

Visions

by

William Booth



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PREFACE TO THE 1998 EDITION

I first read this volume whilst a student at the Salvation Army's International Training College in London, England. The college library owned one tattered copy that could only be viewed in the reference room. I subsequently searched for over twenty years to find a copy for myself, without result. In 1996, I was fortunate enough to find a copy in the archives of the Bodleian National Copyright Library in Oxford and determined to once again make these papers available to all.

I have read and re-read these papers and have been profoundly moved and challenged by their contents on every occasion. Booth would not have seen himself as a visionary. He was a practical evangelist who in the space of a generation raised up a Gospel movement that turned the world upside down with a new, aggressive version of soul-saving Christianity. Yet these papers remain as the legacy of a Spirit led and empowered "General" who enjoyed intimate association with the Jesus he served and loved.

It is my prayer that as you read this volume that you will be challenged, as I am, to become a more effective soul winner for the Kingdom of God.

In His Service

Kevin J Matthews

Rev.

NOTE.

The following papers, by General Booth, have already appeared in various Salvation Army periodicals, and are reprinted here by his permission, in response to a desire on the part of some who have read them and found them helpful. I am confident that they will prove still more useful in this more permanent form.

Bramwell Booth

International Headquarters,
London.
May 1906.

IN HEAVEN, BUT NOT OF HEAVEN.

I had a very curious vision of Heaven the other day, and I have been much perplexed as to whether I should tell it to my friends or not. The chief difficulty I find in giving it publicity arises from its apparent unchartableness. It would seem at first sight a though I made the gate to the Celestial City narrower than the Bible is supposed to do and therefore shut out a large number of those fully expecting to be welcomed there and that with a flourish of trumpets.

In this narrowing of the way it will be considered, perhaps, that my vision is at fault, and therefore somewhat misleading ; but on its behalf I may suggest, that as Heaven is, as the negro said, "a mighty big place," it may be only some special part of the vast continent of blessedness that caught my attention, and which is contemplated in my vision.

Then, again, I have felt a difficulty in supposing myself to be any other than a good Salvationist, and I have not failed to see that this also may lay my story open to objection.

But, as everyone knows that dreams and visions are fantastic and contradictory things, I have thought that these eccentricities might be passed over for the useful lessons they are calculated to convey. I have, therefore, decided to let this one see the light, leaving the reader to judge whether it has any interest for, or any application to, himself.

In my vision I thought that, in some way or other, I had ceased to be, what I hope I am in fact, a persistent seeker of souls and a resolute opponent of Satan.

I thought that I had been transformed into a Christian of that type which we all know is so very common around us. It may seem strange also, but I was not conscious whether I was connected with The Salvation Army or with any other religious organisation. All I knew was the simple fact that I claimed to be a follower of Christ, and regarded myself as having the favour of God, hoping for the enjoyment of the blessings promised to His people hereafter.

In my vision I imagined that, so far as this world was concerned, Solomon's prayer was answered in my circumstances, for I had neither poverty nor riches. All my temporal wants were fully supplied. I had home, friends, and leisure, and all that was really necessary to happiness in those respects.

I was, as I have already said, a Christian. Most of my more intimate friends professed to be the same. We visited at each other's houses, and were alike interested in each other's amusements, business engagements, political opinions, and many other things. We bought and sold, and married and gave in marriage; in short, we acted as though the world we were in was going to last for ever.

I thought also that I took some active part in the Church to which I belonged. I always attended its services on the Sunday, held a prominent position in its financial management, and occupied myself zealously in teaching Bible truths to the children indeed, I considered myself quite a shining light.

Now and then-not very often - I visited the sick, in a friendly way, especially when they happened to be connected with my own circle of acquaintances, and in addition to these

good deeds I contributed a little money to support missionary operations.

In all this I was quite sincere. I had no notion of playing the hypocrite. In fact, I did not do so. It is true I did not stop to think what Christianity really was, although I talked about it freely enough at times, and pitied people who did not profess it. But I seldom seriously considered what were the claims of Jesus Christ and the poor, sinning, suffering world about me, although I occasionally heard them discussed, but more seldom did I meditate upon the length and breadth of those claims in their relation to myself. I had got into a certain rut of thought, action, and profession, and I went on from day to day, hoping that all would turn out well at the last.

But in my vision I fancied that, without any apparent warning, a dangerous fever seized me. I went down most unexpectedly, and before I knew where I was, the doctor pronounced me to be in a dangerous condition; in fact, in a few hours I was brought to the very verge of death.

This was a serious business indeed. Everyone around me was in the greatest confusion, while many of those who loved me were paralysed with despair. Then followed consultations with other physicians, a hurrying from far and near of my family, many suggestions as to remedies from my numerous friends and acquaintances, together with the most careful nursing which money could procure or affection dictate. But all proved in vain.

For my own part I did not feel any particular alarm about my state. Whether it was the suddenness of the visitation, or the benumbing character of the disease, or the effects of the narcotics which the doctors gave me to procure sleep or soothe the pain, I cannot tell ; but, strangely enough, I seemed to be the least disturbed person in the household.

I felt as though I were in a dream. I knew I was ill-dangerously ill-for a relative insisted on my being informed of my real condition, and yet I was not distressed by the announcement I thought I should recover. Most people do, I suppose, until the hand of death is actually on them. And if not, what need had I to worry myself, for was I not a Christian? Had not Christ died for me? Had I not been converted? Did I not believe in the Bible? Had I not lived a moral life? What had I to fear?

And then, again, was I not all the time hearing hymns sung for my comfort, and prayers offered for my restoration, and that if recovery could not be granted me, it was as earnestly asked that I might pass away without suffering, and have a happy admission into Heaven? Why should I be very much disturbed?

And even if disquieting thoughts did cross my mind-for I could not help questions arising as to whether I had done my duty to a perishing world with my time and influence, and money and family, it was all in a dreamy way.

So it seemed as though it were impossible to do anything different under the circumstances than let things drift. How could I do otherwise, with the burning fever lapping up the vital current, and my brain all confused, and my energies laid prostrate? Consequently, when I complained that I had not much joy, I readily acceded to a suggestion made by my minister, that my condition prevented it.

Then I felt, moreover, that if I were not "ready" for the change, I had neither the thought nor the energy required to begin so serious a business over again as the salvation of my soul.

Besides, how could I make the confession in the presence of my wife and children and church comrades that I had been mistaken all these years, and that my life had been a failure? No! It was too late, and I was too ill, for any such action. One thing I could do, and that I did: I cast myself, with what force of soul I had left, on the mercy of my Savior, and again and again repeated a couplet which had always been a favourite with me:

“I am a poor Sinner, and nothing at all, But Jesus Christ is my all - in - all.”

It was with this very sentence on my lips a sentence taken up and reproduced at the Memorial Service held on the following Sabbath - that a cold numbness came creeping over me, and a great difficulty in breathing followed.

My friends were alarmed - I read their apprehension in their faces. Some fell on their knees, and broke out in prayer, while others wept, and my dear ones moistened my lips, and kissed my brow, and spoke their last and lingering farewells in my ears.

Meanwhile a strange faintness seized me, destroying my consciousness. My next sensation was altogether beyond description: it was a thrill of a new and celestial existence. I was in Heaven!

After the first feeling of surprise occasioned by this sudden translation had somewhat subsided, I looked around me, and took in the situation. It was delightful beyond anything of earth; and yet some of the more beautiful sounds and feelings and scenes of the world I had just left appeared to be reproduced in my new experience after an enchanting fashion.

Still, I am constrained to say no human eye ever beheld such beauty, no earthly ear ever heard such music, no human heart ever experienced such ecstasy as it was my privilege to see and hear and feel during the first hours I spent in the celestial country.

Above me was the loveliest of blue skies. Around me was an atmosphere so balmy that it made my whole physical frame vibrate with pleasure. By the bank of roses, on which I found myself reposing, there flowed the clearest and purest of rivers, which seemed to dance with delight to the murmurings of its own waters. The trees that grew on its banks were covered with the greenest foliage, and laden with most delicious fruit, sweet to my taste beyond all earthly sweetness. BY lifting my hand I could pluck and eat the fruit to my heart's delight. In every direction, above and around, the air was not only laden with the richest of odours yielded by the loveliest of flowers, but rendered vocal with sweetest sounds, and filled with fairest forms. Floating about me were beautiful beings, whom I felt by instinct were angels and archangels, seraph and seraphim, cherub and cherubim, together with the blood-washed and perfected saints who had come from the world below, sometimes far away and sometimes drawing nearer. The blue sky appeared at times to be full of white-winged, happy, worshipping, joyous beings, while the whole country - apparently of limitless extent - seemed to be filled with a blissful ecstasy that could only be realised by being experienced.

My sensations may, perhaps, be imagined. At first I was swallowed up with a sort of rapturous intoxication, which was immensely enhanced by the blessed consciousness that I was securely landed in Heaven-that I was safe, and should suffer no more.

“Far from a world of grief and sin, With God eternally shut in.”

And then, strange to say, a new set of feelings began to creep over me. Marvellous as it may appear, I felt somewhat solitary and not a little sad, even in the midst of this infinitude of felicity; for, up to this moment, I was alone. Not one of the happy beings who were soaring and singing in the bright ether above me, or who were hastening hither and thither, each intent upon the performance of some high mission, had as yet approached or spoken to me.

I was alone in Heaven And then, in a still further and yet more mysterious way, I felt in myself a sort of unfitness for the society of these pure beings who were sailing around me in such indescribable loveliness.

And yet, how could this be? Had I come there uninvited, or by mistake? Was I not counted worthy of being a partaker of this glorious inheritance? I was bewildered. It was indeed a mystery.

My thoughts went back to earth, and, as though by an angel's hand, the history of my past life was unrolled before my eyes. What a record it was! At the first glance I seemed to be able to take in the substance and meaning of my entire earthly career, becoming at the same time strangely conscious of a marvellous quickening of my intellectual powers, realising that I could, in a moment, take in what would have required a day to understand with my poor, darkened faculties when on the earth.

With my quickened mind I saw, to my delight, at that very first glance, that this register of my earthly existence-this supernatural biography-contained no record of any of my misdeeds before my conversion : indeed, that part of my life appeared to be very much a blank. Neither was there any mention, to my utmost satisfaction, of the sins I had committed since that time. It was as though some friendly hand had gone through the roll, and with kindly labour blotted out the record of all the evil doings of my human life.

Now this was very gratifying. I felt like shouting "Hallelujah" over and over again in fact, I made some attempt to do so; and well I might, for was I not delivered, through the mercy of Jesus Christ, from the pain of having these things eternally staring me in the face in this beautiful holy land, among all these holy beings where, it seemed to me, that the very memory of sin would defile?

Nevertheless, a second glance at my roll appalled me, for, while the evil things I had done were omitted, it revealed the kind of life required from me by the light I had enjoyed, and the opportunities with which I had been favoured. Nay, the revelation went much deeper, for it described in detail the objects which had influenced me during my earthly career. It set forth the purpose for which my thoughts and feelings and activities had been mainly spent, and brought forth the ends for which I had employed my time, my money, my influence, and all the other talents and gifts with which God had entrusted me to use for His glory and the salvation of men.

Every chapter of this roll carried back my thoughts to the condition of the world I had left; and while I mused on it there came up before my eyes such a graphic picture of its hatred of God, its rejection of Christ, its terrible wickedness, with all the wretchedness, destitution, and abominations flowing out of this state of things as appalled me.

As this part of my vision passed before my wondering eyes there came into my ears such a

hurricane of cursing and blasphemy, and such wild wails of anguish and woe, as almost stunned me. It was a terrible recollection!

I had often seen these sights, and heard these sounds, when on the earth; not too often, it is true, for I had hid myself from them ; but, oh I they blinded and stupefied me now, for they appeared to indicate a condition a million times blacker and viler, more wretched and piteous than they had seemed when on the earth.

I felt like putting my hands before my eyes, and my fingers in my ears, to shut this hideous apparition out from sight and hearing, so intensely real and present did they seem. They wrung my soul with sorrow and self reproach; for alongside these horrid recollections the “roll of memory,” at which I had just glanced, showed me how I had occupied myself during the few years which I had been allowed to live amidst all these miseries, after Jesus Christ had called me to be His soldier, and to fight for Him.

I was reminded how, instead of fighting His battles, saving souls by bringing them to His feet, and so preparing them for admission to this lovely place, I had been intent on earthly things, selfishly seeking my own carnal interests, worrying about my own personal cares and anxieties, and spending my life in practical unbelief, disloyalty, and disobedience to all my most sacred obligations.

I must say again I felt horror-stricken. Oh! if only at that moment I could have crept out of that “land of pure delight,” about which I had sung so much in the past, and gone back to the world of darkness, sin, and misery, which I had just left; that I might spend another life-time fighting for my Lord, combating these evils, and striving to save the sufferers, by poverty and cross bearing, how gladly I should have done so. But that could not be. I was a fixture. I was in Heaven. Heaven must be my abode for ever; and, contradictory as it may seem, this thought filled my soul with unutterable regret.

And then came another thought, wilder than all that had gone before it. (You must not forget that it is a vision I am relating.) The thought was this: would it be possible for me to obtain a commission, or rather a permission, to go back to the world, to that very part of it from which I had come, clothed in some human form, and live my life over again; live it in a manner worthy of my profession, my Christ, and my opportunity. Could this be?

At that moment, if an answer in the affirmative had been brought me, I would have willingly forfeited my heavenly blessedness, I would gladly have undergone ages of hardship, ignominy, poverty, and pain. I would have given a million of money-nay, a world had it been mine to give. But I could see no hope of such a second probation. What was to be done?

I had not been musing thus many seconds -for thoughts appeared to flow with remarkable rapidity, as I have said, ‘in this new world-when, quick as a lightning flash, one of these bright inhabitants whom I had watched floating far off in the clouds of glory, descended and stood before my astonished gaze.

