they are conscious of some one who is nearing them. Not in any boat though—for to their terror and amazement they see what they think to be a spirit! treading on the heaving waters as on solid ground—and so frightened are they, that strong men as they are, they cry out for fear, but that cry reaches the ears and the heart of the one who is borne up by the wild waves as by a sea of crystal, and the voice that before calmed the storm, calms their fears now; and they find that their Master has not only power to still the storm, but to walk in majesty and authority on the very waters that meant death to any who, apart from Him, should attempt to tread the same strange track.

If you and I could have watched from the steep mountain top that night, how marvellous a scene we should have looked upon. The tossing boat, the terrified disciples, and one Kingly figure treading in all calm dignity the roaring waters.

But I think if we had suddenly seen one of the men in the boat leap overboard, and not sinking as we should naturally expect, but also walking on the same wonderful pathway, then I think our surprise would have been unbounded; and yet it really happened.

These same disciples whom we have seen on the shore, and then in the storm with their sleeping Master, are here now in the fourth watch of the night. And when Peter hears the voice of Him who spake as never man spake, he at once wants to be with Him. And hearing from Him the word "Come," he receives the power to tread the strange track that would take him to the Master.

Peter walks on the sea. How far he went we do not know, but if he had looked only at his Lord he could have gone to Him, but he looked at the storm, and got afraid of the place he was in, and then his power to walk on the sea fails, and he begins to sink.

Now you and I, dear young believer, are called to walk through this world, as Peter walked when looking at his Master. If we look at the waves, the foaming, tossing waves of difficulties within

and around, then we shall inevitably sink as Peter did. But why should he have feared the stormy sea, any more than a calm one? he was just as unable of himself, to walk on the yielding surface of the gently rippling, quiet waves, as when they were tossing mountains high.

You see, dear friends, the power for everything is Christ Himself. Now if He has said to you "Come," and He has—then He has given you the power to walk right through all the waves and billows, that try to keep us back from Him. Only we want to be all day and every day remembering this—that it must be "Looking off unto Jesus," if we really mean to tread triumphantly across the trackless path of this world.

I read a letter some time ago from a young lady who had been led to follow Christ while she was at school ; there she had heard of God's love for her, of Christ's wonderful work, and it was so strangely sweet, and glorious to her, that when she really believed it for herself, her whole heart and mind seemed full of the precious truth. She rejoiced in her newly found happiness, and loved to speak of the Saviour through whom it all came. And everything seemed bright around,

because of the brightness within. But at last A— had to leave school ; to say good-bye to her christian teacher, and to the girls in her class, many of whom were also trusting in the Lord. And then began a new path for A—, and she found before long that the waves were stormy—and she was afraid. And in writing to her old friend at school she said, “It seems so much harder to follow the Lord here, than it did when I was with you.” Was it really more difficult? I do not think so, but at school A— had looked more stedfastly at the Lord, thought more of His power for her, and did not stay to look at the hindrances. As long as Peter’s eyes were fixed on his Master, he walks safely, but he looks at the stormy billows, and then it is all over with him, he begins to sink. But does he go on sinking? No, why not? ah! although his fears overcome him, and so make his steps heavy as lead, and drag him downwards for a moment, yet He whom Peter followed at first is watching, and the cry for help is no sooner uttered, than that hand one day to be pierced for him, is stretched out, and Peter is safely sheltered, and learns in very truth that “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Now it is an immense comfort to me, to know that the same 'Arms' are stretched out to-day, for you, and for me. Have you never needed them to save you from sinking? since you believed I mean? Ah! I know well, alas! what it is to let the waves take my eyes off Him, and then only His tender pity can save. Shame and sorrow for us. All glory to His matchless grace, that never fails to put out the helping hand in response to the weakest cry from one of His own.

But the thing that often hinders us is that we do *not* cry to Him. Suppose if Peter had called out "Andrew and John, come and help me," would that have been any good, do you think? Why, you all smile at the very absurdity of such an idea. And yet that is precisely what you and I often do. Instead of going at once to the Lord, do you not often speak to a friend and ask for his advice, when anything puzzles you, or troubles you, and you don't know a bit what you ought to do? Of course you do, and so do I.

Then we are doing very much the same thing that causes us to smile at its foolishness when we imagine Peter doing it.

Let us seek to get into the habit of looking to

the Lord *first* in everything. We may cultivate other habits, why not this? Let us study to do so. For it will, I am convinced, be a great step on the way to being "stedfast, unmovable," instead of being tossed to and fro at the pleasure of every wind that seeks to make us afraid.

And we see what a good thing it was for Peter that he trusted the Lord to save him. And he learned something more from it, I think, than he had ever understood before; the other disciples owned it too, for let us look and see what they said to the Lord. When He entered into the ship with Peter, in verse 33 we read "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him; saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Now this is a great advance in their acknowledgment of whom their Master was. Have you reached it, dear ones?

Are you conscious that God's voice has spoken to you by His Son? That the very one that dried up the Red Sea; that rained down angels' food for murmuring Israelites, is here owned by these disciples as Son of God. Jesus of Nazareth is the Jehovah of the desert. God's love is shewn out to you and me in this being a veritable fact; that

to-day God has "spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he hath made the worlds."

Yet this glorious One has stooped down to speak to you and me. Do you not see what dignity has been conferred upon us by the very fact of being spoken to by such an One? And He has spoken in such a way, that it seems almost impossible to misunderstand the love, and grace, that shone out in all those long years, when the Son of God was making known to men and women on this earth, what the heart of God was for them. But it is so hard for us to believe in the full, deep, perfect love of God, His unwearying love ; that bears with us in all our folly, ever seeking our good, even before we learn to trust Him. And when we really do trust all that we are, all that we have done to Him, what then? Ah! then we find that this perfect love is so far beyond our conception, that we are altogether lost in it, and to understand it we must turn to Christ—as we know Him as the One who went down into death for us, the One who (still a man) is glorified now, and gone up, far above all heavens, to the place He has won for us, and which He will soon take us into ;

that place which is already our home, because He is there, and we are united to Him. Ah! dear friends ; if only you and I remembered this more constantly, we should not get so cast down, and discouraged, should we ? But we so often forget that the precious Saviour is as really able and willing to help us in all our little worries now, as though we could see Him bodily present with us, as He was with the disciples on the sea.

He is the same to-day. A glorious reality. Not a mightier angel, or Spirit, than any other, as I once heard a young lady say, Jesus always seemed to her, but God manifest in flesh—the *man* Christ Jesus. One whom we can lean upon, and speak to, and turn to in everything. One whom our eyes shall look upon ; who is now our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend. Think of the love of God that suffered His beloved Son to leave that glorious home, in the Light that none of mortal men can look upon, and pass by all the shining worlds above us, and come down to our little rolling planet, and live here as a Man for over thirty years of tenderest, toiling love, to shew us what God was and is—to speak to us—for this is the only way that we can hear the voice of God.

Let me then ask the question, Have we all heard this voice?

No power, again I say—to tread the waves if we have not. Only a few hours ago I went to see a poor, dying woman, around whom the dark waves seemed surging and swelling in awful power. Shall I tell you a little of her home? Imagine then that you are standing with me before a poor little cottage, one of a row such as you often see in country places. We knock, and knock again; no answer, then a girl from one of the other cottages sees us, and calls to us “Will you go up, please, there's nobody there to let you in.” So we open the door, and setting foot inside, very nearly tumble into the room, for the uneven floor is much lower than the doorstep outside. No one is in the poor, dark, little room, no fire, no comfort there; we go out into a kind of wash-house, that is next to the room, and see there a tiny staircase, that is certainly rather difficult to mount, so steep and narrow is it.

After six or seven steep stairs, we find ourselves in the sick woman's room. Do things look any brighter here? If most of you know anything about sick-rooms, it is probably

through having seen friends who were ill—or when you have not been well yourself ; and then you found that every comfort, and luxury perhaps, that love could get, was to be found in that one room.

But here in this one we are visiting, there is so little comfort, that I had almost said there was none. A tiny room again, with an equally tiny window, that had not for a long time known what it was to be clean or bright, a very dirty little curtain half-way across it, and under this window a table, the grimy round top of which is crowded with the remains of the last meal that the family had had.

Almost touching the table is the bed upon which lies the woman we have come to see, and a very pitiful picture she makes as we look at her. Wasted to a mere skeleton, racked by a terrible cough that makes great drops of perspiration stand on her face, and spite of the little fire that burns in the grate (the only cheery thing in the room), she vainly tries to keep herself warm by being huddled up in a ragged shawl that almost hides the once white, but now dingy, grey clothing underneath. The soiled sheets and blanket, old and

thin, make one really shudder, and the misery and poverty seem ten thousand times worse, because we know that she who lies there has no hope beyond getting better. Let us sit down by her side and see if it is really as bad as that.

