

A Woman's Work:

BEING

MEMORIALS

OF

ELIZA FLETCHER,

EDITED,

WITH A SKETCH OF HER LIFE,

BY

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"IF WE CAN'T ALL GATHER A SHEAF, LET US ALL GLEAN AN EAR."

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Mr. Bruce Smith
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TO
THE CLASSES,
OVER WHICH HER HEART SO INTENSELY YEARNED,
THIS VOLUME,
IN MEMORY OF THEIR TEACHER AND FRIEND,
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

MAY THE FOUR OF HER FAVOURITE TEXTS
WHICH SUM UP HER SPIRITUAL HISTORY BE EQUALLY TRUE
OF ALL HER SCHOLARS:—

“ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED” (Eph. i. 6).

“KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD” (1 Pet. i. 5).

“SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD” (Mark xiv. 8).

“FOUND IN HIM” (Phil. iii. 9).

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Preface.

THOUGH too many biographies doubtless are written in these days, no apology, I trust, is needed for the issue of this volume. All who knew Miss Fletcher herself were agreed that she was no ordinary woman. All who knew anything of the Christian work she accomplished in her later years were equally agreed that it was a remarkable work. And it is proper that some memorials of both her and it should be put on printed record—though, as one has aptly said, “Her monument will be in the hearts of those who live to bless her name.”

As regards my own share in the production of this book, I was confessedly reluctant to undertake it, not from lack of interest in the theme, but from the unfeigned conviction that, especially in the midst of a busy city pastorate, I could do it but scant justice. Such scruples were, however, overcome by the devoted friend with whom for nineteen years Miss Fletcher found a home; and it is indeed to the enthusiasm of Mrs. Clark and her diligence in procuring and providing material for the volume that its appearance is chiefly due. I have also to thank many other friends who have rendered their kind help, and in particular Miss Jane Hope Grierson, to whom I am specially indebted for the Sketches of Addresses, which were compiled by her from the material left by Miss Fletcher, and from notes taken at the time by herself and other members of the classes.

It is only a faint representation either of Miss Fletcher or of her utterances that can be put on paper. But this book will be at least to many a tangible souvenir of one they revered and loved, and perhaps an incitement to some even who did not know her, to take up the motto written on her Bible—“If we can't all gather a sheaf, let us all glean an ear.”

C. A. S.

“’Tis aye a solemn thing to me
To look upon a life that sleeps,
Wearing in its spirit-deeps
The unrevealed mystery
Of its Adam’s taint and woe,
Which, when they revealed lie,
Will not let it slumber so.”

—*E. B. Browning.*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD.

RUSHDEN Hall, Northamptonshire, in which the subject of this sketch was born, on the 7th October, 1831, is, from its picture, one of the most handsome of old English mansion houses. And it is not without a history. In the earlier part of this century, it passed into other hands: but for generations before Eliza's birth it had belonged to the Fletchers,—before that, to the Pembletons, another Northampton family,—and the proprietorship of the Rushden estate is traced back to John o' Gaunt himself. Till about twenty years ago a chimney was still standing, which was believed to date from the close of the 14th century; and the country folk thereabout have still a story that part of the garden wall was built at a time when workmen's wages were lower than would satisfy them now—at the rate of a penny a day! In the neighbourhood—which has all the attractions of a rich English landscape—stands Kimbolton Castle, seat of the Duke of Manchester; and most of the country side belongs to the Duchy of Lancaster.

Eliza Fletcher was too early removed from her birth-place to have any associations with it, agreeable or the reverse. All that need be said of Rushden Hall, so far as she was concerned, is, that there she was born, and there she was baptized. The parish register bears that it was on the 14th November, 1831, that Elizabeth, daughter of John Fletcher, Esquire, gentleman, and Amelia his wife, was baptized; and from the family Bible it appears that Lord Egmont and Mrs. St. Leger stood sponsors for the child. Eliza was the youngest of five children. Her only brother, Huntly, had the Duke of Gordon for his godfather, while Eliza was named after the Duchess, whose protégée she afterwards became. She visited Rushden Hall at least once in later years, and was warmly welcomed by some of the villagers, some of whom thought her like her father, while others, who remembered her as a baby, said they

would have recognised her by her hair! She told, with much emotion, how she had made her way to the old house and wandered about the grounds and terraces and along the burn bank, but how the rush of feeling which came over her there, a lonely stranger, so overwhelmed her that she vowed never to return. Though not Scotch by name, she always regarded and spoke of herself as Scotch. She had a passionate love for the Highlands—with their “rugged hills and wimpling burns and wild, free moorlands,” adorned with “the purple heather and the bonnie blue bells”—and her love for the Scottish people was no less true and deep.

As regards her parents, she can hardly be said to have known either of them. Her mother, Amelia Ferber, described as a lady of winsome beauty, died while on a visit to her native Germany, on 11th August, 1833; and her father, though he survived some years, in Bedford, appears to have seen little or nothing of his youngest child, after she passed under the safe protection of the Duchess, her mother's friend.

This happened when Eliza was about three years of age. She always remembered, or thought she remembered, being taken up to London in “a butterfly frock,” by the old servant, Hannah, and handed over, amid tears and struggles, to the servants of the Duchess in Belgravia, whose kindness, and that of some of the ladies about her, soon coaxed her into acquiescence and something more.

It was not long before it was seen that in her no ordinary child had been born into the world. Not that she was prettier than the common run of children—rather the reverse, perhaps—but from her earliest years there was in her a passionate eagerness of disposition, a brimming humour, a keen quick-wittedness, and an apparent force of character, which could not fail to interest all who came to know her.

Certain it is that those charged by the Duchess with her early training found in her a subject of no ordinary difficulty. She was perpetually getting into trouble—through what her preceptors at the time were prone to regard as “superfluity of naughtiness,” but what afterwards, in the mellowing light of time, they were more willing to consider as the exuberance of an almost supernaturally active nature. The truth seems to be that they as little understood her then, as she appreciated them. But, as for instance was the case with her earliest governess, whose death she mourned, in 1881, as the loss of one of her most loved and faithful friends, a mutual attachment often existed, which outlived misapprehension, and deepened with the years.

While still very young, she was taken to Huntly Lodge by Bell

and Eppie, two tried servants of the Duchess, of whom Eliza had many reminiscences associated with her sunny childhood there. Every care was bestowed on her; and though at first the governess who was provided for her and another of the Duchess's protégées felt, and taught her, that she was "a very wicked child," it was discovered that her individuality took other shapes than fun and mischief. Reading became a pleasure to the little girl. She showed a thirst for knowledge, a love of nature, a freshness of thought, a vividness of imagination, which won her teacher's admiration, along with a warm affectionateness, which, often as she offended her, could not but win and keep her love.

The rambles in these early days across the moorlands, or down by the meeting of the waters, lingered to the end as happy memories of a golden past; and Miss Fletcher at times would tell how, as a child, she used to go and stand by the hour upon the river stepping stones, alone, to hearken to the gurgling water and wonder what it said; and how in the summer nights she used to lie awake listening to the sigh of the wind among the ancestral trees, and hearing in it an angel's song. From the first, she clung to the Duchess with a sincere affection, which by and bye developed almost into idolatry; and to her last day she had to thank her for her early care and kindness.

The following simple little letter—her earliest extant—was written by Eliza to her sister, when she was only nine years old. Brief as it is, it casts a light upon her child life, as yet innocent of care, which makes it a fit ending to this chapter :—

HUNTLY LODGE, *1st December, 1840.*

MY DEAR EMMA,

Are you to be at Dunoon all the winter? The Duchess gave me on my last birthday a silver lady, which she got from our mamma. It is a needle case. The Duchess said she would get chains made for you and me of mamma's hair. Miss Hume gave me a print of Dr. Gordon. Caroline and I have got nice drawing slates, and silver pencils, with nice prints to copy, so we are very busy drawing, when lessons are done. Give my love to the Miss —.

I am, Dear Emma,

Your affectionate sister,

ELIZA FLETCHER.

“Self-flattered, unexperienced, high in hope,
When young, with sanguine cheer, and streamers gay,
We cut our cable, launch into the world,
And fondly dream each wind and star our friend.”

—*Young*.

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION.



THE rest of Eliza Fletcher's girlhood, during which she was boarded away from Huntly, was a chequered period, on which she did not look back with much satisfaction. Owing largely to her own waywardness—as she freely afterwards confessed—she had to pass from hand to hand, and from school to school, till a restlessness of spirit was bred in her, which it took many a year and many a struggle completely to subdue. One great solace for her in these days was the return of those holiday seasons, which sometimes took her back to the side of her noble friend, and into the midst of the scenes which, away at school, she invested with a kind of fairy charm.

She was placed for a time in a minister's house in Edinburgh, and then committed for some years to the care of a Christian lady in Lochwinnoch, to whom the Duchess wrote, "Will you take this child and bring her up for Jesus Christ?" The good lady replied, "I will," and earnestly sought to fulfil her pledge. But she found her young charge far from tractable, and, though she evidently had her serious moments, anything but docile under pious training. So Eliza had to be sent away after a time, and put under more vigorous discipline—returning, however, from time to time, to Lochwinnoch, which became to her a kind of second home, and in which—as we shall see—she formed one of the friendships which left so deep a mark upon her life. She was next tried at a school in Aberdeen; but alas, the teacher there "could make nothing of her." Lessons were a joke; authority a jest with her. The mistress determined to "master" her. But with such a temperament, coercion was tried in vain. Scenes like the following may be taken as illustrative of the pleasant relations subsisting between teacher

and taught. The English Catechism was being revised one day, and the following colloquy ensued :—

Mistress—"What is thy name?"

Eliza—"M. or N., as the case may be."

Mistress—"Again I ask, what is thy name?"

Eliza—"M. or N., as the case may be."

Mistress—(fiercely)—"No more of this impertinence! What is thy name?"

Eliza—(most coolly)—"M. or N., as the case may be."

Sequel.—The mistress fairly loses her temper, jumps to her feet, chases her promising pupil round the room, fails to catch her, sinks on her seat, and finds herself a name for her—anything but complimentary.

Or again, the mistress goes into her room, finds Eliza swinging on a bedpost, again and again commands her to come down, threatens to beat her, whips her hands till the blood appears, yet the pupil holds on in defiance, till the mistress retires in exhaustion and defeat.

In short, in these days she appears to have been a kind of white edition of little Topsy; and though she had met with Miss Ophelia, she had not come under the influence of Miss Eva yet. No wonder she was pronounced "incorrigible," and had to be removed to another school.

This time Eliza was sent to Alloa, in 1847. There she was boarded in a school kept by several sisters—excellent ladies, whose influence on some of their other pupils brought them lasting good. But they cannot be said to have subdued their new pupil; it is questionable whether they even understood her. Her conduct in Alloa was quite in keeping with what had gone before. More than one of her companions there survive; and they quite concur in their recollections of Eliza—as a wayward but warm-hearted girl; wild and self-willed, but generous in nature; a "great tease," and fond of practical jokes and feats of bravado, but never really malicious, and always ready with perfect good humour to be laughed at as well as to laugh. One of the most reprehensible of her doings at this school was the trick she played upon a girl, whom rightly or wrongly she suspected of "toadying" to the mistress. One day at table, foreseeing that "Miss Susan" would have to send for her spectacles or something else, Eliza, sure that this girl would be the first to run upon the errand, pinned her dress to the tablecloth. Result—half the dishes on the floor, and general consternation!

One of the younger scholars at Alloa was Jane Walker Arnott, who in these days both liked and feared Eliza. She describes her

as having been very clever—"her lessons no trouble to her,"—and very mischievous—with the faculty of sending other girls into uncontrollable fits of laughter, while maintaining her own gravity imperturbed,—but at the same time very free-hearted, and uniformly kind. Eliza made rather a pet of her, and by her ongoings used both to frighten and to fascinate her young companion. For one thing, she could work with complete success upon her risible faculties; and when Miss Arnott and Miss Fletcher were reintroduced, after more than a quarter of a century's severance, the mutual recognition of the two expressed itself in a spontaneous and irrepressible outburst of laughter! How serious and important a development, however, the revival of this old school friendship was, we shall see later on in the narrative.

The next boarding-school that was tried was at Hamilton. The lady in charge there had her own difficulties with Eliza, whom she again and again brought under the notice of the minister for rebuke. He was a man of high Christian character and much discernment, and seems to have had some real hold on the refractory pupil's mind. She was the aptest scholar in his Bible Class, and won his admiration by her accurate résumés of his sermons. The good man spoke with enthusiasm of the "waves of intellect" he saw passing over her countenance as she sat listening to him, and told the school mistress for her comfort—"When the grace of God does take hold of that pupil's heart, the Lord will be greatly magnified through her."

From Hamilton Miss Fletcher was transferred to a school in Glasgow, where her exuberance of energy and waywardness of disposition continued to give the same annoyance to her teacher, and anxiety to her guardian. One of her most notable exploits here was her jumping from the window of the school and making off on foot to Lochwinnoch. Meeting the minister, who was amazed to see her, she frankly anticipated his inquiries by saying, "I've run away," and then naively described how she had effected her escape. He found it hopeless to look severe, and discovered rather some parallel between her and the Apostle at Damascus—with this difference, that while Paul was let down in a basket, she had enjoyed no such advantage!

Fairlie was another place where she passed some time about this period in the society of Miss Hume, a lady who was a great friend of the Duchess, and had a real attachment to Eliza.

And then there was Lochwinnoch, where she spent considerable intervals, in the home to which in her early youth the Duchess had committed her. Of all her girlish friendships, there was none which took such a hold upon her heart as that which subsisted

between her and the family of Dr. Smith, the minister there. Its ultimate influence for good upon her was very great, as the further development of her story will show. But up to the time of which we are speaking, the youthful band of high-spirited girls were simply full of good-natured frolic and unrestrained glee, which made them a delight to one another, and an amusement to such of their elders as could enter into their spirit and understand their ways. A favourite "ploy" with them was to keep a weekly manuscript magazine, to which Eliza and her young friends, Maggie and Marjory and their sisters, contributed stories, essays, poems, and miscellaneous reports. Once a week the contributors met, and the magazine was read to a select coterie amid roars of laughter. There was an Intelligence Column, filled with caricature reports of soirees and meetings in the neighbourhood. These the girls used to frequent for the express purpose of taking notes; and this by and bye became so well known that one minister, who had been got to address a soiree, took his speech away with him, when he heard that the literary clique were there!

Here is an amusing letter written about this time, by Miss Fletcher, to a young lady friend belonging to the Reformed Presbyterian persuasion:—

MY DEAREST ———

You will rejoice to hear that my exertions have not failed, that I have fulfilled my promise, and that the Rev. ———'s household will soon be called upon to hail the advent of—a kitten.

As you seemed to me to be taking a motherly charge in this important matter, I deem it expedient to give you a few particulars anent the new candidate for the manse. Allow me to state, (and I can do so conscientiously), I believe it to be in many respects all that a Ministerial and Reformed Presbyterian kitten ought to be. At the same time, duty obliges me to add, that in other respects I fear it is not altogether such a kitten as a *strict* Cameronian would approve of. I have only known it for three days, but during that short period, it has exhibited many remarkable features of character. You will yourself perceive that its countenance is singularly intelligent—the nose high and slightly aquiline, with one black dot at the top, acquired, we fancy, by a too close proximity in its infant days to the pots and pans. The eyes are large and full, bespeaking the soul within, whilst on the forehead you may perceive the waves of intellect. Its form is graceful, though rather inclined to corpulency. Its natural constitution is good, and its disposition, I think, cheerful,—indeed, I must add, almost riotous. I am sorry to observe that it generally indulges in a spirit of unbecoming levity and light-headedness during the worship. Miss ——— must be warned about this wicked propensity, in order that she may check it during the kitten's youth. It is very fond also of showing its claws. This disposition must be guarded, and brought into a right channel, by its being taught to shew its claws only to mice, or any other disagreeable inmates of the R. P. Manse. I think it might be taught much. It has evidently good natural abilities.

And the following, found in Miss Fletcher's handwriting among her stray papers, may be taken here, though belonging to a somewhat later date, as a further specimen of the kind of humour in which she was an adept when she chose:—

Extract from the "*Morning Journal*" of date 10th December

THE EXECUTION.

(From our own Correspondent).

On the night before their execution, both of the wretched pair are believed to have slept calmly for several hours. On the morning of the day they suffered, they were allowed, as usual on these melancholy occasions, to choose whatever they would like for breakfast. The male prisoner selected a pair of turtle doves, and a dish of green peas, while the female prisoner earnestly requested a black pudding. As the fatal hour approached, both prisoners were observed to be labouring under very strong excitement, which was shared by those around. The female turnkeys assisted to dress the unhappy girl, whose trembling fingers refused to perform their office. When fully attired (in white as a sign of fear), they cast a *veil* over her emotions, and her father supported her down the stairs. The officiating clergyman met them at the fatal spot, and (the male prisoner having also been brought out) proceeded with the usual service, only interrupted by the sobs of the spectators, who unanimously lifted up their pocket handkerchiefs and wept. . . . The solemn service concluded, liberty was given to the unhappy prisoners to repent publicly, if they felt so inclined; but both objected in the most hardened manner to do so. They then, with fortitude worthy of a better cause, refused to have the bandage put on, resolving, they said, to take the fatal leap with their eyes open. The noose (matrimonial) was then adjusted, and while male prisoner was in the act of (*w*) *ringing* the hand of his accomplice, the drop fell, (indeed, many drops fell throughout the crowd) and the hapless pair were launched into a future state—*i.e.*, the holy state of matrimony!

“ Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart ;
Our eyes see all around, in gloom or glow,
Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.

And well it is for us our God should feel
Alone our secret throbbings : so our prayer
May readier spring to heaven, nor spend its zeal
On cloud-born idols of this lower air.”

—*Kzbl.*

CHAPTER III.

UNDER THE SURFACE.

THE wise man has said, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and even in these early days, Eliza Fletcher had experience of the truth of this observation. Underneath her gaiety of manner, there was a deep dissatisfaction with herself; and amid all her levity of behaviour, she had her serious thoughts. There was in her heart a depth of affection which few if any dreamed of then, and a strange longing after better things, known perhaps only to herself and God. This showed itself in occasional fits of goodness, when she would resolve to be "a pattern;" but she invariably felt the hopelessness of *her* attempting to be good, and a reaction of recklessness was sure to ensue. As she afterwards said herself, there had been a kind of fever on her all her life—a thirst for something she knew not what.

To her teachers, she was evidently a kind of insoluble riddle. One after another they had to learn that she was a girl who might be led, but never could be driven; and what she wished, and apparently lacked among them, was one who could thoroughly "understand her."

Even as a child, she was the strangest mingling of resolution and tenderness. Talking one day to two old ladies, she startled them by suddenly exclaiming, "I know I'll do something some day. It's in me, the power to do something for good or for evil; and it must come out. I know it!" On the other hand, as she was seated one gloaming at the feet of Miss Hume in Fairlie, the latter quietly said, "Eliza, go and fetch me such a box" (telling her where to find it). "There are some old letters in it, and I want to look them over. It will save other people trouble after I'm gone." The bare idea of losing her wise and true hearted friend went like a knife to the heart of the young girl, and she burst into tears, refusing to go on such an errand—whereupon the lady, patting her on the head, said soothingly, "Poor child, poor child: never mind then, never mind."

There were traces of seriousness too, about her very early. As a girl, she heard two ladies in a drawing-room discussing the story of a young officer who, though a careless fellow enough, used to

pray—"O Lord, meet me in the dark valley." The words took hold of her young mind, and even in her times of greatest thoughtlessness, she would pray—"Lord, meet me in the dark valley." Again, when quite a child, she heard Rabbi Duncan preach in Edinburgh. The chapter he read was Isaiah xl., which greatly impressed her. On coming out of church, she said, "What a beautiful chapter that was!" Being asked what she found so striking in it, she answered—"O that about the rough places being made plain, and the crooked straight." Mention has already been made of her aptitude for grasping and taking down the gist of sermons to which she listened in her girlhood; and there is still a communion address extant which she wrote at Alloa, from the lips of Mr. Stevenson, of Ayr, on 22nd November, 1847. Her reading further showed that there was some sort of serious undercurrent in her life; for she was early familiar not with her Bible only, but with the Pilgrim's Progress, and the Holy War, and works as solid as Hollin's Ancient History, Zimmerman on Solitude, and Pollok's Course of Time.

There were two religious influences which she could not but feel at this period, and which certainly affected her—how deeply we dare not say. The first of these was exerted through the correspondence of the Duchess of Gordon; the other through the fellowship, and finally the death of one of her loved companions at Lochwinnoch, Margaret Smith.

As regards the Duchess, some idea may be formed of the affectionate urgency of her dealing with Eliza's soul from a very early date, by reading the accompanying selections from her many letters. The first was written when Eliza was barely thirteen years of age:—

HUNTLY LODGE, 26th August, 1844.

MY DEAREST ELIZA,

I see, my dear child, that you are suffering under two mistakes. One is, that you are looking more to the punishment of sin than to the Saviour who bore the punishment in the stead of all who believe in Him; the other is, that you are expecting a deliverance from the power of sin, which you never will have entirely in this world; and which no one can have at all but through the grace of the Holy Spirit enabling you more and more to strive. But do not be discouraged. God *does* hear your prayers. He hears, He knows all things, and He who cannot lie has promised to answer, (*but in His own time and way*), the prayers of those who come to Him in the name of Jesus. What I earnestly desire that you may understand and feel is, that Jesus has died that you may live for ever. You know that you are a sinner: well, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Could the eternal God take our nature and suffer the punishment of our guilt in vain? "He came to seek and to save those that were lost." Do you not perceive yourself to be lost? If so, you are one of those whom He came on purpose to seek and to save. He is seeking you now.

A similar strain is continued in several later letters, from which we subjoin the following extracts :—

“Yield yourself to God, who, by His Word, by His Spirit, by His ministers, by His people, is entreating you, and even by me, your oldest and most affectionate friend, to receive that peace which He is so willing to bestow. Be reconciled to God.