I can never forget the feelings with which this apparition inspired me. Describe the shape and features and bearing of this noble form I cannot, and I will not attempt to do so. He was at the same time human, and yet angelic; earthly, and yet celestial. I discerned at a glance that he was one of the blood-washed multitude who had come out of the great tribulations of earth. I not only judged this from his majestic appearance, but from an inward instinct that

the being before me was a man, a redeemed and glorified man.

He looked at me, and I could not help but return his gaze; in fact, his eyes compelled me; and in doing so I confess to being ravished with his beauty. I could never have believed the human face divine could have been made to bear so grand a stamp of dignity and charm.

But far beyond the entrancing loveliness of those celestial features was the expression that beamed through every lineament of that countenance, and shone through the eyes that were gazing upon me. Those eyes appeared to me, moreover, as sunlit windows through which I could see right into the depths of the pure and benevolent soul within.

I do not know how I appeared to my beautiful visitor. I knew not what form I bore, for I had not as yet beheld myself mirrored since I had exchanged mortality for immortality. Nevertheless, I evidently had a deep interest for him, an interest that seemed of a saddening nature, for his features appeared to grow almost sorrowful as I stood there with my eyes fixed on him by a fascinating spell.

He spoke first. Had he not done so, I could never have summoned courage to address him. His voice was soft and musical. I understood him almost before I heard his words, although I cannot now tell what language he used. I suppose it was the universal language of Heaven.

He informed me that my advent was known throughout a certain district of the celestial region, where were gathered the ransomed spirits who had come from the very neighbourhood in which I had formerly resided. The tidings of my arrival had been flashed through the heavenly telephone of that particular district. My name had been whispered on every hill-side, and echoed in every valley; had been breathed from every tree and flower; had been sounded forth at every turn of the Golden Street; had been articulated in every room of every mansion, and proclaimed from every tower and pinnacle of the stupendous temple in which these glorified saints, day and night, present their worship to the Great Father.

All who had known me on earth; all who had any knowledge of my family; my opportunities for helping on the Kingdom of Christ, whom they worshipped and adored, were burning to see me, and to hear me tell of the victories I had won, and the souls I had blessed when on earth, and all were specially anxious to hear if I had been the means of bringing salvation to the loved ones they had left behind.

As all this was poured into my soul by my visitor, I knew not which way to look. Again and again I remembered my life of ease and comfort. What could I say? How could I appear with the record of my life before these waiting spirits? What was there in it better than a long-drawn story of self-gratification? I had no martyr experiences to recount. I had sacrificed nothing for His dear sake worth naming on earth, much less worthy of being published in Heaven.

My mind was running in this direction, when I think my visitor must have discerned what I was thinking about, and felt some pity for me, seeing that he spoke again "Where you find yourself," he said, "is not actually Heaven, but only one of its forecourts. Presently the Lord Himself, with a procession of His chosen ones, will come to take you into the City itself, where you will reside, if He deems you worthy; that is, if your service on the battlefield below has pleased Him."

“Meanwhile I have obtained permission to come and speak to you concerning a soul, who, I understand, lives near your late residence, and in whom I feel a deep interest. Our knowledge of the transactions of earth is, for our own sakes, very limited, but now and then we are permitted to get a glimpse of what is passing there. Can you,” he said, looking at me with an unspeakable longing, “tell me anything of my son? He was my only son. I loved him dearly-loved him too much. I spoiled him when a child. He had his own way. He grew up wilful, passionate, and disobedient. My example helped him not;” and here a cloud for a moment settled upon that beautiful brow, but vanished as quickly as it came.

“Memory has been busy of late with that melancholy chapter of my life,” he said, as though talking to himself; and then he returned to the story of his prodigal son.

“I myself, through the instrumentality of The Salvation Army, was rescued from a life of sin and shame, washed, regenerated, taught to fight for souls, and had the high privilege of winning many to the bloodstained banner of the Cross. An accident, however, suddenly overtook me while at my employment, and as suddenly swung me into Heaven; and now,” he added, “where is my boy? Oh! give me some tidings of my boy. He lived near you, I believe. He had business dealings with you. Is he saved? What did you do for him? Is there any hope? Tell me what his feelings to my Lord were when you last spoke to him!”

He ceased speaking. My heart sunk within me. What could I say? I knew the boy. The story of the father’s death and his prodigal son had been told me, and yet I had never addressed one serious word to the young man about his soul, or about his Saviour. I had been busy with other things. And now what could I say to his father as he stood there before me? I was dumb!

The cloud I had noticed before gathered again on the face of my visitor, only with a darker shadow this time. He must have guessed it all. He looked at me with a glance, which expressed the disappointment to himself and the pity for me which he evidently felt. Then he turned from me, and, suddenly spreading forth his white wings, he soared away out of my sight.

I was so intently gazing on the receding form of my visitor that I failed to notice a second glorified being had occupied his place. I turned and looked upon the newcomer.

It was a spirit of the same order, belonging to the ransomed multitude who were once dwellers on the earth. There was the same dignity of bearing, the same marvellous expression of inward power, and purity, and joy; but in this case these graces were combined with a beauty of a more delicate and enthralling mould. Divinely fair as I thought my first visitor, more beautiful than any conception or dream of earth could be, yet here was a beauty that surpassed it. My former visitor, I have said, bore the form of a glorified man; this was evidently the form of a glorified woman.

I had, when on earth, sometimes wished that I could have looked upon Eve in the hour when, young and pure and beautiful, she came forth from the hands of her Maker, and had imagined something of what her lovely figure must have been on that bridal morning, bearing as she did the fair image of her Creator, and being, perhaps, the most marvellous work of God.

Now here I saw Eve reproduced before my eyes, clothed in immortal youth, as pure, as beautiful, nay, more so than her first mother could possibly have been; for was not this the

Divine Master's finished workmanship?

But I was soon awakened from my reverie by the voice of the fair creature, who, from her manner, evidently wished to speak to me on some matter of great importance. She introduced herself somewhat after the fashion of my previous interrogator; she, too, had come from the very same neighbourhood where I had lived so long.

She told me her name. I had heard it before. She was a widow, who had struggled with great difficulties. Her husband's death had been her life. Converted at his grave, she had given herself up unreservedly to fight for the Lord. Her children had been her first care. They had all been converted and entered the battlefield, except one.

That unsaved one was a girl, who had been her mother's delight. She had grown up lovely in form, the village pride; but, alas! had gone astray. It was the old story of wrong and seduction and cruel abandonment, with all the consequent train of miseries. The mention of that name brought a similar saddening cloud over her lovely face to that which had dimmed the bright visage of my first visitor; but, as in his case, the cloud vanished almost as soon as it appeared.

I listened to the story as it came from this mother's heart. I had heard something of the painful incident when on earth; but I had turned my ear away from it as being no concern of mine. Little did I ever think I was going to be confronted with it in Heaven.

And now the bright spirit turned on me those beautiful eyes, gleaming with love and pity, and spoke again: "My daughter lived near you; you know her. What have you done for her? Have you saved my child?"

At this I must have cried out in agony. I know I put my hands before my eyes, for I could no longer bear to meet her glance. How long she continued to look on me with her powerful, piercing, pitying eyes I know not; but when I withdrew my hand she was gone, and the silvery sheen of her dazzling wings marked her out to my searching gaze like a speck on the distant blue.

Again I gasped out, "Oh! my God I is this Heaven? Will these interrogations go on for ever? Will the meanness and selfishness of my past life, with all their sad consequences - from which I had hoped for ever to have got away in this country-haunt me every day and every hour throughout the coming eternity? What shall I do? Can I not go back to earth, and do something to redeem myself from this wretched sense of unworthiness? Would it be possible for me to live my life over again?"

This question had hardly passed through my mind when there came another rush of wings, and down beside me alighted another form, resembling the first that had spoken to me; and yet, oh! so different. But I will not stay to describe him. You must imagine him.

His introduction was much the same, but his story was different. He had been a great sinner, but had been awakened and won to Christ by The Salvation Army a short time back, and had joined its ranks. Much forgiven, he had loved much. All his desire when on earth was to get free from the entanglements of business, and devote himself, as a Salvation Army Officer, to the work of saving men.

When just about to realise his wish, he had been sent for to Heaven; and here he was a spirit

of glory and joy coming to inquire from me concerning the Corps in which he had been a Soldier, and of the crowd of unconverted companions he had left behind.

Did I know his old Corps? he asked. Their Hall was close by my house of business. Had I helped them in their struggle with difficulties? Had I done anything for his old mates, who were drinking, and cursing, and fighting their way to hell? He had died with prayers for them on his lips-had I done anything to stop them on their way to ruin?

To all this searching appeal, what could I say? I knew his Corps, but I had never given them a word of encouragement. I knew the hovels in which his old mates lived, and the drinking saloons in which they spent their money; but I had been too busy, or too proud, or too shame-faced, to seek them out with the tidings of a Saviour's love.

Again I was speechless. He guessed my feelings, I suppose, compassionated me, and left in sadness - at least in as much sadness as is possible in that happy land.

For myself I was in anguish, strange as it may appear, considering I was in Heaven. But so it was, and wondering whether there was not some comfort for me, and involuntarily looking round me, I saw, or thought I saw a marvellous phenomenon on the distant horizon. All that part of the heavens appeared to be filled with a brilliant light, surpassing the blaze of a thousand suns at noonday; and yet there was no oppressive glare rendering it difficult to the gaze, as is the case with our own sun when he shines in his midday glory.

Here was a brilliance far surpassing anything that can be imagined; and yet but for my recent experiences I should have looked upon it with indescribable delight. As I gazed and wondered what it could mean it appeared to move a little closer, and I perceived clearly that it was coming in the direction of the spot on which I stood; for I had not left the banks of the beautiful river where I first found myself.

And now I could distinctly hear the sound of music. The distance was a great many miles according to the measure of earth, but the atmosphere was so clear, and I found my eyesight so strong, that I could readily discern with the naked eye objects which on earth would have required a powerful telescope to see.

The sound came nearer. It was music beyond question, and such music as I had never heard before. But there was a strange commingling of other sounds, which altogether made an entrancing melody, composed, as I afterwards discovered, of the strains that came forth from a multitude of musicians mingled with the shouts and songs that proceeded from innumerable voices.

Gradually the rapturous hosts drew nearer - rapidly, I might have said, but that my curiosity was so strongly aroused to know what it signified that a few minutes seemed an age.

At length I was able to comprehend the marvellous sight that approached me. But who could describe it? The whole firmament was filled, as it were, with innumerable forms of beauty and dignity, far surpassing those with whom I had already made an acquaintance.

Here evidently was a representative portion of the aristocracy of Heaven accompanying its King, who, as my first visitor had informed me, was coming to welcome into the Heaven of heavens those who had fought a good fight, who had kept the faith, and who had overcome in

the conflict, as He had overcome.

I stood transfixed with awe and wonder.

Could it be possible? Was I at last actually going to see my Lord, and be welcomed by Him? In the thought of this rapture I forgot the sorrow which, only a moment before, had reigned in my heart, and my whole nature swelled with expectation and delight.

And now the procession was upon me! I had seen some of the pageants of earth - displays that required the power of mighty monarchs and the stored wealth of prosperous nations to create - but those when contrasted with the scene that now spread itself before my wondering eyes, were each, or all combined, as the gleam of a feeble rush-light to the blaze of a tropical sun.

I have to say of this, as I have already said of other scenes that have passed before me, I cannot attempt a description. It would be impossible. Moreover, I was so agitated and excited that the whole spectacle was to my eyes simply one vast sea of glory, and to my ears an overwhelming rush of harmony.

But on the procession came: and as it neared me I fell prostrate before it. What wonderful beings these heavenly spirits appeared I each one looking in himself, to my poor untutored eyes, like a god, so far as greatness and power could be expressed by the outward appearance of any creature.

Rank after rank passed me by, each spirit turning his eye upon me, or seeming to do so, and to everyone I could not help feeling that I was somewhat an object of pity. Perhaps it was my own feelings that made me imagine this; but it certainly appeared to me as though these noble beings regarded me as a craven, cowardly soul, who had only cared for my own interests on earth, and had only been induced to come up there from similar selfish motives.

However, onward the mighty cavalcade swept.

I have said "cavalcade," for while part of the procession filled the heavens with their shining wings, and another part walked with upright mien, the picture of dignity itself, there was a host, as imposing as any, or more so, mounted upon the most beautiful white horses, more beautiful than ever were beheld by any human eye.

On they came! Thousands passed me, yet there appeared no diminution of the numbers yet to come. I looked at the train as it stretched backwards, but my eye could see no end to it. There must have been millions upon millions of spirits. It was indeed "a multitude that no man could number."

All this mighty host were praising God, either in hymns expressive of adoration and worship, or by recounting, in songs of rapture, the triumphant victories gained on earth in the name of Calvary's Prince, or in describing some of the wonderful works of Jehovah in other parts of the vast empire.

And now the great central glory and attraction of this stupendous procession was at hand. I gathered this from the still more dignified character of the beings who came marching past, by the heavier crash of the music, and the louder shouts of exultation which came pealing

forth from all around.

I was right; and before I could prepare my spirit for the rapturous vision of the King, the King was here!

The procession halted, and at the word of command in an instant formed up in three sides of a square in front of me, the King standing in the centre immediately opposite to the spot where I had prostrated myself. In the midst of these circling hosts, rising, tier above tier, high into the blue vault above, each gazing upon Him with eyes lustrous with the love they bore Him, I beheld the celestial form of the God-Man who once died for me upon the cross.

What a sight that was I Surely, it was worth toiling a lifetime to behold. Nearest to the King were the patriarchs and apostles of ancient times. Next to these worthies rank after rank, came the holy martyrs who had die for Him. Then followed the army of warriors who had fought for Him in every part of the world; while around and about, above and below, were myriads and myriads of spirits redeemed from the earth, who, although never heard of outside their own neighbourhood, or beyond their own time, had with self - denying zeal and untiring toil laboured to extend God's Kingdom and to save the souls of men.