We begin to speak of the cough, and she tells us she should be better if she could get rid of that, and as the warm weather comes she hopes she will lose it, and then she may get strong again. Yet we know that the skilful, kind doctor who visits her has said that her days are almost run out. So we remember that spite of her vain hopes, we must not forget the reality. And as gently as such a truth can be told, we try to make her see the need of looking beyond this world altogether ; then we find how dark it all is for her. Not a ray of hope. But does she know that she is lost ? No ! I do not think she does. For as I speak of her past life she says wearily, " Yes ; we are all sinners." And then we have to tell her that that will not do for God—that she will have to stand alone before Him ; how is she going to meet Him against whom she has sinned all her life without even thinking about it ?

As we speak of judgment after death, of

God's wrath against sin, of His love for the sinner, His willingness to save, she rouses into a deeper interest as though feeling that it truly did concern her.

"Ah! I have put off thinking of it till it's a'most too late," she gasps. And seeing how exhausted she is we leave her, after slowly saying over to her several times, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Then we grope our way down the stairs again, and feel how sweet and fresh the pure air outside is, after the sick-room. Very glad to get away now that our message has been given, glad above all that that *sweet* message has been sent down to ruined creatures like ourselves. As we all walk home, thinking over what we have seen and heard, can we help praising Him who died to save us from that "after death the judgment"? Now do you wonder that I said the surges and billows were rolling around that dying woman? And as I went towards my home, this was the question that came to me, "Will that poor thing be able to walk on the waters of death"? Will she? Ah! dear friends, I do not know. If she looks away from

everything else to Jesus the Lord, then she will, even now. For the same One that called Peter to tread the waves, has called her by the words she has had repeated to her. It all depends upon whether she receives them. If she does, then she will not sink. So once more we have to turn to the One who is mighty to save, and speak to Him about her, and leave her there. Before our chats by the sea are over, we may see the poor sufferer again, and know how it is with her.

But, oh ! if you had seen her, you would never think of putting off these things until you were ill, Bodily pain and weariness almost prevent clear thoughts about anything. How much easier to settle it while you are well and strong : able to think and understand the risk and danger of delay.

The very same week that I went to see this woman, brought a letter from a person in great trial and sorrow ; but it was all cheered and lightened by a few words at the end : "I am so thankful that I was led to give myself altogether to Jesus, before this ; for, if it were not for Him, I do not think that I could go on. But I know He does all things for good."

You see that she treads the sea in triumph. She knows that she could not go on alone. But there is no danger of sinking for her, while with the Lord, looking to Him.

Are you and I, dear friends, walking across the sea of life, with our eyes and hearts turned to Him? I do not ask you, are we living faultlessly? We all know, each for ourselves, the frequent failure, sad, shameful confessions of turning away: but are our hearts set to this one purpose of walking with God? He knows how I covet it for each of us. And, thanks to Himself, we can trust Him to perfect it in us, "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.)

Well! we have listened, to-day, to majestic, royal, powerful tones from the sea—to sad, wailing ones, also; speaking of death, and sorrow, and judgment. Now, for a moment before we separate, let us listen to a fresh, hopeful voice; that may cheer us, after the gloom of the dreary night that we have looked at.

Come again to a little cottage; open the door. No dirt here, a bright fire crackles and flashes in the grate, the deal table is clean and bright,

and the brick floor is red and spotless as can be. An old man, nearly blind, sits on one side of the fire, and his wife rises as we enter.

What a dear old face! we are ready to exclaim; round, and fresh, and cheerful, spite of the many furrows and wrinkles that tell of years of toil, even if the snowy, smooth hair, peeping from the old-fashioned border of the close cap, did not tell the same tale. But we soon see that poverty is here, too. Only such perfect order and cleanliness takes away the squalor and misery.

Now, we find that this old couple have been sorely tried this winter. The husband's health has failed. He is an old man, too—over seventy; and cannot do hard work when well. Now he can do none.

Their children are all grown up, and have their own cares and needs; and, as the wife says, "If they can give me sixpence now and then, it's all they can do." And so the old people have been sorely afraid of this winter, and the husband says he fears they must go into "the House"—meaning the Union. He knows nothing, I fear, of the faith that makes his wife say, "No! I don't think it will come to that; the Lord's our Shepherd, He

won't let us want." And when her husband has gone out, to walk down the road to neighbours, who help him the little that is in their power, the wife reaches down the worn, old Bible, and gets fresh strength, to try and go on trusting, spite of the trouble. Yes, God honours her trust : for a gentleman, who has never seen either of them, but who hears an account of their need, is so moved by it, that he sends a sum of money to a friend, to give the old people a little each week, for two months ; and by that time, the worst of the winter will be over, and the husband may get some work, and things be brighter. Any way, it relieves the fear of having to go into "the House," and they can sit by the fireside, and know that, for the present, they are safe ; and for the future, surely,

"He who has help'd them hitherto,
Will help them all their journey through."

And so another one is walking on through the storm-tossed pathway that leads to the Port.

Perhaps, some of you have only just made a start on this pathway ; it is all untried as yet, except a few first faltering steps. Well ! dear

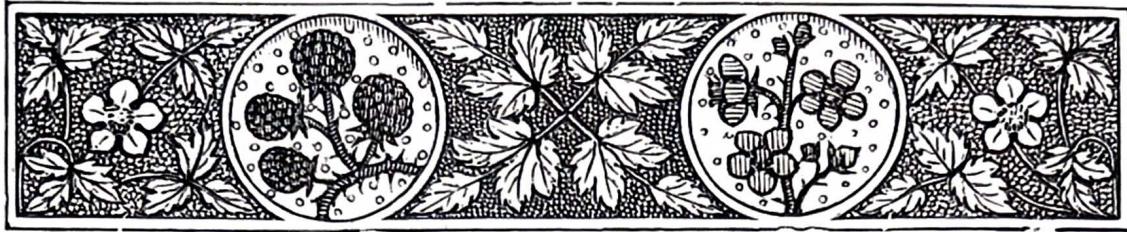
friends, take courage. You may most truly say, as another has done before :

“ I launch me forth upon a sea
Of boundless love and tenderness.”

His love and tenderness are really the answer to the storms that may come, but there is no uncertainty, or should not be, as to the result.

“ Safe to the strand, safe to the strand,
The end is this.
And then, with Him, go hand in hand
Far into bliss.”





CHAPTER V. EVERY NEED SUPPLIED.

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine.”—

(HAGGAI 2.)



HAT *shall* we do to-day? see it's pouring in torrents! And more than one face looks rather gloomy, as they watch the downpour, outside; and when we get rain in Pineland, it is not a gentle shower, but rushing torrents, as it were, that soon form a swift stream in the road outside, and every little hollow becomes a pool.

But as rapidly as it comes, does it pass away. A few hours after, excepting that everything has a sweeter fragrance and a more vivid colouring, we should hardly know that there had been such a

storm ; for the sandy soil, in summer at least, soon drinks up every drop of the welcome rain.

As we cannot go to the beach as usual, how would you all like to have our "half-hour" here, instead? And many voices soon tell how glad they are to find something to occupy the wet morning.

Would you like to hear a little about the money in the Bank of England? Then I will tell you a little of what I heard from a friend who went there some time ago.

He had come over from America, and was visiting different places in Europe. He wanted to go through the private part of the Bank of England, and, by a special order from one of the governors, he was taken through all the rooms, cellars, and places where visitors are not usually admitted. As one of the head officials went with our friend, he was able to shew him everything. And he told us, afterward, that the effect of seeing so inconceivable an amount of wealth, was perfectly bewildering.

At one time, he held in one hand a *million* of money in bank-notes, and in the other hand, a thousand pounds in gold. Some of the rooms he

passed through were full of bank-notes. And he was told that the stock of paid notes for five years, fill 13,400 boxes. If these boxes were placed side by side, they would reach $2\frac{1}{3}$ miles. Or, if the notes were taken from the boxes, and formed into a pile, they would reach to a height of five miles, and weigh over ninety tons. Just think of the enormous value of these notes. So enormous, that millions alone will not do to count it by, and we have to go to billions to express it. And this does not take in any of the gold. None of the huge ingots or bars of the precious metal ; none of the "hills" of silver, either. What their value would amount to, I cannot remember.

But I will tell you now what reason I had for letting you know all this. It was that you might, perhaps, get a glimpse of the wonderful love of that One who has truly said, "The silver is *mine*, and the gold is *mine* ;" and who yet, "for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." The wealth heaped together in *one* large bank, amazes us ; but think of all the combined riches of all the banks in the world, and all the mines of gold and silver, and then remember that the One to whom it all belongs became,

for your sake and for my sake, so poor, that, when down in this world, He had no place to lay His head.

And now we will turn to the place where we see this same mighty One shewing His power over the fish of the sea, and how He can use one of them to supply the need of those who follow Him. Let us read Matthew xvii. 24, to the end of the chapter.

Can we not all imagine the scene? The dark-eyed group of men who gathered this tribute money, which was imposed upon all Jews for the temple worship; and which would, therefore, be collected by Jews. And Peter's answer to the men does not shew that he remembered *who* His Master was. For when they said, "Does not your master pay tribute?" they knew very little of what was really involved in their question. But, do you not think that Peter was anxious to shew these suspicious tax-gatherers that his Master was able to satisfy their claims? And so he takes upon himself to answer, Yes! to their question, forgetting that his divine Master, as Son of that God to whom the temple had belonged, was really free from all tax or tribute, even in the lowly place He had taken as man.