“Yes, Eliza, eternity is already entered on. There, there is our home, and we can have no home here below as our resting place. It is infinite love, when God sees our desire to make our rest here, that He empties those whom He would prepare for glory from vessel to vessel, that they may be kept loose from the things of time, and sense, and learn to look forward to the inheritance that fadeth not away. Surely, dear child, the Lord has yet a great purpose of mercy for you ! You are holding fast your rebellion, you are trying to mend in your own strength, and till you feel *that* to be all sin together, you will not be happy; for the true happiness, as well as the true dignity of the creature, is to be entirely dependent on the Creator, feeling and saying with David, ‘all my springs are in Thee.’

“Do not accuse God of saying what is not true, for Christ says, ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, He heareth you.’ Do not think it is for your merits that He will hear; but Christ’s merits are all-sufficient for the chief of sinners. I send you a hymn by the excellent John Newton, which, I think, will just suit your case, and show you that others have felt as you do. You are not cut off; on the contrary, you have every advantage that the Lord can give a dear child through the means of others, and more than that, for you see He is dealing with you Himself. May you feel, dear child, that it is indeed in love to your soul that He makes you anxious.

“I was grieved, my dear Eliza, to receive your letter, because you exactly repeat all that I argued against, and all that the Word of God refutes. There are but two causes for such views. Either you do not consider what is written, and continue to fix your mind on yourself, and your own opinions and feelings, and *not on Christ*; or there is some hidden sin rankling in your mind, which hinders your receiving that blessing which is *never* withheld from those who ask it in sincerity; or, it may be a third case, that your sense of sin holds you back. But then, do you not know that Christ came to save sinners? I am deeply grieved for you.

“You are returning to your old folly of wanting to astonish. All that I can see in your present trouble is, that you are trying to believe in your own strength, and that you do not take God at His word, and ask for His Holy Spirit to teach you and lead you to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“I am sure I agree with you that it is far better and infinitely pleasanter to be drawn than to be driven to seek Jesus. Indeed, I can hardly imagine the driving system can ever be really effectual. It is so unlike the character of Him whose name is Love. But Love may sometimes hide Himself, and sometimes even appear angry, that He may be sought more earnestly. He who is Love is also Wisdom, and knows how to suit Himself with those whom He has to do.”

HUNTLY LODGE, 6th January, 1849.

MY DEAREST ELIZA,

I cannot leave your most interesting letter unanswered a single day. Surely the Lord has great purposes of mercy for you, or He would not lead you through such deep waters. But, dear child, is it not because you

will not bend your proud will to His omnipotence that you are thus tried? Ask yourself why you will not open your heart to Him unreservedly. For if you did so fully, you would not be afraid of opening it to His people in such measure as to receive comfort from their sympathy. . . . Oh, my dear Eliza, let me entreat you by the value of your never-dying soul, and the hope of an endless eternity of joy in the presence of Him who "came to seek and to save that which was lost," lose no more time. . . .

A somewhat altered tone of expostulation pervades the following—which no doubt reflects the conduct of the Duchess's youthful correspondent at this time :—

HUNTLY LODGE, 21st February, 1849.

I have been thinking much of you. Are you listening to the voice of conscience, and to the Word of God? Are you seeking the Holy Spirit to help your infirmities? God has promised to give His Holy Spirit to those that ask Him. How is it to be known if you are really desirous to be saved! What is salvation? Ask yourself these questions; answer them to yourself—not in words merely. You must also consider another question, which is connected with the two last—Are you anxious to be saved from sin, from your own evil nature, and the temptations of the devil, or only from an eternity of suffering? because, remember that salvation does not mean merely being saved from punishment, but "Jesus came to save His people from their sins." In your last letter you told me of the conflict you endured, and in which you can never conquer in your own strength. It is indeed "impossible;" but "if any will do the will of God, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God," not because we do the will, but because Christ has all fulness, and strength, and wisdom, and not one who ever sincerely asked strength of Him was sent empty away. Again you told me you were miserable. Let me ask you what is the use of being so, when you are commanded to rejoice in Christ Jesus. Be assured you will never find happiness in following your own way. You have said you wish to please me, and to be a comfort to me. How am I to believe you if you do not even take the trouble to apply to your studies, or to fit yourself in temporal things for being useful to yourself and others! Remember, dear Eliza, Jesus said, "by their fruits ye shall know them;" so that except you strive to be diligent in your studies, obedient to those that are over you, and as the only means of perseverance to be much in prayer; that the Spirit of God would bring your spirit under obedience to Christ, and entire dependence on Him—except, I say, that this is your endeavour, we can have no grounds for thinking you sincere in what you have written. . . .

I trust you take advantage of the present opportunity to study German. Remember it was your mother's native tongue, and it is now a very general language in Europe. Do, pray, make a good use of your time now, or you will never cease to regret your folly. Oh, dear child, strive, strive; Christ is both able and willing to save you from self and sin. . . .

I am sure, dear Eliza, if you would only regulate your expenditure, and follow out rules for your conduct, you would be much happier, as well as much more respected. Remember the example of our Lord Jesus, and take this for your rule, "What would Jesus have done in my place just now?" Was He not given for our example, as well as for our surety and atonement? I believe none really take Jesus for their surety, who do not also take Him for their example.

Greater satisfaction is subsequently again expressed as follows :—

HUNTLY LODGE, *22nd November, 1850.*

It gives me great pleasure to hear from Mrs. ——— that she is so far satisfied with you. I cannot tell you the joy it will afford me if, by patient continuance in well doing, through a strength not your own, you show that you are trusting to the Lord Jesus Christ as your strength and your righteousness. Follow on to know the Lord, and to apprehend that for which His people are apprehended of Him.

Somewhat later, it is added :—

I rejoice that you follow the advice to render prompt and unquestioning obedience. Let me beg of you to go yet further, and to endeavour so to do what you have to do, as not to require to be reminded, but really acting on principle to find it your pleasure as well as profit to think how you can make the best use of your time, and give Mrs. ——— the pleasure of reporting your diligence, even in those studies which are most irksome. Indeed, my dear Eliza, I do most anxiously desire your welfare, and to know that you are happy.

HUNTLY LODGE, *10th June, 1851.*

I trust, my dear child, the work that is in you is of the Lord. Oh, cherish it. Remember that though the peace of God in Christ, which can be obtained here, is precious as He is precious—yet, as regards us, it must be kept by labouring to continue in nearness to Christ. It is always in His hand. If we had it, we should lose it, and if we go from Him we lose the enjoyment of it.

We close these extracts for the present with the following reference by the Duchess to the death of Maggie Smith, an event which evidently awakened more solemn thoughts in Eliza's breast than she previously had known.

FAIRLIE, *8th June, 1853.*

I am sure you have felt much the death of your kind friend, Miss M. Smith. I heard of her state of rejoicing, and what is more extraordinary, of the rejoicing of her parents in the confident assurance that to her to depart and be with Christ was far better. She really felt, and said that she was going home, and the same home, dear Eliza, is offered to you.

The postscript is added to this letter :—

I am in mourning for the last of the Gordon family, my sister-in-law, the Duchess of Bedford. What should I do here all alone without a better hope?

The impression created in Eliza Fletcher's mind by the removal of this companion of her girlhood has been preserved to us in the little tractate, "Found in Him," which she printed long years after. She there describes Maggie Smith as one remarkable, from her earliest childhood, for a vigorous understanding and much natural wisdom, with strong affections and lively disposition, distinguished both for an educated intellect and a cultivated heart. She describes how it was in the furnace of affliction that Margaret's soul, at the age of fifteen, was won to Christ, and how, brought back from the verge of the grave, she consecrated her young life to His service.

After enlarging on the bright young believer's spiritual experiences, Miss Fletcher describes her early death, quoting from a touching letter written to herself by the younger sister Marjory :—

MY DEAREST ELIZA,

You knew my dear sister well, and can understand why our hearts are so sad, and why we feel our loss to be indeed very great. But we mourn not as others who have no hope. We not only have hope, but feel assured that she who has left this earthly scene has gone to be *for ever* with the Lord. Her love to her blessed Saviour was manifested in her life; but not until the close of it was it *seen* to be *strong as death*. . . . I said to her, "Maggie, do you know me?" She said: "Yes, but I am not well able to speak." She then pressed my hand very tightly and said: "*Home, home!*" These were her last words. My dear sister had no death struggle, the intervals in breathing alone indicating the approach of death. At half-past ten o'clock upon Thursday morning the happy spirit fled, fully to realise the glory of which, even in the dark valley, she had glimpses.

The Lord has promised that He will give grace and glory. This promise was fulfilled to her. Such were the feelings of those who stood around her death-bed, that my dear mother thought she should see some vision of glory, or catch some notes of heavenly music. But the land was yet a land "afar off" to us. The dying one alone was near enough the palace of the King to gain some idea of its brightness. But we enjoyed much; we saw that sweet face express the "peace which passeth understanding," which Christ alone can impart; and listened to the hallelujah, again and again repeated, even amid the swellings of Jordan.

We can scarcely expect, my dear Eliza, to enjoy such peace in dying; but may the Lord grant that you and I, and all whom we love, may be gathered safely *home* by the same glorious Saviour, that "where He is there we may be also."

"And," Miss Fletcher adds, closing the narrative, "she *was* taken home! A few short years and Marjory joined her sister, and together sweetly they sleep in the lone church-yard till Jesus come."

But we must not anticipate. What is of importance for us to bring out here is the influence which in life and in death the *elder* sister had on Eliza's mind; and that this influence was not restricted to her death, is witnessed to not only by surviving members of that loved family circle, but by written evidence which still survives. About this time, shortly before Maggie's death, Eliza was passing through a precarious mental and spiritual mood which seemed not unlikely to drift into sheer scepticism. Though, curiously enough, clinging to the friendship of good people—a characteristic with her all through life—she at this time scoffed at the idea of herself attempting to be good, showing a bold questioning disposition which alarmed and shocked her young companions, and perhaps affecting an amount of religious unconcern which she was far from really feeling. It is interesting to find her young companion expostulating with her thus in one of the last letters she wrote:

MY DEAREST ELIZA,

I am truly grieved to see by your note to Marjory that you have entered upon the region of scepticism ; a course so wide and dark and endless, that giving yourself up to it you may doubt everything, even your own existence. There is nothing can be so demonstrated as that it cannot be disputed. The very evidence of the senses may not always be trusted : so if you, as you say, never will believe anything until you fully understand all, you never will believe. "Can we by searching find out God? can we find out the Almighty to perfection?"

Dear Eliza, you must be content to become a fool that you may be truly wise. Proud reason and all human confidence must be brought down, and the soul made to feel itself less than nothing, foolish and ignorant, yea, as a beast before God.

It is very trying for corrupt human nature to be thus brought down to the dust, to be put out of sight altogether, but it is God's way, and all who are saved must be saved by it. Heaven and eternal life are a free gift ; dearly bought, but freely given ! Richard Baxter says, "That to his mind the strongest evidence for the truth of Christianity in the world, is the witness of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of true Christians." I have often thought of this remark, and desire to bless God that I *do* know something of the power and operations of the blessed Spirit.

I pray that God may thus convince you of His being and almighty power, by bringing down in you every high thing that exalteth itself against the Lord and His Anointed, and bringing you into complete conformity to His mind and will. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Humble yourself therefore under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you to a more lofty and noble position than poor human reason or earthly learning can ever reach. You cannot chalk out for yourself any new or more dignified path of unbelief than has been trod by those long gone to their account, whose histories we have on record. They set their own intellect in the place of God, as you wish to do ; and have left behind them sad evidence whether or not this was comfortable through life or in death.

Rutherford said, in his quaint way : "I will e'en count it manly to play the coward, and hide myself behind Jesus." I wish you were brought to this, to aspire after the truest of all dignity—an heir of God, a joint heir of Christ the Elder Brother.

It is impossible to gauge with accuracy the impression produced by quiet faithfulness like this on such a nature as Eliza Fletcher's, but it must unquestionably have been great. A surviving sister of Maggie and Marjory Smith, after describing the friendship which subsisted between them and Eliza, writes :—"Both my sisters were decided Christians. Eliza saw they had something she wanted. They were gentle, but consistent, and often spoke to her of Christ and salvation. She listened, but told them she did not believe in these things, and expressed no end of difficulties about religion. She read her Bible, though, and studied it well ; and my sisters took great pains about speaking to her. Whenever she was away she corresponded with them, and they wrote to her, trying to answer objections. And I do think their prayers and labours were not in vain."

“ Look to the weather bow, breakers are round thee !
Let fall the plummet now, shallows may ground thee !
Reef in the fore-sail there ! Hold the helm fast !
So—let the vessel ware ! there swept the blast.

“ What of the night, watchman ? what of the night ?
' Cloudy—all quiet—no land yet—all's well.'
Be wakeful, be vigilant, danger may be
At an hour when all seems securest to thee.”

—*Mrs. Southey.*

CHAPTER IV.

SEEING THE WORLD



ELISSA FLETCHER was a great reader, and in her youth there was one branch of literature for which she had a peculiar liking. This was neither fiction nor poetry, but the romance of real life, as she found it in books of travel and adventure. These she devoured with the greatest avidity, and in her girlhood would sit poring over them sometimes till it was nearer the morning than the evening twilight. Books like Basil Hall's *Voyages and Travels* so fired her imagination that nothing but the lack of a fitting opportunity to go abroad and see the world for herself kept her to the prosaic duties of learning and teaching at home.

In one of her serious moods, some little time after the death of Margaret Smith, she gravely contemplated offering herself as a missionary for the foreign field. The Duchess and other friends earnestly dissuaded her from this step. But at length another opening presented itself, to whose acceptance they could not urge the same objections. Eliza saw an advertisement for a governess to teach the captain's children on board a vessel bound for Australia. This, she thought, was exactly the chance she had been looking for, and she lodged an application which was favourably entertained. While negotiations were yet proceeding, she wrote to the Duchess, and received from her Grace the following reply :—

HUNTLY LODGE, 14th January, 1855.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I return your aunt's letter and Mr. O——'s. I do believe your aunt was a very good woman, and would have done all in her power for your good. Although you have now no relations that I know of in Britain to whom you can look for counsel, you have many friends who are truly anxious for your welfare—although for that very reason they desire that you should act on your own responsibility *as before God*. Remember it is written, "If any one lack wisdom, let him ask of God." I will therefore give no advice respecting your acceptance of the situation as governess to the children

of Captain and Mrs. A.— I am not sufficiently acquainted with the parties to say that it will suit you, while, on the other hand, I see nothing to object to it as a *matter of principle*. The missionary work is another thing, and as a friend deeply interested in your welfare, but still more desirous of the glory of God, I would with all the influence I may possess advise you not to undertake anything of the kind, until, by two or three years of consistent Christian life, and continuance in the same desire to devote yourself to the Lord's work in an especial manner, you prove that He Himself has called you to a position in which you may plead His promises, that your work in His strength and by His grace will be blest. Remember that in taking a place in a Christian mission you would be prominently a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ—and we are not left in doubt who even of the Lord's servants are to be so employed. 1 Timothy iii. 6, 7, 8, 9,—“Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride,” etc. Dear Eliza, I am sure you must know how liable you would be to fall into that snare. Ver. 10, “And let them first be proved.” Nothing can be more injurious to the cause of Christ than that His servants should be inconsistent in their conduct, and if there be the really broken and contrite spirit, which is the character of the new creature, there will be great diffidence in undertaking anything before men, however strong the desire may be to be employed specially for and by the Lord. But I trust you may serve the Lord in a less prominent way, and if He sees fit in the course of time to call you to more public work, I trust He will fit you by patient continuance in well-doing to win souls to Him, and to give glory to His great name. I shall hope to hear if you and Mrs. A.— agree to sail together. You will tell me the name of the ship and when letters will reach you; and, dear Eliza, let me entreat you to live on board as before God, seeking to glorify Him, and to be like Jesus—meek, lovely, lowly, mild, . . . taking up your cross daily. It must be so if you are Christ's, and following Christ. You must count all things but loss for His name's sake—your treasure, your hope, your portion in heaven, with the Lord: this must be the case if you are His. And oh! how much good you might do, how much would you be respected even in the capacity of governess to the children of the captain; much, much more than if, by the desire so natural to you to appear something uncommon, you gave an impression of folly or lightness which you yourself would despise in another. May the Lord guide and direct you!

The upshot was, that Miss Fletcher accepted the situation, and though she heartily regretted it the moment after, she was too high-minded to recede from her agreement once it had been fairly struck. Accordingly, on 24th June, 1855, she set off in the good ship “Briseis,” with Melbourne for her port, and with the captain's children for her special charge.

The voyage was not only a long but an eventful one. Miss Fletcher kept a careful diary from the time of setting out to the day on which she landed again on the shores of England; and it abundantly appears from it how thoroughly she enjoyed this first experience of life on the ocean wave, and yet what a love there was in her heart all the time for home, and what a longing after the friends from whom by her own act she had for a time been severed. Miss Fletcher retained to the last her fondness for foreign travel. It was not only a favourite recreation, but a kind

of passion with her, and she had the instinct which all travellers do not possess of sweeping her surroundings not merely with an inquisitive but with an acquisitive eye—gathering in a harvest of information which would instruct and amuse others besides herself. Yet to the last it was true of her, that all the while she was away her heart was turning to Scotland, like the needle to the pole, and she invariably hailed her return to it with an almost childish delight.

On her first voyage, as her log-book shows, nothing was permitted to escape her notice. She was thoroughly alive to the wonders of the deep, and, at the same time, observant not only of the ways of the passengers, but of the working of the ship—learning what enabled her many years after to astonish and delight the boys on the Cumberland Training Ship by her familiarity with the duties and even the phrases of nautical life.

The diary abounds with passages of considerable descriptive power and sometimes of devout feeling, of which the subjoined extracts may be taken as specimens:—

“Towards the afternoon we made Madeira. My first impressions were very favourable, the great height of its hills filling me with wonder. Light clouds hung over the most of it till evening. After tea I ran up to see the sunset and the island; and, seated on the bulwarks at the stern, I feasted my eyes with a sight I shall never forget. We were quite close to the shore, and there, unrobed in all its glory, stood this lovely island. The sun was sinking amid a sky of the deepest orange, which formed bars of gold across its disc; this shed a lustre of delicate purple over Madeira, and, to add to the beauty of the scene, Venus, the evening star, came out right over the highest peak. I sat swinging on my seat in silent rapture. There gradually sinks the sun—there it goes—goes beyond the deep blue sea; one second—it is gone. But what has it left behind to tell, as it were, of its dying glory? A perfect mountain of gold, which presently assumes the shape of a golden city! It made me think of that city paved with gold, whose inhabitants walk on a sea of glass, with crowns on their heads and palms in their hands. I sat there; a heavy swell came on; it was, I thought, the ocean sighing. See now how it lifts its mighty bosom and heaves such a sigh as lifts our noble vessel like a feather! I sat till the heavens were one mass of sparkling beauty. Then Madeira seemed to regret having appeared so lovely, for thick clouds came over her lofty peaks; so after humming, greatly to my own satisfaction, a hymn—the 23rd Psalm—and one verse of ‘Isle of Beauty, fare-thee-well,’ I took my parting glance and descended.

“About eight o’clock the sky assumed a most peculiar dark appearance—it being hazy on before. And over the ship there hung a cloud like a black rainbow, which reflected on the sea. In a moment the tempest broke out. All went downstairs but myself; I stayed up, and shall never forget the sight. The wind roared fiercely through the rigging; the ship’s lee-side almost touched the water; clinging on I stood at the stern, greatly excited. The ship dashed madly through the water, causing the waves to dance up on both sides like huge mountains of white snow, filled with mellow phosphorescence. Behind us was a broad sparkling tract, glowing with green, and studded over with brilliant

stars. I held on with one hand, and the wind blew furiously on my face. The men were crying to each other through the ship, and I got madly excited. Yonder is a glorious pitch! We are into that huge wave? No! Here, hold on, for we are mounting again! . . . The captain was delighted at my bravery, and said he would never forget my appearance that night; it was like some witch—my hair streaming to the winds, and the Paisley hat blowing like a bellows. I came down wet, but highly pleased.”

“I went on deck. It was getting cloudy ahead; the dark masses then divided, coming leeward and weather-side. The sails were all lowered, and for a few minutes we went silently through the water. We thought there was a storm coming on; but after tea all was bright and clear. As it got later a dead calm set in, and my feelings were most peculiar. The stars burst forth most brilliantly—Jupiter and Venus. The steerage passengers were singing psalm tunes. Imagine what I felt lying full length on the fore-cabin, gazing on such a sky of celestial blue, bespangled with the brightest gems; not a sound but the flap of the idle sails, and Martyrdom and St. Asaph’s floating along the soft breeze. Some time after I got up and sat on the stern. The captain changed our position to east; and here let me note down the scene. I felt as though I was wrapt in a strange dream; not one sound could be heard, but an occasional burst of laughter from the fore-castle, and the creak of the helm. An awe crept over my spirit as I gazed on the vast solitude of waste waters round and round us; clear, smooth, transparent as crystal itself, looking up on a blue sky. I felt the very stars were seeming to hold communion with our becalmed vessel, as she lay so quiet and motionless. What are these bright orbs? I thought. Surely some pure sinless beings dwell there; surely yon bright gem contains not within its silvery limits ought of sin or sorrow. They gazed down on me, they seemed to say, ‘You cannot feel desolate when we are all here; we all proclaim the infinite wisdom and power of our Almighty Creator.’ Cheer up, bad child of earth, yours is a world of sin and death; but you, too, may be the possessor of a world brighter far than ours; a world where sun, nor moon, nor stars ever shine; a world of everlasting spring, and never withering blossoms; a world of light and love. And yours, too, may be a robe of righteousness, such as we, who never sinned, cannot wear. Yours may be an eternal, new song, which our voices may never chant ‘to 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 for ever and ever.’ Then despair not: all those countless orbs on which you gaze are the works of that same Mighty One.

