

IN

PLACES

OF

DRAWING

WATER

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Tom Adams

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PREFACE.

DEAR CHILDREN OF GOD: – This little book is sent forth with the desire that it may be a blessing to the church of God, especially to the babes in grace, who were principally in my mind while writing these semi-allegorical narrations of those gathered at “The Places of Drawing Water.”

May the Holy Spirit bless what I have penned to the comfort and edification of the household of God
This is the heart’s desire of your brother and servant in the gospel of Christ,

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CHAPTER I.

NOT long ago I fell into a sort of reverie, in which I roamed here and there in a land that I should say was once a delightful land, but it now looked as though devastation had swept over it. Its fields lay waste, untilled, and were grown over with briars and thorns. Here and there I saw the remains of a vineyard, the hedges were broken down, and the wild boar out of the woods was bent on wasting what yet remained. (Psalms 80. 13.) As I journeyed along the highways I met no travelers, the highways were unoccupied. (Judges v. 6) Now and again I espied in the byways one who eyed me suspiciously, as though he were questioning whether I were a friend or foe. Then I came upon unwalled towns, deserted villages, where no doubt formerly the inhabitants dwelt in blissful peace, having no thought, no fear that the enemy would come into the land.

As I roamed I came also upon a ruined city. Its gates were thrown down, and in the walls were many a breach. I made my way amidst the ruinous heaps and beheld what had once been fair palaces; now utterly spoiled, having been, I judge, stripped bare by ruthless hands.

As I wended my way amidst these desolations, I heard a voice saying, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow, like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." – Lam. i. 12. Being turned toward the voice, I beheld a group of persons with their garments rent, sitting in dust and ashes, and their countenances were so marred, their eyes were swollen with weeping. The faces of some I could not see, for they lay prostrate upon the earth, with their mouths in the dust. Then he whose voice I had heard did sigh, and I perceived that his sighs touched a sympathetic chord in the others, and all sighed with him, while the silent tears streamed down their cheeks. I said "silent tears;" perhaps I should have said audible tears, for those tears spake volumes of what was passing on within them to my interested heart.

I was attracted to these mourners, and sat down with them upon the ground, and it appeared to me that I was one in heart with them, and that my heart did throb in unison with theirs. I buried my face in my hands' and was soon wrapped in deep thought. Painful and humbling were my cogitations, and at length this conclusion rested upon my spirit: "The Lord hath done that which he hath devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he' had commanded in the days of old; he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee; he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries." – Lam. ii. 17.

I was turned to the Lord, and my heart enquired of him, How long, O Lord God, shall be this desolation t And he said, "Until the Spirit be poured upon thee from on high." – Isaiah xxxii. 15, and then that word came so comfortingly, "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry." – Jer. xxxi. 4. So soothing and assuring was this word to my soul that I sank in rest upon it. I pillowed my head upon the precious promise, and in my repose I was as one that fell asleep, and in my sleep were dreaming. I am as one awakening from a troubled sleep at the early dawning of the day. The sighs and moans that a little while ago distressed my heart have fled, and I hear sweet notes of the singing birds. Opening mine eyes I arise, and looking forth through the lattice I behold the sun arise with healing in his wings. So alluring is the landscape that I say, I will go forth into the field and see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grapes appear, and the pomegranates bud forth.

“In sweet amazement I come forth,
What wonders meet mine eyes!
Spring’s glorious beauty on the earth,
Her radiance in the skies.”

The pastures were clothed with flocks, and the valleys also were covered with corn. The rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys gave forth their fragrance and thrilled my heart with their beauty. With delighted heart I entered a garden enclosed, and here flourished an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices. While in this garden I heard a voice saying, “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” And as I looked upon the voice, I said in my heart, “Sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.” Onward I roamed in a delightful land, a country flowing with milk and honey, and my heart was persuaded that the eyes of the Lord God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year. (Deut. xi. 12.) At length I came to a place where there were wells of living water, and being thirsty and wearied, I drank of these wells of salvation and was refreshed. I sat down by the fountains to muse upon the inspiring scenes that I had witnessed, sweet gratitude filled my heart, my meditations were most comforting; but hearing voices, I was aroused from my contemplations and beheld many persons gathering to this place of drawing water. They came from every quarter, men and women and children, until a goodly company were assembled. I scanned their countenances with peculiar interest, marked their glances of recognition and cordial greetings; their speech and behavior all betokened that they were bound together in union sweet and dear esteem, and I inwardly felt, These are the people whom God hath chosen for his peculiar treasure, they are fellow-citizens, the household of God. They looked at me, not unkindly, and one of them asked me who I was, and from whence I came? I replied that I was

“From Egypt lately came,
Where death and darkness reign.”

That while in that country, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, I had heard of the great name, and of the strong hand and stretched out arm of the God of Israel, therefore I am come out of a far country for his names sake. (1 Kings viii. 41.) I related to them that I had been greatly exercised to taste of the mercy of God, and my heart had been lifted up with fervent supplications that he would pardon my transgressions and save me for his own name’s sake; that I hoped the Lord God of Israel had taken me beneath the covert of his wings, for in him is all my trust. Surely I am a monument of his mercy, a sinner saved by Jesus’ precious blood, and I told them I still find springing up in my soul the prayer, Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

When I had finished they all looked upon me lovingly and welcomed me among them, saying, “We know the heart of a stranger, for we were once strangers in the land of Egypt. (Exod. xxiii. 9.) But thou art no more a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with us.” At this kind speech my soul was humbled, but so grateful I felt to the Lord and to them, I was like a child at home. It was very clearly to be seen that the most intimate friendship dwelt in this congregation. They asked each other after their welfare, (Exod. xviii. 7,) and having refreshed themselves at the wells of living water they sat down around the fountain and talked together of the goodness of their God to his inheritance.

Then one, whose name was Jedidiah, rose up and addressed the assembly, “Beloved kindred, the Lord has been mindful of us, he has been favorable unto his land, he has strengthened the bars of our gates, he hath blessed our gates, he hath given us peace within our borders, and filled us with the finest of wheat. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let us now in the gratitude of our hearts, in this place of the drawing of water, rehearse one to another the righteous acts of the Lord. (Judges v. 11.) This will tend to our mutual comfort and keep in memory the great goodness of our God.”

CHAPTER II.

THE EXILE.

To this proposal there was a murmur of consent from all the congregation. Then a voice in the company said, My heart responds to the suggestion. of our beloved Jedidiah, for in very truth the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me.

The grateful tones of his voice drew me to the speaker, and I beheld a man with a smiling face and a harp in his hand, and thus he continued: My times have not always been so pleasantly spent as this fair day, for I have known dreary days in exile from my native land.

“How came you to be in exile from our dear country?” some of the congregation enquired.

He answered: “‘I was cut off for my parts.’ – Ezek. xxxvii. 11. I was born in the land of Canaan, and like you all I had my inheritance therein. From day to day it was mine to see the good of God’s chosen, I rejoiced in the gladness of his nation, and gloried in Israel’s inheritance.

‘But ah! my inmost spirit mourns,
And well my eyes with tears may swim
To think of my perverse returns;
I’ve been a faithless friend to him.’”

“The causes of my exile arose in this manner. At a certain time there appeared in our land some richly apparelled strangers; they enquired after my health and present welfare with all seeming friendship, and by their alluring smiles I was enticed and associated with them. O that I had been mindful of that divine advice: ‘My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.’ – Prov. i. 10. But with shame to myself I confess it, I walked in their counsels to the gratification of my flesh. The longer I associated with these non-Israelites the more agreeableness I found in the indulgence of the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and I found I could not thus indulge myself, and at the same moment worship God in spirit. Ah, I began saying with regard to our divine worship, ‘Behold, ‘what a weariness is it!’ – Mal. i. 13. You can tell by this, my people, how far away I had wandered from the right way. I met with reproofs from our prophets. (Jer. lxiv. 4.) The watchmen warned me of my evil associations; I trembled, I was ashamed, and I sometimes sighed. But these delicately dressed aliens with soft speeches and caresses, forced me into evil associations. What a poor, weak and sinful worm I am! Ah, I consorted with them till I myself felt as though I hardly belonged to Israel. Then I got into a state of indifference, as though the Lord God, our heavenly Father, had said, ‘Let him alone.’ – Hosea iv. 17; and now no more chided me for my follies and backslidings in heart.

Trouble came! (Job iii. 26.) Not unsent, for God sent it. A decree of banishment was issued against me, my captors came, I was arrested, put in chains and they dragged me forth to a strange land. Who were these captors that now wrenched we away from the land of my nativity? They were those very associates with whom I had consorted and in whose evil insinuations I had indulged myself. They were my enemies, and the enemies of our God. They were Assyrians, Babylonians, the lusts of my flesh, They now appeared without disguise, and I found they were my cruel foes. I would now have shaken off all contact with them, but they drew me on, drew me away from home to the distant land. I felt I was an outcast, exiled from the Lord, and yet it was with tardy steps that I took that journey to Babylon. Each day I felt I knew I was farther and farther away from the land of my happiness. At

length I arrived in the land of very confusion. I was a captive exile in Babylon! All was confusion around me, and all was confusion within me. There was confusion of tongues, and I was confounded. (Gen. xi. 3.) There were tongues of demons, tongues of unbelief, tongues of atheism, tongues that mocked my pitiable state, but I could hear no tongue that uttered a word of the law of kindness. (Prov. xxxi. 26.) I was plagued with inward distractions, my thoughts were confused, I could not think aright about myself, about where I was or about the Lord. Confusion was written upon my countenance, and my very speech was disordered. I scarcely knew what I said to my foes or to the Lord. Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove (bereaved of its mate), mine eyes failed with looking upward, and from my chastened soul there burst forth the cry, ‘Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for in.,’ but the next moment in my soul’s confusion, I cried, ‘When I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer.’ – Lam. iii. 8. I was in very truth in Babylon.

‘By the rivers of Babylon I sat down and wept when I remembered Zion, amidst all my miseries I remembered all the pleasant things that were mine in Jerusalem in the days of old.’ – Lam. i. 7; and while the tears were yet upon my cheeks those Babylonians who had wasted my life and brought me into captivity, taunted my soul with their speeches, requiring of me mirth, saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’ Ah, I had now no voice for singing and I had hanged my harp upon the willows. I brought my harp with me from my native land, but it gave forth no strains of melody from my hand on all that dreadful journey from the Lord and his land, and now that I was held fast in captivity, I had no skill to play and no heart to sing, and I answered my foes, ‘How shall I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?’ But the worst had not come yet! O, brethren, dear, be warned by my story and know that the life of an exile is homeless and dreary, but the state of captive exile is very wretchedness. So I found it as you will learn by my narrative.

In addition to the confusion without and the confusion within, there came upon me a visitation, that was as a ‘withering blast, that parched up all my moisture. (Psalms xxxii. 4.) And my heart was smitten and withered like grass, and in felt hopelessness I sighed, ‘My bones are dried, my hope is lost and I am cut off for my parts.’” – Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

At the mention of this, one in the assembly asked whether, when his captivity was turned, he was restored for his parts?

The returned exile beamed upon the company and replied: “No, indeed! but my restoration was all owing to the sovereign, unchangeable love of our God.”

At this reply all the congregation smiled acquiesingly upon him.

“O, my kindred, I became so dried up, and everything that formerly had been a living spring, now failed. I would go to the law and to the prophets and to the psalms of our nation, but not a drop of comfort could I find. I was a miserable outcast, ready to perish in the land of Assyria. (Isaiah xxvii. 13.) I said, Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever, doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? I feared it was so; my spirit sank within me, and I moaned, I am perished from the Lord.

But it was not so! Sometimes in the night I would dream, dream of home, dream of eating its pleasant fruits, and of worshiping with Israel in the holy mount at Jerusalem. This was pleasant and was some refreshment to my soul, but I would awaken from my dream and find myself a captive still, far, far

away from the land of my heart's desire. I would cry, Let me go, but those that held me captive refused to let me go. (Jer. 1. 33.) The cords of my sins and the chains of unbelief held me fast in affliction.