But see Peter, after his answer, hurriedly going into the house where that Master was—and, I expect, going to his own little store of money, as he thought—to pay the tribute. But now he is to see some further proof of what glory belongs to the One he is following. I think the Lord's question must have reminded Peter of that “voice from the glory,” that, not long before, had told him that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God; as we see in the previous part of this chapter. But while his Master shews him that as Son, He is free from tribute, yet, in His next words, we see the infinite love that led Him to put Peter—and you and me, too, if we are His—into the same place with Himself.

And now, instead of *Peter* paying the demand, it is his Master who meets all claims, and sends Peter out down to the shore for the most surprising catch he ever had.

And as the fish obediently brought the piece of silver to him, I should think Peter must have remembered the words in the prophet, “The silver is *mine*, and the gold is *mine*, saith the Lord of Hosts.” And, whether he did think of it or not, it is for you and me, to-day, to adoringly

remember that it was the same mighty One who could thus justly claim all the gold and silver of the universe, who has paid a far mightier debt for us than He satisfied for Peter that day. And we are *free*, free to follow and serve the One who has bought us, "Not with silver or gold," but with his own "precious blood."

As Peter took the piece of money, and gave it to the men who collected it, I think he must have had a deeper love for his Master, as he saw the grace that could put him—the lowly fisherman—into the same place as his Master: a Son of the living God. And this glorious position is ours, if we all take the same place that Peter did—a believer in the Son of the living God. Are you that, to-day? those who, with me, are looking at this scene on the shores of far-off Galilee.

Those tax-gatherers are gone; Peter is resting, now; "those blessed feet" no longer tread the sacred soil of the Holy Land. The very city, itself, is a heap of ruins, where nothing but the shattered remains of marble columns tell us that Capernaum once was a proud, stately city. And, although—

“The blue waves still roll over deep Galilee,”

as far as we know, unaltered ; yet, everything else that made Capernaum a busy and pleasant city, has passed away. But the One who spoke to Peter then, is just the same to-day, in His love for His own. And as He supplied Peter’s need that day, so now we get this precious verse : “My God shall supply all *your* need.” What is your need, to-day ? You have need, whatever it may be. “My God shall supply it.” Can you take that, and rest upon it, dear friends ? Your need of courage in owning Him ; your need of love for His name ; your need of faithfulness, of wisdom, of the many things that we find out as we go along the road, that we come short in. Can we all trust to Him to supply them all ?

“My God shall supply all your need.” “Where are those words ?” said a poor woman to me, one day. And so we will turn to Philippians iv. 19, and see for ourselves. How is it that such words can truly be said to sinful men and women, down in this blood-stained world ? Well ! the way has been opened.

Some time ago, I knew an officer in the army,

who had lived in India a good many years. He was one day telling me about the city of Delhi, which, I dare say, many of you have read about, in the history of the terrible sufferings endured by many of the English people there, during the Indian Mutiny. And my friend was speaking of the way in which this Imperial city of Delhi was saved from the savage mutineers, and opened to the delivering English forces, because two devoted men, and a few comrades, laid down their lives to save those whom it was impossible otherwise to rescue.

I cannot tell you the names of those gallant men ; I only know that the two officers who led them were named Home and Salkeld. Delhi was in the power of the rebels, and the embattled walls of solid masonry had resisted all the efforts of the English to make a breach, and so gain an entrance into the guilty city.

At last, those two men, and nine others who had volunteered their aid, resolved to attempt the task of shattering one of the massive gates in the wall, that kept their forces outside. They knew they went to their death, for the powder bags which they successfully carried to the gate,

were to be fired, and the explosion would involve them in instant destruction. But most of them were shot down ere they reached the gate. The others completed the work, fired the powder, and the result was the shattering of the gate, and the rescue of thousands of lives, in consequence of the English having a way opened for them to take possession of the city.

But—that little band of men laid down their lives to save others. We must admire their self-sacrifice, and remember them gratefully. But, suppose you and I had been among those who were actually rescued, and able to pass out over that road that their death had made safe and peaceful for us to escape by? Don't you think we should for ever have loved their names, and been grateful to the end of our lives for their timely aid? Of course we should! And yet, dear young friends, perhaps some of you have never thought much about the One who went *alone* to His death for you. No one could go with Him there. "Alone he bore the cross," and so opened the Way of Life, for you and for me. Where such words as "My God shall supply all your need," can be said to us, is it too much to

ask you to let your lives be spent for Him? Do not think because you are young, and feel you know very little how to please Him, that therefore you cannot do it. Only be like Daniel, and have what he had—a stedfast “purpose of heart,” not to defile yourselves with this polluted world, and to let your life here be spent for Him—and you will find that as to the details of it He will teach you.

And we must not think that we need to spend our lives in doing *great* things, either. I once read a line, that fastened itself in my memory, and I will tell you what it was : “Do noble things, not dream them, all day long.” We are very apt to dream of them, and never get beyond dreaming. You are doing *noble* work, if it is for Christ.

Some time ago, I was speaking to a Bible-class about that grand verse, “ye serve the Lord Christ;” and trying to shew them how all we did might be done for Him, although it might only be the ordinary duties of our daily lives.

One of the girls in the class had, some time before, found what a real thing it was to be saved. She was a gentle, timid girl, and never seemed to get into the mischief that many of her companions did. For a long time, she took no particular

interest in the Bible lessons, and our talks about them. But one day she quietly gave me a little note, telling me that at last she knew the Lord Jesus for herself, as her own Saviour. And she said, "I never thought, until lately, that I was lost. I used to think I was good enough as I was, but now I have found out that I am a poor lost girl in myself; but I believe that Jesus died for me, and I do want to serve Him; and I am so glad to think that I can do everything for Him. My text, this morning, made me so joyful. It was the same one you were talking to us about, 'Ye serve the Lord Christ.' And it seems so beautiful to think that I can serve Him."

That is more than a year ago, and this same girl is still going on, trying, I believe, to carry out the words that made her joyful. Her friends, who are often lonely and tried, speak of her as the sunshine of their lives. And, weak girl as she is, they say that they do not know what they should do without her.

So, although it is not given to many of us to do such deeds as Grace Darling accomplished, on this restless sea at our feet, yet we may all do something to make life brighter for those around. It may

only be in overcoming a bad habit ; but the Lord will be with you in that. Suppose you have a hot temper, that, before you gave yourself to Christ, was always getting you into trouble, and causing sorrow to your friends. Well ! you have the same temper now. But there is this vast difference : it had real dominion over you before ; *now it has not*. And you are to own this, and be on your watch against giving way to it, as though it still had the place it once had. In Romans vi. 14, you will see what God says about this : "Sin shall not have dominion over you." And in that same precious chapter, which we, who have believed, cannot study too much : you will see how God tells us to reckon as He does ; and to yield ourselves to Him, as being set free to do so, whilst before we believed, we were, without knowing it, slaves of sin. Sin is still in us, but it is no longer our master. Take care, then, that we do not give it its old place.

In Central India, the traveller finds a wonderful river, called the Luni. On one side of the river he sees the most lovely fertility. Luxuriant crops do the natives reap on this side. But look across to the other side, and there is nothing fertile

there. No waving crops of golden grain ; nothing but an arid desert, although on the brink of the very same river. How is this ? The same stream a blessing to the people on one bank, and a misfortune to those on the other. The cause lies deep down in the bed of the stream. On the side where it is fertile, the waters flow over a bed of sand for the whole course of the river, and its waters are sweet. On the sterile bank, it flows over a bed of *salt*, and its waters are worse than useless. But the cause is in the bed of the stream.

Now, if you let your lives flow out in the power of what you are in God's sight, as belonging to His Son, then they will be like the sweet waters, a source of blessing wherever they flow. But allow those same lives to pass on in the way that they did before you knew that you were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and they will bring no happiness to others ; no rest or joy to yourselves ; and, most important of all, no glory to God.

Of course, dear young friends, you all see, do you not ? that I speak now to those who have begun to follow the Lord—saved by His grace. No possibility of any one else bringing glory to

God. And we shall find, if in need, that help is often sent from most unpromising quarters. Who would have thought of finding the piece of money by fishing for it? Yet that was the Lord's way in that day. Of course, that was a miracle, and I know the day of such displays of God's power is over for the present. But things just as really ordered by Him, and quite as wonderful for us, happen in many of our lives, to-day. If you have christian friends, I have no doubt that they could tell you of the most remarkable answers to their prayers. Not an outward miracle, like the fish carrying the tribute money to Peter ; but as verily ordered by the same Master to relieve their need, as that scene at which we have been looking. Here I must remind myself, and you too, dear friends, that God does not *always* interpose to take us out of trouble, or relieve our necessities. That trouble may be the very answer to our prayers for more perfect dependence upon Himself—for more likeness to Himself. Imagine a young oak-tree spreading out its branches, getting vigour and strength from the sunlight and air, year after year seeing the new rings formed in its trunk, but not satisfied with its *downward* growth. Well!

imagine this tree asking that its roots might strike deeper, might pierce through the clinging soil, and spread wider beneath, as its branches above. Now, in what way would the answer come? Go to a man skilled in the mysteries of wood-craft; ask the question of him, and he will tell you that it is the fierce gale, the stormy wind, that most of all sends those powerful tendrils down, down, deeper and deeper, wider and farther, into the supporting soil.