“I know not if I shall ever see dear, dear Lochwinnoch again. I wonder if I have gazed on dear faces there for the last time—taken a last look on earth—bid a last farewell. I feel quite cool and calm, but sad and sick at heart. I wonder, indeed, if mine is to be a watery grave. I often have wondered where these bones were to lie, and who was to have the bother of laying them in their narrow home. But am I to save them the trouble, am I to sink into the bosom of the mighty ocean—unheeded, unwept for—where none can ever visit the spot where I lie, or drop a single tear at the grave of their friend? How well do I remember the good-bye I took with them all.”

¹ Glimpses of the distinctively religious side of Miss Fletcher’s experience at this time have been prescribed for us in the letters which she wrote from the “Briseis” to her young Lochwinnoch friends. The accompanying quotations will show how powerful was the impression which her early training had left upon her, and,

whatever may be said of her spiritual attainments, how influential were at least her desires after better things.

The following was written to Marjory somewhat early in the voyage :—

“I can't say my health and my spirits are improved ; rather the opposite. I seldom feel really well. The spirit is too closely related to the body not to affect it. But if I return I hope it shall be in the true, the only sense of the word, ‘a new creature.’

“You will rejoice to hear that I have not been drawn into the current of ungodliness around me. On the contrary, it has had an opposite effect on me. The colder and deader the atmosphere around, the more intensely do I long to bask under the cheering and life-giving rays of the glorious Sun of Righteousness ; the more I see Him despised and rejected of men, the more I long to be His, and to bear His cross and be a partaker of His sufferings, knowing that such shall be partakers of His glory.

“I shall rejoice to return ; I will value infinitely more the privileges of dear Scotland,—the precious house of God and the conversation of His dear people. How different is the Sabbath here ; but pleasant it is to take refuge in my own little hole of a cabin. There I can read and sing a psalm to myself. And oh ! those psalm *tunes* vividly bring back dear Lochwinnoch, and as I read— ‘Blessed are they that dwell in Thy courts, they will be still praising Thee ; . . . I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in tents of wickedness ;

‘My thirsty soul longs vehemently,
Yea faints. Thy courts to see :
My very heart and flesh cry out,
Oh living God, for Thee ;’

“My whole soul realises the longings of the Psalmist, and at such times—little bright ‘oases’ in the waste wilderness of my mental life—earth and all earth's pursuits sink into nothingness. There is a glow of delight, a radiance, a halo in the thought that this gloomy world is not, need not be, our only portion—where we are subject to constant separation, pained bodies, sad heavy hearts, ever changing never lasting scenes—but that a *rest* may be sought, *can* be obtained, where all the mists of time, the damps and heavy dews of this world shall have given way to a bright and eternal day, where all shadows shall have fled away. No more doubting and struggling with sin and Satan—no more unbelief or gloom. But oh, Marjory, till then ! But after such a sweet review, back comes the black question—‘What is that to you ?’ and the green spot is covered all over with midnight darkness.

“Imagine to yourself a bright moonlight night, the sky unclouded, brilliant blue. Jupiter and Venus are shining on either side with a beauty and splendour never seen in our dim atmosphere. Above is one canopy of magnificent gems—stars of untold lustre. The sea calm, the ship motionless. We are becalmed, and around no sound do you hear but the gentle zephyr amongst the snowy shrouds. There at the stern, among the ropes, you may see a dark figure sitting all alone singing, ‘Love not, the thing you love may die’ ; then, in a pensive strain, ‘Home, sweet home’ ; and again you may hear, to Martyrdom or St. Asaph's, the same one sing, ‘O spread Thy covering wings around, till all our wand'rings cease ;’ and after that, ‘There is a fountain filled with blood,’ and the figure is seen slowly retiring to rest. Night after night, in sunshine and in storm, the same figure is seen at that hour among the ropes, all alone in the vessel, and the same plaintive airs are heard in the darkness. Oh, with what pleasure I

look forward to be with you all again. *I know* you have not forgotten me, and will not do so. I love to think of returning, but surely if there is uncertainty on earth it is in those circumstances in which I am placed, when one hour, yes, one moment may consign us all to the chambers of the deep."

The vessel was leaky, and at one time it was expected they would all go down. In the midst of this danger she writes :—

"The prospect of sudden death I have found a most profitable thing. It forces you to think of death and eternity; and what an overwhelming thought that one moment might usher you into another world! Should I ever be spared to return to dear, dear Scotland, it will be through the goodness of an overruling providence; but I don't expect it, dear Marjory.

"Remember me in all these trials, and pray for me, that 'living or dead,' I may be found safely hid in the cleft of the Rock. Little, little does it matter what becomes of the poor body,—whether it sleeps quietly under the green sod of the peaceful churchyard, or among the green weeds and cold waters of the pathless deep. For both earth and sea must yield to the summons of that awful voice which will command the sea to give up its dead."

"Truly we are in the hands of Him who rules the winds and the waves. And oh He is kind, most kind, to the ungrateful, unthankful! Our helplessness, our utter inability to help ourselves is most evident to the blindest. What would we do without a God?

"Shall I tell you my Union Jack motto now? 'That I may win Christ!' Ah, is He not a prize worth having? My heart is set on winning that prize, though I should lose everything else.

"I wonder if I will ever be with you again, dearest Marjory. I love you as myself. But if we are steering to the same port, it will not much matter; and if fair winds help your scudding sails before me, while I have head winds and stormy waves, a black sky, and bare poles, so that many a weary day must pass before I reach the harbour, let me but be *steering heavenwards*: and then, though you are before me, we will hoist our peace flag side by side in the same port."

Further on in the voyage, she writes to another sister:—

"O, my dear Jessie, there are some advantages to be obtained by travelling. You see the world, learn to bear a good deal and to brave danger. You have to meet all classes: and you get a great deal of information and gratify your curiosity. But, believe me, the disadvantages in general far outweigh the advantages: and never can you be too thankful that you have a home on earth, a father's care, a mother's love, the affection of sisters, the protection of brothers. O be thankful, too, you have not a cold, wicked, treacherous world to knock about in!—But I must stop this: my feelings carry me away. You little fancy what a fiery series of ordeals since I left dear, sweet Lochwinnoch—how severely I have been tried in almost every way—how nearly I have been giving way—how still I hold on! Give my love to anybody that cares for it. I don't think that's many. But I think, Jessie, *you* do, and *I know* Marjory does, and I think Miss S. does."

This again is to Marjory :—

"I can't tell you how often I remember you all, and the things we have talked about. Oh, yes; I recall all! and long nights do I sit on the bulwarks at the stern, gazing on the wild waste of waters surging about, completely lost in thoughts of many places, many faces, many things, and I do long to be back.

The day I dislike more than any is Sabbath. I *assure* you it needs firmness to keep from the temptations that surround you. There is no middle course can be taken on board ship. You must hoist 'true colours, and sail under them'—either go along with the stream, or set your face resolutely against it. I am glad to say I have been in some measure able to show that at least I regard the possession of salvation and the friendship of God as the one thing needful, and am resolved that as for what others do, I will seek this for myself.

"And I rejoice to say, any little influence I have over either the captain or his wife, has not proved injurious. I persuaded Mrs. A—— in the first place to have a chapter and prayer read each evening, and that is regularly done.

"Watching a good opportunity, I ventured one day to propose to the captain to have worship on Sabbath for all hands. He objected a good deal, but at last agreed. And only *imagine* how delighted I was last Sabbath to hear him tell the mate to have ten men all warned to be ready at eleven o'clock, and to get an awning prepared. The hen coops, &c., formed a square of pews. The capstain was covered with the Union Jack. At eleven o'clock the 'ships bell' rang slowly for some time. I confess this went to my heart, it sounded so sweetly, yet so strangely, then the steerage passengers neatly dressed, and carrying their children, came up and took their places. The steward brought the Bible and Psalm book. The men all came dressed in blue jackets and trousers, and each one carrying his Bible. Then the captain got up and gave out the paraphrase, "Come let us to the Lord our God with contrite hearts return." A young man raised the tune Peterborough, and all joined.

"It sent a thrill through my very soul to look at the sight before me. The deep tones of the sailors were mingled with the shrill tones of the women, and borne aloft by the breeze, and re-echoed by the snowy surge swelling round us.

"The captain then read a prayer and chapter, and the Doctor read one of Ryle's tracts from a collection given me before leaving. When this was done, another prayer and another psalm, and at twenty minutes past twelve o'clock, our little congregation broke up. It was deeply interesting to me to see the dark eyes of Portuguese, Russian, and Italian, fixed earnestly on the Doctor as he read the solemn words of the tract. We are to have this repeated every Sabbath.

"So you must not forget us, sitting in the dear church at home, listening to the precious words of salvation. Remember the little church on the wide waste of waters, and seek for all its rude and rough worshippers that the Word of God may be blessed to them. For do they not all possess immortal souls?"

There is space to add no more than the closing sentences of the diary, which ends thus, near Holyhead, in May, 1856 :—

"I rather think this will be my last entry on board the vessel, which has now been my home for eleven months. Be it so. Were there no life beyond this world—were there no dark hills of immortality looming in the distant eternity—I should choose a sailor's life—so wild! so dangerous! so free! so exciting! But I must fulfil my fate, my destiny—and dark and dreary that fate appears!"

“‘Himself hath done it.’—He who searched me through
Sees how I cling to earth’s ensnaring ties ;
And so He breaks each reed on which my soul
Too much for happiness and joy relies.

“‘Himself hath done it.’—He would have me see
What broken cisterns human friends must prove,
That I may turn and quench my burning thirst,
At His own fount of ever-living love.”

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOL IN FRANCE, AND THE SCHOOL OF TRIAL.



FEW months after her return from Australia, Miss Fletcher was sent to Paris to perfect herself in the French language, and to "finish" her education. There is no trace left of any correspondence between her and the Duchess during the former period of her voyage to the southern hemisphere. But on the 26th December, 1856, we find her Grace writing thus to Paris:—

"It gave me very great pleasure to hear of your safe arrival after all your perils by sea and land. Truly, 'the Lord is thy keeper.' Acknowledge him, dear child; seek the Lord ever, more especially seek Him in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to those who ask for Him. It is not now and then, but always that we need that help. 'Except ye abide in Me, ye can do nothing.' And there is nothing that we ought to do that does not require this same help and strength for its performance aright. May the new year be one of great blessing to you—it would be so if you kept close to Jesus, even though it should also bring trials. I am writing to Mr. Biraud. I cordially wish all that is good to those worthy people."

Miss Fletcher appears to have been partly teacher and partly scholar during her residence in the French capital, and does not seem to have greatly relished her stay among the "grande nation." We quote the following in proof of this, and also as illustrative of her unsubdued spirit at this time. It was written to the lady to whose care in her early youth she had been committed at Lochwinnoch:—

"I hear very often from the Duchess who writes kindly enough. . . . Certainly I shall do all I can to leave Beaumont as soon as possible. The Duchess seems to take an especial pleasure in burying me alive and keeping me working to others for nothing. My plan is to try to get her leave to go to Geneva in the holidays, and there teach English on my own account. I have no idea of working as I am doing from morning to night for absolutely nothing, whilst others are paid for far less. I do think it rather hard. . . . I hate the French. They are a filthy, dirty, abominable set; light, immoral, and disgusting. The weather here is cold, and the French houses are not built for cold, nor their chimneys for fires. I never met with a nation who had so little idea of comfort, and such an idea of dirt. The French hate the English. Many a royal battle I fight. For nothing enrages me as much as to hear a word said against them. I think France in a very dangerous state. It only requires some bold

hand to set a match to the train, and there would soon be a most precious blow-up. . . . Here they take things very coolly, and are, in my opinion, regular fatalists. If any one is taken ill they never think of sending for the doctor, because if he is to get better, he will, and if not, he must die. The other day a man came wanting Mr. Biraud to bury his son, a young man of twenty. He took cold, they never gave him any medicine, did nothing, so of course he took fever, and the fourth day died; and the father was as cool as possible, and canted after this manner, 'Oh, it was the Lord's will, and I must submit'—nothing but religious cant which amongst the Protestants here prevails greatly. If you ask a woman how her pig is: 'Oh, bless the Lord, the pig is better.'"

Some of the expressions in this letter were no doubt harsh, and purposely so, for she was fond in these days of horrifying people. But even while she was writing thus, there was the kindlier side to her nature, which did not fail betimes to manifest itself, as the following incident will show. One Sabbath, at forenoon service, Miss Fletcher's eyes and heart were irresistibly drawn towards an old woman who was evidently pinched with care and bowed under some load of pressing anxiety. She felt that she ought to give that old dame some money, and mentally resolved to do so if the opportunity presented itself at the evening service. Arrived at home, she found that her pocket money consisted of exactly one napoleon, and though loath to part with the whole of it, she felt she could neither break it nor leave it behind, but must take it with her to church. This she did, half hoping that the old woman would not be among the worshippers again. But there she was with the mute and unconscious, but irresistible appeal as plainly written on her face as ever. On coming out of the church, Miss Fletcher somehow found herself side by side with her; and it was the work of a moment to slip the gold piece into the astonished old lady's hand, and to run off without waiting for thanks. It afterwards emerged that the woman at that very time was in the greatest destitution. She had been presenting her case to God in prayer, and was leaving in the confidence that He pitied and had heard her—when the answer was given in this unlooked-for way.

This story is but one of many instances which might be given in illustration of what was a marked feature of Eliza Fletcher's character from first to last—her lavish generosity.

But now, after the lapse of nine months, the time came for her to return to Scotland. Her project of going to Geneva was talked of, and seemed likely to be favourably entertained by the Duchess. But an event occurred which caused Eliza herself to lose all taste for such an arrangement, and made her long for nothing so much as to be free to hasten home to Lochwinnoch again. This was the serious illness of her friend Marjory Smith, which resulted ere long

in her death. And, so far from Eliza Fletcher's education having been "finished" in France, it can scarcely be said to have been properly begun till she entered on the school of trial, whose door was flung open to receive her on her return from the school in Paris.

The death of Marjory Smith did much—more probably than all the other influences put together, which were brought to bear upon her in her youth, to subdue the will and soften the nature of her warm though erratic friend. Others live to tell how devotedly Eliza watched by her sick bed day by day, and how heavily she felt the stroke of her removal. But we have here the advantage of telling the story in her own language, from the narrative long after printed for her by the Messrs. Parlane, of Paisley, and by their kind permission inserted here. Omitting the short introduction, which throws it into the form of a colloquy with an orphan girl Carry over the grave in "the old churchyard," and substituting Eliza for the assumed name of Alice in the original narration, we transcribe the story precisely as she gave it:—

THE OLD CHURCHYARD.

"You wish to know the history of her who is sleeping beneath this stone, Carry?—well, she was the dearest friend of my early days. Loving idolatrously,—investing my idol with every perfection, I gave to Marjory the full tide of a loving heart. But, when the Lord is determined to win our hearts to Himself, He graciously removes the props to which these poor hearts so tenaciously cling. Early, and bitterly, had I to learn that lesson,—a lesson only learnt amidst blinding tears and sorrow. I was then a foolish, thoughtless girl, fond of amusement, self-willed and heedless.

"Marjory was a true Christian, her piety was singularly unobtrusive; it spoke in the life far more than in the words, and I *felt* its power. I loved her, but not her religion; and yet conscience told me that she was in the right. Many a tear did she shed over my godlessness; I had sorrowful moments too; times when voices from another world seemed to speak to me of death and eternity, and the awful importance of preparation for another—a higher life. At such times Marjory was my confidant, and we spoke unreservedly of those great mysteries. Often in the lovely summer evenings, we used to walk together along by the hedgerows of wild roses, up to the Crook Hill, which overlooked the old churchyard,—*this* churchyard, Carry. And there we sat, and talked until the bell in the old tower struck out—ten o'clock. I don't know if we ever listened to it without thinking of those

still sleepers upon whose ears it fell unheeded and unheard. Very often, when those serious moods made me more uncomfortable than usual, I mounted my pony, cantered away across the fields, over the moors, and home by the glen. I found it often a cure; but I knew not, for I refused to know, the only true cure for a sin sick soul, 'By *His* stripes we are healed.'

"At length it was decided that I should go to school in France. You may imagine how delighted I was at the prospect so full of novelty; it had only one dark cloud,—my separation from Marjory. She felt it almost as much as I did, and promised to write very often. The night before I left I went up to say good-bye. We strolled out along our favourite path. What an evening it was! Though many years of joy and sorrow have rolled over since then, I remember it as if but yesterday. The full moon looked down on the beautiful loch, the swans lying on the surface like flakes of snow. We leaned against an old white gate, leading into a clover field, where the cows were chewing the cud, and turning their large and full eyes wonderingly upon us. All was still except the hum of the village lying at our feet, and the splash of the swans, as they half flew, half swam, across the loch. We were both silent; when the old churchyard bell tolled out.

"'Eliza,' said Marjory; 'I think perhaps I will not be long behind my sister Maggie. I sometimes think I shall soon be sleeping beside her yonder.' I felt my heart sink.

"'How, Marjory, what makes you think so?'

"'I cannot quite tell,' she said. 'I only wish to live as long as I can be of any use, and I often feel such longings to be with Jesus,—to be like Him. Life is so sad, too,' she added, 'at least to me, for I have such a *constant* conflict with sin.' Then she repeated her favourite hymn—

'I long to go home, for I'm weary here,
I've wrestled with sin this many a year;
And I know if I stay, I must wrestle on,
For the flesh will not rest, till the spirit is gone.'

"Her whole countenance lighted up as she spoke of what it would be to see *His* face,—how sweet it was after a long separation to see the face of a loved one; much more then to see *His* face, 'whom not having seen we love.' She spoke of the *holiness* of that home above, adding, with *such* solemnity, 'There shall *in no-wise* enter therein *anything* that defileth.' Then looking at me, her voice trembling with deep feeling, she said; 'Eliza, am I not to see you in that narrow way? *can* you live any longer without God? *can* you bear the *thought* even of being *left behind*; of *missing* eternal glory?' I was deeply moved, and made many

promises to myself that night; alas! how soon to be 'as the morning cloud and the early dew.'

"We parted. School days are too frequently days of folly, and light-hearted frivolity. So it was with me. Marjory's letters came regularly, and were always welcomed; sometimes, I am ashamed to confess, I skipped over all the solemn and earnest advices they contained. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of God.' I had no relish for such matters.

"Nine months had passed away, my holidays drew near. And I longed for them, with all the longing of a caged-bird after liberty. I had not heard from Marjory for some weeks, and rather wondered at this. We had just returned from an excursion to the mountains; I had been particularly light and gay. A letter was waiting for me; it was from Scotland, and told me that dear Marjory had been very, very ill, that she was rather better, but never likely ultimately to recover; she might linger for some months, the doctor said,—but it was a mere question of time, and, added the writer, 'she wishes much to see you again.' Ah! Carry, you will believe how quickly all my gaiety disappeared. In utter lonely misery I betook myself to the garden, and in a solitary corner, sheltered from sight by the friendly trees, I wept bitter tears. It was my first deep sorrow; the first wrench this heart was to feel. I recalled the scene at the old white gate in the moonlight; and my heart told me that Marjory was going to that holy home she then so longed for!

"Each day now seemed a year until I should be free; but time flies on, either for joy or for sorrow; and once more I found myself in the dear old home. You may be sure I was not long of finding my way to Marjory. She was changed, oh! how sadly changed; her pale countenance and wasted frame told how quickly she was passing away from us. She had an expression of holy calm such as I never saw before; 'she was *very* glad to see me *once* more,' she said; and she looked it.

"I must not dwell upon those few weeks, dear Carry; weeks, each of whose days are engraven on my memory. Whenever her strength permitted, we chatted together as in days of old, but now her conversation *always* turned *homewards*. Many times she spoke to me of these things which belonged to my peace, but my heart, warm and susceptible to all earthly love, remained cold and hard to the dying love of the dear Saviour! It was remarkable that, during all those weeks Marjory never referred to herself before me, at least, as dying. It was not that she did not know it, or that I did not know it too. It was because she knew I could ill bear to think even of such a thing. We both instinctively refrained.

Each evening, ere I bade her good-night, I read her a few verses of her own choosing. She said she wished me always to do so, for I might perhaps find a blessing when I was not seeking it.

"It was the month of August, and in the garden the roses were in full bloom. There was one bush, which had always been her particular favourite; it was now laden with white buds of peculiar beauty and fragrance. Every night I pulled one for her, and gave it with my good-night. One evening I found a lovely bud, but holding it for some time in my hot hand, it had begun slightly to droop. As I gave it to Marjory, she smiled so sweetly, and taking it in her long white fingers, she said, 'Fading, Eliza, like myself.' This was the first time she had even indirectly referred to her state. I burst into tears, 'Do not speak of fading, Marjory,' I said, passionately. 'No, dear,' she said; 'not fading either, only the poor body, for "I give unto My sheep *eternal* life, and they shall never perish."' I went home that night with a heavy heart: my idol was about to be taken from my eager grasp, and what had I left!

"The next day she was not so well, but at night revived. She told me to read; and when I asked what portion of the Word she wished, 'John xviii.,' she said. When I came to the 24th verse, 'Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.' 'Stop, Eliza,' she said; 'think of that,' and she repeated very slowly and solemnly, 'be with *me*—with *me*—where *I am*.' Yes! Carry, this was her last draught out of the stream; a few hours, and she was drinking at the fountain-head above.

"As I went home, how still and peaceful was all around; the loch wore that peculiar calm which reflects the tiniest shadow. I could not go home at once, but instinctively turned away to the old white gate; my thoughts were not in unison with the scene,—they were troubled and sad.

"Early next morning I was awoke from sleep by a voice at my bedside: 'Rise immediately, Miss Eliza; make haste; Miss Marjory is *very* ill, and wants to see you at once.' I sprang up; I think I was beside her in ten minutes. It was half-past four. Whenever I entered her room, 'Eliza,' she said, 'I am glad you are there, I want to see you alone.' She made all go out.