From my window, open toward Jerusalem, I would look toward the place where God's honor dwelleth, and in looking I experienced little revivings of hope, and I would say, Who can tell? It may be I shall not die in this exile, but the Lord himself will come and redeem me from captivity. Then I would remember the word: 'Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.' – Isaiah lix. 25. But O, so soon, unbelief like a flood would pour into my soul, and I would say, 'It is not so with me.' – Job ix. 35.

My days and nights in the strange land were not all alike. I had my changes even there. Some day's, for a little space, hope would spring up, tidings from the far off country would inflame my longings, and for little moments I would feel my chains growing lighter loosening, ready to drop off, and I about ready to mount up with wings and fly away from my wretchedness. One night my captors came upon me in their might and handled me in a cruel way, saying as they did so, 'Persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.' – Psalms lxxi. 11. They cast me into a low dungeon, (Lam. iii. 53-55,) and put my feet in the stocks, and then Satan roared, 'Where is now thy God?' My soul trembled, and well-nigh black despair set in that I should ever again see the good of God's chosen and rejoice in the gladness of his nation. But though I feared the pit had shut her mouth upon me, and that I should die an outcast from the commonwealth of Israel, remembrances would come, as a flowing stream of the Lord's former loving-kindness, and as I mused a power divine moved me, and I cried unto him out of the low dungeon, I confessed to him my sinful, ungrateful behavior, my heart ached over it, and I longed once more to come into the sanctuary to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. 'The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.' Deliverance tarried and I sank again in the mire, then I would be turned in upon myself and my soul would hold its mournful soliloquy over the humbling causes of my exile. Ah, I knew that all that now was my bitter lot at the hands of the Lord was not without cause" (Ezek. xiv. 23.)

"I thought you said it was the Assyrians and Babylonian. that were your oppressors, and now you say It was the Lord's hands," exclaimed a little boy in the company.

"Well, dear child, I am pleased with your interested question. The wicked are God's sword. (Psalms xvii 13.) The Assyrian is the rod of God's anger, the rod in their hand is the indignation. (Isaiah x. 5.) The Lord hews his people by the prophets, and they are slain by the words of his mouth. (Hosea vi. 5.) And though the axe, and the saw, and the rod afflict us, it is the Lord who heweth with the axe, and shaketh the saw and striketh with the staff. (Isaiah x. 15.) Thus saith the Lord, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings reprove thee.' – Jer. ii. 19. Ah, I found it so! But the time of my deliverance drew nigh, and there came into my dungeon, into my poor heart, a voice saying, 'Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him.' – Jeremiah xxxi. 20.

I knew the voice, it was the voice of our Father, my heart was revived, and warmed in contrition, and love to the Lord. With love and grief my heart dividing my trust in his covenant mercy increased, and I prayed, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name – Psalms clxii. 7. At length the day of salvation came. The great trumpet of the Jubilee was blown (Isaiah xxvii. 13,) my dungeon was opened and I came forth to the light with my face toward Zion. The silver trumpet proclaimed forgiveness,

redemption and everlasting kindness in my soul. Hearken, my dear ones, to a few of the words of the joyful sound that the great trumpet sounded: 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.' I came forth of the realms of confusion, from Babylon, and yet so good it was I could hardly believe it true that my captivity was ended and I could go home. (Acts xii. 9.) I was as one that dreamed. (Psalms cxxvi. 1.) But, O, it was true, my heart bubbled up with happiness, my mouth was filled with laughter and my tongue with singing; I said, I will arise and go to my Father. I will return unto the Lord; he hath torn and he will heal me; he hath smitten and he will bind me up.

How different was the journey home from that weary, rugged road that I took when in chains I was taken to Babylon. Now, in returning to Zion I wept and prayed and sang, and my harp gave forth melodious strains, and all the way from Babylon to Canaan I would hear that sweet, alluring voice saying, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings, I am married unto you.' – Jer. iii. 14-22. This would quicken my pace, sometimes to leaps and bounds, as of a hind let loose, (Gen. xlix. 21,) that I might come to our delightful land, to the companionship of my dear kindred, and to the bosom of our God. From strength to strength I onward sped in sweet anticipation, saying, 'My feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' Though the way was through the wilderness, I found the King's highway there and in due time arrived in Zion. (Isaiah xxxv. 8-10.) Then in my soul's gratitude I repaired to the house of the Lord, and when the High Priest came in robed in his garments of glory and beauty, the first thing I saw was my name written upon his breast. I felt as though I should swoon away in sweet amazement and adoring love, and I said in my soul, all the while, during all my estrangement, during all my captivity, and when I languished ready to die in the dismal dungeon, my name was upon his heart in perpetual memorial before the Lord. (Exod. xxviii. 2-29.) My heart glowed in gratitude and I said in my heart, Thou art mine, my brother dear, my merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for my sins. (Heb. ii. 17.)

Another happy experience was mine: I found, although my absence in my exile had been long, that there had been no forfeiture of my inheritance, it had not been sold or ravaged in my absence, and I was soon comfortably settled in my old estate. (Ezek. xxxvi. 11.) O, all this blessed restoration has been according to the abounding grace of God."

"But will you again go in the paths of sin that God's grace may abound toward you?"

At this inquiry his eyes filled with tears, and looking up into heaven his heart burst forth in an imploring cry, "God forbid." – Rom. vi. 2, and all the congregation said, Amen.

CHAPTER III

HEPHZIBAH'S DREAM

“What our brother has just been relating has been very interesting, and while he was speaking a dream I had last night was recalled to my mind, and as it resembles in some particulars our brother's experience, I should like to tell it to you.”

“We should like to hear your dream, Sister Hephzibah,” said Jedidiah, “for we know the Lord speaketh in dreams and visions of the night unto his people.” (Job xxxiii. 15.)

“Well, this is my dream, may the Lord be the interpreter to our hearts. I dreamed I was in a foreign land, among a people of fierce countenance, and their speech was so barbarous I could not perceive its signification. (Deut. xxviii. 49, 50.) I judge I suffered no loss through this ignorance. I went among them and feared no evil, for a voice said in my heart, ‘No man shall set upon thee to hurt thee’ – Acts xviii. 10. Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? (1 Peter iii. 13.) As I roamed through the land I heard a mournful sound, and turning my eyes in the direction of the sound, I beheld a cage of birds, of turtle-doves. They were sorely mourning (Isa. lix. 11) tabbering upon their breasts. (Nahum ii. 7.) Now, though I could not understand the speech of the inhabitants of the land, I could well understand the voice of these captive doves.

When these Assyrians looked with their fierce countenance and spake with their harsh tongues, the doves were much frightened and trembled (Hosea xi. 10,) as though these men were devouring beasts of prey. My heart went out in pity to these doves, for in such plaintive tones they mourned, saying, ‘O, when wilt thou come unto me? when shall I come and appear before thee? when shall I arise and the night be gone? How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? O, that this cage were opened, for then would I fly to my mountain, I would flee unto thee to hide me. He would hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle he would hide me.’

I was myself about to open the cage, when an outstretched arm appeared, and the gracious hand opened the cage, the doves hastened their escape from their prison and soared on high; they made a circle in the heavens, and then with their faces toward Mount Zion they took their eager flight. I thought in my dream that I rode with them in the heavens, delighted that they were escaped. Over the foreign landscape they flew, it had no attractions to draw them down, to delay their flight, for they were homeward bound.

Then as they flew I beheld other birds coming from afar, and as they drew near I heard their discordant voices and found they were eagles, vultures and hawks. Now I trembled for the safety of the doves. I said, They are escaped from captivity and will now become they prey of these enemies. These unclean, bloodthirsty birds came nearer, nearer, O so near! But the doves continued on their flight unharmed, so that I wondered. I thought, This is like the Egyptians pursuing Israel through the Red Sea. (Exod. Xiv. 20.)

My eyes were opened (2 Kings vi. 17;) and I saw a hand between the doves and their enemies, thwarting all their endeavors to catch and devour these harmless, loving doves. Then they came to the mountain of the Lord of hosts and flew to their windows (Isaiah lx. 10,) and I saw the glorious arm that had been their reward (Isaiah lviii. 8,) in their flight, was now reached forth to draw them in, and

place them in their houses. (Hoses xi. 11.) The days of mourning were ended, they were with their mates again, and were happy. I was happy and I awoke, and my sleep was sweet unto me.”

CHAPTER IV.

SEEING EYES.

“I WAS once blind, and in my blindness declared I could see. (John ix. 40, 41.) I had my eyes opened and then confessed I was blind, so very blind that I begged for sight and cried for light, and now my language is, ‘Whereas I was blind, now I see.’ My speech, my dear companions, may appear to be a riddle, but if you will listen to my story I think it will be well understood.”

The speaker was a person of manly appearance, and had such beautiful, lustrous eyes that his whole countenance was glorified.

“My father and mother were blind, my grand-fathers and grandmothers were blind, and though I search my genealogy back many generations, I still find They were all blind. I was born blind. My former name was Blindheart, (Eph. iv. 18,) but a new name has been given me, and now I am named in Israel, Seeing ‘Eyes. (Prov. xx. 12.)

I was born blind and I knew not the true light. What I thought was light in me was darkness, and when I tell you about it you will all say how great was that darkness. (Matt. vi. 23.) Now, when I was in my native blindness I could get about well enough in my old haunts, and in the blindness of my heart I was so ignorant that I declared I could see as well as any one ever did, as well as any of my associates. In part this was true, for all my fellows were like myself, stone blind. I dwelt with them in gross darkness. (Isaiah lx. 2.) I was blind to my blindness and blind to the path of life; I was blind to my filthiness and deformity, I was blind to the loveliness of the heavenly country, to the beauty of the King of glory and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. I had no eyes capable of seeing such transforming glories. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) As I was blind I loved darkness, (John iii. 19,) my times were spent with my fellows in the dark places of the earth. (Psalms lxxiv. 20.) Here I dwelt like the mole in the dark subterranean passages of my blind heart, and esteemed it my home, my palace; for here I reigned, and reveled and banqueted in the dark lusts of the flesh. My foolish heart was indeed darkened and I knew it not. (Rom. i. 21.)

As I grew older I became more and more vain in my imaginations, for when I came to what is called, in the kingdom of darkness, the age of accountability, I was put to school. I became a diligent scholar under my tutors, who bore the family name of Rebel-against-the-light. (Job xxiv. 13.) As all that these instructors knew was darkness, that was all they could impart to their disciples. They put on an air of wisdom (Isaiah v. 21,) and constantly affirmed, ‘We see,’ – John ix. 41; but all their words were in the dark, turning the truth of things upside down. (Isaiah xxix. 15, 16.) They called evil good, and good evil, they put darkness for light and light for darkness, and put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. (Isaiah v. 20.) You can imagine, my kindred, what kind of a stock of learning I stored up in those days. I was now confident in my blindness that I could see the way to everlasting happiness. I could talk at great length upon the beauties of our own righteousness, but remained blind to the fact that all such righteousness was filthy rags. I descanted most eloquently upon the free agency of man, but was all the while blind to the fact that I was altogether the slave of darkness. I was so confident I counted myself a capable guide of the blind, a light to them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish and a teacher of babes. (Rom. ii. 19.)

I was so blind! What I called my sight was only vain imaginations; I was vainly puffed up by my fleshly mind, for in my vain imaginations I pictured castles in the air, I stretched forth heavens to my

fancy and a god like unto myself. (Psalms l. 21.) I declared I could see it all with as good a vision as any one possessed, and yet all the while I was stone blind. I should have gone on in my blindness until I had fallen into the ditch of everlasting perdition had not the Dayspring from on high visited me.