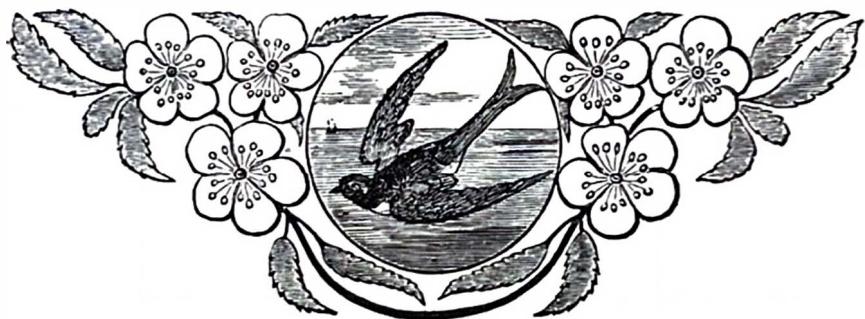
So do not let us dread the storm, nor be afraid of losing anything that keeps us in the very smallest degree away from Himself. He will not send single rough wind, that you and I could do without. He will take from us nothing that His love can take pleasure in. And, surely, you and I want nothing else! But then we must know Him well. And, dear friends, I feel how greatly we need to be reminded of this. How much less we know Him than we ought! But there is always this to encourage us: that, when we see where we have failed, we can always set ourselves earnestly to remedy it, in dependence upon Him. We learn to know Him in this book, that we have been looking into—a book of word pictures, where we

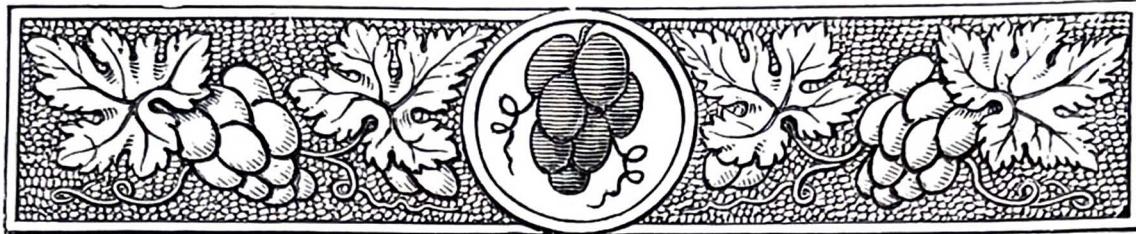
learn to know God, and ourselves. There we see all His heart of love for such as we are ; all His work to ransom us, all His labour to cleanse us, all His power to lead, and keep us on our way home to Himself. And it is the knowledge of Him that shews us how worthless all the things merely of this world are.

We know the counterfeit through familiarity with the real. I heard of a man, the other day, who pretended to buy something of a very poor fellow, and he offered him in payment what he called a sovereign. The other man was so unused to handling gold, that he took it, not seeing that it was not even an imitation of a sovereign but merely a kind of medal or counter. He found out his mistake when it was too late. Now, if he had known a sovereign well, he would not have been so easily robbed. And if you and I know the truth well, we shall not easily accept the false.

“ ’Tis that look that melted Peter,
’Tis that face that Stephen saw,
’Tis that heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw.”

“Draw, and win, and fill completely ;
Till the cup o’erflow the brim.
What have we to do with idols,
That have companied with Him ?”





CHAPTER VI.

JEHOVAH JIREH.

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”—

HEBREWS XIII. 5.



DOES any one care to hear a really true story of a girl whom I have seen and talked to?" I need only ask such a question as this, when I have a number of my young friends near me, and at once I am surrounded by an eager group, all ready to listen to a story.

The one I am going to tell you now, is of a girl who heard the same voice that took Andrew and Peter away from their fishing in the Lake of Galilee, and has taken them now into the rest and joy of being with the Lord for ever and ever.

I shall call our new little friend Ruth. That was not her real name, but it suited her very well when I knew her, and when she told me what I shall try to remember of her history. When Ruth was a girl, books were not to be had so cheaply as they are now. They were rare presents then; very expensive, and highly valued by the happy girl who became the possessor of one.

Ruth had very few books that told about the love of God. I do not know that she even had a Bible of her own then. But she found out, somehow, that she was not fit for heaven, and as she had an idea that she might die at any moment (for I think she was never very strong), this sense of being a sinner, and so unfit for God, seemed to follow her everywhere.

In those days, the Bible was not spread broadcast, as it is now, and, also, in many places the Gospel was very seldom preached with the freeness and publicity of our own time. The only place where Ruth heard preaching was at the church, where she went with her parents; and, eagerly as she listened, she never found any help, or any answer to her unspoken question, "How can I be ready to die"?

By some means or other, Ruth one day heard of a gentleman who had spoken of being saved for ever—of being pardoned, and knowing what peace with God was ; and a great deal more that Ruth did not then understand at all.

But she knew that she would never be at all likely to see this gentleman at her father's house ; for Mr. M—— was not an attendant at church, and only those who were, were ever considered as friends by Ruth's parents.

For some time longer the anxious girl went on, I think it was partly pride that hindered her, for she seemed to think that *she* must *do* something. And so she had to find out that she was quite without the power to help herself. At last she grew so miserable, that she made up her mind to do a very bold thing—at least, it seemed so to her. And that was to go to Mr. M——'s house, and speak to him herself, and see if he could help her.

Now, I do not know what any of you would have done ; but I see very well where Ruth made a great mistake. She did not go to the only One who could really give her all she needed—the Lord Himself.

Well ! at last, Ruth took the desperate step, as it seemed to her, of venturing to knock at Mr. M——'s door ; and soon found herself in his library, alone with him. But then all her courage failed her, and she burst into tears, and could not speak a word for a long time. But by gentle, tender questions, her new friend soon found the cause of her trouble. And, if she had been willing to give up the thought of doing something, perhaps that day might have been the one in her life never after to be forgotten : the day when she should find the Saviour.

As it was, she came away almost as sad as when she went. Not quite so sad, however ; for she carried away a book that Mr. M—— lent her, thinking she might find something in it that would give her comfort. It was not a book that many of you would ever think of reading. I once saw a copy of the same work, and I know I thought it very dry indeed. But, to Ruth, there always remained a charm about it. When first I saw her, her girlish days had long been a memory of the past ; but she still spoke with love of the book that was first lent her by one of the Lord's own people.

Well, the prize was taken home, and pored over for a time. And Ruth would most likely have read it quite to the end ; but one day her father saw her intent upon the strange volume, and told her to bring it to him. Great was his anger at finding that it had been lent by Mr. M——, and equally great was his little daughter's dismay when her father told her she was to read no more of it, but take it back at once ; and also to tell the owner that she was forbidden to see or speak to him again. But, perhaps, the book had done its work. Written by a well-known christian clergyman, for those who were anxious about their souls, it may no doubt have been of use to some, in pointing them to the word of God. But all poor Ruth gathered from it then, was, that other people had been as miserable as she herself.

I cannot tell you much about her for a time after this. She sometimes spoke to her mother about her troubled heart and conscience, and longed to go to hear Mr. M—— preach, but was never allowed to do so, until one happy day, when visiting some friends, I think. Then her wish was fulfilled, and hearing the precious words, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15), then, for the first time, did Ruth know something like joy and hope. Of course, she might have had perfect peace, if she had just rested on that word. But although after this memorable day it was never the same with her as before, yet, still clinging to her idea of being or doing something to fit herself for heaven, she was unable to enter into the perfect peace that the Lord gives to those who take His gift of eternal life *as a gift*. Nothing that we can do will get it—it is the "gift of God."

Ruth was decided, now, to follow the One who came to save sinners, and this soon brought her into trouble. At last, her father resolved that she should be sent away from home. So Ruth was told that, as she would not obey her father's wishes and give up the strange notions she had adopted, she was to go to a distant town, and there learn to support herself, until she was willing to conform to the rules of her parents' house. When the poor girl heard this, it must have been a great trouble to her, on account of her timidity, which she never seems to have altogether lost. But, at the same time, there was a feeling of intense relief; for now

she thought instead of getting to gospel preaching once a year or so, and then against her parents' wishes ; now, at any rate, she would be free to go, and she resolved that she would do so.

But just before she left the house on the day when her journey to the new home was to be taken, she thought that it would be right to tell her father that now she must openly avow herself as a follower of the Lord, and take her place with His people. So she told him as they went. I do not think she had any idea how greatly this would anger her parent. But after some time, finding her unshaken by all he said, he told Ruth that as she chose to go her own way, she no longer had a home ; for his doors would be closed against her, until she owned that she was wrong.

Poor Ruth could only repeat some words that seemed to dart into her mind, and she said aloud, “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.”

Her father replied, “Ah ! it's easy enough to *say* that, but there is the proving it.” And he turned away—although he was walking with her on the first stage of her journey—turned away, without a word of farewell, and walked back the

way they had come ; leaving his daughter desolate and sad, to make her way alone to the place that was now to be her only home.