"'Now, Eliza,' she said; 'sit close beside me; I am dying; there's no use in concealing that, or not speaking of it. I feel I am dying, and I wish to speak to you. Oh! Eliza, you have often talked lightly of Satan, heaven, hell. I know you have not yet given your heart to the Lord; and now I wish to tell you something. Last night Satan came to my bed-side; it was no heated imagination, he was there,' she said, pointing to the other side, 'I *felt* his

presence. He drew near, and held up to my terrified eyes all my past sins,—sins, Eliza, long forgotten ; and it was a terrible sight. I tried to drive him away by telling him I had come to Jesus. *You*, he said, such a sinner as *you*,—look ; and I gazed at my sins. Again I told him of the blood which cleanseth from all sin. But are *you* washed ? he argued ; look again at your sins ; there they are, you cannot deny *them*. Oh ! Eliza, the conflict was so awful, that the perspiration broke all over my body ; at length I said, Well, Satan, I give it up, I *am* a sinner. I have committed all these sins, and far more ; but I am not worse than Mary Magdalene, and she is in glory. The Saviour that took *her* there, can, and will, take *me*. Then he pointed me to the cold grave. Look at that dismal, damp grave, how will you like to be there. Ah ! Satan, I said, my dear Saviour has lain there before me, and the bed upon which He lay will be a sweet one for me. Then he fled. Now, dear Eliza, I tell you as a dying one,—you will believe my *dying* words, wont you ? There *is* a hell, there *is* a devil ; and, blessed be God, there is a heaven, and there is a Saviour. I speak to you solemnly ; let my death be life to you.’ She was exhausted. ‘Marjory,’ I said ; throwing myself on the bed beside her, ‘I *cannot* live without you.’ Putting her hand tenderly on my shoulder, she replied : ‘Oh ! dear Eliza, get Jesus and *His* love, and you will do without me.’

“That forenoon she often repeated,—

‘Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my spotless dress.’

“And never can I forget that pale countenance, over which the shadows of the dark valley had already begun to flit, as she clasped her hands, and said,—

‘Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I’ll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue,
Lies silent in the grave.’

“At three o’clock I was told she had sunk into unconsciousness. ‘Ah !’ I said, ‘she will know *me*.’ Hastening to the room I took the cold hand which lay helplessly at her side. ‘Marjory, Marjory, I cried ; do you not know me ?’ Oh ! those eyes, once so full of expression, were gazing on utter vacancy ! She never even for a moment recovered consciousness. She had given her last testimony to the faithfulness of Him who was even then leading her through the valley of death. All that weary autumn night we watched,—as the darkness gathered, we watched,—as the first streaks of light appeared on the hill top, we watched,—and as the

sun arose, *her* sun was fast setting. At intervals her father prayed. I only remember one sentence: 'Gently woo her to Thyself, Lord.'

"About ten o'clock I was standing at the foot of the bed; her family were gathered around. 'She is going now,' said a voice beside me. I looked up; a peculiar colour and far-off expression had come over the upper part of the face. I buried my face in my hands, for I felt I was in the presence of death; it was my first sight of death, and I shuddered. 'She is within the city now—she is within the city now,' said the same voice. I knew no more, for I fainted.

"The next evening I stole round by the back door, entered the house unseen, and made my way to the well-known room, unlocking the door, then shutting it, oh! how softly. I knelt beside that shrouded form, sleeping the sweetest sleep that death ever gave; those closed lips seemed to say, 'There *is* a hell, there *is* a devil; but blessed be God, there is a heaven and a Saviour.' I draw the veil over the moments spent in that still and darkened room, spent with the beloved dead. Night after night found me there. Ah! Carry, prayer *then*, prayer *there*, seemed so real!

"Then came the funeral day,—such a lovely day! The fleecy clouds hanging in the sky, seemed to speak of a 'brighter clime than ours;' and the calm blue waters of the loch spoke of that 'sea of glass, clear as crystal,' where the redeemed shall walk. I went alone to the old gate, and watched, with a bleeding, broken heart, the dark line of mourners; and from my place there I could even hear,—that most awful of sounds to a loving heart—the dull heavy clods falling on the coffin. Yet all seemed to say, 'There *is* a heaven, and a Saviour!' No! she has *not* faded: 'For them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him.'

"Carry, dear, you now know the history of her who has slept so long and so peacefully beneath this stone. The dew, though, is beginning to fall; we had better turn homewards; yet stay,—ere we go let us again read the text underneath her name:

"'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. Believest thou this?'"

One very significant sentence in this narration is—"Loving idolatrously—investing my idol with every perfection, I gave to Marjory the full tide of a loving heart." There was no lesson which Eliza Fletcher learned with so much difficulty and even bitterness as this—the folly of allowing human affection to pass into idolatry; and there was none which Providence found it

more necessary to inculcate upon her. So much was this the case that she would sometimes sadly say, that "whatever she loved was taken from her, and everything she laid her hands on withered." The death of Marjory wrested her first idol from her; but others in various ways, and through various causes, had to be torn from her bleeding heart, because the Lord, as she expresses it, was "determined to win it to Himself." Another sad experience, and the anguish of soul it cost her, she afterwards, in the *Christian Treasury*, described in "words that burn," as follows:—

A LESSON FROM LIFE.

"I thought I had learnt my lesson. Many years ago I had knelt beside the coffin in that darkened room, and with bended form before that sweet, calm sleeper, vowed that God alone should be the portion of my soul,—that no idol again should fill my heart. And I had kept the vow well, but alas! not because He was my portion—His love had not filled the void. His unchanging faithfulness had not healed the broken heart. I kept my vow simply because so dear had that idol been, that I could find no heart—no room for aught else.

"And so the years sped on. Now and then I visited 'the old churchyard' where she lay, and as I read the text on the gravestone—'I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on Me shall never die,' I seemed once more to hear that voice saying to me—'Take God as your portion, and then you will be happy.' I trod life's pathway calmly—I fought life's battle bravely, and for seven years I floated along the stream quietly, but it was the stagnation of a Christless life. There was often an aching void—a yearning after human love and sympathy—oh! that I had sought *His* love, which is unchanging, that I had found rest and peace in *His* favour and friendship—but I would not take His yoke and learn of Him. At length one autumn month I was visiting some friends in the country. There I met with one so like my dear lost M—— that my whole heart sprang out impetuously towards her. All the old love returned with redoubled strength. In the innermost shrine of my heart, with eager, trembling hands I put up my idol. Conscience whispered of wrong done to Him who says, 'Give *Me* thy heart,' but I angrily and hastily quenched its voice; in actions, if not in words, I said, 'I have loved this idol, and after it I *will* go.'

"My affection was fully returned—at least I fondly dreamed so, and for two and a half years I was allowed to indulge in all the sweets of idol worship. Oh! with what awful earnestness did I strive to quench the burning thirst of my weary soul at the broken

cistern of human love, but not one drop came in answer to my frantic efforts. Often, in the silence of the midnight hour, I was forced to confess to myself that I was not at rest, that I did not possess true happiness!

“The effect of this creature-worship soon became disastrous in the extreme. I felt that all my energies were crippled, my better desires gone. I only lived—thought—acted *for one*—and that one absorbed every desire and feeling. I trembled often, for I felt sure that unless God’s Spirit had forever forsaken me, that reed *would* pierce my hand—that idol *would*, in some way, be dashed from me; and as these thoughts pressed sorely upon me, I clung the more tenaciously to that beloved object, I almost defied God to tear it from me! In an agony of terror I hugged it closer. My misery increased daily. I seriously thought of leaving the country, and with my own hand cutting the tie hoping by so doing to win His favour—but each day left me more bound, and more helpless. But ah! the dark clouds were fast gathering in a way I little dreamt of. It was during the sweet summer months, how or in what manner I cannot, may not relate, that the blow fell—fell in a way the most humbling, the most overwhelming to me. In one short week that idol was rudely torn from my grasp—and I staggered—fell under the hidden agony. The bitterness of death seemed as nothing to this living death. Life became unendurable, I prayed for death, for unconsciousness, it seemed as if bodily suffering itself would be a relief to the anguish of the mind. I could neither eat nor sleep; the sunshine and beautiful blue sky were so painful, that I shut both carefully out, and alone in my room spent days in a horror of darkness—a God-forsaken, creature-forsaken soul.

“Sitting amidst the shattered ruins of my idol, light, hope, all died out. Friends whispered to me of an undying love, of one who never forsakes those who trust Him, of one who never changes, but I knew too well how I had given all up, risked all for that beloved one, and now it seemed to me that He had left me to my own desires. Oh the agony of that time!—I have not yet found rest or light. I have found that it is easier to wander away over the dark mountains, than to return to the pathway of safety. I know not if I shall ever in this wilderness journey walk in the light of His countenance or taste the sweetness of *His* love, but I know I have now learnt the very saddest and the very bitterest lesson of life to some hearts—to ‘cease from man,’ to lean on no arm of flesh, and to bid farewell to all flowers and sunshine on my path. I may not have it—for having had it, I have abused the gifts and turned from the Giver. Now every human prop is

knocked away; and alone, in utter desolation, blighted and broken, I trust I may through His grace enter the kingdom of heaven,—but it will be maimed, halt, wounded—even according to His own word, ‘It is better to enter into the kingdom of God halt, than having two feet to be cast into hell.’”

Dear reader, take warning. Oh! give not your heart’s warm affection to anything or anyone save God:—rest assured if you do, and if He has *one* purpose of mercy toward you—that idol *must* perish, *cost what it may*—for He has said it who cannot lie—“And the idols He will utterly abolish.”

The following, found written on the fly leaf of a printed report, will be read with interest in the same connection:—

“How little I knew then of the tangled wilderness ahead; of the weary heart-sick sorrow that awaited me. How that moon we so often looked up at with thoughtful mysterious glances, has looked down, time after time, upon at least one anguished and despairing face. I’ve gazed up at it on far off shores, as it shone, calm, pale, glorious; aye, and cursed its very light and peace. I’ve watched its rays making silver tracks all adown that deep ocean wave, far, far out at sea, and wondered why it spoke no rest to me! And those stars! Why, they’ve seemed to bend down from those still, strange heights above, and smile pitifully at the sick, lonely watcher struggling on alone. Strange, passing strange it is: a living being ever carrying within, far in the depths within, a *dead one*—a dead loved one. I know I’ve laid that dead one affectionately to rest here; calmly folded those grave clothes around hands often pressed in dearest love; covered those eyes—dead eyes to me *for ever*—from my sight; put to the door; and God forbid I ever open it!”

This autobiographic chapter may be fittingly closed by the insertion here of these simple lines, which Miss Fletcher wrote soon after the death of her beloved Marjory:—

I fondly loved a lily pure,
Of matchless hue and form,
It bent its head beneath the blast
Of winter’s icy storm.

I threw o’er it the genial warmth
Of love—too strong—too deep;
I vainly thought to wile away
The hour when I must weep.

For soon my lily drooped and hung
Its pensile, withering head:
Despairing, still to hope I clung—
I found my lily—dead!

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

O'erwhelmed with anguish deep and strong,
 I scarce could life endure ;
 I mourned the idol of my soul—
 That lily white and pure.

Now life has lost all charms for me,
 Its flowers have lost their hue ;
 To roses, lilies on my path,
 I bid a last adieu !

This heart shall never love again
 The flowers of earth-born bloom,
 I'll seek a flower that never fades,
 Which grows beyond the tomb.

The Rose of Sharon which, I know,
 I ne'er can love too well,
 The only rose without a thorn,
 Who can its beauties tell ?

Yet o'er that lily's resting-place
 I oftimes bend to weep,
 For, oh ! 'tis hard to think it's wrapt
 In death's cold, chilly sleep.

Yet will my lily bloom again,
 Beyond earth's wintry sky,
 Where far from earth's ungenial soil,
 'Twill never droop or die.

Then on bright Canaan's peaceful shore,
 I'll see thee growing fair ;
 No lily pale—no thorny rose—
 No wounded spirit there !

To these verses, we may subjoin the following written later, in celebration of another valued friendship, but showing how fresh and fragrant the memory of the cherished companion of her girlhood ever remained :—

Long years ago, I sadly sang
 Of one—a lily fair,
 Who, drooping, wither'd 'neath the blast
 Of earth's cold, chilly air.

And years ago I sadly bent
 Beside that lifeless form,
 And oh ! *my* journey seemed so long,
My sky so dark with storm.

And when, each eve, I sadly stole
Up to that silent room,
And madly pressing that chill brow—
Oh ! who could tell the gloom,

That gathered o'er my dreary path,
A wanderer and alone,
My cherished idol withered—dead,
A Saviour's love unknown.

And then I took this heart to task,
And told it many a time,
That never more round earthly flowers
Should it be found to twine.

And well I kept that promise too,
And lonely passed along
Earth's journey—loving little, little loved,
And hoped to pass quite on—

Unto the end, where I might meet
Two who had gone before,
When lo ! one day, a stranger came
And, tapping at my door,

GOT IN. I silent sat awhile,
And wondered if I'd care
For this new Flower—as once I loved
My lily pure and fair.

Not long I wondered, soon I felt,
Of love the matchless spell ;
And now I love thee—idle words :
I love thee—far too well !

- “ My path has devious been and wild ;
Thou knowest it well ;
In youth, in after years, e'en from a child,
How oft I fell.
- “ I would not take my Father's hand,
Nor heed His call ;
Leant on my own poor staff—a fragile wand :
He saw me fall.
- “ As oft I fell, so oft He raised
Me from the ground ;
Awhile His grace I sang, and Him I praised
To all around.
- “ Yet, oh ! how false this changeful heart !
Again—again—
From Him, my Guide, my loving Guide, I start,
Foolish and vain.
- “ Yet, oh ! forgive me still, nor leave
Thy child alone ;
Let not the world for aye deceive,
But lead me on !”

CHAPTER VI.

SERIOUS IMPRESSIONS.

FROM the time of Marjory Smith's death, we find the manifestation of what by-and-bye became a law of life to Miss Fletcher—the desire for the eternal good of others. Her own religious convictions were so deepened by the lessons she learned at her dying companion's bedside, that she felt constrained to give them utterance. A small class of girls was gathered in Lochwinnoch, which grew in popularity week by week—as she discoursed with much intensity to them of life, and faith, and duty; of God, and death, and eternity. She afterwards said, looking back upon this period—"I could not have taught them much that was spiritual, but at any rate I pitched into them well." One thing is certain, that the young women of the village had a great respect for her; and the groups gathered on the street for gossip or flirtation of a Saturday evening would quickly melt away when she appeared. An early relic of the appreciation in which she was held by her class remains in the pocket Bible, which she prized to the last, bearing the inscription—"Presented to Miss Fletcher by her Saturday Evening Class, in token of their love and gratitude.—LOCHWINNOCH, March, 1858."

Besides holding this regular class on Saturday evening, she began to address occasional meetings in Lochwinnoch, and sometimes had a series of them night after night. A minister having ventured to make some objection in the hearing of one of the women who attended these, only brought on himself the forcible rejoinder—"It would be tellin' ye, if ye could speak like her!" One who knew her and Lochwinnoch well in these days says—"She was always acceptable to the people, and never failed to fill whatever place she happened to speak in." What the spiritual fruit of these meetings was, eternity will tell.

In the course of a year or two, Miss Fletcher began her first class in Glasgow. It was held in a house in Wallace Street, on the South side of the Clyde, and at first numbered about a dozen mill girls. Ere long the attendance had so increased that she was under the necessity of engaging a small hall at her own expense to accommodate her girls. Her plan then was to hold her Glasgow

meeting on the Saturday evening, after which she repaired to Lochwinnoch, where on the Sabbath evening she held another meeting, returning early next morning to her secular work in Glasgow. It is related, that even at this time her sympathy was so great, that the women often said, "if she only laid her hand upon their shoulders, it went straight to their hearts." Sensitive herself, she had a tenderness of feeling, and a magnetic way of communicating it to others, that made itself instinctively and gratefully felt by the many whom she sought to comfort.

About this time she paid a visit to Huntly, to which interesting reference is made in the following letter written from Haddington by a lady who knew her well in the years of her early childhood :—

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I have been waiting to thank you for your kind letter, until I could tell you of mamma's arrival. She arrived here quite safely last night, and is, I think, all the better for the journey. I am glad she was able to stay another day, that day a Sunday at Huntly, where such a blessed season of revival seems going on. I trust you are largely partaking of it, my dear Eliza. Like the man mentioned in John ix., we are all born blind to the evil of sin, to the beauty of holiness, to the value of the soul, to the terrors of hell, and to the joys of heaven. This blind man sat by the wayside and begged. The most hopeful sign in the spiritually blind is when they are brought to beg not of man, but of God; when they are brought to true prayer, for God is the Hearer and Answerer of prayer, as we see in the case of this poor man. Jesus, the Light of the World, God manifest in the flesh, spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto Him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam." He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing. This shews us that one of the blessed effects of being washed in the blood of the Lamb is soul sight. We are often apt to think when we see and feel the evil of our sin as we have never done before, that it is because we are not washed in the blood of the Lamb. By this we learn that one of the effects of being washed, is seeing the evil of sin, as we have never seen or felt it before, that one of the effects of soul-washing is soul sight. Soul-washing brings soul sight, not only of sin, but of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. This we learn from the 35th verse. Jesus said to him, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen and heard Him, and He it is that talketh with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped Him. From this chapter we also learn that soul sight is followed by confession of Christ. When this poor man confessed Christ, he was cut off by man, but received by Christ.

I have been writing more than I am allowed, on account of my weakness, to do. Dear Eliza, will you thank Miss —, most kindly for me for the nice socks she has worked for me, and remember me most warmly to all my Huntly friends. How happy you must be to be with the dear Duchess, and at Huntly again, where you spent the years of your childhood, and used often to be on my knee. Praying that the Lord may bless you, my dear Eliza, Believe me,

Yours most affectionately,

A. E. S.

And now attention must be called to a remarkable crisis through

which Miss Fletcher's own spiritual history was passing, while she was endeavouring to show her early classes the path of life. The first phase of it will be best told by quoting the article from the "Wynd Journal" of 28th January, 1860, in which it is described:—

I'M THINE : SAVE ME.

The following note in a lady's hand was read one evening some time ago at the Wynd meeting :—

"The prayers of this meeting are earnestly requested by one in much distress—that she may be enabled to continue seeking Jesus, until He reveal Himself."

Soon after, the following was sent in the same hand :—

"Rev. and Dear Sir,—I earnestly beg the prayers of yourself and your people to-night. I came to your meetings, and there I have learnt that I am far from God, and ready to perish. Please pray for me most earnestly, that God by His blessed Spirit would show me more and more of my vileness. Others think well of me; but He knows all hearts, and *He* knows I am far, far away from Him. Oh! pray that His Spirit would come *now* and show me what a sinner I am, for I do not *feel* this at all. I want to be brought to *weep for myself—for my sins*. Oh! pray for me. Your prayers for others have been heard and answered. Oh! that this night God would hear prayer for one of the most lost and hardened!"

A few nights after, the following letter awakened a special interest :—

"Rev. Sir,—I feel constrained to write to you; I feel I must. I would rather speak to you, but I have not courage. I want to tell you about myself. I have often spoken to friends, but I am sure they have always taken a partial view of my state; they have wished and longed to think the best, and they did not judge aright. Now I feel that to you I am an utter stranger; and dear Sir, I implore of you to deal as you think I need, not sparing any startling statements, if you think they are required. I come to you as I would go to a physician, and beg his advice. I do not understand myself; I am quite puzzled and perplexed. I have often had the deepest and most alarming apprehensions of God's wrath. I have often experienced the most overwhelming anguish of soul, arising too from a sense of sin—original and actual. I have often spent nights in earnestly seeking Jesus. O, Sir, it is true; I have sought Him earnestly, in an agony of earnestness: but now here is the fact which I confess, *this never lasts long*. I strive to retain these feelings; I have cried to Jesus to help me to retain them. I have wept in bitter, bitter distress when I thought they might again go away, and O it has all been in vain. I have gone to bed often, and my last conscious cry or thought has been, "O Lord, do not let me be careless when I awake to-morrow;" and O, Sir, I have awoke, and all, all was gone. I did not care to pray; I could spend days without prayer or reading: then, sudden as a flash of lightning, some vivid event, some arousing sermon, has awoke all those desires. Again begins the tremendous conflict—a *real longing* after Jesus, after forgiveness, an earnest agonising wrestling after Him. O, dear Sir, I could fill sheets just telling you those desires and earnest seekings; but then something comes, a mere trifle, and, like a straw, I am whirled away down the stream, utterly unable to stop myself. Hard, cold, dead, I go on, till again an arrest is made, and the same is repeated. Now, what can I do? where can I turn? who can help me? or where is the faith? O, Sir, I beg of you, if you see it, to tell me how I may yet be saved. For many weeks I have been sunk in that awful state of deadness. Attending your meetings occasionally has again begun to make me feel those rising longings after Jesus. O tell me how I may retain and cherish

them. Is it a sign that God does not wish me to be saved? Am I condemned already; am I *never, never* to be truly saved? O Sir, if I could only go on seeking, I think I might find Him; but how can I make myself persevere? Friends think too well of me; they do not know those particulars. Seeing me often in such a state of anxiety, they have been filled with joy, and I have never had sufficient courage to tell them the whole truth.

“O, Sir, what do you think? Is there hope for me at all, or shall I go on ever seeming to get as it were one foot within the Ark of Safety, and then something just dragging me back? O do please to tell me candidly what you think. I do not give my name, my object just now is to remain an utter stranger, that I may know the worst about myself.

A Young Woman, who will be in your Church on Tuesday evening.”

On reading this letter, I said that I could not undertake to pronounce on the case. I was inclined to think she had set her heart upon *being anxious* as the right thing. There were times when she *was* anxious, and then she thought herself safe. But the right thing is *to be* saved, not merely to be anxious to be saved. Seeking is necessary; but seeking is not finding. Let her believe in Jesus: let her come to Him and find rest: let her become His disciple and then follow Him.

At the close of the second meeting, when some hundreds who had waited as anxious inquirers, were retiring, I had gone near the door to speak to one or two, when I noticed a young lady going out. “Was that your note?” She was startled, but said it was. I asked her to come and see me. We had many interviews. She continued for a long time in great distress. All the time she had a large class of young women, many of whom had been awakened, and she had just to tell them, “I am awakened too; but I don’t know how to find Jesus: I tell you that many *seek* to enter in, but are not able!” In one note she wrote: “I feel I must *myself* fight out this battle. I do thank God even now for showing me the bitter truth that I have never yet found Jesus: but O I seek Him now. I know I do! It is very difficult to *wait!*” But it was worth waiting, as the following beautiful letter will show.