One day as I was living in my self-satisfied estate, I felt in me a power, my heart began to ache, and I said, Woe is me, what is this that aileth me? I now know what it was, it was life, divine, life from God, and sight, the light of life. (John i. 4.) For some time I could not tell what it was, I felt, God's everlasting displeasure is my portion. I began to see, I saw not the light, but I began to see that all was dark, and that I was darkness, (Eph. v. 8,) and that all my dwelling-places and all my ways were in gross darkness. I looked at my clothing and loathed it. (Ezek. xx. 43.) I viewed what I thought was the path of life, and could see that it led to the regions of eternal night. Now I began to see the hideousness of my abodes, those underground chambers of imagery. (Ezek. viii. 10.) There, in the vain imaginations of my foolish, blinded heart, I thought I was the much welcomed, much admired worshiper of God. Now I had eyes to see I had been worshiping my own pride and self-will, that I had been offering oblations to my own net, (Hab. i. 16,) saying to the work of my hands, 'Ye are my god.' I saw the imagery of it all portrayed upon the walls, and the deeper and farther I searched these dismal caverns of my blind heart the greater were the abominations that pained my sight. Then that carnal, fairy laud that I had pictured, and had called it the heavenlies, was now engulfed in blackness, and I knew it was all nothing more than the illusive vision of my blind imaginations. Then the horrors of the darkness would creep over me and fears would invade my soul that for me was reserved the blackness of darkness forever. (Jude 13.)

I said to myself, I must get out of these regions; O, I can dwell here no longer. My soul renounced the hidden things of darkness, (1 Cor. iv. 5,) and I began to grope my way out. Ah, I sighed, I cannot see the way out. I am blind; O for light to lighten me out of the realms of this darkness. I turned away from the darkness, (Isaiah lix. 20,) and my face was turned toward the faint dawns of day. I came up from contemplating the dark chambers in the earth with yearnings for light, and for visions of beauty and glory. One thing I longed for now was to behold the beauty of the Lord, and that while I feasted my eyes on his glories, I might be glorified in his beauty. I said, I know the Lord must be beautiful, he must be, he is pure, and gracious and glorious. O, let the beauty of the Lord God be upon me. I cried out for the light, and yet felt, I am blind, I am so blind. But in spite of all the obscurity (Isaiah lxix. 18,) I was in, there was a power leading me on in a way I knew not, and in paths that I had not known. I groped my way along by aid of a staff, (the word of God) and when I diligently made use of it I could creep along in comparative safety, for with my staff I could trace the footsteps of the flock, and while I was in their tracks no evils befell me.

But I began to find enemies all along the way. Enemies! Who would be so heartless as to be the enemy of a poor blind man? You may well ask the question, for I found them cruel, cursed enemies, (Dent. xxvii. 18,) though some of them professed themselves my very friends. That ruler of the darkness of this world put stumbling-blocks in my way, for he was not willing I should turn my back upon his kingdom. I was halted by these stumbling-blocks, for in my blindness I could not see how to get them out of the way, or to get over them, or around them. These stumbling-blocks appeared at times to entirely block the way, and to say there was nothing for me to do but to turn back to my former haunts of darkness. Sometimes I so suddenly came upon these stumbling-blocks that I stumbled, and was badly bruised in falling. Let me give you the names of some of these obstacles the adversary cast in my way: Eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die! No heaven! No hell! No God! Annihilation. O, this was enough to stumble poor me, who felt to have scarcely a ray of light to illumine my way. I was

much bewildered and pained, I bemoaned my blindness, saying, O, that one would take pity upon me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Then there came to me one saying, 'Are you blind?' I told him I thought that indeed I must be, for I could not find my way to the realms of light, and if I had sight at all it was very dim. I told him there was one thing I could see, that all was darkness around me, and that I was black within. He replied, 'You are-to be pitied, poor blind man, take hold of my hand, never mind about your staff now, I can see, I know the way, I will lead you out of your darkness.' So I gave him my hand and on we went. O, that I had known who he was; he was more blind than myself, a stone blind guide, as self-confident as I had been in former times. He said, 'This is the way out of the kingdom of darkness. I have led thousands out before you, come along, quicken your pace, never fear, we will turn off here and make a short cut instead of going in that old foggy rut, that roundabout way, where you were sighing and weeping, and stumbling all the time.' I thought, This is truly an up-to-date guide, who knows the easiest and shortest way to the realms of light. So off we started at a good pace. As he drew me on he discoursed eloquently upon the excellencies of this easy highway, which he called, 'The King's be-up-and-doing highway.' I certainly did the best I could to keep up with him, but it was still dark, and I felt, I am still blind. Soon my feet began to sink in miry places, (Ezek. xlvii. 11,) and I cried to my leader, Is this the highway to the realms of day I But before I could get his answer we both fell headlong into the ditch. (Luke vi. 39.)

What became of this blind guide I do not know, I was too much occupied with the filth of that horrible ditch to take any thought about how he fared. I cried, 'I sink in deep mire where there is no standing.' But I struggled hard and got up out of the ditch and was in a vile, abominable plight. I was covered with uncleanness, it was in my eyes, in my nostrils, and in my mouth. O, the stench of the filth! I learned that the filth of that ditch was the defilements of mankind. (Matt. xv. 18.) I knew such defilements were mine; I was the unclean one. O, how humbled was my spirit and how I loathed myself, and my soul mourned, and now I cried, 'I need the cleansing fountain, I need a true guide,' and I yearned for sight and light.

Then I heard a voice saying, 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.' – Isaiah xlii. 16. This voice took hold of me and led me forth out of the miry places, and the voice said, 'Take away the filthy garments from him,' and then in a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness I was washed and was clean, and then so graciously the voice said, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will give thee a change of raiment.' – Zech. iii. 4. In a moment there fell from my eyes as it had been scales, (Acts ix. 18,) and I was in the realms of marvelous light. (1 Peter ii. 9.) I marveled indeed, for marvelous things had been wrought in me and for me, and my precious eyes were feasted and delighted with comforting, ravishing visions. I beheld the Sun of righteousness, (Mal. iv. 2,) and the heavens and the earth shined with his glory. (Ezek. xliii. 2.) I said, 'The Lord God is my sun, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon me.' (Isaiah lx 1.) But O, I cannot tell you all the comforting, ravishing nights mine eyes have seen. I have seen the rainbow of the new covenant. (Rev. iv. 3.) I have seen the King in his beauty (Isaiah xxxiii. 17,) crowned with glory and honor. (Heb. ii. 9.) Mine eyes can see afar off, (2 Peter 1. 9,) and I have had visions of the far off heavenly country. I have seen the red rose of Sharon and the spotless white lily of the valley, (Solomon's Song ii. 1,) and I have seen Zion, the city of God, out of which, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Beautiful Zion! Thy God is thy glory." (Ezek. i. 1.)

“Thy name may well be called ‘Seeing Eyes,’ and hereafter we shall all think of you by the name of ‘Blessed Eyes.’ (Matt. xiii. 16.) Have you ever had any trouble with your eyes since you first had the heavens opened to see such visions of God?” (Ezek. i. 1.)

“Ah, indeed I have, and only that eternal life is the sight and light of my eyes, (John i. 4,) my sight would have perished, and I should again have been stone blind, and have perished in my darkness. This injury of which I speak happened on this wise: I was one day in the field in sweet meditation, (Gen. xxiv. 63,) when I saw in the distance what looked like a sower going forth to sow. As he approached I watched him at his work and asked him what he was doing. He replied, ‘I am sowing light for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.’ – Psalms xcvi. 11, but he was a cursed deceiver, as I found to my bitter cost, for as I stood watching him he threw a handful of what he called light into my eyes, my precious eyes. Instead of increased sight I was nearly blinded, for the so-called seed he was sowing was nothing but cinders and sand, a mixture of the doctrine of men and devils. I cannot describe the anguish I was in; I now had to grope at noonday as in the night, as if I had no eyes. (Isaiah lix. 10.) O, I mourned for my eyes, I went mourning without the sun. Those cruel cinders! I could not get them out, my eyes became inflamed, I could not open them, and I feared that on my eyelids was the shadow of death. But there came to me our great Physician, and in compassionate tones he said, ‘I counsel thee to anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.’ And I replied, ‘I have no eye-salve.’ Then from his bosom he took a box of ointment, and with his own kind hand. anointed my eyes. They were cleansed and healed, and once more, in his light, I beheld the loving, smiling face of Emmanuel, our Messiah.”

CHAPTER V.

A CITIZEN.

“WE have heard with our ears, my brethren, our fathers have told us what work the Lord did in their days, in times of old. The memory of his goodness to our nation has been most comforting and instructing to me in the house of my pilgrimage, and now as I am, old and gray-headed, and shall soon sleep with our fathers, I would rehearse in your ears, my brethren and children, some of the things that have befallen Israel in my days.”

The one now speaking was a man of venerable appearance, and the hearts of the assembly were moved as the heart of one man to listen to his speech.

“The things I would narrate took place many years ago. I was born in Zion, the typical city of God. Here I was brought up and nourished in the blessedness of all its privileges. In the happiness of my childhood days I played with other boys and girls in the streets of the city, (Zech. viii. 5,) and peace and prosperity were the heritage of its inhabitants. But about the time I reached manhood a change came upon many of the citizens, a restlessness pervaded our minds, (yes, I was one of the uneasy ones) the rod of pride blossomed, (Ezek. vii. 10,) and it was not long before the fruit appeared. Remarks might be heard, in the market places, that the city was behind the times, that it should in many aspects of it be modernized. Some complained of the monotony of our manifold customs, year after year, and generation after generation, and thought it would be a relief to have a little change now and then. (Mal. i. 13.)

One day as the inhabitants were assembled at the gate, a very bold character spoke out in tones that rasped like a sarcastic challenge, ‘How about the angel of the Lord encamping round about Zion, and the Lord being a wall of fire round about his people I Who has ever seen this encampment of the heavenly host and this wall of fire? I have not.’ Some said they had, and then there was a murmur of dissent, these murmurers affirmed they had not. As for myself, I was tossed about, for I would sometimes say I had and sometimes say I had not. ‘What shall we do?’ this bold fellow cried out, ‘when the enemy shall come and lay siege against us? I say, let us in time of peace prepare for war.’

At the mention of war some began to tremble as though the enemy were even then battering at our gates. But others evinced no fear, and said they would not believe that any nation could pluck up courage enough and be strong enough to enter into the gates of Jerusalem. (Lam. iv. 12.) Still it would be well, perhaps, to look to our defenses and have them repaired, if they needed it, and to make such additions to the fortifications of the city as our wisdom should advise. To these suggestions there was a murmur of disapprobation from some of the lowly ones, and in confident tones they declared, ‘The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us.’

Another class of the people, whose faces beamed with pleasure, became quite enthusiastic for what they called the improvement of the day, and said if additional fortifications were to be built they hoped the architects would see to it that an artistic finish should be put upon the whole, so that these bulwarks of defense, so useful, would also be a thing of beauty, a delightful vision, and they were now (in this degenerate hour) bold to complain of the unsightliness, the rugged, forbidding aspect of our ancient battlements, and they told how that some of their dear outside friends (non-Israelites,) whom they had sometimes invited to pay them a visit, had had their refined tastes somewhat shocked when they beheld

what old-fashioned offensive defenses We had. And therefore, said each of these animated ones, 'I am in favor of toning down that which shocks the sensibilities of our dear outside friends, and if this were done doubtless some of them would come and take up their abode with us, and would be of considerable benefit to us.'

The result of all these counsels was that the inhabitants went about what they called improving the city, and putting it in a proper state of defense. They laid out gardens, (Isaiah lxxv. 3, 4,) planted groves, (1 Kings xiv. 23,) and in the secret places thereof erected altars for private devotions. In the public places monuments were erected to compliment the nations around us. There were statues erected to Chemosh, Molech, Baal and Ashtoreth. (1 Kings xi. 5.) Ah, so numerous they became that a statue of some fabulous being could be seen at the head of every street in the city. (Ezek xvi. 24.) The people began to admire these monuments of strange gods, and to worship them. Then others invented and built some artistic battlements, which they, deemed would be found sufficient to repel our foes, and at the same time be an ornament to the city. We now had everything very much to our liking, and felt a little elated that we were become like the great cities of the world.