His words seemed to ring in her ears. Yes ; it had at last to be really proved by her. Would the Lord take her up ; would He take care of her ? —homeless and friendless now. Would He indeed be enough ? And so, with her mind almost overwhelmed, she finished at last her sorrowful journey, to find herself among strangers. But, surely, not alone ; for He who loved her was now to shew her how more than able He is to fulfil every promise.

I must now pass over many months, in which Ruth found that she could never trust the Lord too much, nor herself too little—lessons, sometimes very hard to learn, but lessons that must be learned before we know what lasting joy means. Not that Ruth had found out the whole truth of this. Happy only for a time, and then full of doubts and fears, she did not answer to her Master's desire for her, for that was that her joy might be full. But she was spoilt for anything else. She knew that this world could never give it her, and so she was saved from looking for it there.

But I must go on, and tell you that when

she was settled in her new home, and had time to think of her friends at the old home, she felt she must write to them, and speak by letters, if they would not hear her voice.

At that time letters were not sent for a penny, as they are now, and besides that, she had no money given her, but what she worked for, it often was a matter of self-denial to pay the postage, and very hard indeed did poor Ruth feel it to be, when one day, she received a message from her mother telling her not to write any more, as her father was still so angry with her, that he had ordered all her letters to be thrown on the fire, without being even opened. I dare say all this was too much for the sorrowful girl, for now her health failed, and she was scarcely able to manage the duties she was expected to perform. At last the holidays were near at hand. Ruth had no home waiting to receive her, and did not know any one who would welcome her on a visit. You may all imagine that she thought over it a good deal. How would you feel, those of you who are away at school a great part of the year, and always go home for the holidays, if by some means you were prevented doing so? Do you not think you would

grieve over it very much ? I am sure that you would, and so did our young friend, I have no doubt.

At last she thought that she must speak to the Mistress, and ask her if she would allow her to remain there for the holidays, as her parents had made no arrangements for her. To her dismay she was kindly told that she needed a change on account of her health, and she must go somewhere. They could not think of her losing the opportunity of having a rest and change.

Ruth could now only think of one place to which she could turn. She had an aunt living a long distance away, whom she had seen when she herself was quite a child, but not since. And from the manner in which this aunt had been spoken of at home Ruth had a hope that she was one of the Lord's people ; not knowing what else to do, she wrote to her aunt asking if she might come there for the holidays.

As there had been delay before she had really made up her mind what to do, Ruth now found that there would not be time for her to get a reply from her aunt before the day fixed for her to start. So she had to go without even knowing whether she would be received or not.

At last she reached the end of the journey and was standing with a beating heart outside the house where her aunt lived. For some time she did not dare to knock, but when she did so the door was opened by an old servant whom she was glad to find she remembered. And she exclaimed "Oh Mary ! does my aunt expect me ?" And I think you will all be glad to hear the welcome reply she received, " Why yes, Miss ! Mistress has been looking for you all day."

And then she led Ruth to a pretty parlour and opened the door. For a few seconds Ruth felt as if everything was reeling around her. At last she saw a white-haired, sweet-faced lady coming to receive her, and then some words that sounded strangely comforting fell on her tired spirit, and " Come in, thou blessed of the Lord " (quaint and strange as such a way of speaking seems to us now) was enough to tell her that her aunt was indeed a real friend. As she told me all this, long, long years after it had happened, the tears filled her eyes, and she spoke of that dearly loved aunt as the one friend in whom she found all she had so hungered for. Now at last she had again some one to love—and be loved by. And the best of all,

some one who would teach her more of the One whom she loved, but of whom she knew little yet, as to the full peace and joy that was the right of those whom He had redeemed.

Ruth soon found that her aunt knew a great deal about the trials she had had. Her mother had written and told all she could, no doubt hoping that Ruth would find a home there, as she did—at least for a time.

A very happy time too. For now she found in her aunt one who was peacefully resting in what had been perfectly finished for her by Another; not looking at her own heart to find anything good there, but knowing that it was “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” She owned what God had said was true, and “looked off unto Jesus” for everything.

Ruth’s days passed rapidly and joyfully too. It was an intense pleasure to visit some of the poor people around with her aunt; to hear the conversation when she met with friends, who, like herself, were rejoicing in the Lord. And many precious lessons did Ruth learn there.

When at last the holidays came to an end, and she returned to the town, it was with a new

spring of confidence and peace, that came from having learnt during her visit, more of the love of God as the One who gave His Son to die for her ; and more of the perfection of that work of the Saviour, of that blood that washes “ whiter than snow.” And as the days, and months, and years glided past, our young friend found that the word she had left her home with was perfectly true. The Lord did indeed take her into His own keeping, and give her every needful thing. Like you and me, plenty of mistakes did Ruth make, many failures to grieve over in her daily life did she find, for her heart was just like yours and mine—the very opposite of anything good.

But spite of all her failures and mistakes, Ruth sought to follow the Lord, and His grace is so far above all our thoughts, that she very often found wants provided for, and friends raised up in a most wonderful way.

Some time after her happy visit to her aunt she was taken ill, and the doctor’s bill for attending her was enough to take nearly all her money, and she had only a few shillings left.

She very much needed some warm, winter clothing and boots, and other things. But when

she found that she had no money left, she tried to think she did not really *need* these things and could do without them. And yet she said (when she told me), “that word came to my mind ‘your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things,’ but because I had not the money I wanted to feel I did not need them, instead of trusting Him to give me all that I wanted.” Well, one day a friend said to Ruth, “I have a piece of cloth that will make you a large, warm cloak ; if you care to have it.” And when another acquaintance heard of the gift, she offered to make it for her.

Then another made her a bonnet; and some one else sent her warm boots, until (before she had suffered much from the cold) shew as supplied with all she required. And now her young girlhood’s days were nearly over, and we will say good bye to her. For the rest of her life has only shewn that the Lord’s word never fails. He has never ceased to care for her, and now in her old age she loves to speak of His tender love, His unfailing grace, His never-tiring care of the feeblest of His own, and she longs that others may rest in it now, and more perfectly than when young she did herself.

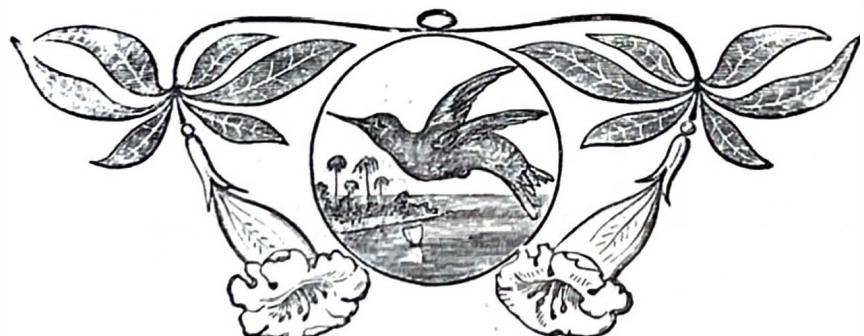
What is the dearest name to Ruth now, do you suppose? I quite believe every one of you could tell me at once, without any risk of making a mistake.

Would you not say the "name of Jesus"? Yes! you would. Well, now has that name any sweetness for you? Does it send a thrill of joy through you? Do you know that your poor name is *in His heart*? And not all the glory of heaven makes Him forget you?

Oh, if you know nothing of all this, then you are poor, and miserable indeed, whether you believe it or not!

Do you believe that that name is dearer to God than any other; that He has commanded that Name shall be honoured above every other and yet it is nothing to you? Take care lest that Name condemns you. Do you ask why I have told you this history of Ruth? Because it is that of a young girl like many of you, no stronger or wiser than yourselves, but one whose heart was set above. She was resolved at all costs to know for herself what salvation meant, and after a life of many years, when she can look back and see how and where she then failed, still she tells you there is nothing like following the Lord. And you all

know that Ruth had very few of the helps that most of you have. Will you not let the story of her young days influence yours? Some of you may have been thinking that it was of no use for you to try and follow Him. But, dear friends, who do you think knows best about that? yourself, or the Blessed One whose voice says to you to-day, "follow Me"?



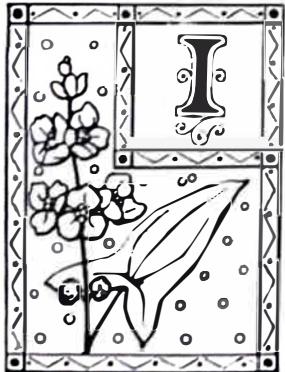


CHAPTER VII.

THE PLACE OF PERFECT SECURITY.

“They went forth and entered into a ship immediately. And that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.”

JOHN XXI. 3-4.



WONDER if any of our young friends are tired of the shore. This shore of Galilee's waters! or are they ready for another picture from it? The last one we shall get from its blue waves, and shingly beach, at least the last half hour there for the present. Our next picture takes us far away from the land of Lebanon. Far away from this wonder-

ful lake whose waters heard the voice of their Great Creator, and became like a floor of solid crystal that His blessed feet might touch their proud crests, and leave them for ever the precious memory, that His footsteps had been in their deep waters, and made them most honoured of all seas.