“I feel constrained to write now, and tell you how wondrous a change I have experienced since I saw you. I little thought then that I should so soon after be enabled to “trust Jesus,” but I would like to tell you *all*, and I think I can write better than tell you. After I left your house on Friday, 7th Nov., I still felt far away from Jesus; but I thought somehow that at night in the Wynd Church, where Jesus had revealed Himself to so many, there might be a chance for me; and so longing and pleading, I went away down; but strange to say I felt far worse when there. The psalms you read seemed just for me. “My iniquities had indeed gone over my head.” I could not look up. I cried mightily after Jesus, but all was darkness itself. Then you spoke of leaving Egypt and going into the wilderness. O, I longed for ever to be free from the cruel bondage of sin there, but somehow I could find *no rest*. When a young man stood up and told how in the Wynd Church he had found joy, my heart sunk within me, for I seemed left alone. Then you gave out the last psalm, “Lord, *still* Thy mercy lasts; do not Thine own hand’s work forsake.” I caught hold of those lines; but O, I went away with as desolate a heart as ever a poor sinner had. All along the road I could have cried, “Here am I, still without Christ,” but “Lord, *still* Thy mercy lasts; O show me Thy mercy:” and so I came home. I had trusted too much to the walls of the Wynd Church, and so God would not let me do that. I remember how you told me to take a paper and write down all the reasons why I should not be

saved. I resolved to do so; so I deliberately sat down, all alone, and asking God to show me these reasons, and if they were no reasons, to help me to see them to be none. I began to think. O, Sir, it was solemn. I *did* find out five reasons; then I said, These came from *myself*, will Jesus take them as good reasons at the judgment day why I should not be condemned? and am I content to rest satisfied that I can't be saved? or will God's Word answer and annul those reasons? So said I, I'll see; and I searched and found answers to every one of the five. Jesus' own words contradicted my heart; then I was at a dead standstill; there was no reason why I should not be saved. So I went down on my knees, and tried to pray, but could not. It was an awful struggle that. I believe now it was Satan's last pull for me. I rose in anguish: would Jesus *not* hear? was it vain? must I give up? No; the many precious things you have said now came to my relief, that Jesus would be glorified in saving me a sinner—just to try Him; more especially that verse, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." So I said, I will try again, and down on my knees I went. I told all the past, confessed all my sins, my iniquities. In doing so, that blessed verse came to help me, "Surely He hath borne our griefs;" so on I went: getting bolder, it seemed, I said, "Lord, I *will* leave Egypt this very hour for ever; Lord, I come to Thee, just because Thou dost say 'Come.' And now *I'm Thine*, I'm not Satan's; I'm not the world's; I'm not my own; I'm Thine. And if, at the judgment day, Thou dost ask me how I can lay claim to be Thine, I will just point Thee to Thine own promise, 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.' Now, Lord, cast me out, if Thou wilt, but *I'm Thine*." And so argument after argument, suggested chiefly by what you had said, came to my help. How long I prayed I can't tell. I seemed drawn to Jesus, forced just to pour out all to Him. I know it was somewhere about three o'clock in the morning when I fell asleep, with the calm assurance that I was no longer any one's but the Lord's. Next morning I awoke early, with a new sensation; it was the same thing. I belonged to Jesus; He *might* put me away, but I *was* His. All day I went about saying to myself, Lord, I'm nothing but a poor sinner; and yet, Lord, I'm something too—*I'm Thine*. And if I am Thine, I'll be with Thee yet. I was afraid to open my lips to any one, in case I would lose this, or say anything wrong; but O, how I prayed for a blessing on my class, and then when I went up amongst them, I did open my lips, or rather Jesus opened them for me. I do not well know what I said. I know Jesus was the theme, and trusting Him the main lesson. I felt I poured forth from my very heart, and He seemed to come almost visibly amongst us. They all seemed taken by storm. I told them I had learned deep and sore lessons, but that now I trusted Jesus. I had gone to His school, and was content, if need be, on the lowest form. O, I can't tell how near Jesus seemed to be. I felt almost like one standing on the top of Pisgah—standing firm on His promise, from thence viewing the whole expanse of promised land, and earnestly begging those around to clamber up too, and enjoy the same goodly view.

And now, dear Sir, I must not longer intrude upon you. I do feel a wondrous change—not that great joy many express, only a deep, solemn calm, a firm determination in the Lord's strength to live a very different life from that I have done—to be boldly on His side, not to be the cowardly thing I have hitherto been; but O, He looks down upon me just now, and He knows my heart's prayer is, "Here I am, Lord; I give Thee my time, strength, talents, health, now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone. O, Lamb of God, I come!"

I still ask Him to show me if I am not His, but until He do it, I am content to follow in His footsteps, *even behind*. If He should, some happy hour, turn round and allow me to feel the full shining of His blessed face, I will rejoice.

Meantime I am content to cling to His own Word, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Lord, *still* Thy mercy lasts.

I long once more to be in the dear Wynd Church. I have, I trust, often really joined in those earnest *prayers*, but never felt I could *sing*; such loud, joyous notes were not for me; but now I hope to be able to join my feeble voice to so many others, and sing:

"Still trust in God; for Him to praise
Good cause I yet shall have."

I look up to Jesus, and say, "Where thou goest I will go: where thou dwellest I will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

When that last letter was written, Miss Fletcher evidently believed that her struggle with the tempter, and with her own unbelieving heart, was virtually over. She had given in her allegiance fully and for ever, as she thought, to Christ; and half-heartedness and vacillation, she fondly reckoned, were at an end. But subsequent experience showed that she was not as yet fully aware of the plague of her own heart. "She afterwards, alas!" as one of her early friends writes, "manifested a time of backsliding. But again she was arrested by the rousing addresses of the late Brownlow North; and she again put herself among the inquirers. I have seen his letters, in which he addressed her as his 'dear spiritual child.'" A paragraph Bible, it may be mentioned, still remains, inscribed on the title page, with a variety of texts: "Eliza Fletcher, with the prayers and best wishes of Brownlow North.—*4th February, 1859.*"

Her enthusiasm for this noted evangelist's meetings was characteristically shown in the following incident. Seeing an advertisement that Mr. Brownlow North was to preach in the Barony to "women in mutches," she insisted on a friend procuring a "mutch" and a shawl for her. Attired in these, she stood among the crowd till the doors were opened, and was frequently addressed as "mistress," by some of her venerable "neebors." The throng was so great that, as she afterwards narrated, she could only look helplessly at the Infirmary on the one side, and the Burying-ground on the other, wondering which of the two places was to receive her body! She managed to get in to the meeting, however, and returned home—minus the mutch and shawl, but with life still in her body.

The impression made by this further revival does not appear to have been for her much more than the "after glow" of the former. No doubt a current of deep religious feeling passed over her spirit again at this time; but it is as certain that it was in turn succeeded by a period of coldness, bordering almost on spiritual apathy. He would be a bold man who would say of these times of religious excitation at Glasgow, and at Barnet a little later, that they were

vamped up and unreal. On the other hand, it would require no little confidence to single out any one of them as the time at which Miss Fletcher underwent the great spiritual change which Scripture speaks of as "being born again," and as "passing from death unto life." It needs no courage, however, for those who knew her in her later years to say with assurance that she had at *some* period made this momentous and needful transition. And if this be so, it is of minor consequence to be able to point to the exact time at which it occurred. Whereas she had been blind, she then saw, with a clearness of spiritual vision which no man has except it be given him from above. The fact is the main thing. The *how* or *when* neither herself nor others might have been able to indicate with precision. But that is of comparatively little moment. It is of more importance to observe that from the time of her close intimacy with the young Smiths at Lochwinnoch, her life was in the main at least an earnest struggle after the right; and that, even in seasons of wavering faith and failing resolution, when she seems to have given herself over as lost, she never ceased to be earnest and anxious for the salvation of others. If at times she was a disappointment to those who were interested in her highest welfare, she was on such occasions a yet more bitter disappointment to herself; and it is satisfactory to find one who knew her all her life, and was fully alive to all her spiritual and other eccentricities, writing after her death—"Dear Eliza had evidently a hard struggle with herself: and yet, amidst her many inconsistencies, one could not help being drawn toward her, both in love and compassion. She was the subject of much prayer by those who in her earlier years took deep interest in her; and these prayers have evidently been graciously answered in the latter years of her earnest evangelistic work."

Whatever may be said of the permanency of the impression made by this twofold revival of 1859-60, it was genuine while it lasted, though not perhaps so deep as even the subject of it thought. We find Miss Fletcher about this time writing in the following admirable strain to a lady in Glasgow, on a Saturday night from Lochwinnoch:—

MY DEAREST —,

You cannot imagine how delighted I was to-night to receive your timely letter, as I confess I was rather incredulous about getting one at all. I had such a hard day's work, and it was so refreshing to get it just before going to the class. I assure you, dear Miss —, I have long loved you. Now forgive this, I must say what I feel. I never saw you till lately, but Mr. — so often spoke of you, that I felt I did love you. I have often, often prayed for you, feebly, yet earnestly, and *now* I love you as I have seldom loved any one. It is late, and now when a careless world is sleeping, and no eye but

that of Him "who slumbereth not" is upon me, I would like to have a little talk with you. To-day I have had much to cheer—a little to vex—cheered in seeing many in deep anxiety. Oh! how wonderful to see an immortal spirit beginning to awaken—drawing the first breath of life eternal! I have been talking with girls whose earnest struggles after Jesus are most touching. I have been striving to comfort and encourage others who are beginning to suffer a fierce persecution from father and mother—yes, from all relatives, and yet who are resolved to give up all for Jesus. The work here I find overwhelming. Each week seems to add to the number. My dear Miss —, I agree with you in wondering how those who seem to love Jesus, and look forward to be for ever with Him, speak so little of Him. I never felt as I have done lately. A light from eternity itself seems to be now struck across my path. It is too painful—too awful! I seem to view every one—every thing—every action in that startling light. Oh! if we are really to live for ever—if we are really heirs of eternal glory—if we are really to see Jesus as He is—if we are really to be for ever with Him—how can we live such stupid, worldly lives? I don't know how you feel, dear Miss —, but I am perfectly crushed lately under a sense of the awful position my fellow-creatures are in—living for time—and hastening onwards to eternity. I have felt I could stop and warn them "to flee from the wrath to come," and never mind all the sneers or scoffs. Yes! I have got great comfort from your verse; but here is my strong hold which Satan has never yet managed to draw me out of—though he often tries hard. "Ask and it shall be given you." And again, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." How precious the thought to such a fickle, changeable soul as mine. The same loving, gentle Jesus, who said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." The same Jesus who bore with the unbelief of Thomas, and restored the backsliding Peter—the same Jesus for ever! Oh! may He be your friend and mine—even unto death! I have but lately come to derive comfort from the contemplation of the character of Jesus, which you speak of, and find it a most encouraging and delightful study. Oh! is it not precious to sit down and quietly realise Jesus as actually speaking what He did speak. I love to try and trace Him in His various actions—to imagine Him really doing what He did, and then that gives one somehow such a power in prayer to believe that He as really and personally exists now as then. Dear Miss —, I wish like you I could realize God's word. I don't realize some of it, I know; but my greatest temptation and struggle—a constant fight—is to believe that word in spite of all feelings to the contrary. I don't believe in all Scotland there is one so full of unbelief. Satan and this wretched heart fight against me every inch of the ground, and I believe the great power they have is, in making one always look in, in place of look out. Don't you find that whenever you forget yourself and your sad shortcomings, and look to Jesus, there follows such a bright sunshine, such a calm, cloudless sky. Here is the position I envy, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her beloved." Oh! how I long, how intensely I long to be able at all times to rest calmly and gently on the sure word of promise to believe that what He has promised, He is able to perform. Yes, dear Miss —, we have all our peculiar cross. It wouldn't be a pilgrimage journey; it wouldn't be a wilderness road if we had not. I often feel ready to sink under some of these crosses. But lately I have found it very animating and cheering to consider the end of the way. To think of one day (if we only hold fast and fight on), being more than conqueror—of seeing Jesus—our precious Jesus—of entering the celestial city—of hearing the angel's song, and the song of the redeemed—of clasping the glorious fact, "Now Heaven is mine, and mine for ever." Free from sin, and sorrow, and sighing—

crosses given up for crowns—sighs for songs—earnest wrestling in prayer amidst many tears, for the loud song of praise. Ah! dear Miss —, let us go right on, and never faint. At the longest, the journey will be short, and before we know where we are, we may hear Jesus say, “Arise and depart, for this is not your rest;” and then we won’t regret all the rough way, or the thorny path. Only one shadow to my mind dashes this bright picture, the thought of those whom one loves who will take their portion here, and will not be persuaded to seek Jesus and eternal glory. The autumn before last I stood for the first time at a death-bed, and saw how a believer could die; that dying one was my dearest earthly companion. I loved her passionately, and wrapt myself up in that dear idol. It was a fearful blow when she was snatched away, but her death I believe was the first dawning of life to me. She loved Jesus ardently, and grieved to know I was a stranger to Him. The last words she ever uttered were to me, “Oh! seek Jesus—meet me in heaven, I will expect you.” And now I do hope to meet her. Dear Miss —, I shall weary very, very much to see you. I have not written to any one in this way for long. The truth is, I find very few who would sympathise or care for such things, and I cannot bear any other society. Oh! to live entirely to and constantly in communion with Jesus. Do you not feel when you are mixing with the world in all its whirl and bustle such a heart-longing after Jesus, and a peace in even thinking of Him! I think the best way to help the world out, is to let Jesus in, but oh! how easily the world and its cold, icy influences creep in and shut Jesus out! I must stop; I fear you are wearied. I thank you very much for your letter, I have greatly enjoyed it, and understand it well. Now, dearest Miss —, good-night. That Jesus may be more and more precious to you, and that you may more and more realise His constant presence and everlasting love, is the earnest prayer of your most affectionate,

E. FLETCHER.

Also to the same correspondent she writes, about the same time:—

Don’t you often picture the first hour or week in heaven—the eternal Sabbath begun, the first sight of Jesus our Saviour, the first welcome from angels and saints. Oh, —, dear, are we really heirs of eternal glory? Then we may well care little about time or time’s sorrows! Oh may He bring you over every difficulty, every rough step, every mountain pass, to His own eternal city. “He led them by a RIGHT way to the city of habitation.” Do you ever feel it very difficult to believe that God is leading us by a right way; oh, it’s so wicked to think otherwise, and, still, I believe we do. We say, Can this rough bit not be avoided, and could I not be spared this thorn or this briar that strikes right across my way, may I not always walk beside green pastures and still waters? Yet, if we did, I think we would forget that this world is a wilderness, and would take up too much with its withering flowers and fleeting shadows. . . . I have wondered lately very often if it was wrong to pray to be taken home *soon*, and yet I think it must. I know I am not unwilling to work if Jesus spares me as long as he sees fit—and oh that I could work tenfold more earnestly and constantly; but, somehow, one often feels so sick and weary of the sin in and around—a heart-longing for that blessed rest from all sin, and from a foolish, miserable world. And yet, dear, dear —, have we not much to do in our little space of time, even though we should live for many long years? O how soon the end will come!

“ Oft in my dreams a form I view,
That thinks on me, and loves me too—
I start, and when the vision’s flown,
I weep that I am all alone.”

—*Kirke White.*

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUCHESS.



It has already incidentally appeared how warm was the attachment felt for Eliza Fletcher by the Duchess of Gordon. Vexed as she often was by her wilfulness of heart and waywardness of conduct, and frequent as were the admonitions and rebukes which she felt it necessary to administer, this noble lady loved her young friend truly, and loved her to the last. Perhaps it was not till after she was gone that Miss Fletcher realised what a "good angel" she had had in the good Duchess, or perceived all the love which had uniformly shone through her treatment of her. But ingratitude was never one of her failings, and she had sense enough to appreciate the kindly intent of even the least palatable portions of the long correspondence with which she was favoured by her early, and as she often signed herself, "truly affectionate friend."

We cannot do better than leave the accompanying extracts from some of the Duchess's later letters to speak for themselves. It need occasion no surprise to those who have read the foregoing portion of this memoir, to find some variation in their tone; but though the strain which catches the ear may sometimes alter, the undertone, it will be readily perceived, is one of unvarying loving kindness. It is a deeply interesting circumstance, told by the Duchess's maid, that her Grace, whom we find here "preaching" so often and so pointedly, was in the habit of praying for Eliza Fletcher by name every night for nineteen years! How well would it be if all preaching of the kind had a like accompaniment!

The first letter we quote was written during the height of the revival, to which reference has been made in the preceding chapter:—

THE LODGE, HUNTLY, 15th Jan., 1859.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I hoped to have heard from you before now. How is your side and your cough? I heard from Mr. North that he was much interested in your class, but had hardly seen you. I hope he will return to this part of the

country, and that the Lord will yet bless his labours more and more. It is only as the Lord blesses, that any work can prosper, it is only as the work is done simply to the glory of God—truly unto Christ—that it will be blessed to the soul of the doer. Keep that in view, dear Eliza, and remember our Lord's words, "How *can* ye believe which receive honour from men and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" May the Spirit of Jesus enable you to rest on Him more exclusively, and while He makes you more like Jesus—going about doing good—may He enable you to live to the praise of God, and to be daily more indifferent to the praise of men.

To which, in the following month, it is added :—

May you more and more feel, as you write, my dear child, that you are nothing and can do nothing but as an instrument in the hand of the Spirit. May you be enabled to glorify God in all you do, and say, and *think*—for He searcheth the heart and knoweth the thoughts before they come into our minds. Yes, and His Spirit will guide our thoughts if we seek Him and walk in the Spirit with Jesus.

And, again, a few days later :—

I cannot express the pleasure your letter gave me. The good news of your factory girls was much, but the expression of your own dependence on the blessed Lord Jesus, of your utter nothingness in yourself, and your desire to live entirely for Him who has done so much for you, came more entirely home to my heart and filled my soul with thanksgiving and praise. The nearer you keep to the Word of God, and the more use you make of that Word itself in your teaching, the more will it be blessed. The Holy Spirit works by the Word.

The Duchess's anxiety about Miss Fletcher's health at this time is repeatedly expressed—

I am much afraid you are not at all taking care of yourself, and will very soon be laid up again. Indeed, it is not right! God has made you responsible for your health in a great measure; it is clearly a talent committed to your charge; and I am sure it is utter folly to neglect the charge. . . . Now do, dear Eliza, take care of your health. May God bless you, and give you grace to live to His glory!

Many thanks for your letter. I warmly join in your prayer for the blessings you need. But, indeed, my dear child, you cannot expect the answer to the prayer for health and strength of body when you are doing all you can to exhaust both. Really you undertake a great deal too much. . . . You say that there is often a hard conflict to maintain the ground on which we stand. Do you not call that pressing forward? Is there not often a far more real advance and victory gained by resisting temptation notwithstanding a difficulty, fighting in weakness, than by a sudden rush forward at the enemy, which perhaps may cause a fall at the end of the run? I maintain that the truly brave soul is more exercised, and more victorious in the sight of God, by the standing still you speak of, if I understand you aright, than it might be by what would gain applause in the eyes of men. The word is, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." This may be done when standing still, in one sense; but is it not fighting a good fight? and therefore observing the injunction, "Press forward toward the mark."

THE LODGE, HUNTLY, 18th April, 1859.

MY DEAR CHILD,

You do not know what a rich reward for all my anxiety about you it is to believe that you are really in earnest, living for God and thirsting for holiness. Well, if it be so indeed—and I am inclined (with Dr. Duncan, in regard to the Gospel) to say, “It is too good news to be false”—I am most thankful, and also for the blessing you are receiving from your girls. I trust it may increase to the utmost! But I suppose the time is soon coming when your Glasgow work will be over; and I think a change of air and scene for six or eight weeks will do you good. You had better come here, where I doubt not when you are able you will find plenty to do.

Towards the close of that year, Miss Fletcher seems to have gone to Huntly Lodge, and apparently suffered a collapse in health, which detained her there. On the 25th of *January*, 1860, the Duchess thus writes to some of Miss Fletcher’s class of girls at Lochwinnoch:—

HUNTLY LODGE, 25th January, 1860.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

It gave great pleasure to your beloved Miss Fletcher, to hear that you remembered her so tenderly, and that you and others of her dear class pray for her, committing her continually to the Lord Jesus, “unto whom all power is given in heaven and on earth,” and who “doeth all things well.” I trust by the blessing of God there is some amendment in the state of your dear friend, but she is still very ill in body, yet has been kept in “perfect peace, with a sense of the presence of her blessed Redeemer, who “is our peace.” I cannot express the cause of thankfulness to Almighty God, which we have for such a manifest work of the Holy Spirit; she has not for one moment lost the comfort of His grace—although often insensible to outward things from pain, and the remedies applied to soothe. Dear girls, let me entreat you to lay to heart this example of the faithfulness of our God, and of the love of Jesus for this precious ransomed soul. Continue to pray that “patience may have its perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,” and that it may please God to raise her up again for His glory, and for His service. She is quite satisfied that the will of God is best, and her desire is to have no will but His. I would entreat you all, dear young friends, to look to Jesus without ceasing. In Him you will find all you need—His blood to cleanse; His righteousness to clothe; His Holy Spirit to sanctify; His Father to bless and accept you as His own children in Christ, “that you may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” and “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our God and Saviour” unto everlasting life.—I am, dear girls,

Your sincere friend in Jesus,

E. GORDON.

Not long after, Miss Fletcher returned to Glasgow, and on the 8th *March* of the same year, the Duchess, who would seem in the interval to have experienced some disappointment in her, writes as follows:—

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I was very glad to hear from you, especially as I learned from Miss — that you are going on steadily. I sincerely trust that you are beginning to see that obedience to the commandments of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, has the promise

of this life as well as of that which is to come. For it is written, "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Yesterday evening I received a letter from Mrs. —, which gave me very great pleasure, as she tells me that you do seriously try to correct your evil tempers, and by obedience and diligence to prove that you are sincere.