As these alterations were taking place our customs and manner of living changed also. The inhabitants were turned away from the simplicity of the divine worship of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and they toyed with, made love to and worshiped the vanities that had been introduced into the city. 'They chose new gods, then was war in the gates.' – Judges v. 8. Yes, trouble came. The armies of the aliens invaded our land. Tidings of their coming arrived, and all was commotion and confusion, and many a face turned pale. The trumpet sounded the alarm of war, (Jer. iv. 19,) and the inhabitants put themselves in readiness for the foe. Some with a vaunting spirit pointed to our modern battlements, and declared no enemy could scale such heights, and they were sure the city was impregnable. Others whose knees trembled, with chattering voices breathed forth their misgivings and feared that destruction now awaited us. Others were so confused they neither knew what they did nor what they said. Then those lowly, God-fearing few, with tear-stained countenances, went about the streets clothed in sackcloth and ashes, sighing and smiting their breasts because of the abominations, the idols that met their view on every hand, and they cried, 'Unto us belongeth confusion of face, have mercy upon us, O God.' As for me, I seemed to partake of all these elements that were in the city. Sometimes one state of mind would predominate, and then another would cast it down, usurp its place and reign for a time. So I was an up-and-down tossed-about creature indeed. The armies appeared, and as they drew nigh, a voice resounded throughout the city, 'This is the city to be visited.' – Jer. vi. 6. O how that voice went through me. I knew the voice, it was the voice of the Lord, and I trembled at his presence. The city was invested by the encampment of our adversaries, forts were built, and mounts cast up, and battering-rams set against the city round about. (Jer. iv. 2.) The bitter siege began and our newly built walls, bulwarks and battlements were put to the test. The enemy made breaches in our walls, and then amidst the din of war, with much labor we would build up the gaps again, but the battering-ram would again, and in many places at once, batter down our walls, and again we would repair the breaches. But the most mighty and courageous found their courage waning and their strength decaying in their endeavors to keep out the foe.

How was it that these walls were so easily cast down? and who composed the army that compassed our city? Our enemies were a gathering of all nations, (Zech. xiv. 2,) all sworn foes of Israel, representing all the evils that afflict, and would, if possible, utterly destroy God's chosen nation. From their forts and mounts they sought to subdue us with sling-stones, and shot their fiery and poisoned arrows. I was wounded by these stones, and pierced by these arrows, and only by a miracle of divine favor am I alive

to-day to tell the story. Ah, those walls and battlements that we had built, I have ever blushed at the remembrance of them; they recall to mind the pride and ignorance that led us away from the living God to serve lying vanities. Those walls, bulwarks and so-called battlements were very vanity, and afforded us no salvation from our relentless tormentors. ‘One built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar!’ A wall built in this manner you may well understand could not withstand the battering ram. That untempered mortar had no cementing properties, and beneath the shocks of the battering-rams our walls were in ruins. But when the bricks were fallen down, then in the pride and stoutness of our foolish hearts we would say we would build with hewn stone. (Isaiah ix. 10.) But as we used nothing but this untempered mortar in building up the breaches made by the enemy, we found hewn stone of no more utility in building a wall for our salvation than the bricks we had been using. O that untempered mortar! How I despise it now; what wilful, wicked fools we were to have attempted to use such a mixture. I have called it a mixture, but it would not mix. After all the labor we spent upon it, it still remained untempered mortar. O, that untempered mortar! What could this mortar be composed of that you should now, at the remembrance of it, be so wrought up? I will tell you, but only as a warning, never to be so wicked and foolish as to attempt to make it or use it. This untempered mortar was nothing less than the insane attempt to amalgamate grace and work, (Rom. xi. 6,) to establish communion between light and darkness, to bring into agreement the temple of God with idols, and to harmonize Messiah with Belial.” (2 Cor. vi. 14-16.)

“Why, how unwise you must have been, you might as well think to mix oil and water.”

“Ah, we were fools, and I was a very fool to have taken any part in such work. Now the city was so closely invested by our foes that it was straitly shut up, none went out and none came in, (Joshua vi. 1,) and before long we began to experience the straitness of the siege, our bread and water became scarce, then our bread was weighed, and our water measured out to us. (Ezek. iv. 16, 17.) So small was my portion I was filled with astonishment. I could see the short allowance meant that famine was near, and that we should soon all pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field. The battle raged, and wounds and sufferings and dreadful fears were our portion. Sometimes our enemies in their fury against us would howl as a pack of ravening beasts, ‘Rase it, rase it; even to the foundation thereof.’ – Psalms cxxxvii. Now the famine was sore in the city, and one day the evil tidings were whispered from one to another throughout the city that there was no more bread. (Jer. lii. 6.) Not a crumb could I find and the bitterness of famine was our lot. (Amos viii. 11.) Not a word from the Lord, no food from the blessed God; we must therefore die; but though we could find no gracious sustenance, yet in tones of rebuke the Spirit of the Lord in the prophets sounded throughout the city: ‘Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.’ – Ezek. xiii. 11-16. Then in our dire distress I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Go up upon his walls, and destroy; but make not a full end; take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord’s.’ – Jer. v. 10. The enemy now came in like a flood, and we were trodden under their feet as the mire of the streets. There we were famine-stricken and sick, and the whole city given up to merciless pillage. There was nothing sacred in their eyes, they invaded the sanctuary, (Lam. i. 10,) they entered into our palaces, (Micah v. 5,) and spoiled and polluted the city of God.

I recognized that army to be our vile iniquities personified, that now in the hand of the Lord were his chastening rod to bring us into the dust. (Jer. ii. 19.) Ah, those modern improvements, those monuments, and the manifold artistic embellishments which we vainly imagined would add grace and glory and be our defense, were utterly demolished. ‘Battlements! that are not the Lord’s!’ About the

time these battlements were being built, Truth was fallen in the streets, (Isaiah lix. 14,) and there lay her beautiful form as one in a swoon, and there was none to lift her up. Those battlements, what were they? They were airy, fine spun speculations, ingenious, spiritualizing away the doctrine of the God of Israel, Damnable Damned Heresies I That was their material and their construction. Of course, during the time they were being erected they so appealed to the carnal senses, their fantastic forms so pleased the roving eye that is not satisfied with seeing, (Eccl. i. 8,) that it would never have done to have called these battlements by their right names, as I have now done. There were a few in the city who protested against the supposed fortifications, and declared the time would come when the Lord would take vengeance on such inventions, (Psalms xlix. 8,) but the builders sneered at them and pushed them aside. What! erect battlements of fantastic heresy to withstand the onslaughts of heresy? This is what we did. No wonder that the Lord in the time of his wrath should say, 'Take away the battlements, for they are not the Lord's.' Our enemies having spoiled us, now departed, and the remnant that survived the siege were left sick and wounded and famished amidst the ruins. Now we wept and mourned over our desolations, we remembered in our miseries all our pleasant things that we had in the days of old, (Lam. i. 7,) and then, blessed be the matchless grace of God, we remembered the Lord, (Jonah ii. 7,) for he remembered us in our low estate, and we mourned unto him. (Jer. xii. 11.) He had compassion upon us, and the voice of covenant love said, 'Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel; thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.' O this voice put life and hope and strength in us, and we arose amidst our ruins and said one to another, 'Let us rise up and build.' – Neh. ii. 18. The first thing that we had to attend to was the removal of the rubbish. This was tiresome and humiliating work, there was so much of it. (Neh. iv. 10.) There were demolished idols and altars, monuments and battlements, heaps of rubbish, all to be removed in order to revive the stones with which to build the wall. But the remnant that was left had a mind to the work, and we carted away I cannot tell how many loads of this rubbish to its proper place, to the dump in the valley of Tophet, (Jer. vii. 32,) and there is this rubbish unto this day, execrated and accursed by all who fear the Lord. (Gal. i. 9.) We builded upon the foundation rock, the Rock of Ages. (Margin, Isaiah xxvi. 4.) This foundation is the eternal purpose and immutable counsel of God. (Heb. vi. 17; Eph. iii. 11.) We builded by faith in our God, and faith indeed we needed, for the city was built in troublous times. (Dan. ix. 25.) We were compassed with crafty, envious enemies, who conspired to light against us, and in every way hinder us. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, and each one of us with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon, and so we builded. (Neh. iv. 9, 18.) In due time Zion, the city of God, once more appeared to our eyes of faith and love. We beheld her the perfection of beauty. 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north; the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.' O, my brethren, my children, 'Walk about Zion, go round her; tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces that ye may tell in the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.'"

CHAPTER VI.

ADINO.

“WELL, Adino, (2 Sam. xxiii. 8,) our brother, where have you been? and how have you been engaged the past season? We are glad to see your face again in our midst, thou mighty man of valor.”

This was Jedidiah speaking, and Adino replied:

“All will need all the valor they possess, and find they have none to spare, when contending with the enemies of Israel. And not only will all the valor the Lord can give be found needful, but wisdom also must be given us of God or we shall meet with ill success in war with the crafty armies of the aliens. (Heb. xi. 34.)

If indeed I am a mighty man of valor it is of God that I am such, and you all, I know, will join with me in giving praise to the mighty God for all the victories that the armies of Israel have achieved over their adversaries. It is only God who can gird us with strength for the battle. He teacheth our hands to war, and when his power rests upon us (2 Cor. xii. 9,) we can run through a troop, pursue our enemies until they are consumed. I have been in many battles, but this war from which I have just returned was one in which we all needed all courage and wisdom. We have been at war with the Hagarenes, who dwell in the wilderness of Paran. (Gen. xxi. 21.) We penetrated their country till.

we reached their mountain strongholds at Mount Sinai in Arabia. (Gal. iv. 25.) There, around that mountain, was fought the decisive battle.”

“But why, brother Adino, did you invade their land? why not let these outsiders alone, and in peace? Is it not well to live peaceably with the nations around us?”

“The reason of our invasion of their land was that they had invaded the southern part of our country, and had carried away captive some of our people. When the knowledge of what they had done came to the army we inquired of the Lord what we should do, and he said, ‘ Pursue, for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.’ – 1 Sam. xxx. 8. Thus it was of the Lord that we should arm for the conflict and march to the rescue of our brethren. Could we let them remain the bond slaves of the Hagarenes? Perhaps I had better, in a few words, tell you how these Israelites were carried away by the children of Hagar. When these Ishmaelites came into our land they disguised their man-stealing practices under the guise of being merchantmen. (Gen. xxxvii. 25.) They carried on their traffic in the land, and were tolerated as harmless, peaceable traders. But, however, for a time, they may appear to be peaceably inclined, they are in their nature wild, untamable men, (Gen. xvi. 12,) with their hand against every man. It was, as I have said, as merchantmen that they came among our people, and when at length they were drawn into their net and they took them away in bonds, it was to make merchandise of our brethren. (2 Peter ii. 3.) While these Hagarenes were endeavoring to find purchasers for their merchandise, they made bold to claim kinship with Israel, for Abraham, you know, said they, is the father of us all, and we are therefore brethren. Then they began to tell of the beauties of their country, especially of the region round about Mount Sinai, which though originally a desert, was now in their hands transformed to the beauty of the garden of Eden. Then in glowing colors they described the glories of Mount Sinai, and said it far exceeded the glories of Mount Zion. They gave pressing invitations to our people to come and see for themselves, and said it would afford them the greatest of pleasure to show them the sights and to entertain them as their guests. Indeed, said they, it is the very

place, the only fit place for any one to spend their last days, and the only fit place to die is at Mount Sinai, and they declared with special emphasis that except a man should climb to the top of the mount no one could die aright, no one could be saved. (Acts xv. 5.) Come, then, dear children of our father Abraham, and pay us a visit, and we will do you good. Now these 'feigned words' (2 Peter ii. 3,) had a satanic influence upon these Israelites, they were simply bewitched, (Gal. iii. 1,) and while they were being held beneath the spell of these feigned words, these men-stealers, with cunning craftiness, were engaged in what might be designated sleight-of-hand performances. (Eph. iv. 14.) Ah, they are adepts at such practices, as many of the seed of Jacob have learned to their cost. Yes, while they gave their ears to the soft, honied speech of these merchantmen they were all the while being entangled (Gal. v. 1,) by the sleight of these Hagarenes. Ah, poor beguiled brethren, they did not see what a net was being cast around them until it was too late, and then they found their liberty and blessedness gone, (Gal. iv. 15,) and themselves to be the bound victims, the captured prey of the children of the bondwoman.