It is night time again. Let us look from the top of the mountain. On the heaving waves tosses one of the fishing smacks, that we have become so familiar with. Well known too are the faces of these fishermen. There is Peter whom the Lord had called to leave his fishing and follow Himself. There too we see James and John, and others of those same disciples who for three years had been sheltered and cared for, and taught by their beloved Master all busily fishing. But they drag in their nets, time after time to-night, only to find them empty. They would steer their boat to a fresh fishing ground—still it is the same tale of empty nets. At last the morning breaks, clear and fresh, and most welcome surely to the tired toilers, weary of their useless labour. As they near the shore they see One standing there, who watches them, but whom they know not. Too tired to look at the stranger stedfastly, they hear



A Picnic on the Beach.

His voice speaking to them. And the question He asks draws from them the confession of how utterly useless all their work had been.

But they are to have a marvellous proof now of who this Stranger is that speaks to them as one who has right and title to do so. He gives them a command, and in obeying it they not only get their net filled to overflowing, but learn that that One who since last He had been with them on the same shore, had gone into such unfathomable depths for them, now stands awaiting them, and as He ever had done, had been thinking of their need ; and now He had prepared food for strengthening their bodies, as well as being ready to meet all the wants of the heart.

Have you ever thought of that luncheon or breakfast on the shore? I dare say some of you know what it has been to have what is called a "picnic" on the beach ; you know how hungry the keen sea air makes you, and the delightful bathe in the cold waves, and the quick walk or run after, gives you such an appetite that you feel ready for anything eatable. How many of you have thought that buns, or cake, or sandwiches, never seemed so good before as they do down on the sands ? Well,

imagine what these men, Peter and John and the others, must have felt when, having found out that it was their own Lord and Master who stood there —they reach the land, and find a fire burning to welcome them and food ready for them to eat, and the voice dearer to them than any other on earth calling them to come to their wonderful breakfast, or dinner.

They all knew who it was, but in verse 12 of this chapter it says they were afraid to ask Him.

Have you ever asked yourself why they were afraid? I have, and I think it must have been that there was now about their Master such gleams of that divine glory of resurrection, such traces too of where He had been for their sake, that their lips were sealed, as it were.

Do you each know what I mean, dear friends? Do you remember dark Gethsemane, the bitter, awful anguish there of the Son of God? Do you remember Pilate's judgment hall, the purple robe, the crown of thorns, and last of all the cross, and the broken heart at Calvary? Can we ever forget it? All which

“That darkness falling on Calvary”

meant was the way, and was the only way, by which Peter, and John and Andrew, and all the believers in His name throughout the whole universe, could ever pass into the light. And well these poor tired fishers remember it all, this early morning on Galilee's shore. Don't you all agree with me when I say that I do not know of any such marvellous breakfast, on any shore, before or since that day? For just think of who it was that was there giving them that food.

Think too of the new place that they were put into now. We see it in the message He sent them by Mary Magdalene. He by His atoning death had won for them an entirely new place. Never before His sufferings at Calvary had He given them the precious name of "brethren." But now He can send the most amazing message that any human lips ever spoke, telling them that His Father, was now theirs, His God their God. And thus the royal place, which He had gone down into the dark regions of death to win for them, and for us, is nothing less than that of beloved children of the Father. And not children at a distance either, nor children merely in name, but of the very "household of God." (Eph. ii. 19.) And so

perfectly have those who have truly believed in Him, been redeemed and cleansed, that they are called "elect of God, holy, and beloved." (Col. iii. 12.)

And, dear friends, this truth of the grace and love of God is as much mine and yours to-day, as it was the apostle Paul's. A boy at school, in this nineteenth century, or a girl at home, if they can truly say "I am trusting in the Lord Jesus as my own Saviour," may also claim as their very own this grand new place of "children of God."

Do any of you think that God will ever allow any of these children for whom His Son paid such a mighty ransom, do you think He will ever suffer one of them to be lost?

Why, we need only remember that the eternal life that is His own gift to all who believe in His Son, is not given to us to take care of—we should be sure to lose it if it were—but it is told us in Colossians iii. 3, where He has put it, "your life is hid with Christ in God." Can that be lost? I knew a poor young fellow once who, while confessing Christ as the only Saviour and his only hope, yet thought it depended partly upon what he did as to whether he should ever reach heaven at last.

He did not see that Christ's was a finished and a perfect work, giving too a perfect salvation. If we could add a single thought to it, it would be imperfect, but it is not so. It is perfect, as God's work ever is. Now I want all the young friends whom these words reach, to get the joy of this in their hearts ; just believe God's word about it, and not your own thoughts, or any one else's that does not agree with that peerless word.

I know that to be quite sure that we have eternal life, and that we shall never come into judgment, is thought by some people to be presumptuous ; they think we take too much upon ourselves, but really it is they who do so, for they dare to contradict God's word.

Perfect certainty of everlasting salvation—without a shadow of any danger of ever losing it ; this is the strange and foreign flower that blossoms in many a heart to-day—the hearts of those who take God's word as it stands, and rest most peacefully upon it.

Perhaps some of you may have heard of a remarkable flower that is found in some of the Malaysian forests. Amid the dense masses of the camphor and sandal-wood trees, graceful, feathery,

palms, and the strange and poisonous Upas tree, may sometimes be seen a gigantic flower, bursting from the trunk of an old tree. It has no leaves, or root either, but the flower stalk springs at once from the knotty, rugged bark of the tree upon which it grows. It is not part of that tree. Their species are of quite different orders ; yet there this huge flower, sometimes a full yard across, buds and blossoms ; spreading its vast petals ; that are formed almost like shallow cups, over the trunk of the tree, and after a heavy rainfall as much as four quarts of water may be found in the spreading leaves of the Rafflesia. Now may we not learn a lesson from this strange blossom ?

The perfect certainty of everlasting life ought to be one of the lovely flowers that brighten for each believer the dark path of this world, where amid that darkness, there is a clear, bright track for us to tread in, left by the footprints of our great Shepherd who has said, “ 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 pluck them out of my hand.” (John x. 27, 28.)

Now let these words of the One who knows

what your life will be right on to the end, settle once and for ever the question of your eternal safety. Trust God and rejoice in what He has given you. And whilst the peace, and joy, and rest, that the assurance of salvation gives, is as foreign to our hearts, as the strange flower of Malaysia to the tree that bears it, yet there God wills that the one and the other should be found.

I do not believe Peter ever had a doubt as to this, and yet if any one of the followers of the Lord had an excuse for doubting, surely he had who had denied his Master with oaths and curses.

But look at what that Master's love does, after they had taken that wonderful meal on the shore. When He has probed Peter's heart and conscience to their very depths, He gives him a special place of service to Himself, and leaves the one who had disowned Him a few days before, in charge of the lambs and sheep of His flock. And before He takes these same disciples on that last wonderful walk to the beautiful Mount of Olives, where for the last time in this world they look upon His face, Peter hears again from his Master the same words that separated him from all his former life, and started him on that shining path of life that led

him at last into rest with his risen and glorified Lord ; far above all the surgings and turmoil “under the sun.” And the last recorded words to Peter of the One who had been into death for him, were again “Follow thou me.” And these words did not simply take in the following of Peter on that bright shore of Galilee that morning. If we look at the letter or epistle that he wrote years after to fellow believers in the same Lord, we shall see how he remembered this last morning on the beach : and how he speaks of the Lord as the Shepherd, and the great Shepherd, and of being called not only to follow the Master down here but “to his eternal glory.”

For Peter, as for many other of these disciples, the way to this eternal glory led through a martyr’s death. And Peter really followed his Lord in this if we are to believe the ancient records that tell of his crucifixion ; that death by which he was to glorify God.

But never again, so far as we know, did Peter go back to his fishing, after that meeting with his Lord on that shore so often trodden by them.

His work was altered now. To feed the sheep and lambs of the flock of God was to be his life-

work, and they were found scattered here and there throughout the country, so Peter must go and look after them ; and say farewell to his fisher life. And here too, you and I, dear friends, say good-bye to blue Galilee's voiceful waters.

Much more might they say to us, but for the present we leave them.

Nearly nineteen long centuries have rolled away with all their varied lights and shades since those shores echoed back the voices to which we have been listening, since this shore was the scene of our pictures. But that same land of Palestine will once more feel the touch of those hallowed feet, once wearied, and pierced for us.

“ His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” (Zech. xiv. 4, 5.)

And then He who once was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, shall be seen and owned by all as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And those who own Him as Lord and Master even now, will then know fulness of joy, when they see Him take His rightful place. And while

we are waiting and longing for the voice that calls us up to meet Him in the air, we have His own precious word that we have been getting some glimpses of now, to tell us more and more of Himself. Do you value that word? Some time ago, I was in a room where some of my young friends were looking at a map of Wales, and I heard one of them exclaim, "see! there is Bala, that is the place that Mary walked to for her Bible."