Also about this time :—

MY VERY DEAR ELIZA,

Cheer up! Remember the injunction, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!" How much cause for rejoicing has a sinner saved by grace? I have no doubt it is because you cannot work for Christ that you feel so low now; but "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Again on *2nd May*, 1860:—

MY VERY DEAR ELIZA,

It gives me the greatest pleasure to hear from you and of you, and I really trust, both from your own letters and those of —, that you are speedily to regain strength by the blessing of God. . . . The great defect in your education has been that you have never learned to feel that a thing must be done unless it happened to suit your own idea. You have indeed done certain things to please — or me, but not from the conviction that it was really your duty. Now, my beloved child, that the mind of Christ is opened to you, I trust the question will always be with you, from the smallest to the greatest matter, "Lord, what would'st Thou have me to do?" Now don't forget, dearie, that health is one of the talents He has given us to use for His glory, and for which we shall have to render an account.

The two following are full of affectionate sympathy :—

29th May, 1860.

MY DEAREST ELIZA,

I am very sorry indeed to hear of your sorrow about your girls; but I trust the seed of spiritual life has been sown before the king of terrors was permitted to approach. I remember when my infant school was under a faithful teacher at Fochabers, and a great epidemic came to the place and carried off fifteen of the children, poor Lexy said, "The Lord knows which to take." His own lambs were ready; so I trust it is with yours.

9th June, 1860.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I should be very sorry to think we are not to have a peep of you before October, but I think for some time the seaside might be good—certainly not Lochwinnoch. I have written to engage a motherly servant for you, for the express purpose of taking care of your health. . . . I don't want you to be dependent on her, but I desire that she should be allowed to remind you to take proper food and rest, to avoid whatever is hurtful—such as wet shoes, and attend to all rules which conduce to good health and good discipline.

This one has an interest of its own :—

23rd July, 1860.

I must just write two lines in the midst of my bustle, for from your last letter, and —'s to-day, I see she is greatly disturbed about the meeting here. She thinks me both a Plymouthist and a bishop! Well, if I am in the middle between the two, or rather nothing but the lynch-pin that holds some of the wheels together, I shall perhaps be nearer my right place.

. . . . I must hope that the Lord will greatly bless the meeting, and, if so, why should I care what even my oldest friends think, if I know I am not acting presumptuously before God, but in subjection, according to a woman's place. I have asked — for such a pretty little hymn to send you. If I have time to add more I will.

Ever your most affectionate,

E. GORDON.

The good advice and kindly sympathy continue in the next two:—

11th October, 1860.

MY OWN DEAR ELIZA,

I do trust you are a good child, and not giving way to self, but submitting to the advice of those who desire nothing more than your true good for eternity, and your complete restoration to health and usefulness in this world. . . . I do not cease to pray that the Lord Himself may be very near to you—your guide, your friend, your counsellor, your very life. Is it not so, that Jesus is your life? Oh then, think it not hard for His sake to deny self and self-will, and to employ the talents which He has given you in the way which will be ultimately, with His blessing, more for His glory and your own good. Ever believe me, my dearest Eliza,

Your most affectionate,

E. GORDON.

15th November, 1860.

I am very glad to hear, my dearest Eliza, that you have had so much pleasure and gratification in your last visit to Lochwinnoch. It is very touching to see so much affection in the dear girls; and you have indeed cause to be thankful, while you learn the lesson that they can do without you.

But, the reaction in Miss Fletcher's mind to which the previous chapter alluded having ere long set in, we find the Duchess, after an interval—on 31st March, 1862—writing in the following rather different strain:—

I wish very much that another arrangement could be come to, at least when you are in Glasgow. I would pay your board and lodging to some respectable family, and you would, I hope, learn to be more regular, and to eat proper food at proper times. Dear Eliza, do remember who has said, "Except you deny yourself, and take up your Cross daily and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple." It is not much to ask that you should be reasonable or regular in your mode of life. . . . I fear you have often deceived yourself by thinking you could work for Christ without submitting to His will and guidance. You know well how willing our blessed Saviour is to guide and support those who truly lean on Him. Let me entreat you to cast yourself on His strength, and cease to trust your own impulses in *anything*.

The two following, written fully a year later, at the time of the Barnet revival, hint at the re-awakening in Miss Fletcher's heart of her former desire to become a foreign missionary:—

THE LODGE, HUNTLY, 6th July, 1863.

I hope this will find you safely arrived at Barnet, and that you will find your stay there very profitable. I have always heard the highest character of Mr. and Mrs. Pennfather, as most consistent earnest and loving Christians, and I

trust you will learn much by seeing what is really required of those who would work under the eye of the omniscient and most holy God. You may find, perhaps, that you are not fitted for the work to which you at present aspire, but whatever you learn of God, of human nature, or your own heart and character, will fit you for greater usefulness somewhere—though it should be where you have already been.

On 21st *September* of the same year :—

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I am sorry to hear of all your disasters and disappointments; but what can I say but that I hope that they may be among the “all things” that work together for your good. Assuredly that is the case if you truly love God, and are content to take all these trials as from the hand of a tender Father, who afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit. We have heard a great deal of the Barnet conference from people who have been here, and had been there. I think the Pennefathers must be delightful people. I have just met them; having travelled by train from Barnet to London in the carriage with them, and the conversation was most profitable. You did not tell me the result of your visit to Barnet, but I suppose you have learned that your health was not calculated for Indian Mission Work. I hope you will find some other pupils in Glasgow, for I do not think you will find any other occupation that will suit you so well. Believe me, my dear Eliza, yours affectionately,

E. GORDON.

And, here, finally, is one of the very last letters the Duchess wrote, for its prayer for her young charge was fulfilled for herself just eleven days after, on Sabbath evening, the 31st of January :—

THE LODGE, HUNTLY, 19th *January*, 1864.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I have often intended writing to you, but you know I am now a very bad correspondent. I sincerely wish you may find the New Year on which you have entered, a period of growth in grace, and that you may be enabled to realise what God requires of you *if* you are His child. His name is Love, and He would have us use *His strength for His glory*, and not merely His word for our glory. In our weakness His strength is found; and so long as we think ourselves strong in wisdom, purpose, or power, we shall be sure, sooner or later, to find our wisdom folly, our purpose a cobweb, and our power utter helplessness. Therefore my best wish for you is that you may cast all your care on Him who careth for His people, and as my favourite hymn says :—

“Lay you down in His strong hand;
So shall the work be done.
For who can work so wondrously
As the Almighty One.”

and, to continue my wish for you :—

“Work on then, Lord, till on her soul
Eternal light shall break,
And in Thy likeness perfected,
She satisfied shall wake.”

Believe me always, your true and affectionate friend,

E. GORDON.

This last wish, which Miss Fletcher regarded as the Duchess's dying prayer for her, rang in her ears for many a day, and in the dark season that was coming she sometimes was fain to catch at the comforting hope, that it might yet, through grace, be realised.

It was no common loss, losing such a friend, and Miss Fletcher keenly felt it. When the news came of the Duchess's death, her spirit was shadowed with an unspeakable sorrow. She remembered how on her last visit to Huntly the Duchess, instead of saying good-bye in the sitting-room, came with her to the hall door, and how a strange presentiment had come over her then that they never again would meet on earth. Flinging her arms about her noble friend, she had cried, "I'll see you again, won't I?" — to which the Duchess, surprised, had answered cheerily, "Yes, yes, child, please God, we'll meet again."

When Miss Fletcher at length was able to go back to Huntly, as she wandered through the dismantled rooms, her soul was flooded with affecting memories; and, repairing to the neighbouring woods, she flung herself on the ground, and cried long and bitterly. Some time after, she went to Elgin Cathedral, to visit the grave where lay the honoured dust. And when the name of "Elgin" used to come up, long after, she would say with a sigh, "Ah, the one I loved best on earth is buried there!"

"*Yes, yes, child, please God, we'll meet again!*" And they *have* met again, but in the Better Land, where the anxieties of affection and the faults which awakened them, as well as parting and all else that is sorrowful, are only, at the most, a reminiscence—not a recollection—of the past!

“ When we are dark and dead,
And Thou art covered with a cloud,
Hanging before Thee like a shroud,
So that our prayer can find no way,
O teach us that we do not say—
' Where is *Thy* brightness fled ?'

“ But that we search and try
What in ourselves has wrought this blame,
For Thou remainest still the same ;
But earth's own vapours earth may fill
With darkness and thick clouds, while still
The Sun is in the sky.”

—*French.*

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOUDS AMID SUNSHINE.



HE decade which succeeded the death of the Duchess of Gordon was, for biographical purposes, the least eventful in Miss Fletcher's life. The first seven or eight years of it were quietly and happily spent in the comfortable home at 6 High Windsor Terrace, to which she went in 1864, and whose amenities, with only one important interval, she continued till her death to share. Her capabilities as a teacher began to be known, and her services to be in much request ; and, with the addition of her weekly religious class, and occasional calls to hold meetings here and there, her energies, though not strained, were fully and not unpleasantly occupied

Miss Fletcher, as we have already seen, was passionately fond of travel, and every summer brought with it the agreeable variety of a holiday excursion somewhere, with her attached friend, Mrs. Clark, who was often startled as well as entertained by the adventurous spirit of her companion. Sometimes we get a sight of them roaming in the Scottish highlands—climbing a mountain, or fording a dangerous stream afoot—wandering, in the evening, in some wild glen, till they lost their way and had to wait, under the shelter of a boulder, for the morning light—or clambering off a wrecked boat on to one of the solitary islands of the Western Hebrides. Sometimes we find them scaling a peak of the Tyrol, or see Miss Fletcher, to the admiration and terror of her *compagnon de voyage*, springing, with Alpen stock in hand, across the Swiss crevasses. It was a period that left behind it many pleasant memories, and was in some respects perhaps the most tranquil time in all Miss Fletcher's life.

Nevertheless, it was a time in which she had her inward struggles. Clouds settled over her spirit now and then ; and the glimpses we have of her at such seasons, reveal her to us as one who felt herself mysteriously doomed to fight the battle of her spiritual life alone, and to fight it in the dark. So far as we can gather from the fragments of correspondence belonging to the earlier section of this period, Miss Fletcher's great difficulty was about the doctrine of election. While she did not question the love of God for others, she

laboured under an overwhelming conviction that she herself was reprobate. We find her expressing the longing, "What would I give to feel, *that* love was for me!" There were not wanting friends to point her to the Cross; but she could get no comfort, no peace, no joy, because she could not *feel*, and could not dare to believe, that God in Christ loved her.

Perhaps the explanation of much of the mental anguish which she now at intervals passed through, as well as of much of the waywardness of her past youth, was to be found, where she afterwards partly found it, in the secret and unhappy bias which had been given to her religious thinking by a sermon to which she had listened in her early childhood. The subject was, "Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction;" and the preacher's solemn words had fallen like molten lead on the young child's heart. It was her unhappiness, as Dr. Watts would have phrased it, to be introduced into "the university of predestination," before going to the "grammar school of faith and repentance." She carried away the idea that she was one of those the preacher spoke of, and that *this* was why she never could be good even when she tried. God, she felt, hated her; and for *her* to strive after holiness was but to fight against fate, as failure after failure, she imagined, only too surely proved.

We shall see by-and-bye into what a paroxysm of agony thoughts like these at length wrought her writhing spirit.

Meantime, it is to be observed that even when her own heart was destitute of the joy of salvation, she did not refrain from urging others to "flee from the wrath to come." Though herself sometimes able to grasp only God's threatenings, she was ardently desirous to have others made partakers of His promises.

An intimate friend of hers in those days mentions, that Miss Fletcher had then a class on the South-side on Friday evenings to which visitors were not admitted, and continues:—"On the Saturday mornings, when she almost invariably came to see me, she seemed to me to be so filled with 'fightings within,' that I determined to go and hear what she had to say to others. So our maid and I dressed as mill girls of the unkempt type, found our way (though not without difficulty, as I did not dare ask too minute directions) to the place of meeting, and sat down in different parts of the room. The teaching being only the Gospel was simple as the Gospel, and Ross (the maid) with many others that I saw, was melted to tears, at the earnest way in which they were asked to give themselves to Christ. I remember Eliza's expression of face now, when it gradually dawned on her from our conversation next morning, where I had spent the evening before. She nearly jumped upon me! I am sure she was a Christian then, and long

before it; but her idolatrous clinging to earthly friends, which so often ended in disappointment, constantly clouded from her eyes the never-changing Friend, who all the while was sticking to her closer than a brother. She felt lost; but never lost the desire that others might be saved."

This friend furnishes the following lines sent to her by Miss Fletcher. She says, "My impression is that they are original; but if not, they are the expression of her heart's refrain at the time they were written."

Surely to all but me, *some* light is given—
Some cheering ray;
 But ever darker grows *my* heaven
 Through the long day.

My heart is fainting with the ceaseless sorrow
 Of fear and doubt;
 The very hope of any brighter morrow
 Seems dying out.

I know some souls pass thro' this darkness, with sweet voices singing;
I have no song!
 And others with strong hands clinging;
I have not clung!

Some souls walk clothed in robes of gladness,
 Whom God can send;
 But I must be content to go in sadness
 Unto the end.

The only light my childhood ever had,
 Came, cleaving a thunder-cloud—
 Leaving it ghastly and sad,
 Wearing its own death shroud.

Not *such* the light in which, thro' this long darkness,
 My heart must dream;
 Serene and calm, with infinite strength of gladness
 In its pure beam!

It is affecting to find various proofs of Miss Fletcher's anxiety to comfort the hearts of others, while she herself might be "tossed with tempest, and not comforted." We give two illustrations of this self-forgetful disposition, which was characteristic of her all through life, but specially beautiful at such a time as that of which we speak. The first is a letter written in June, 1866, to a young lady, the news of whose sore bereavement had unexpectedly reached Miss Fletcher in the country:—

MY VERY DEAR —

Immediately upon our arrival here, I went straight to the Post Office, fully expecting to find a few lines from you. Not receiving any, I felt first vexed and then anxious. A few nights after, sitting at the fireside, I glanced carelessly at the newspapers—which just then came in. My eyes swam,

and seemed rooted at one terrible announcement. I read—I stared at it, I don't know how long, till Mrs. ——'s attention was arrested. I flung down the papers and rushed out of the house to the woods; I felt I must be alone. We sat that night long and late, feeling as if in a dream, and, dearest ——, I feel so still. Though I have *your* word for it, I *cannot* get myself to realize it. And, now, I must tell you, I never left your house, for the summer holidays, with such peculiar feelings; a cloud was over me that Tuesday evening, and, now I remember—oh, how vividly!—that, after saying good-bye to your dear father *once*, something impelled me again to do so. I dwell constantly now upon every little circumstance of that night: I thought he seemed ill, but, still, I very, very little imagined I should never see him again. Dear ——, I cannot trust myself to write the half of what I feel. A gloom and deep shadow has been thrown over us—my enjoyment is all gone; I cannot believe I am never to see him again. But why should I dwell so much on my own feelings? should I not rather try to comfort you by reminding you of *his* present and never-ending happiness? There was no necessity to tell me that your dear father's end was *peace*. I know no scripture more descriptive of him than that, "Mark the *just* man, and behold the *upright*, for the end of that man is *peace*." You mustn't, dear ——, any of you, look too much *down*; you must look *up* where he is, and that will help to cheer and comfort you. I love to think of him now as amongst the company of the ransomed in the eternal city; or when you remember *where* he is, *with whom* he is, and how perfectly blessed he is, surely you should in some measure dry your eyes. And yet, do you say, It is difficult to say, "It is the Lord's will!" I know how terrible will be the blank, how almost unbearable the sense of desolation. It must be so. Yet, dear ——, remember Him who "tempers the wind to the shorn lambs;" and you will be surprised how you will be enabled to bear up

The other is a series of simple verses in which she seeks, in November, 1867, to ease of its burden of sorrow the little heart of a child, whose pet bird had, in her absence, drooped and died:—

A WEE BIRD'S SONG TO A DEAR WEE GIRL, SENT TO HER FROM
BIRD LAND.

My dearest little Mistress,
Away in far Torquay,
My little heart's been breaking
Since the day you went away.

You never thought I heard you
Up in my cage so high,
Telling you must leave me—
Leave me behind to die.

I soon began to notice
The bustle you were in,
And though you spoke so kindly,
Poor Dicky could *not* sing.

I loved my cheery window,
My sweet and warm sunlight;
I loved both Jane and Janet,
I loved your dear "good-night!"

But that sad morning came at last ;
 I cheeped a low "good-bye,"
 And you said, "Dear Dick, I love you!"
 But—you left me just to die.
 I watched you when you went away
 Till my little eye grew dim,
 Then I sat upon my lonely perch
 With my head below my wing.
 Then Dennis came, "to take," he said,
 "Miss Aggy's nice wee bird;"
 I raised my head, and then I tried
 To cheep out one wee word.
 Farewell, my dear old home, farewell!
 Where oft I've sung my song;
 Now, poor wee Dick, why *should* you sing,
 When Agg and *all* are gone?

 They were so kind in my far home—
 How kind, I couldn't tell!
 And a nice, tall lady often said,
 'Poor Dick, I fear's, not well.'
 The best of seed—of hemp and rape—
 Was given me day by day;
 But my feathers drooped, my wee eye closed,
 And slowly I passed away.
 I tried to warble a little death-song,
 But heavily hung my head:
 My wee feet shook, I gently sighed,—
 Your Dicky, dear Aggy, was dead.
 I watched them digging my little grave,
 In a garden by pale moonlight;
 And a tender hand laid me gently in,
 And said, 'Dear Dicky, good night!'

 And now I'm away in the sweet Bird-land,
 Living amongst its bowers,
 Singing aloft in the skies so bright,
 Or kissing the beautiful flowers.
 My cage is empty away down on earth,
 Which I know you will grieve to see;
 But in this fairy land I've built my nest,
 In a beautiful *evergreen* tree.
 And if you would come to the sweet Bird-land,
 I'd warble you *such* a song;
 Don't vex for wee Dick, he wants you to know
 He's happy, and sings all day long.

The conclusion of this lay may not square with any realistic philosophy of bird life, and the poetic quality of the verses may be open to criticism; but none will question the lovingness of the heart that

in the midst of the busy, and sometimes troubled life, could dictate them, to soothe away the pain of a little one who was making probably her first acquaintanceship with grief.

Meanwhile Miss Fletcher's own spiritual burden seemed growing only heavier, and her darkness ever deeper, till it became almost "a darkness which might be felt." In vain friends besought her to "look away from self to Christ," and reminded her that her "*feeling* safe would not make her safe," and that "if we felt or knew we were saved before we believed, it would not be faith at all." She was well aware of all that they could tell her; but the most precious truths appeared to lose their power and consolation in the personal application of them to herself. Words which the Duchess wrote to her twenty years before were hardly less applicable to her now:—

"You say you are lost; you have often said so before. Remember, dear, He who alone can save is unchangeable. He does not save one day to cast away the next. You are evidently trusting to something in yourself, or to frames and feelings. . . . You say you can do nothing! But is it not true that you refuse the grace that is freely offered, and are waiting for a miracle in your favour which will not be wrought—though all salvation is in one sense a miracle—instead of making use of means within your reach? Oh! dear Eliza, be not so foolish; think not that to make yourself remarkable is an advantage. On the contrary, it is the greatest possible disadvantage, and may prove your ruin if you will not seek the true wisdom which is promised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

A breach in more than one valued friendship, some time after the date last given, plunged her into a yet lower depth of mental anguish than before. Besides writing hard things against herself, which she had long done, she began to write bitter things also against God. She could hardly even grope now after the light, but sank into an utterly despondent, and sometimes reckless and defiant mood, which caused those who were aware of her spiritual condition no little sorrow and alarm.

A lady friend, more versant than most with the workings of the human heart, thus writes to her at the time of which we speak, and with these quotations we close this chapter:—

"Now, or at any time, how glad I should be to give you any help. But, dear Eliza, you know in Whom alone is rest for the soul. Do not say He has forsaken you; are not His mercies new to you every morning, and His faithfulness every night? He never forsook but *One* who trusted in Him, and that One was His dearest, and for our sakes. Do you know these words, which often ring in my ears,—

'Speak to Him! for He hears,
And spirit with Spirit will meet;
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet.'

"Never forgotten, never forsaken, desired, followed, entreated by God; is not this the history of each wandering heart even unto death? Dear Eliza, listen to His voice—His imploring voice—and do turn and look Him in the face at last, and believe the love that God has toward us. . . .

"I am grieved indeed that you feel so sad and wild, having no comfort. But I do entreat you not to think, or say, any more hard things of God, even our Father, who has loved us and given His Son to us. What more *could* He have done? We have nothing whatever to do with 'dark decrees,' which we probably misunderstand and misinterpret, but we have to do with the tender Shepherd calling us home, with the voice which speaks in our hearts, and replies when we are on our knees. Try, dear Eliza, not to stumble over dark sayings any more, but let His mercy embrace and save you now. . . .

"May we not feel that God, in taking our idols from us, draws the nearer, and offers us Himself? In Him there is light, and no darkness at all; in almost every other heart there are dark places, where, trusting ourselves too utterly, some evil rises in the shadow; in Him *no* darkness, no possible discovery of evil or change in all the days to come.

'Dark is the world to thee?
Thyself art the reason why.'

"Let us always say, when darkness or doubt arises, 'This is mine own infirmity,' *never His*. You seem to think He has been hard on you, and shut you up, and given you no chance; but do you not feel in your soul that it is not so? You know that, in the Great Day, your own heart will justify Him when He speaks, and clear Him when you are judged. Ah! shall we not see in that Day, that it was *all* our own fault, and that He was incredibly sweet and willing all the time. . . .

"Do you not allow yourself to be reckless in what you think and say of Him, and then look for His grace to be shed out? But this is not His appointed way. We must come like little children, low to His feet, and there wait for Him who sometimes seems to hide His face. . . .

"I wish just to tell you how earnestly I sympathise in your struggle towards the Light. May God, according to His glorious custom, meet you half-way, and receive you to Himself. *Then* are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them to their desired haven."