Brethren, beware of the Hagarenes! Having thus our brethren now in their power to bring them into bondage, (Gal. ii. 1,) they took their journey back to Arabia. When these Hagarene depredations became known Israel's armory was opened, (Jer. 1. 25,) and grasping the weapons of our warfare (2 Cor. x. 4,) we marched in pursuit of these children of the bond woman to the rescue of our captive kindred. We had some slight engagements with the rear guard of the enemy, but it was not until we came into the regions of Mount Sinai that we encountered the main host of the Hagarenes. With lying words they had described the country round about this mount as being a paradise, but we found it a dreary waste, and however well suited to those wild men, the children of Hagar, its climate, and the manner of subsistence there are altogether unsuited to the children of the freewoman; the children of Mount Zion could never be in health and blessedness beneath the shadows of Mount Sinai. (Heb. Xii. 18-24.)

As these Hagarenes were now in their own country and amidst their familiar strongholds, their self-confidence was fortified, and we could see that they would not deliver up our brethren, whom they considered their lawful captives, without a desperate battle. We put ourselves in array and the battle began. The Hagarenes began to fall before us, and some in our ranks were wounded, for they were unskillful in warfare and did not know how to handle their weapons aright, or to take advantage of their armor. The battle raged on with varying success, and then it appeared to me we were losing ground, and it looked as though our army would be overwhelmed and routed. Many were being wounded and carried to the rear, and I saw some leaving the forefront of the battle that did not appear to be wounded at all.

I felt something must be wrong, and that I must make an investigation. I soon found the cause of our weakness, and why it was that we were being discomfited by the enemy. I came upon a cluster of well-known valiant men of Israel who, without any authority from David our captain, were holding a sort of council of war. They were discussing whether it would not be well to call for a truce in the fight, and to see whether we could not come to terms with them, at least for the present time come to some compromise with them, a sort of give and take arrangement. I saw that numbers were being carried away with this shameful, craven talk. I could scarcely believe what I saw and heard, that those who formerly had been so valiant for the truth against all the adversaries of Israel, should now be found talking of compromising matters with these men-stealing Hagarenes, at a time, too, when many of our nation were being held in the miseries of Hagarene yokes of bondage. (Gal. v. 1.)

Now, when I saw their counsels were not in uprightness, according to the rules of our warfare with our enemies, (Gal. ii. 14,) I withstood them to the face, for they were to be blamed, and I said, flow is it

that you have acted in this manner and can counsel such things? I thank God they fell beneath my open rebuke, (Prov. xxvii. 5,) which I could see was better than secret love, and I said, Let us endure hardness as good soldiers, let us look unto the God of battles. to give success to our arms this day. I saw they were troubled, their lips moved in prayer, and their hands grasped their weapons. At this moment, David, our captain, (1 Sam. xxii. 2,) appeared in the field, and his standard was unfurled. (Isaiah lxii. 10.) O how this gladdened our hearts, with faith in our captain, (Heb. ii. 10,) out of weakness we were made strong and waxed valiant in the fight. Then as one man we rallied to our standard, our shattered and disorganized ranks were made up, and with the sword of the Spirit in our hand, and all prayer and supplication in the Spirit in our hearts to God (Eph. vi. 17, 18,) to give us the victory, we made a fearful onslaught upon them and smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. (Judges xv. 8.) God was entreated of us when we cried unto him in the battle, and there fell down many slain, for the war was of God. (1 Chron. iv. 20-22.)

When we came upon our captured brethren they were in a sorry plight, and we found it no easy task to set them free from their entanglements. Their feet and hands were bound and their tongues also were tangled, so much of the dialect of the Hagarenes was mixed in their speech, and it was some time before their tongues could be put in a proper frame (Judges xii. 6,) to speak again the pure language of Israel without that Hagarene lisp. (Zeph. iii. 9.) If any one associates and makes bosom friends of the children of Hagar, that Hagarene lisp is easily acquired, but it is a very hard matter indeed, if once the tongue becomes entangled with it, to get release from it.

Having freed our brethren, we turned our faces homeward, and were glad to arrive in our delightful land again. This last war, I trust, will be a profitable lesson to us, and that henceforth we shall be on our guard against the invasion of these crafty foes. Let us stand fast, my brethren, in the liberty wherewith our Messiah has made us free, and let us not become entangled with the Hagarene yoke.” (Gal. v. 1.)

CHAPTER VII.

A MAN AMONG THIEVES.

“I AM truly glad, my people, to assemble with you again. I have been absent for some time through much affliction, so sick and wounded I have been that I drew near the grave.”

This speaker now looked to be in the glow of healthful manhood, and his countenance betokened his gladness in being again among his friends.

“What has been the nature of your sickness, and how came you to be so sorely wounded? Have you been at war against the armies of the aliens?”

“Let me tell you my story,” he replied, “and then you will understand it all. Some time ago I undertook to journey from Jerusalem to the City of Palm Trees. As I drew near to the wilderness on my way, there caught up with me a person of the name of Worldly Care. He said he was traveling my way, and by my favor we would journey together. He appeared of friendly aspect, so we journeyed on as though we were companions. We were soon joined by another, who described himself as a wayfaring man. His aspect was not so agreeable, but he professed himself an honest man; his name was Don’t Care. The society of these fellow-travelers had an ill effect upon me, for their communications were far from edifying. Then one Unbelief put in an appearance and journeyed our way. These companions then assumed the office of being my guide, declaring they were well acquainted with the road to the city, but they were miserable deceivers, for we had not gone far before there sprang up, as from the dust, a troop of robbers. Yes, my brethren, I had fallen among thieves. They surrounded us on every side, so that there was no escape. In a moment the behavior of Worldly Care, Don’t Care and Unbelief was changed, and I saw they were confederates with this band of robbers, who rushed upon me and cast me down. The tribal name of this troop of robbers is Imagination, (2 Cor. x. 5,) a deceiving, cruel and bloodthirsty lot as ever bad being, though some of them wore an appearance of gentility. I was overwhelmed, and while some of them held me down the rest of them were either tormenting me or stealing all my valuables.”

“How is it, brother, that you are so familiar with the names of these robbers?”

“O, it was not until some time after I was robbed that I learned their names. In answering your inquiry, though it will anticipate a part of my story, I will tell you how I came to know their names. It was during my convalescence in the House of Mercy. One day, while I was there, I entered a certain chamber and found written in bold characters on the wall, ‘Beware of Pickpockets, Thieves, Robbers and Murderers in the Wilderness. Beware of Unbelief, (Heb. iii. 12,) Imaginations, (Genesis viii. 21,) Covetousness, (Luke xii. 15,) Hypocrites, (1 Peter ii. 1,) Berich, (1 Tim. vi. 10,) Arrogancy, (Prov. viii. 13,) Dogs, Concision, (Phil. iii. 2,) Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revelings and a multitude of others, under the family name of Suchlike. (Gal. v.21.) Looking around me I saw the likenesses and characteristics of these robbers. I examined these portraits and the description of their appearances, the haunts they infested, and the ways in which they carried on their depredations, and I knew they were the very thieves among whom I had fallen in my journey to the City of Palm Trees.

I will resume my story. They held me in the dust of the earth and plundered my person of all that I had. They stole my purse, containing my daily spending money, gold and silver, (Rev. iii. 18; Psalms xii. 6,)

and promissory notes given me by our Father. (2 Peter i. 4.) Then an ugly wretch tore open my bosom, exclaiming, 'What have you here? Documents!' He ruthlessly opened them and read aloud to the horde of my tormentors my title deeds, and our Messiah's will and testament. When he had finished reading he exclaimed, 'It is all trash! He will have no farther need of these papers, and they are of no value to us, we may as well cast them away, and the howling winds of this wilderness will soon scatter them.' O, it was not without a desperate struggle that they robbed me, but I found I was of little might against such a host. Having me at their mercy they began discussing the supposed value of the will and title deeds they had cruelly wrenched from my bosom. Some of them laughed and mocked, some said no such property as that described in the documents existed, others admitted that all such fine thing. no doubt were laid up somewhere, that the property was willed or deeded to nobody in particular, but all these things were offered indiscriminately to all the human family. Indeed, they declared that the Owner of eternal glory was in much anxiety to get people to be interested in these riches, and that he went around from house to house, knocking at every one's door, beseeching every one to become heirs to the inheritance of glory which he offered them; but although he often stood a long time soliciting their acceptance, he was not very successful, for only a few could be induced to accept these documents, which are the earnest of the inheritance. (Eph. i. 14.) Some considered the inheritance might be desirable if one had nothing else, but it was rather too far off, and then parts of the inheritance, such as immutable holiness, to be forever with the saints, and forever with the Lord, this they had no relish for; thus finding the pleasures of sin congenial to their tastes, they found no inclination to possess title deeds to far off, unseen, unknown possessions. Thus these robbers in their ignorance raved and made light of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all the heirs of the covenant ordered in all things and sure. But the loss of my money and of my bosom treasures was a bitter grief to my soul. My tormentors mocked at my tears, and I thought, I shall never have possession of these treasures again."

"Did you ever regain possession of them?"

"O, yes, indeed," he exclaimed, clasping his hands upon his breast, "I have them now, that dear neighbor, my Savior, gathered them together after these thieves had scattered them, and when he brought me to the inn he put them in my bosom. But in answering your inquiry I am again ahead in my story. These robbers stole my purse, my every day peace and happiness, they wrenched away my title deeds; then seeing a ring on my hand they roughly plucked it off. My Father had given it to me, telling me it was a token that I was his own dear child, and not a mere servant. Then they stripped me of my clothing, my beautiful robe, (Isaiah lxi. 10,) they took the shoes off my feet, (Eph. vi. 15,) and there I lay, bruised and faint and naked. Finding there was nothing more to steal, they went about to murder me. They set me up as a mark for their arrows, (Psalms xi. 2; lxiv. 3,) and pierced and slashed me with their spears and swords, (Psalms lvi. 4,) so that I swooned away in my wounds. (Lam. ii. 12.) Thinking they had killed me, they decamped to pursue their villainous practice elsewhere.

There I lay naked, wounded, half dead. There were passers by, but they kept aloof from my dreadful plight, none of them would know me, (Psalms cxlii. 4,) and my spirit moaned forth its sorrows, saying, No man careth for my soul. How long I lay in the dust I do not know; I became so sick and faint that, despairing of any help, I was ready to perish. Then there came along one riding upon an ass. (Zech. ix. 9.) O, I found he was meek and lowly in heart, my very Savior. (Matt. xi. 29.) He came where I was, and alighting from his ass, with much tenderness and skill he immediately attended to my needs. I have thought he must have known all about the condition I was in before he started on that journey, for when he came where I was he had a complete outfit to provide for the comfort and salvation of the perishing.

Then he was so wise, he understood my condition so well and knew what to do. I was faint and ready, to die, so he first gave me a little wine. (Prov. xxxi. 6.) O, such wine! Since then I have ever called it the best wine of my beloved. (Solomon's Song vii. 9.) O, it was drink indeed! (John vi. 55.) It revived my drooping heart, and I said within me, Who can tell, I may recover of these wounds and live to praise the Lord. Then he attended to my wounds, every one. Some of the wounds were deep, and stinking from long exposure to the blasts of the wilderness, (Psalms xxxviii. 5,) but he tenderly washed them, pouring in oil and mollifying them with ointment. (Isaiah i. 6.) He bound up all my bleeding wounds. O, I am witness that this neighbor knows how to heal the brokenhearted, and has a soothing, healing balm for every wound.