And the words brought to my mind the great value that the precious word of God was estimated at, by the young girl whom they called Mary. She had worked hard for six years, to earn money enough to buy herself a Bible, and then walked fifty miles, to the nearest place where one was at that time to be had, to buy it; shewing how precious the Bible was to her, a young girl of sixteen years. And I have lately had another proof of the power of this word. Do you all remember the dying woman, whom I told you of one day? Then you will, I am sure, be glad to hear that she is safely sheltered for ever—past all the storms, all the suffering, that she knew here. Do you ask why I can say this? It is because I

have seen in that dying woman another proof of what a living, present Saviour the Lord Jesus is, and how God accepts those who trust in Him. Since the day I spoke to you about her, I have seen her several times, and saw from time to time, how the Lord was leading her to cast away every hope excepting that which was centred in Himself alone.

She had a very large print Testament sent her, and I was so glad to find that she was diligently reading this, for "The entrance of thy words giveth light." And it was so to her. The day came when she left off speaking of getting better, and spoke instead, of faith in Christ, hesitatingly at first, as one whose long, careless life, forbade perfect confidence being spoken of too surely. But that was only for a time. I must go on now to my last visit to her. And I want you all to see how the same glorious One who walked on the waves of Galilee, enabled her to walk scatheless across the waves of death—through simple faith in Himself. Come with me now to her room ; she lies with a bright flush of colour on her wasted cheek, and her eyes are feverishly bright, but the heavy, laboured breathing speaks only too plainly

of the near approach of what we call death. The wasted hand is feebly put in welcome, and the peaceful look almost *makes* me exclaim, as I do, "Are you going home?" And she replies, "Yes, yes, going home!" Then I bend over, and ask, "What *right* have you to say that you are going home, to heaven?" At once she with difficulty gasps out, "because I—am a—sinner, and—Christ died—for my—sins ;" pausing several times as she said it. Then I said "And what of all the past?" "The blood, the precious blood," she said. And can you look up and tell God that you are fit to stand before Him?" "Yes! with a—free—conscience," came the reply. Then seeing she was getting exhausted with the effort she had made to speak, I sat silent for a few moments watching her as she lay there with her eyes closed, and the peaceful look on her face, and I slowly repeated, "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ;" and then I went on to speak of her soon seeing the One who had loved her so well as to die for her, and she said "Yes, He will—come, sooner or—later He—will come;" meaning, I think,

that she was looking for Him to come and take her home.

A few minutes after a paroxysm of pain seized her, and after some intense suffering she said several times, "pray—pray—that He will release me." On my speaking of the Lord knowing her pain, and not allowing one needless pang ; of His looking down at her at that moment ; she said, " Ah ! yes, a lovely countenance, a lovely countenance," as though she were looking at the One of whom we were thinking. But a few hours longer, and she was "absent from the body—present with the Lord." Almost her last words were, "Now I am going to sleep in the Lord." As I thought over her past—of the dreary hopelessness she was in until that Lord taught her of His willingness to save, taught her to trust Him unreservedly, I could only praise Him for allowing me to stand by and see how "death was swallowed up in victory." By His grace ! That boundless grace—nothing but grace, for those who will accept it in His own way.

Our hearts are slow to take in the love that watches over our *path* here, protects and guides us, but it is ours to-day.

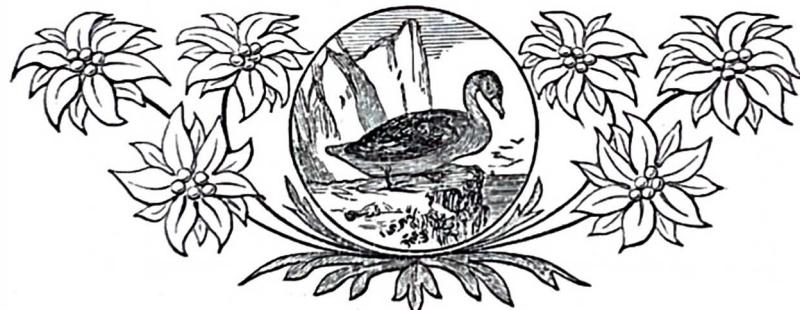
That same love was around the feeble band of Waldenses as they fled through a defile in the Alps, in the dead of night, seeking to escape from their persecutors. When the glorious sun arose in the morning and lit up the way by which they had passed in the darkness ; the whole company, compelled by an irresistible impulse, fell down on their knees in thanksgiving to that One who alone could have led them in safety through such a perilous march. Looking back upon it, they saw how at one time they had passed on the border of one of the deep mountain lakes, where a fall would have been fatal. At another they had wound along under an avalanche, whose balance was so tremulous that a whisper would have brought the whole mass of snow crashing down upon them. Then the path led on the very brink of a precipice, where a false step would have been instant death. Yet all unknown as the route was to every one of them, it had been passed in perfect safety and security. Sheltered and kept by the One to whom darkness and light are the same, they had escaped from every peril, and could only bless and praise their God for all. And, dear friends, the day swiftly approaches when we shall see all our lives

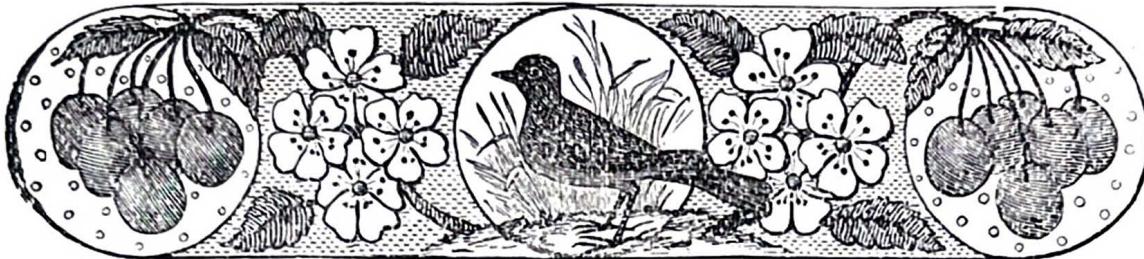
spread out before us in the light of His presence. But we shall be *like* Him, when, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

That I believe is the time and place when our God will shew us, each one, what our life has been as in His sight. He will in His love reward us for every tiny little thing that was done for His sake. Not a cup of cold water given for love of Christ shall pass unrewarded. He will shew us too how very much of ourselves was allowed in our daily path ; how much that we did was not done for Him. All *that* must be burned up as utterly worthless ; and we shall be very glad to see it all destroyed.

So let us seek to spend our days for Him—to do our work well for His sake, though it may be only the ordinary round of our usual tasks. This reminds me of a verse that I am very fond of, and I hope some of my young friends will take it for themselves and try to live it out in their path of life down here.

“The daily round, the common task,
Will offer all we need to ask ;
Room to deny ourselves ; a road
That leads us daily nearer God.”



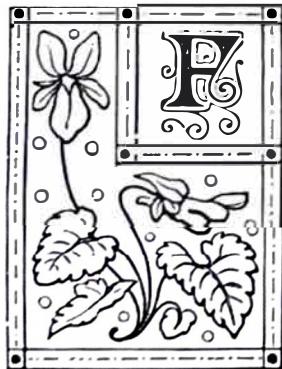


CHAPTER VIII.

FREEDOM IN SERVING.

“There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.”

ACTS xxviii. 23.



AR away now from the wonderful land of promise, and beneath the deep blue of southern skies lies the beautiful Adriatic, the scene of our picture for to-day. Many of you, I am sure, could tell me a great deal about this far famed sea ; of the countries that lie on its coasts, and the beauties and wonders to be found there ; but our half-hour is all too short for even a glimpse of them now. And I want you all to look with me, not at a humble little fishing-boat, but at a stately ship,

large enough to hold over two hundred-and-fifty people, that is being driven up and down in Adria—known to us at this day as the Adriatic. But though years have passed since that wondrous meeting on Galilee that we looked at last time, and this day that we are told of here ; yet the power of that same voice has attached other lives to the One who called the Galilean fishers to Himself. And here in this storm-driven ship that we read of in our chapter to-day, we find one who tells us that he was even blinded by the glory of that light, that shone from the same Jesus of Nazareth, whom we have seen on the shore, and on the sea. Yes, blinded to all the lurid glory of this passing world was that same Paul that was here in the midnight storm in Adria. He too had heard and obeyed the call “Follow me ;” and it is on his way to the proud city of Rome, to bear witness there to this same Jesus, that Paul finds himself now in the storm, and later on in the shipwreck. Day after day, night after night, did that storm rage ; hour after hour would the poor vessel creak and groan, while the wild waves foamed and hissed, and tossed all around ; as if on the point of engulfing their prey ; until all hope that they would

be saved was taken from the voyagers, wearied with their ceaseless efforts to keep the ship afloat.

First one thing and then another did they cast overboard to lighten the vessel, until at last even the tackling of the ship was given up, and thrown to the waves. And then an awful hopelessness seems to have settled down upon all but one.

But suddenly a calm cheerful voice was heard. Who can it be? Who dares to speak of safety now? Surely it must be the captain, or the centurion of the soldiers who are on board with a few poor captives! Who can it be?