Miss Fletcher afterwards looked back on the close of this period as a time of sad apostacy from God. One most unhappy and significant feature of it was, that even her class was given up for two whole winters; and she subsequently shuddered as she thought how near she had come to flinging herself upon the world as her portion. Gleams of hope might now and then flash in upon her soul. But these only sufficed to make the darkness visible, and it became a more and more dark, dismal, despairing time, in which, as she afterwards expressed it, she was "fleeing from herself"—without fleeing to Him who is "as a Covert from the tempest, and as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land."

“ A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, ‘ O mists, make room for me !’

“ It hailed the ships, and cried, ‘ Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone.’

“ And hurried landward, for away,
Crying—‘ Awake ! it is the day.’”

—*Longfellow.*

“ And God said, Let there be light,
And there was light.”

—*Moses.*

CHAPTER IX.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.



“**H**EN night is darkest, dawn is nearest.” How often, in the experience of sin and sorrow troubled hearts has this comforting word been verified! It was now to find illustration in Miss Fletcher’s case. Life to her was at its very gloomiest, when the God of love, whose face had so long been hidden from her by earth-born clouds, brought her out into the light of His own countenance. By what human instrumentality He effected this, the rest of this chapter will narrate.

She was led, in the autumn of 1875, to open her heart unreservedly to two of God’s people deeply interested in her—the Rev. J. G. Cunningham, then minister of Lochwinnoch, and his wife; and how serious, and even perilous, her disquietude of soul at this time was, will appear from the earlier of the following letters, written from October of that year. Little will be required in the way of analysis, beyond culling from the correspondence the most significant extracts, and submitting them in the order in which they were written. The reader will note, without difficulty, the phases of spiritual experience through which Miss Fletcher at this time passed, in the well marked sequence in which they occur.

Here, first, are some of her words of unsparing self-reproach, followed by vehement expressions of her disconsolate sense of the hardness and alienation of her heart:—

“I long to be done with shams, and have only to do with realities. My whole soul has been in a turmoil, and is yet. Head knowledge has ruined me. I wish I could become a mere infant, to learn those truths as a child. I know by theory, but my knowledge has never led to any practical result. I have never, never felt His love—a real love; His person—a real person; His work, and life, and death—a reality done. And I have such an idea that true religion, if there be such a thing, must so change, so revolutionize the whole being, as to leave no doubt regarding its reality. . . . I have prayed—oh! for days and months. I have struggled hard to get faith—to act faith. I have got up to a certain point of faith, which looked terribly like the real faith, but then I’ve found out it was spurious and natural faith, because it produced no effects. Oh! it’s an awful thing to realize that you must be saved by faith, and yet you can’t give yourself that faith, and so you are lost. I do believe there is a Saviour; but oh! when I have tried to pray (which I’ve done

since I saw you), He seems oh! so far, far off—mountains of separation, seas of guilt! I can't pray; my heart gets like a stone. I feel oh! so at a distance—cast off, and then I get angry, and defiant, and hard. . . . My pathway for the last two years has been strewn all over with thorns and briars, and the sunlight has gone; but it has only made me bitter and sour, and morbid, and oh! so sceptical and hard. I feel as if He was my enemy; and yet, oh! I know He is so worthy of love and trust!"

The following awful sentence gives some idea of the tragic extremity of despair into which she had fallen:—

"Sometimes, I confess, I almost think the anticipation of woe and anguish is perhaps as bad and not worse than the reality, and I have almost longed to solve the awful problem, and dive into the unknown future."

But she is still, we find, clutching at the one stray hope which seems to be left to her now:—

"I am coming out on Saturday, just on purpose to see you and Mr. C., and hear him preach. It seems a forlorn hope. I am eagerly hoping I may get good. Oh! do pray that I may get a broken heart, and that I may be enabled to believe; and yet I feel so sure it's useless. I shall hope to see you on Saturday. Oh! perhaps I might be saved then! Only fancy if I was! How I'd spend all I have for Him; but you see it's too late now, I think, and He is ever so far, far away! But I'm coming to hear what you've got to say to me, and who knows—you and Mr. C. have helped others, may be you can help me—even me."

On the receipt of another letter which (like the rest of those written *to* her at this time) has not been preserved, she writes in a more softened mood. Yet her self-distrust is as great as ever, and the alternation between hope and fear continues:—

"I bent my head at last, and I uttered a few words:—'Oh Lord, this letter has been written by Thy servant; if I can be saved, oh! save me, and bless it to me.' And then I read. The effect of its words I can't describe. I pondered every sentence. It took me literally hours to finish it and the other shorter one. Oh! it broke me right down. When I came to that bit where it says to pray, and pray with intensity, I did pray—no! I dare not call it prayer; but I cried, and the cry was simply this, 'Lord, save me—even me, if I can be saved;' and when I read your message, my heart melted right down. I laid down the letter—I fell on my knees, and oh! I poured out all. . . . But do not misunderstand me; I didn't realize Him. I didn't feel He was near. Oh no! but I just cried, as one down in the lowest depths would cry, looking up where the light and help should be—cried as one lost, and far, far away, and sinking would cry, lest peradventure, some one with infinite mercy and love might hear the cry, and come nigh and save. I said to myself, 'If His real children are so tender, and long so after wicked vile ones like me, what must the Master Himself be!' I have been wandering, dear —, a weary, sad enough wanderer, He knows, in the far away lands, on the cold out-lying mountain sides, till latterly my steps have been in the very shadow of darkness and despair—the gloom of death eternal. No one ever spoke to me or knew the agony that was hid under a careless, reckless conduct. Oh! they thought me so regardless, and my heart breaking all the

time, and when the doctor told them he didn't think I could pull through, I didn't care. I felt I was doomed to die! And I've lived to know your tender love in Christ—for it's His love must make you care as you do—and to get such a letter from Mr. C.; ah! in the awful 'lone land' in which I'm wandering, your voices have sounded strangely in the silent darkness! They have arrested me—they have come with unspeakable power and constraining force upon me. . . . Oh! don't misunderstand me, I'm so afraid either of you think me one bit better than I am. You have made me stop and listen, and yes! I do think, hope, and cry for help and mercy!—that's all. I'm not saved, or changed, or one bit nearer Him, only I'm broken up, and I can't but cry for help—if it's ever for me."

The old difficulty about Election crops out again :—

"The people spoke against God and against Moses; exactly my sin—speaking against Him and His people. Then came the serpents and the cure, 'When he beheld he lived.' But there was the tug of war. They could always look; and I wondered if any were physically blind, and yet struggled to look; for oh! I'm spiritually blind, and I can't, oh! I can't see Him, and I'm spiritually deaf, and I can't hear Him, and what a hopeless state! When I try to come as He bids all weary ones, I utterly fail, and oh! I'll be lost if I don't come, and He only, or rather the Father only can draw me. It's here that dark, and stern, and awful election comes in, and from my earliest childhood, I've kicked at the doctrine of election. But I don't want to. I want to get to Him, but only He can bring me; and if I can't go, isn't it because I'm not divinely drawn? Could I but see what you seem to see—that He does care for me, does love me, can make me His; that His very decrees and attributes are not against me. Oh! how would the streak of light illumine the murky darkness that has so long surrounded me! Please don't think well of me. I'm very, very vile. Oh! believe me, it's no idle words, but what I feel, and I want to have the luxury of being true and real with you. I have told you the best, though I can't tell you the worst, for I'm all worst."

But her trouble seems, momentarily at least, to vanish, as she is led to look out from herself to the crucified Redeemer, and enjoys an experience which afterwards furnished the theme of one of her best remembered Class addresses :—

"For long after I left your house, after that most solemn time on Sunday night, I felt as one in a maze. Somehow I seemed to have been confronted with such an awfully solemn truth, which I hadn't before realised, viz.—the Cross of Christ and its power: the death of Christ and its efficacy. I could not speak that night when I got home, but pleading weariness—which was indeed true—I went off right to my little room, and for hours—yes! hours—sat there in deep, strange thought. . . .

"My bible was open at St. Matthew's gospel, xxvii. chapter. I had got the length of the 56th verse—'And sitting down, they watched Him there.' Oh! I seemed to be amongst those watchers, and I thought of the one so watched—the very Son of God. I tried very hard to think of Him as there dying for sinners—the chief. Oh! I longed to know if I was amongst them—that He died then for me. Then I thought of the different watchers. How His Father was watching Him; the holy angels, that great host above, how they must have watched; then that arch enemy of mine, Satan, how *he* would watch

—perhaps along with a chosen band from his dark domain; then the small company on earth watching—and I seemed amongst them. My heart filled very full as I realised that scene, and I tried—oh! *He* knows how I tried to bring this cold, hard heart there, that it might be, even in some small measure, broken or touched. Ah! *I did feel—I did see it all.*”

Yet the self-questioning continues, and she is soon engaged in a conflict with the Enemy again—the description of which recalls some of Luther’s face to face struggles with the great Adversary:—

“But then, was it mere head work—or heart work? Yesterday I sought hard to think of that scene, and I cried *more thus*—‘Wash me in the open fountain, even as the dying thief was washed, that *I—even I*—may be clean.’ But to-day Satan has been so fearfully busy with me. I wasn’t bothered or fretted all yesterday, but to-day and to-night he is making up his lee way. To-day I had such another day as that dark, awful Sunday I’ve told you about. Oh, I don’t know how I got through my work. It’s easy for those who have time and quiet to go away and—like Peter—weep it all out, but I must keep outwardly calm, with a breaking, bursting heart; I must look oh! so different to what I feel—those consuming, earnest, weary thoughts and longings all at the same time crowding into the heart. To-day I almost broke down, Satan was so close, and urged his temptations with such fierce zeal. ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘you think you’ve made a discovery; you are to look more at His work at Calvary, at the blood shed there. I have no objections to your doing so, it’s all the same; I don’t care what you think of, or look at, for as long as you cannot get Him to help you, *you are mine.*’ I said, ‘I will not argue with you, I shall just go to Him, and repeat to Him, word for word, what you say to me, and ask Him if it is true.’ But, ah! *he* was soon upsides with me, for he said in a moment, ‘*You* tell Him! *do so*, what ANSWER will you get?’ ‘Just this,’ I said, ‘I am the door, by Me if *any* man enter in, he shall be saved.’ ‘Quite true,’ said Satan, ‘you thought you got a great help on Sunday evening, and you sat up thinking and trying to pray: I saw you all the time, and, I tell you, you are mine: I’m not at all afraid of losing you.’ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘if you are so sure of me, let me alone.’ But I assure you it’s beyond my power to fight on thus. To-night I know not almost *where* to look; I seem to be left utterly alone with that Evil One and my own heart of unbelief, and, oh, what company to be left in! All is very dark, and I am very, very wearied and tired out. *Still*, better this than dead calm; better to take that awful plunge into that awful future, clinging even to His word, than die as a fool dieth.”

A little later, she is again in the depths—feeling herself a castaway, and speaking of the “irony” of what seems her cruel fate—without surer hope, at best, than that of the Ninevites to hold by:—

“As regards *worldly* circumstances, I’ve never known want, or trouble, or anything but abundance, and everything above and beyond what generally falls to the lot of those who have the world to fight. Now, I don’t think that’s a good sign. I’d rather starve here, and win Him; but it looks as if He would let me have my all *here*, and miss eternal life hereafter. . . . Have I not sinned too deeply, too sorely? grieved away His Holy Spirit? It’s like the blast of the northern wind from the cold Arctic regions, it paralyses and freezes the very life-blood here. Oh! it’s an *awful experience*—it’s like the poor castaway. You and Mr. C. are safe on the ship; you’ve firm

footing underneath; but I seem to be drifting away, and I hear your kind, loving, sympathising voices above the storm and tempest, telling me to hold on and *hope*. But, ah! hope is a poor, poor shadow in such a real storm; yet let me—even in my forlorn and desperate state—oh, let me utter words of heartfelt gratitude and tender remembrance of your kindness, never, never to be forgotten. Oh! if I could only catch the life buoy and be hauled on deck safe and sound, what a shout I'd give! . . . I gave up what seemed good for this world, because one I knew of wasn't His. And it seemed such bitter irony. What had I in return? I was giving up the world: and yet, what was to fill my heart? I feel '*doomed*.' I can't shake off this, and when I try and struggle to *hope*, oh, I seem as one dreaming a dream—a happy dream, never to be realised. I do feel as if '*fitted to destruction*.' Only now I cry after Him. My only hope is, 'Who can tell?'

But in December, the darkest month in the year, the light begins to flicker on the horizon of her soul: and, though at first she is inclined to question the reality of its appearance, and feels 'as one that dreams,' the morning is now near—a new morning for her life:—

"Can I ever forget last Sabbath night? I am sure not. The first ray of hope and comfort came in church. Somehow the thought, the *very* thought that Jesus was not ashamed to have to do with the vilest, and that, through all His sufferings, He rejoiced over that poor dying thief,—why it was like a ray of sunshine stealing softly into a dark, dark cavern! Then at night, oh! I cannot tell you the half of what I felt—of the rush of thoughts, the new light, the hope that sprang up in my heart. I think I can best describe my feelings by saying I felt utterly *disarmed*, and still. The thought of His love, His gentle, tender, unchangeable love made me cease my every effort, and I just felt silent and wondering."

"I could not sleep. I just felt in a sort of dream, in a new world of hope and thought. All night, all morning, I spent in thinking of *that* love—in crying after Him; and all that day I seemed as one who dreamed. And there arose in my heart the question, 'Oh, is it true He will receive sinners and not be ashamed of them?' Oh, what a Saviour and what a salvation, what a love, and what a joy to be acknowledged by Him! 'Oh, Lord, remember me!' And I still feel thus. I live two lives just now. One a life within, all to myself—such an earnest, anxious life of desire and longing to be His—of crying after Him—of gazing at the work of redemption. And then the other busy life—seemingly so calm, and as if no strain of anxious hope and earnest longing was wearing one down! . . . Oh, don't think too well of me. I cannot, I dare not say I am His—that I am one forgiven and accepted—that I have ever peace or rest. Oh, no! But this I can and do say, My soul follows hard after Him, and I find a sweetness in that, even, that is unspeakable. Whether He ever receives me or not I must follow Him."

She is conscious of fresh impulses now, but has her difficulties and struggles yet:—

"I find myself trying to do many things I never tried, or, at least, not for long before—trying to curb this quick gunpowdery temper; to be patient, and watch my lips; and so on. But oh, I want a deeper, far, far deeper change. I want to feel His love in my heart. Oh, my heart breaks with very misery when I think His love does not constrain me—His love hasn't melted this great

cold iceberg. If He had really come into my heart, oh, surely I'd know He was there. . . . I *cannot* tell you how you've won this heart, so long wrapped up in cold defiance and bitter wicked scepticism. I cannot tell how it may end, but this I know, I believe now in His love and tenderness and unspeakable love, as I've never done before. I say to myself: 'All that's so tender, and good, and true, and real in them, is only a reflection from Him. They have caught it all from Him, and what must *He* be.' Yet though, I can so believe in you, transfer it to Him: and oh, the unbelief and questioning that arises.

"I did so often in the quiet still hours of night, when no eye saw me save His who never slumbers nor sleeps, and no ear save His heard me—I did so often cry, 'Lord, Thou knowest how utterly crushed I am under my burden; how weary and heart sick and utterly *done* I am. Oh, never did one need rest as I do.' But then came a blighting thought—'It's only earthly disappointments have troubled you. If you were weary of sin, ah, you might go to Him, but what a selfish, cowardly thing to sneak away to Him when all else has failed.' And then my heart failed me, and I felt I was a very outcast and vile. Oh, I would reverence Him if I saw Him, but, you see, I don't see Him. I am fully persuaded He is all precious—all glorious; I am fully persuaded that to win Him and to be found in Him is the joy and felicity of heaven; but, oh, I am blind."

The thought of doom still oppresses her, and the fearfulness of "coming short." But she has now a hope, though feeling hardly more secure in clinging to it than the sailor feels in clinging to his raft or one of "the broken pieces of the ship," if haply he even yet may reach the shore:—

"There are two elements in the thought of *hell* to me, which are surpassingly awful. One is, to have lost *for ever* the love of Jesus. Oh! I think *that* is so fearful. *Anger* hardens; but to think of missing *for ever*—love! and such a love! The other is, being gathered with sinners through those unending ages. Oh! it makes me shudder and shiver! Surely this will indeed constitute—*hell*! I see that the Trinity House have just put a lightship where the wreck of the Strathclyde lies, and over that there is placed a large board with the words on it: '*A wreck.*' Oh! how it went to my heart as I read that! Shall it be so with me? Oh! if I was only His! and yet—as Bunyan says, 'It's for God to choose.' It's not for *me* to choose, it's *my duty* to hold on, to cry on, to hope on, and I trust so to perish, if perish I must—still, it's very awful work! Oh *for rest*! I suppose the poor maimed and wounded ones who reach the Home of safety at last, have a deeper, a profounder sense of peace, and rest, and delight, than those who have reached the kingdom with whole limbs, and all sound! I am sure, if ever I get there, *I shall* be a poor battered and shattered half-wrecked thing. Oh! for even *that* hope!

"Oh! it is still very dark *weather* with me. The winds and the waves are still high, and I don't realise that *He* is with me in the ship; but, I dare not, would not give up or yield the sweet hope I have got. I must venture, come what may! To give up is to go to *certain* destruction. To cling on—ah! well, there's a hope anyway, and if at the last I'm found 'in Him,' or at best holding to Him—then, will He cast me off and say, 'I never knew you?'

"I have found some parts of what you quoted in your letter most helpful, for instance—'It is not the *act* of faith which saves, but the *object*.' Ah! I think I am far more taken up wondering *how* I've tried to believe, if it's the right way, and so on. To-day, I have sought to look *at Him*, and the thought came

into my head as I remembered that verse, 'Come unto *Me*,' that I stick at the word *come*, and don't get *beyond* to the great '*Me*.' So I cry, 'Lord bring me out of *myself*—*my* coming—*my* anything—to *Thee*.'"

By 1st January, 1876, her tone is more decidedly hopeful, while still she has not reached the assurance either of faith or of hope as yet :—

"I think Jacob must have been sorry to take his staff in his hand again, and make for the strange country, after Bethel, with its vision and angels, and stony pillow. I don't mean *I* had such as that—only it was sad for *me* to face again much of the world and its ways, and leave your house, and that room—a room now sacred to me, I believe through eternity.

"Why, Lochwinnoch seemed a changed *place* even to me, it seemed as if a solemn—most unspeakably solemn transaction had taken place there. I had been *made* to fling down the wicked weapons of rebellion, the weapons of scorn and cold defiance, and hear Him, saying even to *me*, 'Be ye reconciled.' Pilate-like, I had encased myself in the bitter irony of that question put even to '*Him*'—'*What is truth?*' but, I venture to hope and trust, unlike Pilate, I had been made to linger near to the crucified One, and at least long, and weep, and pray for the answer! All within me seemed changed; I could hardly cease crying, that I might feel His dear and precious love ere I left.

"Do not suppose I have got a real grasp of Jesus. Ah! I wish I had! All the length I dare go is this. All is changed—old feelings, old desires, old indifference have gone. To find Him, to win Him, to *know* His love, to *be full* of Jesus, to live for Him, to die and be ready to go to Him—oh! these now are the things on which my heart is set, and I feel *heartsick*, that I do not get near to Him. My Bible is my best book, and the moments alone seeking Him the best moments too—still I dare not say I am His, but I *do* say, 'Other regard have I none, clings my helpless soul to Thee.'"

The following is a very significant aspiration, also found in this New Year's Day letter :—

"This is a strange New-year's Day to me! Oh! if I was His, what a bright look out one would keep! I feel powerfully, as if my time might be short, and oh! I get feverishly anxious to be His in Christian truth, and do something for Him, however small, ere I go hence and be no more. How strangely this year comes up, veiled and shadowy, full, too, perhaps, of infinite possibilities. Oh! to have His love—so as bravely to face the unknown future!"

It is, however, in March of that year that the turning point is fairly reached, which Miss Fletcher evidently at the time considered as her conversion, but which others might be rather disposed to regard as her turning *again* to the Lord :—

"Just one line. I thought you would like to know that I seem to be in a new world since last night. I trust, oh! earnestly, it is not feeling. I *know* not if it is faith; but one thing I *know* I can say, and am ever saying, 'My soul followeth hard *after Thee*.' Oh! how can I *ever* forget last night! For the first time in my life I felt *He was* near. Oh! for such another blessed time!"

Somewhat later in the same month she writes, in the full assurance of faith, as one done with "peradventures" now, and calmly resting on the finished work of Christ, and in the realisation of His living love :—

"I have been very much occupied, chiefly regarding the joys and sorrows of others; and *now*, most strange to tell, I find I've leisure of spirit to listen to both, as I never did before. I cannot tell you what a change I experience. If one who had slept Death's sleep for years awoke—rose from the silence and darkness of the tomb, and beheld heaven's light, and sun, and gladness, what would be the change experienced by that one? *So do I feel!* I seem to have sprung from death, and darkness, and despair—from what looked *very* like the sleep of death, into the glorious light of heaven! At present all I can do is to look around to gaze in wonder and in amazement at what I see—*His* work—His love—His tender forbearance—the hope of glory—the Home above—the new creation—the height—the depth—of that love!—and then to add, and that is mine! . . . I have my troubles—have had them even since I parted with you, but I'll tell you how I feel now about *them* :—You know what a profound calm there is in the depths—the far down depths of the ocean's bed—the wildest storms may rage on the surface—the waters then be lashed to fury—but away down ever so far, all is *so* calm, and still, and peaceful, that the shell—fragile as the wing of the gossamer—is all unmoved, and undisturbed. Now, I feel like that, *because He has done it all*. Oh! if I had to trust in one feeling, or thought, or work of *my own*, I think I'd soon *kill myself* through sheer, downright striving and struggling; but to my mind the sweet, restful thought is—'He has done *it all*: there has been—there is—help laid upon *Onc mighty to save*.'