'Moved with tenderest compassion,
He relieves the wounded heart
And the richest consolation
His blest Spirit doth impart.
This physician understandeth
All disorders of the soul,
And no payment he demandeth
When he makes the wounded whole.'

All the while he was attending to my wounds his looks of compassion and his kind words eased my pains, and from time to time he poured into my lips some of that wine that goeth down sweetly. O, this wine (the precious blood of Christ) is the only wine that cheereth God and man. (Judges ix. 13.) Having thus comforted me he took me in his strong and merciful arms and put me on his own beast. So I journeyed as a prince, and he who in truth is the Prince of Peace and Lord of Glory walked at my side as my affectionate servant. O, it is wonderful! We journeyed on and on out of the wilderness, and he took me to the inn. There I was put to bed and found little moments of repose. He stayed with me and took care of me (Luke x. 11,) all that night, and in my wakeful and painful moments he would make all thy bed, and his tender ministrations strengthened me upon my bed of languishing. (Psalms xli. 3.) He told me I should not die, but praise the name of the Lord, (Psalms cxviii. 17,) and oh the morrow when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.' Was there ever one so kind? O, he was neighbor to me, and loved me as he loved himself. (Eph. v. 29.) Mine host was one after God's own heart to care for me, attending to my wounds and feeding me with knowledge and understanding. (Jer. iii. 15.) I looked forward to the promised coming again of my Deliverer, and he came, again and again, to see me. He met all the cost of my sojourn in the inn until I was restored to my wonted health, and during these visits he talked so graciously, O, he has the tongue of the learned, grace is poured into his lips; he knows so well how to speak to the sick and the weary. (Isaiah 1. 4.) I was so drawn to him that I unbosomed all my life and told him all that was in my heart. Then he drew forth from his own bosom the title deeds to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, and the Messiah's testamentary will, which is sealed with his own blood, and he placed them in my bosom. As we communed one with another I told him the Messiah is all my hope, and he said, 'I that speak unto thee am he,' (John iv. 26,) and he shewed me his hands and his feet. Then as in rapid, vivid vision all his acts and kindnesses poured into my mind, I looked into his face, (2 Cor. iv. 6,) and my heart exclaimed, My Lord and my God. I was now in health again, and arose from my bed. He brought me clothing to put on, (Rom. iii. 22,) and put shoes on my feet, (Eph. vi. 15,) and the ring on my hand, and said, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

CHAPTER VIII.

A LITTLE CHILD.

“I LOVE to hear you all talk of God’s wonderful ways, though some of the things I have heard are beyond my understanding, for I am only a little child; yet in your stories of the Lord’s gracious ways there are crumbs of comfort even for me, and I want to tell you things wherein I have tasted that the Lord is good. My first recollections of myself are that I was lying in an open field, weeping. (Ezek. xvi. 5.) I was naked, defiled and hungry. Here I lay weak and helpless and sick, and I mourned for my mother. I felt I must die if my kind nurse did not come soon and take me up. While I thus languished there came along one, a woman, who said, Why are you here? You will die if you do not get better. The only reply I made was to weep in my miseries. Then she said, I will be a mother to you, come, dear, to your mother’s arms. There was a tone like sympathy in her voice that inclined me to her, and I thought, This is my dear, compassionate mother. She took me up and first gave me a bath in which she used nitre and much soap. (Jer. ii. 22.) After washing me awhile she pronounced me clean enough, saying, as long as we were sincere and did the best we could that was all that was needful; but I still remained defiled. Then she began to clothe me and put upon me some garments which she called, our own righteousness. (Rom. i. 3.) But they were nothing but filthy rags, (Isaiah lxiv. 6,) and I found no warmth and comfort in such clothing. I loathed myself in my own sight, and still wept, for I was faint and hungry. Then, seeing me still weeping, she said, I suppose the child is hungry. She drew me to her bosom and put me to her breasts to suckle me. She kissed me and called me her dear child, and I said to myself, This is surely my mother, and I sucked her breasts to satisfy my longings. I craved the forgiveness of my sins, I hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and I longed for repose, for I was ready to perish from the effects of my exposure in the open field, and from the lack of the warm, nourishing, sincere milk of the word that only the breasts of my mother can yield. I said, She is kind, she is my mother, that now holds me to her bosom. So I sucked her breasts till I was filled, and thought, Now I am better, I shall thrive and live. My cries being hushed, she laid me aside to attend to the discipline of her other, older children. She allotted them their daily tasks with promises and threatenings and laid the rod on some, very severely, I thought, for they made wry faces and howled beneath their stripes. As I witnessed this I shuddered at the thought of what might be in store for me in future days should I come short in my allotted tasks. But I had not long to think about the future, for the present soon swallowed up all my thoughts. I began to feel an uneasiness in my bowels, and I began vomiting up some of the milk that I had taken from my mother’s breasts. It had soured upon my stomach, and what I had not thrown up so disagreed with me that I was soon in acute pain and screamed out in my agonies. Mother came to me, saying, What ails that child? Stop that crying, you are washed and clothed and fed, I have done everything for you that can be done, what are you crying about? Thee seeing the milk I had vomited forth, she exclaimed, O, you naughty child, to throw up that nourishing food. But the colicky pains kept me screaming, so she took me up and began dandling me upon her knees to hush my griefs. She seemed to go at it as if in anger, and shook me up so much that she well-nigh shook all the breath out of me, and as she did so she would call me names, declaring I was the most tiresome youngster she had ever had to deal with. Then she put me to her breast again, saying, Here, take that and stop your crying. I was nearly smothered in her bosom. I would swallow a few mouthfuls, and then again have a fit of crying, for her milk so disquieted my bowels I was indeed in pain. Then she would shake me and threaten me, telling me she would give me to the bad man (the devil) if I would not be good and stop my crying. O, I would try, and gulped down my sobs, and in my terror of the bad man try to be what she called good. But I was hungry and sick, in filthy rags, and with

the colic in my bowels. O, I could not be good and I could not keep from crying. My nurse again talked to me in severe tones, while she rocked me, and dandled me upon her knees. She declared she had no patience with children who were all the time whining about nothing. She said she knew there could be nothing the matter with me, for I was washed and well enough clothed and fed, and it was simply because of my bad temper that I cried so much. She told me none of her children ever behaved as I did, for do what she could for me, I would not be pacified. She said all her children thrived upon her breasts, and she mentioned several of her grown-up lusty offspring as examples of the virtue of her motherly care, such as Ahithophel, Caiaphas, Simon Magus, Diotrephes, Hymenæus and Philetus. She laid all the blame upon me, saying I could be quiet and happy if I would, but that I would not, for I was a stubborn, peevish, bad-tempered child. At length she declared she could not be bothered with me all the time. O, I suppose I taxed her resources and tired her patience to the utmost. So she compounded a potion for me which she said would quiet me, and she herself could then take a rest for a while. This medicine I think is called Mrs. Hagar's soothing syrup."

"Damnable stuff to give to a child!"

"I was rather startled at this emphatic voice from one of the company, and found the speaker was Boanerges, a son of Thunder. (Mark i. 7.) He continued:"

"It is a compound of so-called higher criticism, non-inspiration of the Scriptures, non-resurrection of the dead, annihilation, and many other things that are contrary to sound doctrine. A dose of this so-called syrup, (O, yes, it is sweetened with much fair speech and flattering lips to deceive the hearts of the simple,) a dose of this damnable compound is enough to deaden in any dear child of God all sensibility to divine realities."

"It did indeed have a stupefying effect upon me," replied the child, "and in this stupor I was quieted for a little while. When its effects wore off, and I was coming to myself again, I knew not at first where I was, or what I was, but my pitiable condition was again soon felt, and there I lay in the open field still; sick indeed and ready to die. But my other, my very mother, heard my cries and came to my relief. O, she is so lovely, so kind. Do you know my mother?"

Then one in the assembly, leaning upon his staff for very age, exclaimed, "Yes, dear child, we do; her name is Zion, Hephzibah, New Covenant. (Isaiah lxii. 4.) She is so pure, and ever has immortal health, she is the mother of us all. (Gal. iv. 26.) O, there is nothing like the breasts of Zion to nourish babes in grace, and we are all abundantly satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; we are delighted with the abundance of her glory." (Isaiah lxvi. 10, 14.)

The little child looked up in pleasant surprise to the countenance of the aged pilgrim, and in return he smiled upon her with parental graciousness. The little one was as a child at home in the congregation, and continued her story:

"My mother gathered me in her loving arms, she took away the filthy garments from me, (Zech. iii. 4,) washed me in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. (Zech. xiii. 1.) Then she clothed me with a beautiful robe of righteousness, (Isaiah lxi. 10,) 50 clean and white. (Rev. xix. 9.) She embraced me fondly and suckled me at her breasts, which were like towers (Solomon's Song viii. 10,) stored with abundance of mercies to me, a poor famished child. And as I nestled in her bosom all fears of the wild beasts of the open field were gone. Now I feared not the bad man of whom I had been so frightened. In my mother's arms I feared no evil, my heart was soothed and my fears led away. O, my mother understood all my ailments, and all my disquietude., and her tender care and soft sweet voice healed

and hushed me to sweet repose. From her loving breasts I drew forth the precious promises, righteousness and salvation, all of which I so needed, and thus I was refreshed and nourished. Then as she dandled me upon her knees she would tell me such soothing, beautiful stories of Christ the Lord, how he was manifest in our flesh, and born of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem, who wrapped Jesus, the Christ, the Lord from heaven, in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' Is that not a sweet story I Then I would say, Tell me another story. And she told me of the sacred life of Jesus and of his crucifixion, of his resurrection and ascension to glory; and she told me the story of Joseph and his brethren, and I would say again and again, Tell me another story. O, there are no stories like those my mother tells me. I love them, I am sure they are not fairy tales, or cunningly devised fables, I believe them with all my heart, and muse upon them most lovingly. My mother dear sang to me also the sweet songs of Zion, such as, 'The Lord is my Shepherd,

I shall not want;' and, 'The Lord hath triumphed gloriously,' and many other precious songs that charmed away all disquietude and healed all my sicknesses. My mother's breasts were my consolation, (Isaiah lx. 11,) and so well agreed with me I was nourished and delighted, and her milk never gave me the colic as Hagar's milk did. O, I have talked so much of dear mother, and I could tell you many more things about her since the days that she dandled me upon her knees, of journeys that I took with her, and was borne upon her sides, (Isaiah lxvi. 12,) for then I could not walk, but she taught me to go, (Hosea xi. 3,) to walk by faith, taking me by my arms. I am her happy child, may I ever keep my heavenly Father's commandment and never forsake the law of my mother." (Prov. i. 8.)

And all the congregation said, "Amen."

"And now let me sing a little song that some one wrote about mother and me," and the child sang:

"As when a child, secure of harms,
Hangs at the mother's breast,
Safe folded in her loving arms,
Receiving food and rest.

And while through many a painful path
The traveling parent speeds,
The fearless babe, with passive faith,
Lies still, and yet proceeds.

Should some short start her quiet break,
She fondly strives to fling
Her little arms around her neck,
And seems to closer cling.

Poor child, maternal love alone
Preserves thee first and last;
Thy parent's arms, and not thy own,
Are those that hold thee fast.”

CHAPTER IX.

A MERCHANT.

“WHEN Brother Adino was telling us about those Ishmaelite merchants many recollections of my past life were stirred up, for I have been a merchant, and have in times past traded with this people, but ever found they had the best of the bargain in all my dealings with them. Perhaps an epitome of my mercantile transactions may not be uninteresting, and I feel with the blessing of the Lord attending my story it will be profitable.