Neither captain nor centurion is it who stands in the midst of them with such quiet dignity, while from his eyes flashes "a light that never was on sea or land." No; to one of the poor prisoners is given the princely task of imparting hope to the hopeless crew, and trembling passengers; and of assuring them of their ultimate safety; though the shipwreck must come, and they must lose everything but their lives, and such things as they could secure to their bodies. And now picture to yourselves the drifting ship, the worn-out company on deck, the raging winds and waves, and amid all, one despised prisoner on his way to Rome, able

to utter the grand words that we started with, "there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought before Cæsar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

In the storm on Galilee the disciples were toiling to keep their boat afloat ; He who was "God manifest in flesh," walked on the wild billows to go to them, and calm their terror ; but here the same One sends His angel to Paul, to let him know that for his sake the whole company of those crowding the vessel, are safe as on land. Little did they think when they started on their journey what a safeguard they had, in the person of that poor captive, who until the storm had raged for days, was most likely unknown and unnoticed by them. But in the time of imminent peril he becomes the most important man on board. Why? Not because he in himself is different from any other, but because he is a servant and follower of Jesus of Nazareth, the Most High God. And this calm assurance of the Infinite power and truth of the One he seems to glory in, makes Paul at rest, and in perfect peace, while all around is perplexity and dismay.

As we read verse after verse, in this graphic account of the wreck of the vessel, we find Paul really taking the command, and the very soldiers who were there to keep him as a prisoner, were obeying his orders. And we see him too, quietly giving thanks for the food that all needed, but which terror had made them forget, or neglect before ; but which he now by his own example, induces them to take, and so gain strength for the last act of the eventful scene. So instead of Paul the prisoner here, we see him really as Paul the commander.

At perfect peace as to himself, he is at leisure to think of others.

But dear young friends, you and I to-day, if we are followers of the Lord Jesus, have just the same power that Paul had, we have the same God—the same Almighty Hand to keep through any storm. But are we trusting Him as Paul was ; are our hearts set where his was ; have we the same purpose of heart that he had ? We shall not be able to answer Yes to these questions, unless it is a settled thing with us that we are not our own, but God's.

Paul not only said “whom I serve,” but he also

says "whose I am." Now, dear young people, are you willing to be solely, and entirely, yielded to the One who redeemed you at such Infinite cost? Not to be saying, "I don't see any harm in this, or that," but "I belong to God now, and He is to order my life." If we are as willing as Paul was to say in very truth "whose I am, and whom I serve," then we too shall have the same peace, and joy, and triumph.

But only let us have a divided life, as it were, part for ourselves and the world, and part for God, then we shall only get unrest and doubts, and clouded joy, when our precious Master desires that our joy should be full; and if we are yielded to Him it will be so. I remember hearing of a little child once playing with some beads in her father's study. He often looked at her, and each time he found that she appeared quite absorbed in her glittering treasures. At last he called her to him as he sat by the fire, and told her to throw the beads on the fire. Now came a tremendous struggle in the poor little heart. After a surprised look into her father's face, and reading there that he was in earnest, the instant obedience that was the habit of her life, triumphed over her love for her play-

things ; and with eyes full of tears, and her little breast heaving with the sobs she could not restrain, she dashed them all into the flames.

You may all imagine how hard it was for her ; and I do not know the reason for her father wishing her to do it, excepting to accustom her to yielding to his desires. But a few days after, he put into her hands a box of beads, much larger and more beautiful than those she had given up. And so it is with ourselves ; the Lord only wishes us to give up that which would hinder our learning what a magnificent place of blessing He has brought His own into. That child who gave up her treasures in obedience to her father, very soon received something a great deal more beautiful. And if you and I have the privilege of surrendering anything for the Master's sake, we shall find that He will give us that which is infinitely better. But it is "yield *yourselves* to God, as those that are alive from the dead." (Rom. vi. 13.)

It is perfectly true that we are His by purchase ; and we are committing nothing less than a fraud if we are not so yielded. But then in His wondrous grace He invites us to offer our poor worthless

selves as something that He can take pleasure in accepting. Is it not a grand thought, that you and I can minister joy to the heart of God by being yielded to Him? Some time past I had an account given me of a machine that is used in some of the large American factories, for working *cold* iron. With marvellous quickness the huge plates of solid metal, as much as two inches thick, are cut into designs and patterns by the index or finger of this powerful machine, that noiselessly cuts its swift, steady way through the mass of cold, unyielding iron, as easily as if it were red-hot and soft. How is it explained? If you and I could visit one of the vast American factories where this machine is used, and were to ask the man working it there, he would tell you that a mighty, though unseen force, of not less than a thousand tons weight, was brought to bear upon the finger that so unerringly was cutting its way through the metal; and either that finger must go on doing its work, or the immense weight must crush the whole machine to atoms.

Now when I think of this, it reminds me of the mighty power God's love has given us to live here for Him. Surely no cold iron is so cold as our

worthless hearts, and it is well for us when we see that ; but I read this, "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i. 7.) And only let us rely on what He has given us, and even the desire and purpose to live for Him, will be answered and fulfilled. I wonder if you will like these lines as much as I do ?

"Take my life, my Lord, and use it,
Wholly Thine now let it be !
Fill'd each moment from Thy fulness
Moulded, guided, ruled by Thee.

All the sad and shameful story
Of the past Thou readest well ;
All the changeful shade and sunshine
Of the future Thou canst tell.

Glad and free with Thee I leave them ;
All my longings lost in one :
Wholly for Thyself, Lord Jesus,
Wholly Thine, till years are done."

After all, it is a very small thing to let our poor little lives here be for Him ! Why, He gave His own life ; indeed, He did more, He gave Himself for us. And if you and I, dear young friends, can truly say "he loved me and gave himself for me," then

let us not rest until we can as truly declare that God is He, "whose we are, and whom we serve."

May our every remembrance of this shipwreck in Adria be a fresh incentive to us for following the noble example we have been looking at.

If we do so, the end for us will be the same as for those in that ship; that is, "safe to land," only with a vast difference. They came safe to land to find themselves among strangers, with their unfinished journey still to be trodden, and for some of them the dreary dungeon walls closing them round at the end of it; but for us it will be the glorious "city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Again I want to remind myself and you, dear friends, that not one single step of *this* path shall we tread alone. You all know who will be beside us. And there will be no fear in our hearts then of meeting His searching gaze at the close of the pathway of our lives. But for this, dear ones, we need much care, for our ever-watchful enemy—the prince of this world—never forgets his hatred of our Master, and is ever seeking to get us out of this path of constant dependence upon Him. So we must be like a man who built a tall tower to his house, so that

when going to start on a journey he could first go up into the tower and look over the road he meant to travel, and see if there were any foes to be prepared for. He was watchful: and as the sailors, when on a voyage set their watch, so that the man on the look-out may know of the peril that may lie near, and warn the crew to prepare for it, so we must watch at all times, or we shall get into trouble. Some time past, a friend was telling me of the dangers he had passed through in a long voyage; how the ship was enveloped in a dense fog, and how cautiously the captain felt the way along, and kept fog horns constantly sounded lest they might come into collision with other vessels which they could not see, and how carefully the watch was kept at night; and it reminded me of our Lord's words to us, "I say unto all, watch." I remember the thrill of horror and dismay that went through every heart, I might say that heard the news, when tidings were brought to the coast town where I was then staying, of two steamers that had come into collision near there, during a gale in the night, and spite of the efforts made, one steamer had filled and sunk so rapidly that the loss of life was appalling,

It was feared that the watch had not been kept, and thus the danger was not perceived until it was too late.

Alas, how often we bring sorrow to ourselves because we have forgotten to "watch and pray." And if we had seen and spoken to Paul when he was bearing witness for His Master here, he would have told us how all important he considered this; in his various letters he reminds us of it frequently, and speaking to his beloved Timothy he says, "Watch thou in all things." So let us each take that word to ourselves: "Watch"! But now I come to the best part of this. What I have been speaking of is something like the gardener watching for the unwelcome weeds, to prevent their springing up. But then he watches too for the gradual unfolding of his lovely and precious flowers, and sees the first, tiny leaf, or bud, with an added pleasure if it appears a little before the time that he had looked for it to blossom.

So does our God give us something to watch for, and that, nothing less than the radiant face of our blessed Redeemer, our Lord and Master; whose voice is soon to call up those who have been washed from their sins in His precious blood.

Have you ever tried to imagine, dear friends, what our first glimpse of that face will be? The very same One that we have seen on Galilee, the One whose loving heart could prepare food for the tired disciples, after their long night of toilsome fishing; and with His own pierced hands, give them the bread and fish—actually serving them in His own boundless pity, and love—that very same One is coming for all who believe on Him now; coming to take them in to those “many mansions” that He spoke of when down here in the world; never again to know long days of weariness and weakness, or nights of watching and pain.

All the fight will be over, and the long struggle ended and in the rapture of being with; and like our Lord, all the traces of this defiling world will pass away like a dream, with Himself for ever. Ah! our hearts thrill even at the idea of it. Soon we shall enter into the great reality, and then, every discordant note hushed, we shall learn the sweetness of

“ETERNITY’S LONG, DEEP, THANKSGIVING PSALM.”