Then, circling the gorgeous scene, was a innumerable host of angelic beings who ha kept their first estate, proud, it seemed to me, to minister to the happiness and exaltation of the soldier saints who had faithfully lived an died for their Lord in the poor world from whence I came.

I was bewildered by the spectacle. The songs, the music, the shouts of the multitude, like the roar of a thousand cataracts, echoed and re-echoed through the sunlit mountains, and the magnificent and endless array of happy spirits ravished my senses with unspeakable delight.

All at once, however, I recollected myself, and bethought me of the High Presence before whom I was bowed; and lifting up my eyes, I beheld Him gazing upon me.

What a look that was!

It was not pain, and yet it was not pleasure. It was not anger, and yet it was not approval. Anyway, I felt that in that countenance, so transcendently admirable and glorious, there was yet no welcome for me. I had read this in the faces of my previous visitors; I read it again in the face of my Lord. That face, that Divine face, seemed to say to me - for language was not needed to indicate what His feelings towards me were - "You will find yourself little in harmony with those who were once the companions of My tribulation, and are now partakers of my glory, who counted not their lives dear unto them in order that they might bring honour to Me and salvation to men." And as spoke, He waved His hand, and gave a look of loving admiration at the host of apostle martyrs, and warriors gathered around Him.

Oh, that look of Jesus ! I felt that would be worth dying a hundred deaths the stake, or being torn asunder by wild beasts, to gain one such loving recognition The angelic escort felt it too, for their responsive burst of praise and song shook the very ground on which I lay and the vault skies above my head.

Then the King turned His eyes on again. How I wished that some mountain would fall upon me, and hide me for ever from His presence. But I wished in vain.

Some invisible and irresistible force compelled me to look up, and His eyes met mine once more. I felt, rather than heard Him say to me, in words that engraved themselves in living fire upon my excited brain : “Go back to earth. You shall have another opportunity ; and if you prove yourself worthy of My name, and show to the world that you possess My Spirit, by doing My work, and by making yourself a saviour of men, you shall return hither, and I will give you a place in My conquering train, and a share in My everlasting glory.”

What I felt under that look and those words, nor heart nor mind could possibly conceive, nor tongue nor pen could ever describe. They were mingled feelings. First came the unutterable anguish arising out of a full realisation of a wasted life, a life squandered on the paltry ambitions and trifling pleasures of earth, which might have been filled with deeds that would have produced a never-ending harvest of celestial fruit, won for me the approval of Heaven’s King, and made me worthy to be the companion of these glorified heroes.

But, combined with this self-reproach, there was also a gleam of hope. My soul’s desire to return to earth was to be gratified.

Perhaps it was in response to the longings which I had felt ever since the consciousness of my earthly failures had dawned upon me, that this favour was to be granted me. I should have the privilege of living my life over again. True, it was a huge responsibility; but my Lord would be with me, and His Spirit would qualify me for my task. I embraced the opportunity with all my heart.

And then I closed my eyes, and gave myself over, body, soul, and spirit, to live, and fight, and die, not for my own salvation, but for the glory of Christ, and the salvation of men.

The King spoke again, this time pledging His word that His presence should go with me back to earth, and make me more than conqueror through His blood.

And with the joy of this assurance I awoke. The crowd of shining ones had vanished. The music was silent, and behold it was all a dream.

HEAVEN

I have had another vision. I thought I was safe landed in Heaven, where I had settled down all at once, quite at my ease, everything appearing so familiar and home-like.

It was a lovely place, strongly resembling in many respects the fairest of the countries I have travelled over during my salvation campaigns down here, and yet as far beyond them in every form of beauty and every source of delight as can possibly be conceived.

The blue skies, the towering mountains, the green valleys, the shady groves, the luxuriant vineyards, the charming flowers, the flowing rivers - I did not observe any sea - were all exquisitely beautiful beyond the power of language to describe. Then in, about, and indeed everywhere, were the loveliest of birds and the most graceful of animals, and I know not what else.

I was enraptured with the scene. I was certainly a little surprised to find these living creatures here, having been always rather sceptical as to the resurrection of the animal world. There, however, they certainly were. Still, you must remember it was only a vision.

But it was the intelligent inhabitants of that beautiful country that interested me most. It is true that they resembled more nearly, in appearance at least, the expectations I had formed respecting them than many other creatures I found in the celestial land; but, oh! how much more glorious they were than any pen can set forth.

There were the angelic hosts, coming and going in procession up and down the golden streets, or clouding with their snowy pinions the skies overhead.

There were the blood-washed multitudes, busy about their respective duties, or wandering about the gardens, or reclining on the banks of the river, or worshipping before the Throne, or careering across the heavenly plains on their white horses.

There were the children of all ages, who had died in childhood growing up to perfect man and womanhood, surrounded by the sublime examples, and taught by the unerring direction of the glorified spirits around them; and then through all, and above all, and upon all, was the glorious overshadowing presence of Heaven's eternal King.

And yet, notwithstanding all this celestial grandeur and unsurpassable beauty, curious to say, I had not been in the City very long before I felt that something strange - I was going to say something painful, if I could use such a word in connection with such a home of delight - had happened, or was going to happen. A kind of sadness sat on every countenance; nay, it seemed to be round about everywhere like a depressing atmosphere.

As I thought upon this contradictory state of things, I was filled with amazement as to what it could mean.

The mystery was soon explained, for while I mused a scene, strange to me, and passing strange to Heaven itself, was enacted before my astonished gaze.

A solemn assembly had been called of the ransomed men and women who had already

entered the celestial kingdom. It was to take place in the great council chamber of the Holy City, which consisted of a vast amphitheatre surrounded by mountains, and capable of holding countless millions of the glorified hosts.

The saints assembled in the centre of the great arena, while the angels were seated tier above tier on the sides of the surrounding heights, all alike waiting with unutterable interest the revelation for which they had been called together, and of the nature of which they had already received some intimation.

And then my Lord-my Saviour Lord came forth and stood revealed before those millions of wondering and adoring eyes. I cannot describe Him.

I have all through my life in this lower world felt a strange revulsion to every effort that has attempted to delineate His sacred person as it appeared during the days of His humiliation on the ground of the difficulty of the task. How much more impossible would it be to present any adequate picture of our Saviour Lord, enthroned and crowned with the glory of His Father in His celestial home! I won't attempt the impossible task.

The occasion for which the Lord of Life and Glory had assembled this remarkable gathering was to make a communication and to prefer a request. I can only refer to them. Amid the profoundest hush the Blessed Saviour spoke His message as follows :-

It may be summarised "The great object for which His life on earth had been given was in dire difficulty. The world had grown worse and worse. The ignorance, the vice, the cruelties, the wars, the unbelief, the hypocrisies, the cold formalism, and ten thousand other evils had swelled to such proportions as to pain Him to the heart, and compel Him to make one more desperate effort for their overthrow and for the salvation of the world."

"In trying to stamp out the rebellion against His Heavenly Father, and stem the rising tide of iniquity, His brave warriors had been so seriously outnumbered, out-manoeuvred, and overcome in the conflict that reinforcements on a large scale had become absolutely necessary, and must be had, if His armies were not to be beaten and routed, and driven from the field."

"Therefore, to help His struggling forces He had resolved to send to their assistance a million of the inhabitants of Heaven, selected from the multitudes who had already fought below."

"Once more they would have to be clothed in flesh and blood, to endure humiliation, hardship, and contempt. Nay, in view of all the possibilities of the conflict, they must at the onset embrace lives of persecution, and be prepared to suffer stripes and imprisonments, if not death itself."

Then, standing up, and showing the marks of His passion, He pleaded for reinforcements on these lines, proposing to the glorified host before Him the question, "Who will go?"

This thrilling announcement, I need not say, was listened to in silence, and with breathless attention; but the moment He ceased speaking a scene followed which made my heart stand still.

The whole multitude, with a shout like the roar of many waters, rose up and, with burning eagerness, volunteered for the fight. And then a signal from the Master again secured the most perfect silence, while a wave of His sacred hand made the selection, and the million spirits required for the holy enterprise, at the invitation of their Lord, stood forth, the envy and admiration of every being present, while acclamations from the encircling angels rent the celestial sky.

Another pause ensued, and then the Master made another statement, and preferred a further request :

“The warriors were ready,” He said. They would be on the field of conflict right away, and would, He had never a doubt, acquit themselves worthy of their mission.

“But they were going forth under human conditions, and supplies necessary for their outfit and maintenance during the fight would be required.

“You,” He said, with inimitable force and sweetness, “will remain behind under this blue canopy in the company of your precious comrades, possessed of all the joys of duty, and love, and worship; but these,” pointing to the chosen band, “will be engaged in heart-breaking toils and sufferings in yonder world of misery.” And then He asked the question, “Who will sympathise with them in their undertaking, and pray for their success; and who, out of their celestial possessions, will contribute generously to their support ?”

The scene that followed is beyond my powers of description. For here the vision became suddenly clouded, and what I saw I saw only imperfectly, while innumerable sounds, strange, though harmonious, arose in all directions. As I listened I fancied that I heard the voices of men, women, and children-for the children were there-all crying out in glorious confusion. One was saying: “Allow me the high privilege of helping my Lord in this heavenly warfare;” and another,: “Take all I have, dear Saviour, to assist my brave comrades;” while another was crying : “Let me go with these blessed volunteers, and work for them, beg for them, or in some way minister to their needs.”

At this point, however, the vision became still more indistinct, and gradually faded away altogether. As the last glimpse of the glorious scene disappeared from my eyes, a loud song of praise burst upon my ears, in which saints and angels appeared to unite. And the burden of their song was “Glory and praise and honour to our Saviour Lord for the million spirits He has chosen for this grand enterprise, and for the provision of a million times more than is required for the supplying of their every need!”

Comrades, I leave my vision with you.

You will see its application without an explanation on my part. The Salvation Arm is fighting for God and the rescue of the human race from sin and misery and hell on innumerable battlefields. My Lord has as surely selected, and anointed, and despatched this army of warriors as though the whole business had been transacted in the council chamber of the skies, after the fashion set forth in my vision.

They are making a noble stand in the face of unnumbered difficulties and countless foes. Their trials are many, and some of them hard to be borne; but they are fighting a good fight. I KNOW THEM WELL. They are worthy of being assisted generously. My Saviour asks that it shall be so. Will You not, dear reader, give them your hearty support ?

THE STORY OF PENTECOST AS RELATED IN HEAVEN

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE had yet another vision. I hope I shall not come to be regarded as a “visionary” consequence of my frequent dreamings; but this is how the one I am about to relate came to pass. I wanted to write something upon the subject that stands at the head of this paper, that was calculated to be useful and likely to be read; but how was it to be done?

My longing for information on the subject of which the vision treats from the very people who actually took part in the stirring events, in addition to our account given the Bible, can readily be appreciated. I can remember exclaiming, “oh, that I could but interview someone among the favoured few who composed that upper room audience on that remarkable day.”

That could not be, however; so, giving wing to my imagination, I found myself suddenly transported to the celestial country, where, by favour of an attendant angel, I succeeded in securing an introduction to one of the very individuals whom I wanted to meet, and from him obtained the following narrative, which will, I think, be found, so far as the facts of the case are concerned, to be in strict harmony with the story related in the Sacred Book by the inspired writer.

In our translation of this account more liberty has, I think, been taken with the Scripture narrative in the effort to make it more real and natural to the reader than what will be considered to be perfectly lawful and reasonable by those who count it their special duty to protect the inviolability of the Word of God.

Imagine, then, dear reader, that you see me, in company with one of the happy inhabitants of the Holy Land, seated on a bank covered with verdure, at the foot of which one of the tributary streams of the river of living waters is flowing. Around us are the loveliest of flowers of every colour and form. Above us is the clear blue sky, from which floods of warm sunshine are poured down without unwelcome heat or glare; while on the branches of the trees of ever-green beauty which stud the landscape the birds of paradise are singing their entrancing songs.

Now to my business. But before proceeding I must have a word respecting the companion from whose lips I am to hear the story which had so much to do with the introduction of Christianity into the world.

Who is he? Ah, that was one of my first enquiries, to which he responded in the freest manner. “My name is Samuel, and I am the son of that beautiful saint who was known on earth as the widow of Nain.”

“What!” I said, in surprise, “are you the young man whom our Blessed Lord raised to life, and restored to the arms of his mother while the funeral procession was actually on its way to the grave?” “I am that very individual,” he replied, with a look of delight, called up, doubtless, by the recollection of his Lord’s tender concern for his mother, and of the blessed consequences that had followed to himself.

My surprise knew no bounds, and I do not know how many questions came unbidden to my

lips, referring, among other things, to his feelings at the hour when he was restored to life; the manner in which he had spent his days on earth; and the place in the heavenly world where his mother could be found - for I could not question but that she was there. But I checked myself at once, remembering the object of my visit, and that I must attend to that business before venturing to enter upon any other.

So, having satisfied myself that my friend was an actual eye-witness of the matters I desired to describe, I settled myself down, note-book in hand, and proceeded to record the story of the Day of Pentecost, as my companion's words, which thrilled me like music, came from his inspired lips.

"And how did it all come about?" I asked. "Let me have the particulars as they occur to your mind, for the merest details of that marvellous event will be of the greatest interest to those who read my account of it."

"Well," he said, "I will try and tell the story; but you must have patience with me. For, although my memory is perfect as to what I heard and saw on that memorable day, I was so excited with the remarkable experiences that transpired around me with such startling rapidity, that my ideas were naturally a little confused. Then you must remember also, that, although I could speak very freely to you in the language of Heaven, I have not the same facility for conversing with you in the language of earth."