I have often been a very fool both in buying and selling, I have been cheated times without number, I have been coaxed to buy worthless goods, and, with shame I confess it, I have sold the same to others. At length I was so cheated and robbed that I became bankrupt, utterly destitute, with no assets whatever. But I will give you the particulars of some of these transactions, that you may the better understand this trafficking in which I so foolishly engaged. The desire of gain was in my nature from my first consciousness, and as I increased in years I came to the conclusion that gain was godliness, (1 Tim. vi. 5,) so I put forth my energies for the acquisition of wealth. I was not satisfied with what was to be bought in the markets of Zion, so I betook me to the fairs and markets in foreign lands. Time would fail me to tell of my journeys to the distant places of traffic, or of my varied experiences in buying and afterwards in selling the various lines of merchandise which I handled in my ever increasing business. I purchased wares in the fairs of Tyrus, (Ezek. xxxvii.,) and in Egypt, (Isaiah xxxi.,) and Babylon, (Rev. xviii.,) and prospered above many my equals in our nation. (Gal. xiv.) I so prospered that it took me much of my time to be counting up my gains, (Phil. iii. 7,) but this was far from being a tiresome task. I rather felt my breast to swell with inward gratification as I contemplated my stores that were ever accumulating, so successful were all my business ventures. I found I had to have storehouses for the various products that I had purchased. I had warehouse No. 1 for eatable goods, warehouse No. 2 for clothing, changeable suits of apparel, (Isaiah iii. 22,) and warehouse No. 3 for delicacies, and the manifold delights of the sons of men. (Eccles. ii. 8.) I very bountifully partook and made use of all these things myself, and could therefore push the sale of my merchandise by telling that I had myself tested their excellencies.

Perhaps some of you may not be acquainted with the methods of doing business in these markets, I will therefore tell you a little about these methods. In the first place, I must tell you there is no settled price for any of the goods, the seller gets as much as he can and the buyer pays as little as possible. In this way there is room for plenty of that wisdom that descendeth not from above. (James iii. 15.) Indeed, deception and self-deception enter into every transaction. Let me give an illustration of buying and selling, and this will answer, with slight variations, as a sample of the methods employed in the many branches of the traffic. I was once in the markets of Babylon on the look out for bargains, and from the activity of the sellers and the responsive activity of the buyers it was evident it was a bargain day – a thriving business was being done.

The sellers cried up the importance of purchasing that very day, as possibly there never would be another such opportunity. They cried, ‘Now is the accepted time, (2 Cor. vi. 2,) to-morrow may be too late, buy today, or you may regret it forever.’

They were selling Babylonish garments. (Joshua vii. 21.) They were certainly beautiful to the eye, (Matt. xxiii. 28,) and I thought, No doubt, were I dressed in such apparel, it would improve my

appearance, it would give ins an entrance into the society of the holy; I should be the admiration of my fellows, and be presentable even in the eyes of my lord. Still I thought, It will not do to pay too high a price for such clothing, it will be well for me to buy as cheaply as possible, to pay as little cash as possible, and if possible to get the garments by paying a little money down and giving my promise to pay note for the balance. I came to a determination to possess these gaudy robes, for I found an ambition within me to make as fair a show in the flesh as any one. (Gal. vi. 12.) I approached the sellers of these garments; they moat eloquently set forth their excellencies, offered them at a price, but I began to resort to the usual methods of the trade, that is, to depreciate the goods. I told them that I thought they were not very serviceable, and I wanted that which would last till the lest day, and would thou present me presentable before the King. (Matt. xxii. 11.) They declared thee Babylonish garments of self-righteousness were just the thing and the only thing fit to be seen in on such an occasion. But I said, It is naught, it is naught, (Prov. xx. 14,) you are holding your goods at too high a price. I left this one and went to another offering his robes for sale, and with him also I haggled over the price. You see I was set upon what was called buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest. Some of them would come down in their prices at the thought that I really meant to buy. O, they were all keen to do business; each one, if possible, would have me buy of him, but I was not one that bought at the first stall, or at any stall in the market until I had found where I could buy the cheapest. Some of these merchants offering their wares for sale would make inquiries what prices the others had demanded, and when they found out they would make their terms a trifle less. After having about tried them all, I at last struck a bargain with one whose price was a small cash payment, and the balance by a daily installment. He told me it would not be at all burdensome, so the Babylonish garment was mine, and I immediately put it on.”

“You have not told us what you gave and were to give for this apparel.”

“O, the price! Well, there was to be an immediate cash payment of a small coin called, ‘Taking the first step,’ which consisted in standing with a brazen face and saying, ‘I am determined to go to heaven,’ and the duly installment was to wash the outside of the cup and platter. (Matt. xxiii. 25.)

This, as I have intimated, may serve as an illustration of the methods employed in my mercantile pursuits. I bought all manner of what I called useful and ornamental merchandise, some of it by paying the money down, and the installment plan, but having no hesitancy in my ability to meet all my obligations; the most of my goods in my warehouses were obtained by giving many promissory notes. I heaped up stores of wealth and held my head up high (Isaiah iii. 16,) in the exultant consciousness that I was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, and I contemplated tearing down my warehouses and building larger ones in which to store my wealth. (Luke xii. 18.) I proclaimed to all my fellows, Business is flourishing. I had thoughts of retiring from my mercantile pursuits and settling down to the life of a gentleman. I went to my offices, glanced at my books once more, everything looked favorable. A voice said within me, ‘It would be well to look over your stores and see how your goods are keeping.’ I said, I will do this, it will be businesslike to have a thorough stock-taking, and to have a complete inventory of all my possessions. Of course, said I to myself, I shall meet with a slight shrinkage in some of my stores, and a shrinkage in value of some things that are a little shelf-worn, but I am not going to be worried over such trifles.

I entered warehouse No. 1, and as I entered there was an odor that I had never noticed before; an odor of mouldiness. (Amos iv. 9.) This was the provision warehouse. I examined the goods and found everything was mouldy, breeding worms and stinking. They might well be labeled, ‘perishable goods,’ for they were so bad. (Jer. xxiv. 2.) Not only did I discover that rottenness (Hosea v. 12) impregnated

all these stores of food, but a wonderful change came upon me, I no longer had any appetite for what had formerly been pleasant to my taste. The very sight of these so-called eatables, and the remembrance that I had in days past made them my food, was nauseating. What! nothing to eat! Can I find nothing in this warehouse to satisfy my cravings? (Matt. v. 6.) I attempted to eat some of my former dainties, but they were not bread, (Isaiah lv. 2,) I was faint with hunger for the true bread. (John vi. 32.) I said, I will take a little of my wine, but it was wormwood and gall to my taste. (Dent. xxxii 32.) Ah, I had feasted and banqueted in the past upon the delicacies of the flesh, but now I found no sustenance.

I hastily left the mould and rottenness and stench of the provision warehouse to enter warehouse No. 2, containing clothing, changeable suits of apparel to suit all times of the day, all seasons of the year, and all classes of society. Here I found my assets to be nothing; all the garments were moth-eaten, (James v. 2, 3; Hosea v. 12,) and were of no more value to cover one's nakedness than spider webs. (Isaiah lix. 6.) They stunk also, for they were reeking with filth. (Isaiah lxiv. 6.) What! I cried, can it be? Have I not been wearing the self-same garments that are stored up here, and have I not been beautiful in the eyes of others? My eyes instantly turned upon my own appearance, and I saw I was clothed in rags, in filthy garments, (Zech. iii. 3,) and I knew that the filth was my own filthiness. (Lam. i. 9.) O, how ashamed I felt and how I loathed myself. (Ezek. xxxvi. 31.) I am unfit to be seen, and I thought all could see me as I saw myself. I looked at my feet and my shoes were old and clouted. (Joshua ix. 5.) What! nothing to wear?

I went to warehouse No. 3, supposed to be filled with treasures of all sorts, but to me all was now vanity of vanities. All the supposed gold and silver was rusted and cankered. (Matt. vi. 19.) I saw that all were worthless, I had no delight in them. Dismay smote my heart, all my riches had taken wings to themselves and had flown away. I said to myself, I am ruined, undone; I am a very pauper. What now shall I do? My conscience also lashed me because I had induced others to possess themselves with such delusive, worthless merchandise, and they will all in due time find themselves in abject beggary like myself, and then they will blame me and curse me because I persuaded them to spend their money upon such mockeries.

While I was being swallowed up in my dismal cogitations, an officer of the law approached me and took hold of me by the throat, saying, 'Pay what thou owest.' I told him I felt I had no ability to discharge my debts, so he haled me to prison, and from the severity of his countenance I said, I shall never come forth until he is paid the uttermost farthing. O the miseries of my prison life; my moments were spent in sighs and groans, (Psalms cii. 20,) and then I would long for release; I longed for God's mercy, and that he would set me free. But how could my debts be paid? How could the guilty be set at large? I could see no way, so I would sink again in despondency. Then I would be roused up with inward longings, and I would cry, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.' – Psalms cxlii. 7. One day in the twilight I looked forth from my narrow window upon the landscape; as a garden it was all spread abroad. How I longed for freedom, that I might roam amidst its beauties and fragrance, but with a heavy heart I sank down to the floor of my dungeon groaning forth my sorrows, but a power divine buoyed up my soul amidst the billows of guilt, condemnation and despair, and I cried, 'I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again toward thy holy temple.' – Jonah ii. 4. Then I said, Before the mantle of night is spread over all I will take another glimpse of the garden. I arose and looked forth. (And now, beloved kindred, I am come to that part of my story where I feel words will fail me. How can the tongue of a mortal man signify the mystery so divine? 1 Tim. iii. 16.) I looked forth into the garden, (John xviii. 1,) but Instantly I lost sight of it, for in the garden was one to whom

my eyes were riveted, and while beholding him I felt he absorbed all the powers of my being. Who is this? inwardly exclaimed my astonished soul. I thought to close my eyes, so moved was my heart at the sight, but he absorbed my vision, and I could but stare upon him. (Psalms xxii. 1.) His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. (Isaiah lii. 14.) O what hath marred thy visage so? His features betokened every grace, but never was sorrow so depicted, his loveliness was so marred. My heart 'then said, 'Thou art the man of sorrow.' (Isaiah liii. 3.) Never, ah never was sorrow like thine. (Lam. i. 12;) Then began he to be sore amazed and very heavy. What is this amazes thee so I What heavy weight is this so weighs thee down? I looked, but could not perceive. Ah, my own heavy heart ached to know who this sufferer could be, and why he was now in such amazement. Then, as in answer to my heart's entreaty, I perceived who he was, and glimpses were given me of what occasioned the sore amazement and heaviness of the man of sorrows. It was Emmanuel. (Matt. i. 23.) There was he, verily of the seed of Abraham, made in the likeness of men. (Phil. ii. 7.) O, I knew it was our Messiah, my heart's desire, (Hag. ii. 7,) and I knew it was not flesh and blood that revealed him unto me. I saw he was heavy laden with sins not his own. O brethren, the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. I looked upon those sins, and my heart was pained. I looked and then exclaimed, What! mine, too? No marvel thou art heavy, my dear one. (O, I felt he was dear, so dear to me.) My sins are too heavy for me, will they be too heavy for thee?

I beheld a flaming sword (Gen. iii. 34,) in all readiness to smite that great Shepherd and Surety of the sheep, the man who is the fellow of the Lord of hosts. (Zech. xiii. 7.) Not all the blood of beasts upon our altars slain can quench God's law-avenging sword, and I began to understand that the flames of that sword could only be quenched in our Emmanuel's blood. Then I beheld a hand drawing near holding forth to this one a cup. I looked into that cup, it was but a glimpse I could take, and I was appalled at the sight. In that cup was Jehovah's indignation and wrath. (Rom. ii. 8.) Yes, in that cup was tribulation and anguish, the curse of the holy law. It was but a glimpse that was given me, but Emmanuel saw away down into its abysmal depths to the last dark, bitter drop.

He was sore amazed and very heavy, and cried out, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death? Will he now turn away from the cup? Will he refuse to give himself a sacrifice to the flaming sword? 'He was not rebellious, neither turned away back.' – Isaiah i. 5. He went forward a little and fell on the ground,' – Mark xiv. 35, and prayed, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt. And there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him.' O how was he strengthened? Was it that he looked at the joy that was set before him, (Heb. xii. 2,) the glory that should follow, (1 Peter i. 11,) the eternal satisfaction that should be the fruit of the travail of his soul?