CHAPTER II

I was no little struck with this modest remark, and assured my friend that I felt quite certain that I should find his information all that I could desire. Whereupon he proceeded to relate to me the following narrative.

"I need not say that we had all been in a state of considerable excitement during the two months that had preceded the events of which I am about to speak. Those months had witnessed the tragic events of the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord, and the other bewildering scenes that followed. And now, on the top of all, there came the crowning incident of the ascension."

"I cannot describe to you what our feelings were as we watched our precious Lord - a thousand times dearer to us after the ungainsayable evidence of His Divinity, of which we had been spectators-pass from our longing eyes behind the walls of golden cloud that received Him into their beauteous bosom."

"It seemed as though this could not be our last vision of Him. As He had come again to our delighted eyes from the dark tomb, we felt as though He must come again from the bright blue sky; and so we stood and gazed, and gazed and gazed again."

"At length, reminded by the two angels, who seemed to have lingered behind in order to speak a last word of cheer, that He had left us, at least for the present, we turned our faces once more towards Jerusalem. This was our home, and consequently had its natural attractions. Where else could we go? Moreover, this was the post of duty, according to the last instructions of our Master. Here we were to wait for the Power which would qualify us to testify to the miraculous events of which we had been witnesses, and tell of the salvation we

had ourselves received.”

“Although it was but a Sabbath day’s journey-about six miles to the City - it appeared quite a formidable task on this occasion. We had neither eaten nor drank for some hours gone by. Still, the excited state of our nerves prevented the strong men amongst us feeling any serious fatigue, but the women of the party were terribly exhausted, and the dear Mother of our Lord, whom we all spoke of as the ‘Blessed Mother,’ was so far overcome that it seemed as though she must swoon away before proceeding many yards further.”

“But Providence so arranged that Bartimeus who was, you will remember, one of the men whose eyes the Saviour opened, and who earned his living by carrying fruit and vegetables into the City, happened to be passing with an empty conveyance. He was only too glad to assist us, and we lifted the precious burden, the ‘Blessed Mother,’ together with Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who also showed signs of great weariness, into the vehicle, and so we all travelled along.”

“That was a wonderful journey. Our hearts were too full of feeling as to the past, and our brains too crowded with thoughts as to the future to allow of words. The latest event seemed the most important of all, and that specially because of the serious responsibility it devolved on us of taking up the work where the Master had left it, and pushing it forward to a triumphant issue.”

“The crucifixion appalled us, scattered us, and drove us to despair. That was bad enough; but then it did not seem to leave any responsibility on our shoulders. We see now that it did, but we did not realise it then. At that appalling moment the whole superstructure of the salvation scheme, as far as we His disciples were concerned, seemed to have collapsed on the occurrence of that event.”

“But now all was changed. The duty was laid upon us of standing forth and testifying to the nation, that, after all, He WAS the Messiah; and, consequently, that in putting Him to death, the people were the murderers of their own Christ. Who were we, and what were our qualifications for such an undertaking?”

“Nay, it seemed as though we had suddenly been made responsible for the conversion of the whole world, for were not His last words, ‘Ye -shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth’? The very thought of such a task appalled the strongest hearts amongst us.”

“ It is true that every doubt respecting the truthfulness of every claim set forth by the Master had been dispelled. He was the Lord of life and glory. All things were delivered into His hands. His blood could make the vilest clean. But He was gone.”

“We had watched Him ascend further and further, while we made the mountain ring with our Hallelujahs; but, with saddened gaze, we saw Him pass from our vision altogether, and realised that He had actually departed. A black pall of anxious concern fell upon us, and the question came to every heart, ‘Could we succeed where He had failed? Could we conquer without Him?’”

“That was the enquiry that was now passed from lip to lip. Matthew proposed it to Luke, and Luke asked it of John, and John suggested it to Nathanael, and Nathanael propounded it to

Peter; and Peter replied, 'Yes, what you are saying IS quite correct. In our present state of mind and heart we are manifestly unequal to the task; but don't you remember that in the last talk He had with us in that farewell meeting He said we were to wait at Jerusalem until we were "endued with power from on High"? We know our weaknesses, and He knows them too, but He will not forget us. Let us press forward. He will keep His word. We shall be all right. Cheer up, comrades! Hallelujah ! we are going to win.'

"These words of confidence had a good effect upon the whole company, and the spirits of the party went up at a bound."

"At a bend of the road we came upon a sumptuously-ornamented chariot, in which sat two important-looking personages, deeply engaged in conversation. Their horses were walking slowly, on account of the steep ascent, and so we had time to recognise them as no other than Herod and Pontius Pilate, who were evidently journeying together to some feast in the neighbourhood ; and, if these personages were of interest to us, it appeared that we were of some interest to them, for they turned round and watched us most intently."

"We had evidently been pointed out to them as followers of the Christ, whom they were supposed to have disposed of for ever, by the servant of Caiaphas, the man whose ear Peter had cut off, in his over-zeal for his Master. He was riding alongside the coachman, and Peter knew him again."

"We were quite a little procession, and, as we passed along the streets of the City, we attracted no small notice from the passers-by, many of whom recognised us as the followers of the Nazarene."

"Some of these treated us with great respect, for, with many of the common people, there was still a deep, though unspoken, conviction that Jesus was the true Prophet, and that His cruel death was a great wrong."

"Then, many had heard the rumour that was afloat in all directions, that He had risen from the dead, and were disposed to believe it. These stood and gazed sympathetically at us as we passed, while others openly mocked us, crying, "There go the Nazarenes Ha! ha! Where is your Messiah now? together with other similar expressions of ridicule."

"But our hearts were too closely occupied with other things, or we might have told them that, though rejected of them, our Lord was now at the Father's right hand; that we had seen Him go through the gates of Glory; and that, though things were dark and hard with us at the moment, a change was coming on, and that some of those who now mocked us would soon be on our side."

"It was far on in the evening when we reached our destination, and, after the word had been passed round for a meeting in the morning we separated for the night. Some of the comrades, including the women, repaired to their homes, while some of the men, who had no particular dwelling-place, were billeted with Peter and other of the Apostles, who had a sort of quarters in a large old building, in a retired part of the City, in the lower portion of which they lodged, while the upper story served for our assemblies from time to time."

"This room was to all of us already a sacred place, and was destined to become, within a few days, more sacred still."

“Here the Lord had performed several of His marvellous miracles, and delivered some of His most startling utterances. Here, notably, the never-to-be-forgotten scene had transpired in which the unbelief of Thomas was not only rebuked but banished, by the Saviour showing him His wounds, and bidding him place his hands within them. Oh, that night! I was there; I saw it. It can never be forgotten. I wondered how it was possible for anyone who was present to ever have doubted again; but, alas! for poor human nature, there were those in that very gathering who not only afterwards doubted, but actually disbelieved, and, I fear, ultimately perished. But they were sorely tried.”

“Well, in this room we met the next morning. The meeting was called for an early hour, for although, as I have said, most of us were weary with the excitement and journeyings of the previous day, we were too anxious about the stirring events that were passing to rest for a long time far away from each other. Verily, we felt that we were making history.”

“The Hall was crowded. Everyone was there. There was little or no need to guard the doors to prevent strangers mingling with US. To have anything to do with the Christians was so dangerous a business that no one would very easily be induced to associate with them, either on this or any other occasion, excepting those who were really and truly one in heart and soul with our cause, and had made up their minds for the worst that could happen.”

“It was a remarkable gathering. The eleven Apostles were naturally to the front. Peter I observed sitting next to John, with whom and the other Apostles he frequently conferred as the meeting went forward. The ‘Blessed Mother’ and her faithful attendants, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene, had places assigned them near the Apostles.”

“My own mother was in the group, and several other godly women. Then there was Joseph, the husband of the ‘Blessed Mother;’ Nathanael and Barnabas, and Stephen and Joseph of Arimathea, and Bartimeus; and Lazarus, who was raised from the dead; and Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, the latter having grown wonderfully bold in his profession of Christ since the resurrection.”

“Then there were a number of the men and women on whom miracles had been performed, and of others who had followed the Master, and witnessed His wonderful works, and so been led to cast in their lot with us.”

“The spirit of that meeting was as wonderful as the people who composed it. Whatever of doubting or fear there might have been on the previous day in the souls of those on whom the responsibility for conducting the new movement rested, it had all vanished with the night. There was not a trace of timidity or a sign of drawing back visible in any member of the rank and file; and of the whole gathering, Officers and Soldiers combined, perhaps poor doubting Thomas was the most confident and sanguine of all.”

“Peter led the meeting. No one asked him to do so; neither did he claim any sacred right to occupy the position. If he had done so his claim might have been disputed and disallowed; but he had taken the post on several occasions during the absence of our Lord when He was upon earth, and had generally filled it since His death. It seemed quite natural that he should do so on this occasion. Someone must lead, and who so well fitted for the task as he? In after years Paul became more prominent amongst us than Peter; indeed, he was what you

Salvationists now style 'The General.'”

“But to return to the meeting of which I was speaking. First it was decided that we should divide our time between the upper room and the Temple; that in the Temple we should testify to the facts connected with our Lord’s life, and death, and resurrection, and seek to persuade men to accept the salvation that He had purchased for all by His precious blood. In the evening it was resolved that we should assemble in our own upper room, and there pray and believe and prepare ourselves for the reception of the promised Baptism of Fire.”

“After Peter had led us thus far, he proceeded to review the events of the previous day for the special benefit of any who had been deprived of the privilege of witnessing them for themselves. Then for the profit of all he referred to the closing instructions of our Lord, laying special stress on the promised Baptism, and explaining it as far as he was able to do so. He laid down the fact, with much simplicity, that it seemed to him that this promised Spirit was not intended-as far as he was able to judge-to take the place of our own natural gifts, either in thinking, feeling, or acting.”

“Neither was it intended that the promised Spirit was coming to relieve us from our responsibility to live and suffer, and, if necessary, die for our Lord, even as He had done for us.”

“On the other hand, this promised bestowment was intended to possess the souls of those who were willing to receive Him, in the sense of guiding, assisting, influencing, and strengthening their natural powers for doing His will and fighting unto death for the salvation of souls.”

“That explanation was listened to in unbroken silence, with intense interest by everyone present. The promised Baptism was now seen to be a great reality, not something that would relieve men and women from personal responsibility, but something which, on the contrary, would greatly increase it. It was felt to be something that would make it a serious thing to live-and living, to be a still more tremendously serious thing to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.”

“As Peter concluded his address we all involuntarily fell upon our faces before God, and then Barnabas prayed. Every heart was moved, and every lip responded; and as the young and ardent disciple closed his petitions we felt that we were all indeed of one heart and of one mind, and that was to live or die in order that the promise might be fulfilled.”

CHAPTER III.

“When the voice of Barnabas had died away, a spirit of deep meditation fell upon the company. Then the Apostle John rose, saying that it was in his heart to say a word at that juncture of the meeting. Every eye in the room was immediately riveted upon him. It could not very well be otherwise, for his presence was remarkably attractive. He was of noble bearing, with a beautiful countenance, that beamed with the affection of which his heart was full. His voice was soft and musical, and yet expressive of the conviction derived from the resoluteness of a lofty purpose. I thought at the time that he looked like an angel in human form; and, since I have had the privilege of making the acquaintance of the inhabitants of this angel world, I am of the opinion that my imagination did not lead me very far astray. Anyway, the appearance of the beloved disciple commanded for him an intensely interested hearing from every individual in the room.”

“You will not have time to hear, nor space to record, all the words spoken either by John or the other Apostles who addressed us that morning. I could give them, if necessary. They are indelibly written on my memory, and, amongst the rest, I fancy I hear John speaking now.”

“Like Peter, he dwelt upon the character of the gift of the Spirit, describing what he clearly saw would be the natural consequences in our lives of receiving Him fully into our hearts. That was the all-interesting theme of the hour.”

“‘You know something of the nature of the promised Comforter’, the Apostle said. ‘You have had an opportunity of seeing His character perfectly portrayed during the last three years in the person and work of our ever adorable Lord. Now, if we receive in all His fullness that same Spirit into our hearts, He will so control us that we shall think as He would think, and feel as He would feel, and act as He would act, and, if circumstances should require it, suffer and die as He would suffer and die, were He in human form to come back to this world again.’”

“‘Are you willing,’ the beloved disciple asked, in words that, while gentle and calm as a summer evening’s zephyr, nevertheless carried with them an unquestioning conviction which sank down into the very depths of the heart of everyone present. ‘Are you willing,’ he asked, ‘to receive this new and all-mastering Spirit into your souls, to control you entirely, and all the time, so that it shall be no longer your will, but the will of your Lord that shall be done in and by you?’”

“There was now another dead silence. If you want to know how we felt at that hour, I can only say that we had a deep conviction that we had reached a crisis of more than ordinary importance in the world’s history. And so we had, for all the mighty, world-moving events of Christianity which have followed, have been more or less influenced and determined by the decisions and actions of the men and women assembled there during those ten days.”

“Then you must remember also that we were all human beings, and human beings of like passions with you, and you know how the publication and enforcement of the same truths affect Your people in your meetings, whether held in upper or lower rooms, at the present day.”

“Just think for a moment. Here was a miscellaneous crowd of the followers of Jesus Christ invited to give up those loves and, pleasures, those appetites and ambitions of life, which were natural to them, and on which the very joy of their existence-nay, their very existence itself-seemed to depend, and to accept in their stead the control and guidance of another Spirit, which would lead them, in all human probability, to toils, hatreds, poverties, imprisonments, and stripes, if not to death itself.”

“It is true that those disciples saw afterwards, if they did not see in that room, at that hour, or in the hours that followed, that this way of the Cross would have behind it such supports, consolations, joys, and prospects, supplied by the very Spirit that led them into it, as would make that road of suffering and sacrifice a way of satisfaction, endurance, and peace, and that they would probably come to glory in the Cross, as nearly all in that room ultimately did.”

“I was one that did so myself,” said Samuel, with flashing eyes, “and have ever since been glorying in the decision as one of the wisest and happiest acts of my life.”

“I made my election that morning when I chose to receive the Spirit of Christ as my Guide, come what might, and have suffered much and long in consequence. With my dear mother I was cast out by my relatives, beaten with many stripes, confined in dungeons deep and dark, and finally torn to pieces by wild beasts to make a holiday for the persecutors of my Lord.”

“But the choice I made in that room at that hour brought with it such power and consolation that I never once regretted making it; - and, looking back from the banks of this lovely river on which you and I are reclining, with Heaven above and around me, to the track of tears and blood that I trod, you can easily imagine that I do not repent it now.”

Then Samuel continued: “As John ceased speaking we all went down in prayer before the Lord, and another season of solemn silence followed, and Mary Magdalene, at the request of Peter, prayed. And, oh I what a remarkable prayer -she offered.”

“Beginning in a modest manner with softest tones of voice, and in slow , and measured sentences, she gradually increased in fervour as her heart became more and more absorbed in her petitions. She asked the Father for light to enable us to understand the sacrifices required from us, and to discern the value of the boon that was offered. She pleaded for courage to carry into practice the resolutions we might form, and for grace to enable us to persevere in the high and holy course on which we were about to enter.”

“Louder and louder she knocked at the gate of mercy, and with more and more tender earnestness she pleaded with the Father, for the sake of that Saviour, whom we had seen ascend to the heavens only the day before, that He would influence all the hearts bowed before Him to the making of such a deliberate and intelligent surrender of. themselves as would ensure the bestowment.of the promised gift.”

“A wonderfully bright and joyous influence now seemed to fill the room; a, hymn was sung, and the meeting closed.”

CHAPTER IV.

“Day after day similar gatherings followed in that upper room. Their character was somewhat varied. No fixed time for the Baptism had been set by our Lord, and as the hours went by without anything remarkable happening, some of the more eager of our company grew a little impatient, while the zeal of others flagged, and, in more than one instance, some deserted our ranks altogether.”

“Then we had amongst us some who were always disposed to reason about the mysterious events that were passing around us, rather than to regard them as the handiwork of God.”

“These brethren at times were much troubled as to how any change in their opinions or feelings could qualify men and women so ignorant as we were for the formidable task now placed before us, which was neither more nor less than the turning of the world upside down.”

“Others of the more timid school were tormented with the temptation that the moment we took our stand before the public the authorities would sweep us away as they had done the

Master. Others, again, occupied themselves with questions of finance, government, and the like. But, fortunately, there was not much time for us to trouble ourselves about these secondary matters. All hearts were, as if by instinct, supremely concerned about the main object of our gathering-the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”

“Peter, the uncertain and hesitating Peter of bygone days, was now ever to the front, *full* of confidence, and always ready for action. Running over with faith for the future, and anxious, as far as possible, to wipe out the distressing recollection of the shameful conduct of Judas, he arranged for the selection of an Apostle to take his place at the earliest moment.”

“Certain that his Lord would fulfil His word in the bestowal of the Spirit, Peter was determined to have everything in order when the longed-for Guest arrived.”

“But it was not all plain sailing with us. Some rather discouraging incidents transpired in the outer world about this time. I have told you how it was resolved that we should, in a quiet and humble manner, bear our testimony, in the Temple and elsewhere as opportunity served, to the fact that notwithstanding all that had happened, Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God; that He had died for the nation; that He had risen from the dead, and ascended to Heaven before our eyes, thereby proving that He was verily the Lord - the Christ.”

“The majority of those thus privileged, went about this task with hesitation, although meeting with a fair share of sympathy-many of those to whom we addressed ourselves, especially the common people, being much interested in our account of the resurrection, and apparently disposed to receive the facts as we related them, when we described what we had seen and heard with our own eyes and ears.”

“Some had themselves been witnesses of the miracles of our Lord, listened to His teaching, and indeed had counted themselves as His followers, only shrinking from the duty when it became evident that the path was one of suffering. Many of these wept when they heard our story, and promised to think and pray about the matter; while others again went so far as to express a wish to unite themselves with our company.”

“But, alas! the bulk of the people treated us with the bitterest scorn, describing us as impostors, and by other equally disgraceful terms. They threatened, indeed, to report us to the High Priests, who were, they said, fully determined to stamp this false religion out of existence before it had had time to take root in the nation.”

“Moreover, this particular week was very unfavourable for making any direct impression on the public mind. One of the great holidays of the year was due in a few days; in fact, you might say that it had already commenced. This was the Feast of Pentecost, a great yearly national festival, when every male Jew, in whatever part of the world he might reside, if possible, was required to appear at Jerusalem for the purpose of acknowledging God's goodness in the previous harvest, offering sacrifices for his sins, worshipping in the Temple, and presenting gifts before the Lord. It was what you Salvationists would call a Harvest Festival, on a large scale.”

“Crowds of people were flocking to the City from all parts of the world. Rich and poor, young and old, were entering the ancient gates by every road that led there, in every imaginable

form of conveyance used in those days, while multitudes came on foot, travelling for days and even weeks over mountains, and plains, and seas, in order to be present on this, to them, intensely interesting occasion.”

“To Peter and others of the disciples it doubtless occurred that the first and chief day of this Feast would be a most likely time for the Divine visitation which they were so anxiously expecting. A million people would, by that time, be gathered within the precincts of the City, and the tidings of whatever happened that was at all remarkable would on their return be carried by them to their kindred and brethren in every land.”

“At every successive meeting in that upper room the interest increased, faith and hope grew stronger, and a general spirit of expectation settled down upon every member of the little Society, that that particular day was destined to be the time when the Visitor, so eagerly looked for, would arrive. It was therefore resolved that they should meet on the previous evening, and continue in prayer throughout that night and the following day. In short, the boldest believers of the group resolved that they would never break up until they received the promised Baptism of Fire.”

CHAPTER V.

“The All-Night of supplication and prayer, referred to in the last chapter, was duly held, and I find it difficult to describe the experiences of that night to you in such a way that you shall understand them,” Said my heavenly comrade.”

“To us they appeared only a few degrees less marvellous than those of the remarkable day that followed. Of course, by this time our feelings were a good deal stirred. The occurrences of the past forty days had greatly moved our souls, and now that we seemed to be in sight of another miraculous event, every nerve was wrought up to its highest tension.”

“The solemn, anxious hours were spent largely in prayer. Occasionally we chanted the Psalms which prophesied the triumphant reign of God on the earth, or sang hymns which had been composed by different members of our little community in honour of our Lord, and in anticipation of the visitation for which we waited. Now and then there were pauses for silent prayer before God, while again and again there were testimonies and addresses, in which we told of our expectations, exhorted each other to courage, and stimulated each other’s faith.”

“As the early hours of the morning came along, expectation rose to a still higher degree, and the feeling was borne in upon every soul that the sacred moment was actually drawing near.”

“It was just about that time that Stephen offered a most wonderful prayer. I call it a wonderful prayer, because it certainly was one of the most remarkable intercessions it was ever my privilege to hear. I had heard prayers before, and I heard prayers afterwards which appeared remarkable, but none so thrillingly wonderful as that offered by Stephen in the still watches of that early day has ever fallen on my ears.”

“Stephen was young and enthusiastic and beautiful. His face was, you will know, described as that of an angel when he talked to the Sanhedrin and to the crowd who afterwards stoned him to death. I was present on the former occasion, listened to his address, and gazed upon his countenance; but it did not shine with a purer light or with more heavenly radiance on

that occasion than when he stood up in the upper room, and pleaded with God for the grace we all felt we so much needed to worthily magnify the new and important trust He was about to repose in us.”

“Now, in accents broken and tremulous with emotion, and with big tears streaming down his cheeks, he confessed the sins, cowardices, and backslidings of the past.”

“Now he deplored the miserable failure in our attempts at soul-saving and miracle working as the result of our unfaithfulness.”

“Now he acknowledged our weakness and fearfulness in view of the difficulties that were likely to meet us at every turn of the future.

“Now he dwelt with joy and thankfulness on the Divine mission of love and suffering and sacrifice of the dear Lord, whom we had seen with our own eyes on the cross, in the tomb, and afterwards ascend from Mount Olivet to Heaven.”

“Now he rose to heights of prophetic rapture, as he anticipated the floods of mercy and Salvation which were coming on the world through our instrumentality.”

“Now he enlarged on the purity and faith and courage we all needed to make us warriors worthy of our Master.”

“And then he pleaded that the Father should do all this, and whatever else we needed for our warfare in this world, for the sake of His dear Son, who had died for this object.”

“As the voice of Stephen died away a solemn awe fell on the assembly. Every soul was occupied with the petition that had just ascended to the Father. It seemed as though the young disciple had carried us away to the great Throne of Grace, and that we were still waiting there for the answer to the cry which had, in such delightful unison, gone up from every heart present.”

“It was then that Peter, moved by the Blessed Spirit, amidst this solemn silence, named the terms on which God was willing to fulfil the promise of the Master, and asked those of us who were prepared to accept those conditions, and henceforth be absolutely governed and guided by the Holy Spirit, to rise to our feet.”

“Our feelings at that moment cannot possibly be described in words. My own heart seemed to cease beating. Over and over and over again I examined myself to see whether I was prepared to leave all to follow, obey, suffer, and, if need be, to die for my Lord. A lifetime seemed to be crowded into a few minutes. My past history, my present motives and activities, and all I had, and all I hoped to have, passed before my scrutinising gaze; and then, satisfied as to the sincerity and whole-heartedness of my purpose, I rose to my feet.”

“I had every reason to believe that the whole company were occupied with a similar review, and that they had arrived at a like decision; and when I rose I found the entire assembly standing with me.”

“There was now no more hesitation, no one of us holding back or lagging behind. We were all of one heart, and of one mind.”

“Immediately the floor under my feet began to tremble. The roof above me literally rose and fell. The walls rocked like reed, shaken with the wind; and before we had time to consider what this extraordinary manifestation signified or make any enquiry of one another on the matter, there came a roar louder than any tempest we had ever heard, while at the same moment the place was filled with a dazzling golden light, that played round every individual, and settled down on every head in a form like unto a cloven tongue of flame.”

“While these signs were evident to our outward eyes and ears, a strange sensation came over me, as though a secret hand gripped my very heart and held it in its grasp, not with pain, but with a beautiful, warm, joyous feeling of satisfaction, purity, love, and power.”

“All the way through this miraculous visitation no one in the upper room felt the smallest sensation of fear. Under ordinary circumstances we should have been filled with apprehension as to some serious consequences following the tottering building and rumbling earthquakes, while some natural movement would have suggested itself as the cause of these mysterious manifestations.”

“But no, there was no such feeling here. We knew that God was in the shaking building, in the rushing wind, in the tongues of burning flame; but, above all, in the glorious and enthusiastic fire which was burning in our souls.”

“And so it was that, after the first feelings had subsided, a burst of ‘Hallelujahs’ arose, and every man and woman fell down before God, crying out in rapturous realisation, ‘This is the Baptism of Fire; the promise is fulfilled; the Lord whom we sought has suddenly come to His temple; He has made us His Soldiers indeed; now we are ready for the War - ready to live, to fight, to die.’”

CHAPTER VI.

There was a little pause in our conversation at this point, and, on resuming, I ventured to enquire of my heavenly friend, in whom, I need not say, I was beginning to feel unutterable interest, which afterwards ripened to positive affection, as to the remarkable results that followed the visitation he had just described. I had read about them, and heard them descanted upon from pulpit and platform over and over again, and yet they were as interesting and fascinating as ever. Here seemed to be a chance for obtaining a further knowledge of the detail of one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the world.

It was with this feeling that I begged my friend to continue his narrative, specially asking him if he could describe the feelings with which such a remarkable occurrence inspired the company. Accordingly, he went on:

“To describe the feelings of that wonderful hour, I should say that –

“1. THERE WAS, FIRST, A MARVELLOUS REALISATION IN EVERY HEART OF ENTIRE CLEANSING FROM SIN.

“We felt that not only the prophecy of Joel, but also the promise recorded in the, Book of Ezekiel, had been fulfilled in us.”

“We had been sprinkled with the sacred water, and were clean. From all our filthiness and from all our idols we were delivered. We realised that we had been washed, and were made whiter than snow. For, strange as it may seem, there were those in that room who, notwithstanding all that they had heard and seen and known of the Master in His life and death, resurrection and ascension, had the consciousness that certain sinful dispositions and tendencies, though not having the mastery, still remained in their hearts.”

“For instance: with not a few of my fellow-disciples certain little jealousies were entertained with respect to Peter. There were some present who, remembering his deplorable cowardice, and disgraceful failures in the past, resented his boldness in coming so prominently to the front during these last days. They thought he ought to have preferred a back seat.”

“Then there were some among us of the fearful class, who, like Nicodemus, shrank from an open recognition of the Lord, and a public avowal of their intention to proceed at once with the dangerous task of establishing His Kingdom on the earth.”

“There were others who, like the sons of Zebedee, hankered after the more prominent positions in the new organisation. They wanted to be the top men of the undertaking.”

“Then there was in many hearts a great deal of unbelief with regard to the future. Some were like Thomas, who, while cured of ever again doubting the Divinity of the Master, or the fact of His having risen from the dead, had still serious fears as to the possibility of making other people believe in Him, or persuading them in any great number to become His followers.”

“All these evil dispositions, whether inward or outward, together with every form of pride and jealousy, envy and selfishness, were swept away from every heart by this glorious manifestation.”

“2. THEN THERE WAS, AS THE RESULT OF THIS BAPTISM, A WONDERFUL REALISATION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

“All at once it seemed as though our lost Lord had been found again, our absent Christ had come back to earth - come this time not to be seen here or heard there by the outward senses, but to abide within us, to go away again no more for ever.”