With strong crying and tears he offered himself to the Father. (Heb. v. 7.) And now the conflict waxes hotter; he is wrestling, struggling, but he prays more earnestly. The terrors of God are in array against him, he is wounded and bruised, he tastes the cup, his soul enters upon its travail for the redemption of the chosen. O Messiah, man of sorrows, my soul is stirred to its depths and I contemplate the vision. He cries, he weeps, the tears stream down his face; he is in agony, he sweats. O, his body weepeth tears of blood. ('Great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' – Luke xxii. 44.) O how art thou so straitened, baptized with thy blood!

Now once more he prays, 'O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done.' – Matt. xxvi. 42. It is his meat to do the will of him that sent him. This is acquiescence most divine.

He will drink the cup, it comes to him full, it shall pass away empty. The first woe is past, God's dear Son arose from the ground in the greatness of his strength to go forth. Then I beheld in the garden lanterns and torches, a multitude of men with swords and staves, and as they draw near one steps forth and kisses him. Then said Emmanuel, 'Betray thou the son of man with a kiss? He saith to the multitude, Whom seek ye? They said, Jesus of Nazareth. He answers, I am he.' Then as if a blast from the Almighty had smitten them they went backward and fell to the ground. They arose to their feet again to take him, and then stood up one in his behalf and with a sword cut off a man's ear, but the Messiah said, 'Put thy sword into the sheath, the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' Then they took him and bound him and led him away. My heart said, He goeth to drink the cup. They go, I would go also to see the end, but I am in prison. I watch them retreating from the garden, receding from my view into the darkness of the night until their lanterns and torches grow dim and they are lost from my sight, and my heart says, They have taken him as a lamb to the slaughter, and down I sank in my prison cell. There I remained a while swallowed up with grief. O could I see him again, that face so fair, so marred, bedewed with tears. Whither have they taken him? Was he not the Messiah, the Son of God, Emmanuel? Thus my sad soul held its soliloquy.

I arose to look forth from my window again; the garden had vanished, and there to my vision was revealed a striking scene. It was the palace of the high priest. The priests, the scribes, the multitude were there, and in the midst Emmanuel. O, I was shocked at the sight! O brethren, that was the scene of our infamy! They were our fellows, they had our likeness; yes, I saw my own in that infamous host that were subjecting the Messiah to cruel mockings. They were smiting him with their fists, spitting in his face, and with one mouth exclaimed he was worthy of death. They led him to the Hall of Judgment, and at this judgment-seat they clamored for his death. O what satanic fury raged in their breasts. Again there was renewed, with increased aggravation, the former scenes of cruel abasement. I was shocked, could I believe my eyes? They stripped off his garments as though he were a very nobody; then they scourged him, and plowed deep their furrows on his sacred form. (Psalms cxxix. 13.) But he so patient, gave his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. (Isaiah i. 6.)

Then they put on him a gorgeous robe, clothing him in purple; they platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head; they put a reed in his right hand, and began to salute him as king; they took the reed and smote him on the head, and with the palms of their hands they smote him, they spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshiped him. Thus they made a fool of him, heaped upon him all indignity. As I beheld this shocking scene of shame I said within me, Why hides he not his face from such shame? I was ready to cry out, Spit upon me, spit upon me, shame and spitting belong to me, I am the object, I am sin's slave, all dishonor justly is mine; but my lips could not sound the words, they could not reach the ears of his tormentors. Then, in a vision, for a moment behind Emmanuel I beheld all his loved and chosen once, all the congregation of the Firstborn. My heart was thrilled with holy wonderment, and flowed forth in adoring love to the sufferer. O, I see the mystery. Thou wilt not have them spit upon. Thou art their shield and salvation, and my heart in its entreaty asked, 'Is it that thou wilt not have me spit upon? Is it that thou art my salvation that thou hidest not thy face from shame and spitting?' I looked at him and mourned for him. I said, Have my sins brought thee thus low, to be treated as a slave, a felon? Dost thou make thyself of no reputation for thy people? for me Ah, how black, how vile my transgressions appeared. I looked with anguished spirit upon the scene and felt I could pillow his sacred head, now crowned with thorns, upon my breast. O, could a word be found I would speak it to soothe him; if he would look at me my eyes should pour on him my heart's pity, but I cannot touch him, I have no word to speak, and though my pitying eyes on him are fixed, his griefs are not assuaged. I feel my throbbing heart must fail, I shall die. They reviled him, but he reviled not again; they mock and jeer,

blindfold and smite him, they spit in his face and pluck off the hairs from his cheeks, but not one revengeful word he speaks, not one look of unkindness he gives. As a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. But the multitude like a pack of ravening beasts are fiercely howling, Crucify him! crucify him! He has done no evil. In his mouth is found no guile. Why should such a shameful death be his? But, my brethren, in his humiliation his judgment was taken away. In this Judgment Hall was wickedness, iniquity was judge, (Eccl. iii. 16,) and the judge gave the decree for Messiah's execution, he delivered him to their will (Luke xxiii. 25,) to be crucified. Then stripping him of the purple robes they put on him his own clothing and lead him away to put him to death.

They came to the mount of Calvary. There was transacted a scene so tragic that it passes all telling. They stripped Emmanuel naked of his garments, his murderers cast him down and then to a cross of wood they nailed his hands and feet. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so they lifted up the Messiah, and there he was extended upon the cross, crucified, a spectacle to men and angels. Then I remembered that word, 'He that is hanged is accursed of God.' – Deut. xxi. 23. What! this holy, spotless one accursed of God! In response to my heart's amazement came a voice saying, 'He is made a curse for his people.' – Gal. iii. 13.

Then what visions were poured upon my sight as I looked and looked and looked upon Emmanuel the crucified. I saw that it was not without cause that the curse was come upon him, (Prov. xxvi. 2,) for I beheld laid on him the iniquity of us all. By covenant suretyship our sins are his. Thou art made sin for us, thou art made an offering for sin. The sorrows of death compass him, he is afflicted with all the waves of Jehovah's wrath against the transgressions of his people. I saw that he was cut off, the curse of the law hath cut him off, he is bereft of all human consolations, there is none to help, none to comfort him. In the garden thou wast comforted by the angel, but now the light of thy Father's face is withdrawn, and the powers of darkness assail thee. O Messiah, thou emptiest thyself till thou hast nothing. (Dan. ix. 26.) O, I see! Thou givest not silver and gold, not the cattle upon the thousand hills; thou givest thyself a sacrifice, a ransom for thine own. And while I mused upon the vision, O brethren, my heart in its yearnings enquired, Does he redeem me from all iniquity, to bring me freed from all defilements unto God? Art thou my propitiation, O Messiah?

Then my eyes glanced at the multitude that compassed the crucified One. What a sight! There was pictured all enormities, all deformity. This, said I, is the blackest picture of man. Hell is transferred to earth; here I see all hatefulness, all the vile passions of sinners portrayed. They reviled the Holy Sufferer, they shoot out the lips at him and wag their heads, they mocked his sufferings, O they compassed him about like vicious dogs. How my heart sinks within me with shame, for I see in them my likeness; I loathe myself.

Emmanuel speaks, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' – Luke xxiii. 34. For a moment he was transfigured to my view, and I beheld him all glorious, in the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. My soul drank in the divine vision and exclaimed, O beloved Intercessor, thou unbosomest the bosom of God. Then again all the darkness of the scene was poured upon my sight. I view him the surety of his flock, and on him descending the righteous vengeance of the Father because of our transgressions. And now a cry from the mighty Sufferer appeals my heart, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' O unfathomed deeps! Forsaken! All comfort gone! But though he pours out his soul unto death, he forsakes not God, but prays, 'My God, my God!' Now again he cries, 'It is finished,' and again for a moment he is transfigured before my eyes. I see him, his face is glorified in holy triumph, the sacrifice is ended, he has made the atonement for sin, his soul is not left in hell, (Acts ii. 27,) his soul is risen, he has come forth from the sorrows of death and the

pangs of hell, he has satisfied the law, he has paid the mighty debt, he is no more straitened, the last billow of divine wrath has gone over him, his baptism is accomplished, he cannot be beholden of the pains of death. As I beheld the transfigured, crucified Messiah, I remembered those divine words, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' Again he speaks, in tones of ardent trust and love, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and bowed his head and gave up the ghost.'

There still I see his sacred body nailed to the tree. A man with a spear pierces his side, and forthwith there gushes forth water and blood. They take him down from the cross and carry him to the new tomb; there lies his sacred form; they roll a great stone to the mouth of the tomb; I see him no more, and I sink back into my prison cell swallowed up in wonderment. The visions of the past are as a dream, and I am saying, Can all these things that I have seen be true? His soul was not left in hell, shall his sacred body lie in the tomb, the prisoner of death, and see corruption? Ah, if his dear body shall remain the prey to death I shall perish in my sins, (1 Cor. xv. 17,) and thus be forever separated from the everlasting God. In my prison I languished, my soul alternately ebbing and flowing with hopes and fears. Sometimes darkness settled upon my spirit and I was buried in despair; then again I would find comfort and hope springing up in remembrance of the sacred vision of the crucified One. But O, that day dawned, and a joyous voice I heard saying, 'Now is Messiah risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept.' I arose, my prison was dissolved, it is no more, I am free. I see the empty tomb, I see the place where the flesh of Messiah lay, his body is not there. In glad surprise I sing, 'Who is he that condemneth? Messiah hath died, he is risen again,' and lifting up my grateful eyes unto the Lord I behold Emmanuel ascending into heaven itself, and in spirit it was as though I ascended with him, and as I ascended I said, He has vanquished hell and death and the grave, he has brought life and immortality to light. I saw he was our very Messiah who endured the sufferings of death, (Heb. ii. 9) but now he was glorified. O, his form was all effulgent in all the beauty of God. From his face irradiated all the glories of the Father. (Heb. i. 3.) Then I hear a shout and the voice of the trumpet, (Psalms xlvii. 5,) and I hear the rapturous, triumphal song of all the heavenly host welcoming him to glory. They sing, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.' – Psalms xxvi. 7-10. He entered heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for us, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. I beheld the vision for a moment more. I see Emmanuel, the Lamb of God, our Priest and King, enthroned, crowned with glory and honor, and all the ransomed around the throne having the harps of God, singing, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen!'

My heart joins in the song and the vision is closed, I am upon the earth in all the blessedness of hope, of life eternal in our Messiah, and now I am enriched with true riches, (Luke xvi. 11,) all of which is the fruit of Oil? Messiah, for he for our sakes became poor, willingly emptied himself, made himself of no reputation, came into all those deeps of poverty which my soul witnessed in the visions and revelations given me of the Lord. Yes, such is the grace of our Messiah that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. (2 Cor. viii. 9.) Through him we have durable riches and righteousness, (Prov. viii. 18,) and untarnishable graces of the Spirit that so ornament us, even in the eyes of the Lord, such as meekness, love and adoration, and then in what beautiful garments he has clothed us, (Isaiah lxi. 10,) and all the riches of glory are ours. Now we have

foretastes of our heavenly riches, and may we in blissful anticipation pursue our way till we shall be glorified together with our ascended and glorified Emmanuel, and in all the fullness thereof know the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is our inheritance, laid up for us in heaven.”

The shades of evening were now deepening, and the concourse of the dear companions faded away from my view. Then I came to myself again and remembered that I was bowed with sorrowful ones in the dust amidst scenes of desolation. (See page 3.) My heart again was sad, but a voice of divine power, so animating, I heard, saying, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem.” I lifted up my eyes, what a marvelous transformation! No longer scenes of desolation and disconsolation greeted my sight. There stood the former desolate ones upon Mount Zion all radiantly happy, clothed in garments of glory and beauty, declaring the praises of the Lord, and as I looked upon their faces I saw they were those dear companions whom I had recently been with at wells of living water.

[THE END.]

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