“3. THEN THERE WAS, BEYOND QUESTION, A GLORIOUS FILLING UP OF EVERY HEART WITH THE SPIRIT OF DIVINE LOVE.

“Oh, what a turning there was of soul to soul. It is safe to say that never before in the history of the world had there been seen a company of men and women of such varied dispositions, capacities, and characters whose hearts had been so suddenly and completely flooded with love as was the assembly gathered in that upper room on that memorable morning.”

“Every semblance of suspicion or selfish preference had vanished, and after the first burst of praise to God had subsided we looked into each other’s eyes, and then embraced, weeping, and laughing, and singing by turns. IT WAS INDEED A FEAST OF LOVE.”

“4. You see,” said Samuel, “ALONG WITH ALL THE PERSONAL BLESSEDNESS, WHICH CAME TO OUR HEARTS WITH SUCH OVERPOWERING FORCE, THERE WAS THE BURNING DESIRE TO PROCLAIM IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH THE WONDERFUL, SANCTIFYING, JOY-CREATING, SALVATION WHICH NOW POSSESSED US.

“That was the main object of the miracle – the end for which the Holy Ghost had been given. That end was realised. Everyone felt that he must go and tell everyone else what had happened, opening the eyes of all to the chance before them, and compelling them to avail themselves of it.”

“You see we were all necessarily in the dark as to what was going to happen. We did not realise our newly-acquired ability. We did not foresee the mighty results God was going to accomplish through us. We did not anticipate-how could we? - the wonderful crowds waiting as it were to listen to our message, or the remarkable liberty or power of speech with which we were already endowed. All we felt was that it was for us to go, to preach, to fight. The results lay with God. We had faith in Him.”

“I am not sure whether, at the onset, all my comrades were conscious of the possession of the power to speak any other language than their own. I only know that I had no such assurance myself. It is true I was filled with the wonderful subject, and ready to burst with the desire to declare it ; but as to the ability to make the foreigners, whose strange countenances afterwards met me at every turn of the road, understand the truth with which my head and heart were full, I never stopped to enquire.”

“When the opportunity presented itself, however, I simply opened my mouth, and God filled it, not only with arguments, but with language which those who listened to me readily understood. It mattered not whether they came from Cappadocia, Pamphylia, or Phrygia ; whether they were the Jewish rabble who had shouted with oaths and curses, ‘Crucify Him! crucify Him!’ or whether they were the Roman soldiers who nailed Him to the tree, I did not stop to enquire. I simply poured out my heart on them, entreating them with prayers and tears to accept my Messiah, and be saved through His blood, and the result showed that my message was understood.”

My comrade here paused to point out to me a group of his old friends, who, deep in conversation, and with faces beaming with gladness, were slowly walking along one of the banks of the river on which we were reclining. Samuel pointed out several of the company by name. In doing so he spoke rapidly, and I could not gather the meaning of all he said; but I do know that the description he gave was sufficient to create within me a deep interest in every member of the party.

“The road was rough and thorny by which that group reached the celestial abode,” said Samuel, “nearly everyone laying down his life for the Master’s sake; but the prize was worth the sacrifice. Was it not? I am sure it was, and that a million times over.”

Then, resuming our conversation where we left off, Samuel remarked :

“You Salvationists have often in your warfare had a very similar experience to ours at Pentecost. If you have not had the gift of tongues in the miraculous fashion I have described,

you certainly have had the gift of that Tongue of tongues which speaks the language of the heart, the Tongue which not only speaks out of the heart of the speaker, but right into the heart of the listener; and that verily, verily, is the Tongue of Fire.”

“So, like men and women on fire, which we really were, we went to work. There was no one to suggest anything about prudence-no one in that room that morning, anyway-and if any strangers had come along who had tried to frighten us with the difficulties of the task that lay before us, by describing the fearful possibility of the losses or imprisonments, or tortures or crucifixions, that lay before us, lie would not have been listened to. The passion was on us and in us. We had to go, to do, to dare. It was for our Christ, who had inspired us with this passion, to see to the consequences. That is just how we felt.”

“Accordingly, we passed out to the conflict,” continued my heavenly narrator. “It was a systematic attack we made upon the City, every public square and open space where a crowd could be collected being utilised for our meetings.”

“The chief centre of operations was the spacious court of the Temple. Here crowds from every part of the world were gathered together, standing about in groups eagerly enquiring for the latest news, and earnestly discussing it.”

“Had you been there on that eventful day you would have seen every now and then some disciple, with the new fire burning in his heart, and the new earnestness flashing in his eyes, throw himself into the little crowd, and immediately commence in the native tongue of the listeners to proclaim the wonderful tidings that at length the long-looked-for Christ had appeared. Then he would tell how this wonderful Messiah had justified His claim by working miracles of surpassing grandeur, and how He had been rejected and crucified by the Chief Priests and Elders ; and, wonder of wonders, how He had risen from the dead, ascended to Heaven, and poured out upon His Disciples the promised Holy Spirit, sanctifying their natures, enduing them with the Gift of Tongues, and filling them with love to God and man.”

CHAPTER VII.

“You can judge of the utter amazement of these foreigners not only at the startling intelligence they heard (probably for the first time) concerning the miraculous career of our Lord, and the remarkable manner in which the news was imparted, but by the wonderful Salvation offered them. Through this Christ they heard of the marvellous deliverance from the guilt, power, pollution - nay, from the very indwelling of sin provided for them and for their children.”

“Everybody wanted to hear more. They ran in all directions, and talked as they ran, only stopping to question those who seemed likely to be able to in any way enlighten them further as to the character of these marvels.”

“A particular gathering, however, gradually absorbed the bulk of attention. On the steps of one of the most public gates of the inner Court of the Temple, right on the main stream of the pedestrian traffic, Peter and John had stationed themselves, and were to be seen with an immense crowd of eager hearers, growing larger and larger every minute.”

“Thomas, to the joyful surprise of all concerned, was the first to speak, and then some of the other disciples gave their testimonies. Amongst these was Lazarus, whom the Master had

raised from the dead. As he stood forth the buzz of wonder and the jargon of controversy on the outskirts of the crowd suddenly ceased, while he related the marvellous story of his coming back to life.”

“No sooner had Lazarus finished than, impelled by the Spirit within me, I forced my way through the throng, took his position, and told the story of my own departure from life; my mother’s grief; the solemn funeral; the unexpected appearance of the Master; the simple words He spoke; and my utterly indescribable feelings when I found myself in my mother’s arms, a living man once more.”

“Then John spoke. His address I can never forget, nor the assemblage who listened to it, nor the results that followed. It was indeed a history-making event.”

“Take the crowd. Not only were there clustered together, listening as though their lives depended upon every word, the representatives of fifty different nations, but men belonging to each of the classes in Jerusalem who had been so prominent in the incidents of the few previous weeks.”

“Scattered amongst the throng were hundreds who were, more or less, secret believers in the claims of our Lord; there were many who had either been themselves the subjects of His miraculous power or witnesses of it as shown in others; there were crowds who were full of curiosity to hear more about the new sect, and there were enemies without number.”

“The very Priests and Elders, and members of the High Council, whose hatred had brought about the destruction of our dear Master, were there, and at every mention of His name they cursed Him, either aloud or under their breath, with even greater enmity than they did when they saw Him standing at Pilate’s bar. For, was not the scene passing before their eyes at once the greatest of surprises and the bitterest of disappointments? They thought the bloody tragedy of the Cross had stamped out the Galilean heresy; yet here it was, a living power, not only forcing itself on the attention of Jerusalem, but advertising its claims in the presence of representatives from every corner of the civilised world.”

“Then came Peter’s speech. If his audience appeared remarkable, his address was more remarkable still. I had heard him talk with interest in our small assemblies during the life of the Master. I had heard him with riveted attention in the recent upper room gatherings, but the speech he made to that miscellaneous multitude was one of the greatest surprises of my earthly career.”

“He appeared to me a perfectly changed individual. He was a new man. He was a Divinely-inspired man. He was a man on fire. His address was not what men would call eloquence, or oratory, or argument, so far as fine phrases go. It was all that, and a thousand times more. It was a continuous stream of burning words that compelled conviction, made every ear listen, every brain understand, every heart feel, and every unprejudiced mind assent to every truth he maintained, and every fact he described. Any attempt to report it would have been useless. No language could describe it. It must have been heard, and heard under the exciting circumstances of the hour, to be understood, much more to be appreciated.”

“And the effects?” I interjected.

“Yes, the effects,” Samuel replied. “I stood and watched the faces of the crowd so far as my eye could observe them. I do not know how Caiaphas, the High Priest felt, although he was pointed out to me as listening on the fringe of the assembly. Neither could I tell what were the feelings of Pilate’s wife, who, veiled, surrounded, and hidden by a group of guards, could be plainly seen was not one of Peter’s least interested hearers.”

“But the human countenance is a tell-tale affair, and I could see conviction gradually revealing itself on the faces of almost everyone within the circle of my vision. That conviction grew deeper and deeper as Peter proceeded; and when he came to the declaration that the Great Father was going to bring good out of the evil that had been done; and that, instead of sending the whole nation to destruction, He was going to prolong the days of their visitation, and make this Christ whom they had murdered the Author of temporal and everlasting salvation to them and to their children, if at this late hour they would accept Him, tears began to flow in all directions, hearts were broken, and multitudes fell on their knees, crying ‘What must I do to be saved?’”

“The day had been a succession of surprises, and now our eyes looked upon the greatest wonder of all. Here were the men who had murdered our Lord-whom we had been told over and over again would murder us if we mentioned His name in public; who had cursed us from the commencement of the campaign - instead of proceeding to hale us before the authorities, and consign us to a bloody death, they were actually on their knees asking how to become Soldiers with us, and what they must do to receive the Salvation which we published, and for which our Master died.”

“That Penitent-Form, as you call it,” Samuel proceeded, “was one of the most striking scenes our poor world ever looked upon. I see it now. It was engraved upon my memory at the hour, and it has never been erased. Again I see the excited assemblage, and again I hear their self-condemnations and cries for mercy, and promises of faithfulness, if that mercy could only now be given.”

“Can there ever be such a motley throng kneeling at the Saviour’s feet again ? I question it. For instance, here are a number of the class so common in all ages-the Indifferentists, who, at the Crucifixion, passed by on the other side, too intent on their pleasures or their business to give even so much as a look on the Christ who, at that very moment, was in the agony of death.”

“Here is the very Roman soldier who thrust the spear into the Redeemer’s side; he had been pounced upon in the street by some disciple, and captured by hearing him tell his experience in his own mother tongue. Yonder is the Priest who was foremost in the mob that, with staves and lanterns, led on by Judas, arrested their Victim in the Garden. Not far from him kneels one of the false witnesses who, bribed for the occasion, joined in swearing the Master’s life away.”

“Near by is a group of the roughs who, in the early hours of that fatal morning, shrieked in the ear of Pilate, ‘Away with Him, Crucify Him, crucify Him. His Blood be upon us and on our children.’

“And there is the man who, amidst the jeering laughter of the Jews, placed the mocking reed in His hand, and then spat on His sacred face.

“Further away is a man smiting his breast, and asking the question, I Can I ever be forgiven ?”

He is the Sadducee who taunted Him in His very death agony with the gibe: 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save;' while in and out, and all among the crowd, are to be seen people who followed Him in prosperity, but who-when He came to speak of the sufferings and death that awaited Him at Jerusalem-cowardly forsook His cause and cruelly left Him to His fate."

"We had a busy time that day. We began early and finished up late. The healing of these wounded souls was no easy task but it was quite as important, if not actually as difficult, as the wounding of them. Still, we persevered, and, one by one, the penitents came into liberty."

It was, indeed, a triumphant visitation. I do not know whether any captious person disapproved in those days of the publication of the results of soul-saving efforts; but if they did, the inspired historian, utterly regardless of their objections, himself proclaimed, in a record that will last for ever, that the day's work was crowned with the conversion of three thousand souls.

Here my informant ceased speaking. Some celestial duty called him away. On my attempting to express my gratitude for his great kindness, he embraced me, planted a kiss upon my brow; bade me be faithful; and then, with an entrancing smile of pleasing anticipation, said, "We shall meet again!" and disappeared.

CHRISTMAS

CHAPTER I.

It was late, and I was weary. To tell the truth, my heart fairly ached again. The day had been one of more than usual trial. Many things had happened-some perplexing and others painful. One Officer, highly valued and much beloved, had gone to Heaven. Another, who had sworn eternal fidelity to the Flag, and whose work had promised a useful career, had deserted for pleasanter fields of labour. Financial problems had been unusually troublesome; the public meetings had been exceptionally trying; the sinners more than usually hard, the backsliders pitiably stupid, and the Soldiers strangely listless; while, at the moment, what seemed the most perplexing experience of all was the difficulty of finding a supply of Officers equal to the growing demands of the War.

Almost the last words of the Chief of the Staff, at a Council held a few hours before, to consider the World's affairs, had been : "Men, men, men, is our crying need." "Yes," chimed in the Foreign Secretary, men are wanted; where can we find men?" This cry was still ringing in my ears, when, beaten down by one thing and another, I threw myself on my knees, and struggled hard to roll my burden on the Lord, telling Him that He must help me, my only hope being in Him. Then, lying down exhausted, I was soon overtaken by a deep slumber, which made me oblivious to all around.

But neither the weariness of my body, nor the heaviness of my heart appear to have interfered with the activity of my mind, for I could scarcely have closed my eyes ere a vision passed before me -a vision so vivid, so impressive, and so intimately associated with the things which most deeply interest Salvationists, that I feel I must relate it for the benefit of any to whom it may apply; and that, unless I am mistaken, will be a considerable number of my readers.

CHAPTER II.

With that remarkable sense of reality so often experienced in dreams, I found myself in what appeared to be a magnificent mansion of considerable proportions. Its numerous rooms were brilliantly lighted, and crowded with elegant furniture. Carpets, soft to the tread and attractive to the eye, covered the floors, stairways, and passages; costly pictures adorned the walls; book-shelves, filled to overflowing, occupied the recesses; while organs, pianos, statuary, and banks of beautiful hothouse flowers were to be seen on every hand. It was, indeed, a veritable palace of delight.

In one of the most luxuriously furnished apartments I found a young man. Mistletoe, holly, and other decorations were artistically arranged in every room, indicating the festivities with which the occupants of the mansion had been recently celebrating the Christmas advent of the Saviour of mankind. When I entered the young man was standing with -his arms resting on the mantelpiece, gazing into the fire now burning low in the grate. The room, unlike other parts of the house, was only dimly lit. The flickering light of the fire showed him to be tall and slim in build, with a dark, intelligent countenance; and, taken altogether, was of prepossessing appearance.

At the moment, he was apparently deep in thought. What was he thinking about? His mind

was evidently contemplating some serious problem. What was it? I confess to being no little interested in the scene, and even now it stands out vividly in my memory.

Soon after I entered he commenced walking to and fro - there being plenty of room for this kind of exercise in the spacious apartment. And as he walked he talked.

“What a future is mine!” he mused aloud; “I have loving parents, congenial friends, and considerable wealth, and they tell me I have genius as well. The latter is questionable. But I know that I can marry, have a home, and a thousand other pleasant things. How kindly the providence of God has dealt with me in comparison with thousands of others.

“What shall I do with this future? Let me see.”

Before waiting to answer himself he suddenly paused in his walk, rang the bell, and asked the servant about some engagement. And then resuming his position by the mantelpiece, he fell back into the track of his meditations with the question, “What was I saying? Let me see. Ah! that is it. WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY LIFE?”

“Well,” still thinking aloud, he said, “I can maintain my position, cherish a family, be kind to my friends, and deal liberally with the varied efforts put forth by different agencies for the benefit of the world; and then, in addition to all these temporal blessings, I have good ground for hoping for a better world when all these earthly pleasures are ended.”

Here I thought I heard a slight movement at the door. Someone was evidently entering. At first I fancied it was the servant, but I was mistaken. In my dream I wondered who else it could possibly be at that late hour of the night.

The door seemed to open of itself, and, all unannounced, a strange figure walked across the room, and without any invitation seated himself on a vacant chair beside the fire.

I had only an imperfect view of the visitor but so far as I could judge from his appearance, he belonged to the artisan class; anyway, he wore the garb of a working-man. He looked tired and weary, as might have been expected in one who had just come from some long journey and needed rest.

Sitting in the shadow I could see but little of his countenance, but what I did see made me wish to see more. Altogether, he impressed heavy load of care; and yet there was **about** him a quietness of demeanour that **seemed** to testify to the possession of great inward strength and deep unbroken peace.

What astonished me much with the advent of the stranger was the fact that the owner of the mansion - for such I judged the young man to be - expressed no surprise at his appearance. Perhaps it was concerning this visit that he had spoken to the servant a few minutes before. Anyway, I concluded that the call must have been expected, and it was soon evident that such was the case

Although a stranger to me, he was evidently no stranger to the young gentleman, who, a little time before, had with such satisfaction been laying down his plans for the future. Perhaps the reason why the young man did not bid his visitor welcome was that he did not care to see him. But, whichever was the case, nothing of an introductory nature passed between them.

The night was very chill. The stranger, apparently cold, drew his chair up to the fire. The young man took a seat opposite him. And there for several minutes they sat in silence, while I wondered what the meaning of it all could be.

CHAPTER III.

At last the stranger spoke. As he did so he turned his eyes full on the young man, and through the gloom I could see they were wonderful eyes, not so much in their peculiar size or colour as in their remarkable power of expression. As I looked into them they seemed to speak volumes of that sadness which I at first noted. They were evidently the windows through which a sorrowful spirit looked out upon a sinning and suffering world.

But if his eyes were remarkable, his voice was more remarkable still. Soft and melodious and yet, oh! so piercing, it penetrated and thrilled one's whole being, as his words fell upon the listener's ear.

"Although I gave you notice of my coming," the stranger began, "you appear surprised to see me. I have appealed to you before, but appealed in vain. I have sent **you letters, but they have brought** no answer; messengers, but there has been no response; now I am come myself."

At these words an anxious look passed over the young man's face; but he made no reply. Evidently he did not know exactly what to say.

"You are too much occupied to think about my affairs," the stranger went on. "You have so much to do with your studies, your pleasures, your recreations, your future, and the rest of it, that any serious thought about my work is pushed on one side. But my business has now become urgent, and I want an answer to the request I have sent you so often, and I want it to-night."

The young man was still silent; but as the stranger spoke of wanting an answer to his request at once, I fancied that I saw him shake his head slightly, as much as to say, "That cannot be."

"You know my business. It needs no explanation," the stranger quietly went on, without any reference to the effect his words produced on his host. "The sins and sorrows of the world fill me with anguish; they are an overwhelming burden on my heart. Night and day I wander to and fro, a living witness of all the horrid oppressions and cruelties inflicted upon man by his fellow-man, and all the terrible wrongs and indignities that are heaped upon my Heavenly Father. I must do something more effective than has hitherto been done to change this terrible condition of things. I want you to help me. You can do much, but there is only a very little time for you to do it in. Hence my present call."

At this I thought I heard the young man say, under his breath, "What can I do?"

The stranger proceeded "I have just come from India; where I have seen three hundred millions of men, women, and children, with only an exception here and there, still in the darkness of heathendom. I have seen the miseries that flow out of their caste notions, idolatrous practices, and social abominations, besides a thousand other evils. I was there during the dark days of the ghastly famine. But famine," he said, "with its attendant plagues of hunger, disease, and death, is the ordinary lot of forty millions of these poor people. I know

them well. I am always visiting them. I am conversant with it all.”

“But, then, there is their terrible spiritual blindness. You believe,” turning his eyes on the young man, “do you not, that these people are superior to cattle? that they have souls that can never die? You believe that they ought to know the way to the favour of their Heavenly Father, and have a chance of getting to Heaven? I want fifty thousand men and women who will go and tell them the true way into the Kingdom of God. Their ears and hearts are open. Shall they have this opportunity? What do you say? WHO WILL GO?”

By the twitching of his features I observed that the young man’s feelings were being stirred as the stranger proceeded, and I was not surprised to hear him break in, on being thus appealed to. “Oh, they must be helped, and they shall be helped. They shall live, and not die in darkness. Who will go?”

“There is our governess; she has a tender heart; she might go. My coachman is a Salvationist, send him. He would be willing to face any difficulties, I am sure. Then, there is the housemaid; I fancy she cares about the heathen. Somebody must go, and as to the cost, if that is a barrier, I will subscribe. Yes, I will give liberally.”

I could not help being pleased with the warm feeling displayed by the young man; but the stranger appeared disappointed, and a cloud passed over his face. He was evidently expecting something more than was implied in this little speech. But there was no alteration in his manner, and, in the same measured tones, he went on:

“You will not be surprised to hear that I have beheld more harrowing scenes than those which I have just described, in **this** your boasted Fatherland. All yesterday I was wandering in and out of the slums of your great cities.”

As he pronounced the word “slums” I fancied that his eyes glanced upwards at the pictured ceiling, the gilded cornices, the crimson hangings, and the luxurious furniture of the apartment in which we were sitting. But if it was so, if he made any comparison in his mind between the glitter of the surroundings and the squalor of the slums to which he referred, he did not offer any remark upon it, but simply proceeded in the same quiet manner:

“Yes, I have been up and down the creaking rotten staircases, and in and out of the filthy, empty chambers, and seen the nakedness and wretchedness and hunger that reign there.”

“I have been wandering, too, in and out of the haunts of drunkenness, and looked on the multitudes, that no man cares to number, of men and women whose bodies and minds, and souls and lives, and families-and neighbours are cursed for ever and ever by the blackest curse humanity knows-the curse of the monster drink.”

“Yesterday, I saw a young man, insane with the maddening passion, strangle his fair young wife. In the same city I saw a mother dash out the brains of a child of tender years; while in the same street I saw a son dye the white hairs of his aged father with that father’s crimson blood.”

“Horrible, horrible, horrible,” ejaculated the young man.

“Yes,” continued the stranger, “I have stood for hours and hours in the glittering drink

palaces, and watched men and women, with alluring smiles and flattering words, for the gain of a little gold, deal out the fiery fluid which they knew full well would carry destruction to their customers.”

Here the working of the young man’s face indicated that his heart was very powerfully excited, and when the stranger paused, he broke in . “Oh, something shall be done! The poor slaves of the drink plague shall have a chance. Where are the temperance people? We will have legislation. I will vote for it; I will go into Parliament. I will drink no more. Never shall another drop of the murdering beverage enter my house or cross my lips.” And then, in his agitation, he rose, and walked several times across the room.

As he calmed down, the stranger again resumed his appeal, in the same calm and yet piercing tones: “All last night I was in the streets, and in and out of the houses of ill-fame. There I saw thousands and thousands of women, young and old, many of whom were once, oh! so innocent and beautiful, the joy and hope of their mothers’ hearts, but who now, alas! are bereft alike of virtue and of shame. I saw them with their mouths full of ribaldry, dead to all womanly feeling, revelling in the ruin that they spread, as they rushed recklessly down the steep incline to rottenness, death, and endless woe.”

Again the young man started, rose from his chair, and was about to speak; but the stranger waved his hand, and went on; and, awed by his manner, his listening host sat down again.

“I am always busy with the miseries and evil doings of men. I am a regular visitor of the prisons. Do you ever look inside those dwellings of despair?” he asked. But, without waiting for an answer to his question, he quietly continued. “If you visited those places, as I, do, you would find hundreds - nay, thousands - of men and women, of all ages, shut up like wild beasts: shut up, I say, away from love, and hope, and Heaven; and, you might almost say, from the true knowledge of God Himself. If you saw those desolate creatures, or could find time to muse a little on their wretched lot, your heart would ache, I think, as mine does; in the contemplation of the grim necessity that seems to be laid upon them to come in and out of those gloomy walls, with monotonous regularity, until their miserable career is ended by the criminal’s hopeless death.”

“All day and all night,” he continued, “I gaze on the maddened crowds absorbed in the frenzied search for gold, and fame, and pleasure. I mingle amongst them on the Exchange, and in the market, on the race-course, and in the theatre, in public and in private, on the land and on the sea.”

“All day and all night I see the melancholy procession of human souls as it marches on, on, on, down the broad road which leads to destruction, reckless of my Father’s honour, or their own interests here or hereafter: on, on they go, direct to misery and death.”

“Yes, I see them while I speak. Can you not see them also?” And raising himself up, and taking a step forward, he gazed with a far-away look towards the window. “Can you not hear them?” he enquired again. Tramp, tramp, on they go, to the grave, and to destruction. Oh, the gates of Hell are scarcely wide enough for their reception!”

Here the young man again interposed. This time it was a piercing cry that quite startled me. “Oh, awful, awful!” he exclaimed. “And yet, I know it all - have known it long. Oh, say no more! I cannot bear it. Oh! my God, where are the Bishops, and the Clergy, and the Ministers,

and the Priests, and the Salvationists? Where are they? What are they all doing? Can I do anything? How different life looks to me after what you have said to what it did an hour ago. What can I do? I will pray - I will give - I will write - I will talk to my friends; I will, I will, I will." And then he worked off his excited feelings by again pacing the room.

CHAPTER IV.

A long, I might say a painful, pause followed. The fire burned lower. The weary traveller's voice was silent, when, strange to say -although everybody knows what strange things do happen in dreams-the young man seemed to fade away from sight, and, curiously enough, I found myself in his place. But, what was stranger still, I seemed to have been in his place all the time.

Now I thought that it was I who was the owner of the mansion. It was I who sat by the fireplace gazing on the stranger. It was my heart that had been pierced and torn by the words that he had spoken; and it was my mind that had been occupied with no uncertain notions as to what might be done to deal with the harrowing circumstances that the stranger had so graphically described.

For a time, as I have said, all was silent. It was growing late, and the visitor made no signs of retiring, and I wondered why he did not. It would have been an unspeakable relief to me to have been left alone. I wanted time to consider. I felt I must do something. But what must it be?

I looked at my watch, and thinking I saw the stranger shiver, I stirred up the fire; on which the flames blazed out, the light falling with full glow upon his face. And what a face was then revealed to me! It fairly startled me again, it seemed so familiar. Was it my imagination only? No must have seen that face before.

He lifted up his hand. Again, was it my imagination that was playing with me? But there was certainly a wound upon it, and the dim light revealed to me something that seemed to look like blood. Had he met with an accident? What did it mean? It was all so strange; and yet I did not ask him to explain. I simply wondered and wondered who my visitor could be.

I waited. The stranger spoke again: "Can you not hear the wailing of the poor doomed children?" said he; "doomed, not by God, but by selfish, thoughtless man. Can you not hear their sobs and cries, as their little feet are unwittingly turned into the thorny road of evil?"

"Can you not hear the clanking of the chains of the slaves; the groans of the wounded and the dying on the battlefields? Can you not hear the moans of the paupers in the workhouse prisons?"

"Can you not hear the curses and blasphemies which, like an infernal chorus, are going up to Heaven from these blasted hearts and lives all the time?"

"Can you not hear the despairing cries of men and women perishing in their sins? Can you not hear?" And as he spoke, he raised himself up with the anguish that evidently filled his heart. "Can you not hear the sounds of the weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, of the men and women who have gone down to Hell, because no man cared for their souls?"

As he pronounced the word “Hell” a shudder went through me, and I cried out in bitterness: “Something must be done; someone must go. Men and women cannot be left to perish without a hand being stretched out to deliver them. Who-who-who-will go?”

All at once the stranger rose, crossed over the crimson carpet to the spot on which I stood, and fixed his eyes full on me. Beneath that gaze I trembled from head to foot. And then, in louder tones than heretofore, he spoke again. This time he only uttered two words, but they went to my inmost soul. All through the night, again and again, my heart had been beating so wildly that at times it seemed as though it would force its way through my breast; but those two words made it stand still. What were those words? – “Go YOURSELF !”

“Go myself? What-me go?” I said in astonishment. “How could I go? and whatever use should I be if I went?”

“Me go? Impossible!” I inwardly gasped. It was only the whisper of my heart; but the stranger seemed to hear my thoughts, for, soft and low, he answered back, “All things are possible.”

However, I went on, as though he had not spoken, saying to myself, “What, leave my father and mother?” And I thought of their grey hairs, of all their love, and my obligations to them. “Impossible!”

And again the stranger whispered, “All things are possible.”

“What! leave my home! with all its luxuries and comforts and associations?” I inwardly kept on saying. And rapidly my mind travelled from room to room, upstairs and downstairs, and then out into the garden; and again I said within myself, “Impossible.”

And once more the stranger whispered, “All things are possible.”

Then I thought of the breaking up of my plans for the future-my plans for acquiring wealth, and winning fame, and finding pleasure; and again I inwardly exclaimed, “Impossible! it cannot be.”

While once more the stranger, in his low, clear, piercing tones, answered, “All things are possible.”

And then my feelings got the better of me, and I said aloud, “It cannot be. No one has ever been asked to make such a sacrifice before. No one has ever been expected to leave so much, and go down so low - even for so great an object.”

While I spoke another change came over my vision. The luxurious apartment, with its gildings, and furnishings, and comforts, suddenly assumed the appearance of a stable. Here were cattle; there were rough servants; there were weary peasants preparing to pass the night upon the straw, and there was a manger, and in the manger was a lovely Babe. So fascinating was it that it fairly captivated me and made me forget the stable and its tenants and all else besides.

As I gazed upon the Babe I could not help fancying that I saw something in the features with which I was familiar. But while I wondered and wondered, the scene changed once more, and the stable was gone, and the mansion had come back. Once more I was in the drawing-room,

again the visitor was sitting in his chair, with his face turned fully upon me, as though still waiting for my answer; and as I looked at him more closely, and, to my further amazement, I beheld in him the features of the Heavenly Child.

CHAPTER V.

Now I saw it all. How blind I must have been not to have seen it before. My Lord had come Himself to invite me to follow, Him. Then my heart broke, and falling at His feet, and bathing them with my tears, I cried out : “My Lord and my God, I will love Thee, I will worship Thee, I will sing for Thee, I will pray for Thee, I will talk for Thee, I will give Thee my house, my money, my all. But, oh! ask me not for such a sacrifice. Ask me not to go on such an errand. What could I do for the heathen, or the slums, or the criminals, or the drunkards, or the ignorant, mocking crowds? It might mean to me not only poverty, and sorrow, and suffering, but death itself. Oh, I cannot face that - I cannot. Ask anything but that.”

And then suddenly the gloomy room was flooded with light, and the Stranger again rose up, and stepped forward. And, as He did so, the robe fell from His shoulders, and the covering from His head, and for the first time I had a full view of His figure; and, oh! what a vision was there.

His countenance was beautiful beyond description. His forehead was torn as though with thorns. His hands and feet were stained with blood. His side still showed the murderous gash through which the Roman soldier’s spear reached His blessed heart.

For a moment we looked into each other’s eyes, and then He opened wide His arms as though to welcome me; and, as He stood there with those blessed hands outstretched, it seemed as though I could see Him actually suffering, praying, and dying for me on the accursed tree.

And then once more I fell before Him, this time stammering out with broken speech, “Lord Jesus, forgive the thoughtless withholding of myself in the past. Thou didst go to the lowest depths for me. There shall be no more wretched excuses. Here I am, send me where Thou wilt. LET ME GO.”

Then those blessed arms enfolded me, lifted me up to His bosom, and pressed me to His heart; and with the rapture of that embrace I woke, and wept to find Him gone. It was a dream.

WHO CARES?

During one of my recent journeys I was led out into a train of thought respecting the conditions of the multitudes around me living regardless of all that concerned their eternal welfare, and in the most open and shameless rebellion against God. I looked out upon the millions of people around me given up to their drink and their pleasure, and their dancing and their music, and their business and their anxieties, and their politics and their troubles, and thousands of other things; ignorant-wilfully ignorant, in many cases: in other instances knowing all about it; but all of them sweeping on and up, in their blasphemies and devilries, to the Throne of God; and while thus musing I had a vision.

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightnings flashed, and loud thunders rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, and fretted and broke, and rose to foam and fret and break again.

In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, and shouting and shrieking, and cursing and struggling, and drowning; and as they cursed and shrieked, they rose and shrieked again, and then sank to rise no more.

And out of this dark angry ocean I saw a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea; and all round the base of this rock I saw a vast platform; and on to this platform I saw with delight a number of the poor, struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean ; and I saw that a number of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the same place of safety.

On looking more closely I found a number of those who had been rescued scheming and contriving by ladders and ropes and boats and other expedients more effectually to deliver the poor strugglers out of this sea. Here and there were some who actually jumped into the water, regardless of all consequences, in their eagerness to “rescue the perishing;” and I hardly know which gladdened me most - the sight of the poor people climbing on to the rocks, and so reaching the place of safety, or the devotion and self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in efforts for their deliverance.

And as I looked I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different “sets” or castes, and occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments; but only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea.

But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them.

Then what was equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not seem to have any care - that is, any agonising care - about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning before their eyes, many of whom were their own husbands and wives, and mothers and sisters, and children.

And this unconcern could not have been the result of ignorance, because they lived right in sight of it all, and talked about it sometimes, and regularly went to hear lectures in which the awful state of the poor drowning creatures was described.

I have already said that the occupants of this platform were engaged in different Pursuits. Some of them were absorbed night and day in trading, in order to make gain, storing up their savings in boxes, strong rooms, and the like.

Many spent their time in amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock; others in painting pieces of cloth, or in playing music, or in dressing themselves up in different styles, and walking about to be admired.

Some occupied themselves chiefly in eating and drinking, others were greatly taken up with arguing about the poor drowning creatures in the sea, and as to what would become of them in the future, while many contented themselves that they did their duty to the perishing creatures by the performance of curious religious ceremonies.

On looking more closely I found that some of the crowd who had reached the place of safety had discovered a passage up the rock leading to a higher platform still, which was fairly above the black clouds that overhung the ocean, and from which they had a good view of the mainland not very far away, and to which they expected to be taken off at some distant day. Here they passed their time in pleasant thoughts, congratulating themselves and one another on their good fortune in being rescued from the stormy deep, and singing songs about the happiness that would be theirs when they should be taken to the mainland, which they imagined they could plainly distinguish just "over there."

And all this time the struggling, shrieking multitudes were floating about in the dark sea, quite near by - so near that they could easily have been rescued. Instead of which there they were, perishing in full view, not only one by one, but sinking down in shoals, every day, in the angry water.

And as I looked, I found that the handful of people on the platform whom I had observed before, were still struggling with their rescue work - oh, God! how I wished there had been a multitude of them. Indeed, these toilers seemed to do little else but fret and weep, and toil, and scheme, for the perishing people. They gave themselves no rest, and sadly bothered everyone they could get at around them by persistently entreating them to come to their assistance. In fact, they came to be voted a real nuisance by many quite benevolent and kind-hearted people, and by some who were very religious too. But still they went on, spending all they had, and all they could get, on boats and rafts, and drags and ropes, and every other imaginable device they could invent for saving the poor, wretched, drowning people.

A few others did much the same thing at times, working hard in their way; but the people who chiefly attracted my attention were at the business all the year round indeed, they made such a terrible to-do about it, and went at it with such fierceness and fury, that many even of those who were doing the same kind of work, only in a milder, way, were quite angry with them, and called them mad.

And then I saw something more wonderful still. The miseries and agonies, and perils and blasphemies, of these poor struggling people in this dark sea moved the pity of the great God

in Heaven; moved it so much that He sent a Great Being to deliver them. And I thought that this Great Being whom Jehovah sent came straight from His palace, right through the black clouds, and leaped right into the raging sea among the drowning, sinking people; and there I saw Him toiling to rescue them, with tears and cries, until the sweat of His great anguish ran down in blood. And as He toiled and embraced the poor wretches, and tried to lift them on to the rock, He was continually crying to those already rescued - to those whom He had helped up with His own bleeding hands - to come and help Him in the painful and laborious task of saving their fellows.

And what seemed to me most passing strange was that those on the platform to whom He called, who heard His voice, and felt they ought to obey it-at least, they said they did - those who loved Him much, and were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken - who worshipped Him, or who professed to do so - were so taken up with their trades and professions, and moneysaving and pleasures, and families and circles, and religions and arguments about it, and preparations for going to the mainland, that they did not attend to the cry that came to them from this wonderful Being who had Himself gone down into the sea. Anyway, if they heard it they did not heed it; they did not care; and so the multitude went on struggling, and shrieking, and drowning in the darkness.

And then I saw something that seemed to me stranger than anything that had gone before in this strange vision. I saw that some of these people on the platform, whom this wonderful Being wanted to come and help Him in His difficult task, were always praying and crying to Him to come to them.

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier.

Others wanted Him to come and **take away** various doubts and misgivings they had respecting the truth of some letters which He had written them.

Some wanted Him to come and make them, feel more secure on the rock-so secure that they would be quite sure they should never slip off again. Numbers of others wanted Him to make them feel quite certain that they would really get on to the mainland some day; because, as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to miss their footing, and had fallen back again into the stormy waters.

So these people used to meet, and get as high up the rock as they could; and, looking towards the mainland, where they thought the Great Being was, they would cry out, "Come to us! Come, and help us!" And all this time He was down among the poor struggling, drowning creatures in the angry deep, with His arms around them, trying to drag them out, and looking up - oh! so longingly, but all in vain-to those on the rock, crying to them, with His voice all hoarse with calling, "Come to Me! COME, AND HELP ME!"

And then I understood it all. It was plain enough. That sea was the ocean of life-the sea of real, actual, human existence. That lightning was the gleaming of piercing truth coming from Jehovah's Throne. That thunder was the distant echoing of the wrath of God. Those multitudes of people shrieking, struggling, agonising in the stormy sea, were the thousands and thousands of poor harlots and harlot-makers, of drunkards and drunkard-makers, of thieves and liars, and blasphemers and ungodly people of every kindred, and tongue, and nation.

Oh, what a black sea it was! and, oh, what multitudes of rich and poor, ignorant and educated were there, and all so unlike in their outward circumstances and conditions, yet all alike in one thing—all sinners before God; all held by, and holding on to, some iniquity, fascinated by some idol, the slaves of some devilish lust, and ruled by some foul fiend from the bottomless pit!

“All alike in one thing?” Nay, in two things - not only the same in their wickedness, but, unless rescued, alike in their sinking, sinking, sinking, down, down, down to the same terrible doom.

That great sheltering rock represented Calvary; and the people on it were those who had been rescued; and the way they employed their energies and gifts and time represented the occupations and amusements of those who profess to be rescued from sin and hell, and to be the followers of Jesus Christ. The handful of fierce, determined saviours were Salvation Soldiers, together with a few others who shared the same spirit. That mighty Being was the Son of God “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” who is still struggling to save the dying multitudes about us from this terrible doom of damnation, and whose voice can be heard, above the music, and machinery, and hue-and-cry of life, calling on the rescued to come and help Him to save the world.

My comrades, you are rescued from the waters; you are on the rock. He is in the dark sea, calling on you to come to Him and help Him. Will you go?

Look for yourselves. The surging sea of life crowded with perishing souls rolls up to the very spot on which you stand. Leaving the vision, I now come to speak of the fact that is real as the Bible; as real as the Christ who hung upon the cross! as real as the Judgement Day will be, and as real as the Heaven and Hell that will follow it.

Look! Don't be deluded by appearances - men and things are not what they seem. All who are not on the rock are in the sea. Look at them from the standpoint of the Great White Throne, and what a sight you have! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is in the midst of this dying multitude, struggling to save them. And He is calling on You to jump into the sea - to go right away to His side, and help Him in the holy strife.

Will you jump? That is, will you go to His feet, and place yourself absolutely at His disposal?

A Soldier came to me once, saying that for some time she had been giving her Lord her profession, and prayers, and money, and now she wanted to give Him her whole being. She wanted to go right into the fight. In other words, she wanted to go to His assistance in the sea. As when a man from the bank seeing another struggling in the water, lays aside those outer garments that would hinder his efforts, and leaps to the rescue, so will you who still linger on the bank, thinking, and singing, and praying about the poor perishing souls, lay aside your shame, your pride, your care about other people's opinions, your love of ease and all the selfish loves that have hindered you so long, and rush to the rescue of this multitude of dying men.

Does the surging sea look dark and dangerous? Unquestionably it is so. There is no doubt that the leap for you, as for every one who takes it, means difficulty, and scorn, and suffering. For you it may mean more than this. It may mean death. He who calls to you from the sea,

however, knows what it will mean; and knowing, He still beckons you, and bids you come.

You must do it. You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in religion long enough. You have had pleasant feelings, pleasant songs, pleasant meetings, pleasant prospects. There has been much of human happiness, much clapping of hands, and firing of volleys - very much of Heaven on earth.

Now, then, go to God, and tell Him you are prepared as far as necessary to turn your back upon it all, and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days grappling with these perishing multitudes, cost you what it may.

YOU MUST do it. With the light that has now broken in upon your mind, and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning finger that is now before your eyes, you have no alternative. To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness henceforth will consist in sharing their misery; your ease in sharing their pain; your crown in bearing their cross; and your heaven in going to the very jaws of hell to rescue them.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