"How glad I am now that I was so knocked off every hope and every rest apart from His work and His work! What a real living Jesus *I know* Him to be. My heart bounds towards Him; and yet it is *no feeling* that comforts me, for the weathercock on the steeple of the Established Church does not veer and knock about in a day half as much as I do in moods, and feelings, and frames. But no one can tell how firm, how steady I find the foundation, the Rock—His word, His work. . . . Do you know, I get such *gems* in my Bible! Here is one of them: 'Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.' And I thought, Well, if we pay a great deal for something, what a care we have over it *after* it's ours! And, so, if I am His, and He has paid so much for me—poor worthless me—won't He take good care of me *after* I am His? Just to think I am cared for by Him, thought of by Him! I tread this earth, even now, as a different being; I think, I feel like one who is free. I heard His voice, and it said—'Strike off the fetters!' and I am free through His work, His death, His stripes."

And here, lastly, we find her—still in March, 1876—no longer dashed on a sea of troubles, but peacefully afloat on the ocean of a Saviour's love :—

"I *do* long, and pray, and desire to be out and out for Him, and like Him, that I may be ready to be with Him when He sees fit. I don't want to sail under any doubtful or temporizing flag, but to hoist the true flag, and never haul it down, come what may! I think the most bitter lesson I've learnt has been that of the changeableness of all belonging to earth; that friends, the dearest, fade and fail as quickly, as really as Jonah's gourd. And now, seeing, as I

trust I do, with eyes opened by His own Spirit, how true, how unchanging is His word, His work, His love; it has produced in this stricken and scarred spirit a peace and rest quite unutterable. The ship that has been driven *almost* on the quicksands, when it wears round and rides in calm waters, ah! the safety is a *double* safety, and the calm is a double calm. And so I've been taught such awful lessons—been flung into such storms and noisy din of seeming shipwreck and destruction—that looking to Him, and finding rest in and through and by Him—ah! it's a double rest to me."

In reference to this correspondence, Mr. Cunningham writes:—

"You will believe me that it was not in our own strength, or in reliance on our own wisdom, that we addressed ourselves to the duty of ministering consolation to one whose condition so pathetically claimed our sympathy and help. Every letter which we received was 'spread out before the Lord;' the description which it gave of the actual state of the writer was considered carefully for days, and often we scarcely knew whether the masterly analysis of the heart's moods and feelings, or the vigorous and felicitous style in which these were laid bare, was the more worthy of admiration. The Word of God was searched for the "word in season," which might bring light and life; and the answer sent to each letter was written only after earnest study, and united prayer. As the correspondence extended on both sides to several hundreds of pages, and our letters have not been preserved, it is impossible for me to give even an outline of the successive stages of experience through which Miss Fletcher passed during that eventful winter. To ourselves the correspondence was one of the most instructive and profitable exercises we have ever known."

It will be readily understood that the severe mental strain under which Miss Fletcher had been labouring seriously affected her health; and its shattered condition at length induced her, in June, 1876, to set out on a second voyage to Australia. A member of a Christian minister's family there, to whom she became much attached, says—"During her visit to Queensland, seven years ago, she enjoyed herself immensely, and nothing seemed too small to engage her interests and sympathies. Her kind pleasant manners gained her many friends while in Brisbane, who still remember her visit." In describing Miss Fletcher's vivacity, this friend adds—"We had the impression that she always carried about with her a peculiar mournfulness."

Just before sailing, she wrote, in June:—

"By sea or land, amongst strangers or dear friends, it matters not, if He abides with me! On Monday morning I was feeling very sad and dreary

somehow : I longed for rest in every sense, though now it is different. Bethlehem's star *generally* shines through the darkest cloud overhead and around, and I *know* I have cast my anchor on the Rock of Ages. Still, that does not prevent one from feeling keenly the rough winds that blow all around."

During Miss Fletcher's absence, which lasted nearly a year, she continued to correspond with her friends the Cunninghams ; and, as the following extracts will show, though occasionally complaining of home sickness, her tone was for the most part hopeful, and her spirit bright during all that time. She writes thus from Queensland on 23rd November :—

"Oh ! dearest —, *how I long* for a talk with you ! My heart *does* turn most longingly upwards to where He is, and I rejoice to know and believe, 'Thou God seest me.' I find that most of the colonists I've come amongst are content to live in a very rough way. No fine houses, or expenditure on luxuries. Comfort and abundance—no more ; and they will tell you the reason is, they hope soon to be able to go home ; this isn't home, and anything here will do. So I think I feel like *that*. How little after all it matters how we are housed here, if only within the fold ; and, having our treasure up there, 'a few more setting suns,' and we shall be *Home* in the Father's house. Ah ! one may, indeed, take calmly all the rough, lonely, weary, toils of the road down here. You and Mr. C—— will, I know, be glad to hear, that '*I know* in whom I have believed,' and can give my testimony—'Not *one* word of His promise has failed me.' Ah ! He has been as good as His word to me. I can't tell you—some day I trust I may—how near, how close, how precious He is to me ! how He seems to go before me in every step, and point the way, and open and clear the path, and raise up kind friends. When my heart begins to fail and to faint, I hear Him say, 'Oh ! thou of little faith, wherefore wilt thou doubt !' And *often* I feel lonely and strange—so far away from all I love, and the deep, troubled ocean rolling between. . . I rise here at daybreak—it's so cool and exquisite ; and going into the bush, spend hours reading and thinking, and revelling in the scene around. You can never imagine an Australian sunset or sunrise. At the latter time the birds begin to utter their strange sounds ; the dew lies sparkling amongst the creepers, and the trees, hanging with blossoms of all colours ; there is an unspeakable calm and freshness ere the sun has risen to his strength, that exhilarates the spirit, and helps one to '*mount upwards*.' Then I can, more than at any other time, make all known unto Him, and oh ! how near, how dear you and one or two others seem to me at such times !"

The following is from a letter of 14th December :—

"The bush life is indeed a wild free life, with much to fascinate, and the perfect solitude and isolation is to me one of its chief delights. You can't fancy how wild all is. The track we came was through forests of bush and gum tree, with chains of blue hills and ridges in the far-away west. No road was ours, only a track made by drays and cattle. We had a bad accident—one horse fell, the other tried to bolt. I stuck in, but both the shafts smashed, and to crown all, an Australian thunderstorm came crashing down on us. I was so thankful at our escape, that the storm seemed but light. The climate so far north is of course pretty trying since I came—the glass stands 103° in the shade, but I believe before that for a week it was 105°, in my room it is 110°. As the

verandah is off there, we have breakfast always at half-past five; and just picture a morning at sunrise in the bush! The dew glistening on every bush and tree; the kangaroos rushing past from their feeding ground; the scream of the parrots and cockatoos; and a sky as clear as any cloud as if no cloud could ever dim its exquisite beauty. At night the howl of the dingo, or native dog, trying to make off with some unhappy calf, or the hop, hop of the walaby, and the shrill petted scream of the opossum make the night hours anything but lonely. . . Oh! how my heart turns to dear old Scotland, as I wander under this marvellously glorious sky, and think of it with its privileges and true Christian hearts. For here, with so much around outwardly to delight the senses and allure, there seems only one here and there who remembers Life is not for ever here, and Eternity is the real life time of the spirit. The whole country seems to be swallowed up in the solution of the problem 'Will it profit?' The conversation—cattle, sheep, tallow, hides, and horses. At home there is a thirst for riches, still an *outward* decency maintained—here the whole soul of the colony is absorbed in the race, and there is such a free, wild sort of liberty given, that religion is too often openly sneered at, and the life that is beyond utterly forgotten and despised. Sabbath is a sad day in my experience of bush life—seventeen miles from any place of meeting, and far in country. The only difference made is dressing, resting, and visiting—the latter the most prevalent custom. I have that day quietly to myself, going out with my little Bible, and feasting on its precious, soul-reviving words. Oh! how refreshing its sweet promises of a deeper, holier, higher life to come! how it fills every nook and cranny of the soul's utmost wants! As I lie under the shade of some bush, and gaze up into the deep, blue sky, and seek to penetrate far, far beyond to where *He* is,—how one's heart leaps with an unspeakable joy to know *Jesus lives*. He who was dead is alive for evermore, and He lives to plead for *me*. Drinking in all the beauty around, I often say to myself, 'Holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of His glory! How marvellous are Thy works!' There is a sentence which has been much in my thoughts, rich as honey, yea, sweeter than the honeycomb, 'Redeemed from amongst men.' Oh! how it seems to draw one closer to Him! I feel as if *He* drew near and put His pierced hand in mine, and whispered, 'Redeemed from amongst men—alone with *Me*.' Yes; aloneness *with Him*—an angel could have no greater bliss. Dearest ——— I *can* sing of goodness and mercy *unspeakable*. He *is* leading me by the right way. Oh! *surely* I can trust Him to bring me in the end to the City of habitation. He who has borne with me so long when wandering on the far-off mountain, He will care for me *now*, when, as I trust, He has gathered me into the fold."

Again, on 20th January, 1877, she writes from another part of the same country:—

"I may wait for the March steamer to avoid going round by the Horn, but having been hitherto so amazingly guided, 'I fear no ill.' I *know* all will be arranged for me by an *unerring* hand, and I can go on from step to step calmly, and in quiet assurance 'He, even He who slumbers not nor sleeps, *He* keeps *me*.' Ah! even as I write, I lay down my pen, and pause—as well I may—over those little words—'He,' 'me.'"

"Much, very much as I enjoy all around me, I have felt lately intense weariness of spirit, and longing for dear old Scotland. There's *nothing* congenial here—no sweet Sabbath bell—no sound of praise or prayer; all is money-making, pleasure-seeking, and a total defiance of God—His Word, ways, and ordinances. The torrent is too fast for my feeble strength *in the least* to stem.

Silence is forced upon me, and my heart sickens in its lonely solitude for a word of cheering comfort. Three families around are either Unitarians or infidels, or both; and oh! what a blighting, desolating breeze is that which sweeps over those poor souls, and, with its deadly blast, makes death and icy coldness. There is a gentleman here who has formed a selection near us. He was a Church of England minister but gave up on account of his infidel views. He has left home, wife, and children, and lives utterly alone. He often comes for a ride with me, and at last I summoned up courage to speak to him. He told me all his history, and what led to his present belief. It was the study of geology. He poured all his scoffing into my ears—all his cold, chilling infidelity. My heart sank when I got back; somehow the shadow of a great cloud came over me. I went out alone to the bush, and wept bitter tears—not that I felt staggered, only oh *so* sad! I gazed upwards, and away beyond those stars was ‘My Father’s house on high;’ away yonder were those I loved here below. And was their love to the Master a myth; was the faith that lighted their steps through the dark valley a legend, or founded on an old Roman fable; was I a mere waif, left to drift about, the poor thing of idle, cruel chance? Oh no! I flung myself on that grass, and oh! I found *such* sweetness, such power, such comfort in making Peter’s declaration my own: ‘Whom say ye that I am?’ my whole heart replied—‘The Christ of God.’ It’s a bitter ordeal all this, and far more which, in the narrow limits of a letter, I can’t tell you; but though the lesson is hard to learn—even if through blinding tears I read ‘the loving kindness of the Lord,’ it’s worth it all. I often think what a wayward and wilful and abominably obstinate nature mine is, which requires such sore teaching.”

And finally, on the return voyage, from Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope, we have this, on 4th April, 1877:—

“When within ten days of the Cape, one of the passengers took suddenly much worse, and on Sabbath morning died quite calmly, unconscious. A coffin was made; three iron bars from the furnaces put inside; the bottom bored—the poor body was put in there. At sundown all hands were summoned aft by the toll of the ship’s bell; the coffin, covered by the Union Jack, was laid athwart ships. It was *so* sad: the sun was sinking behind a range of mountains cut clear against the deep, blue sky: the sea was still as if it knew the charge it was about to get. The captain read the service. I was amongst the shrouds, the sailors in the rigging, the scene deeply solemn. At the proper moment, we stopped—the four quartermasters lowered the coffin. With a heavy thud it struck the water. Oh! my heart sickened within me as I saw it float for a few seconds, and then sink with a deep gurgle. I buried my eyes in my hands, and felt as if it was one of those I loved; I could not bear to leave them in those cold, cruel waters! Unless you have witnessed a funeral at sea, you can form no conception of its unutterable solemnity. And yet, *He* watches over the ocean bed of His own, as unceasingly as by the graves of earth.”

“It appears as if ship life had in general a most deteriorating effect on the spirit. I don’t feel this—simply because I like the sea. I like its deep, lonely language; it seems to speak tenderly and affectionately to me, and I find it reads me so many lessons of deep meaning, I am never quite lonely. But yet, oh! dearest —, I do often long with *such* a longing to hear what I’ve *never* heard since I left—words of love and sympathy. In all the affection I have met with, I have had to *give*, not to receive. *How* selfish that looks! but you

know what I mean. How I wonder how you are! what a time since I got a letter from you! I do fret over that many a time, and wonder what the meaning of it can be. It will not be without trembling that I shall look forward to arriving. What may I not hear! And yet, why should I fear? I try to rest and calm myself on that Rock of Strength, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' As I look up at that great Mountain towering in its strength overhead, and think of the eyes that have looked wonderingly on it—Livingstone, Martin, Campbell, and hosts of others going to the mission field, who are now 'far away,' and when I remember next that 'The mountains *may* remove,' yet '*He* abideth the same,'—ah! it does help me to bear the jars and angles in characters around, and to tide me over the *strange* scenes enacted on ship board. *Gladly* will I hail my release. You may imagine how I will look out for the land, night and day, but doubtless storms and tossings are before us yet."

“ Our hearts, if God we seek to know,
Shall know Him, and rejoice ;
His coming like the morn shall be,
Like morning songs His voice.

“ As dew upon the tender herb,
Diffusing fragrance round,
As showers that usher in the spring,
And cheer the thirsty ground :

“ So shall His presence bless our souls,
And shed a joyful light ;
That hallow'd morn shall chase away
The sorrows of the night.”

—*Paraphrase xxx.*

CHAPTER X.

SUNSHINE AFTER RAIN.



WHATEVER "storms and tossings" awaited Miss Fletcher ere she again touched the shores of England, it soon appeared that she was not done with stormy weather yet, in the voyage of her spiritual life on earth. She seems during her absence to have sailed under a comparatively cloudless sky, with serene trust and settled hope in God. And her bodily health before her return was perfectly restored.

But, remarkable to relate, hardly had she reached her own country again, before she was again enveloped in clouds and thick darkness, and abandoning herself to spiritual hopelessness and misery.

At this juncture it was, that her early friendship with Miss Walker Arnott, referred to in a previous chapter, was revived; and the importance of the service her old school companion was at this time enabled to render to her, and the lovingness of the relationship which thenceforward subsisted between them to the end, make us happy to be able to quote here Miss Arnott's own words:—

"After Eliza Fletcher left the school at Alloa, I lost sight of her until the end of July, 1877, having only heard of her once or twice during that time. It seemed a very trifling circumstance which brought us together again, and yet it led to great results. In 1877, I met a number of friends in Glasgow, in the Religious Institution Rooms, and afterwards left there for sale some copies of a tract which I had printed, entitled 'Hunneh Wakeely.' A few weeks afterwards, E. Fletcher, who had recently returned from Queensland, was about to take the train for Edinburgh to visit some friends there, when she found she was too early, and to pass the time, she wandered into the Religious Institution Rooms, noticed the little book on the counter, and, having once heard that I was in Jaffa, recognised my name. She bought the little book, put it in her pocket; but forgot all about it until the evening, when she was reminded of it by hearing her friends mention me. When she retired for the night, she sat down to read it. She afterwards told me that Hunneh's words, 'I wish I knew Jesus as you do,'

made a great impression on her. Something seemed to say to her, 'Go thou too to her: she knows, and she will tell you.' Then she had a vivid recollection of the little girl whom she had teased at school, and she thought how different our paths had been. An intense longing came over her to see me.

"At last this feeling became so strong that she made up her mind to call with a friend. An evening or so after I met her at this friend's house, and she asked if she might call and see me, for she was very unhappy, and she told me of how she had come across the little book. Next day she came to see me, and poured out all her heart to me. She was one who at different periods of her life had been under very deep impressions, but these had hitherto passed away. At that time they had returned with great strength. She was much exercised about the doctrine of election, and told me that it had often caused her great agony of mind. I tried to convince her that it was a mistake thus to perplex herself about election, that the Gospel invitation was free to all, and therefore to her, and that her very anxiety and longing after Christ and His salvation showed that He loved her, and was yearning to save her. She remained with me for some time, and was in much distress and conflict.

"The following day she left Edinburgh, but a few days after I had a letter from her begging to see me again. She came to Edinburgh on purpose, and I saw her at the hotel, and spent an hour or two with her. That time she seemed in great darkness and despair, until 2 Cor. v. 21, which I pointed out to her, seemed to come to her with a new light, and she told me afterwards that it gave her a view of the plan of salvation, which she never had before. Still her conflict continued to be very severe, and for a long time she continued to write to me once, and often twice-a-week, telling me her difficulties, and seeking comfort and help.

"After that second interview, she came again to Edinburgh before the end of August to see me. It was no easy thing for one of her independent and energetic nature, and strong will, to cease from her own doings and struggles, and to trust simply in Christ Jesus as a little child. Not only at that time, but ever after, she had very deep views of her own sinfulness; the past was always recurring to her, and filling her heart with the deepest humiliation and sorrow. She had a deep sense of her own unworthiness, and this continued with her to the end of her life, and so overwhelming at times was this feeling, that she often walked in darkness, and had sore conflicts with unbelief. On one occasion, which I well remember, she had been saying that surely God could not love her until she had become quite changed. I said to her, 'No, God loves you just as you

are.' She started, and said to me earnestly, 'Say that again.' I repeated it, and much agitated, she at once wrote on a blank page of her Bible, 'God loves me *just as I am*,' as if she would engrave it on her heart. I have been much touched by finding those very words, and others too, still in her Bible, just as she wrote them at the time. Gradually she was led by the Spirit of God to look away from herself to Jesus, and I remember her once writing to me how much comfort she had found in Rev. v., where *He* is spoken of as *worthy*."

The meeting between Miss Fletcher and Miss Arnott took place in the summer of 1877. All the next winter, during which Miss Fletcher, with increased hopefulness, as well as fervour, was conducting her South-side class, they corresponded with each other; and in the following June (1878), Miss Fletcher set off to Jaffa, for the twofold purpose of being near her friend, and of fulfilling a cherished dream to see the land whose soil was trodden by the feet of the Son of God.

In the course of that summer, she visited Jerusalem, Nazareth, Galilee, Baalbec, Damascus, and Beyrouth. We are enabled from Miss Fletcher's letters home to give her own record of some of her experiences by the way.

Here is the description of her arrival and reception at Jaffa:—

"Here I am! safe in Jaffa, and almost wild with delight at finding myself really in Palestine. The 'India' arrived at Port Said late on Saturday night. A few of us landed and saw the town—one of the most wild and wicked. The agent of the Anchor Line brought a letter to me from Walker, with directions. So like her! I remained on board all night, and at seven o'clock next morning he came for me. The passengers parted evidently with sorrow, and I felt the same. I remained all day at the hotel, and at three went on board the 'Messagerie' for Beyrout. I was *very* restless and excited—couldn't sleep, but ate a good dinner. There was such a queer lot of passengers—the Patriarch of the Greek Church and his attendants, Greeks, Syrians, and pilgrims. Next morning the stopping of the screw told me we must be off Jaffa. I sprang up—not from my bed, for I did not like the look of it, some greasy priest evidently having lain there, and so I was on the floor. I went on deck, and with unspeakable delight gazed on the shores of the Holy Land. A boat came off, a voice shouted—'Miss Fletcher?' Yes! 'Miss Arnott?' Yes! Then a small paper was flung on board; I picked it up, found it was a note from Jane telling me this gentleman was to see me on shore, etc. The box was hoisted out of the hold, my portmanteau pitched into the boat by a splendid Arab, I followed; we pulled to shore through a surf, and frightful rocks, the Arabs chanting and pulling well. But oh! at the landing, Arabs, Greeks—all varieties—were on the narrow little ledges called, *in irony*, stairs. They yelled, thumped each other, and sprang into the boat; I was almost thrown down; at last I felt myself seized under each arm, and, partly dragged, partly lifted, found myself *pitched* on shore. Here was a donkey, and *Haleel*—Jane's servant—waiting. Imagine the scene! My portmanteau shouldered by an Arab, a motley group we set off for the Home. Katingo was on the stairs; I entered a splendid hall; children

crowded around to kiss my hand and salaam, but no Walker. It was only a little after five o'clock, and they had only awoke her. In a few moments she entered my room; and didn't I get a welcome! You can't fancy how lovely the country here is,—groves of oranges, lemons, prickly pear, and palms; the hills of Judea all along; and Bedouins on such beautiful horses, camels, donkeys; Jews, Syrians, all sorts of classes. What a talk we had; then breakfast, when the two assistants came down. I like them both so much, and the young one has quite won my heart. The Home is splendid. . . .

"Dear Walker! I think she is sweeter, more charming, more heavenly than ever; and how she talks of you. Ah! those days at High Windsor live in her memory and heart. She is so earnest and true, I think *all* the people here would nearly die for her. I have adopted a darling wee lassie—Fareedy is her name. She is very proud I have taken her, and she calls me her English mother."

This is how she felt in Jerusalem:—

"I visited the Jews wailing place, and mingled my tears with theirs. At night visited Gethsemane and Olivet by full moonlight. Dear Jerusalem! beautiful, unspeakably beautiful in its sad, solemn desolation. My heart clings to it, and I rejoice to have been allowed to gaze on such scenes. Do you ask which of all these places is most really associated with Him? I think Olivet, and the little pathway that winds around it to dear little Bethany. Doubtless His blessed feet trod that very path. It was 'toward eventide,' too, when I went along it."

The following is an account of the hazardous expedition which she made alone to the region of the Jordan and the Dead Sea—a district notorious, from time immemorial, for the brigand lawlessness of the tribes infesting it:—

"The Bedouin, who was showing off on his Arab horse, was armed with a Damascus sword, two revolvers in his belt, and a double-barrelled gun slung on his shoulder. Achmet was also armed. I was rather surprised when the Sheikh asked some of my people if I could keep my saddle and ride at a gallop, and seemed pleased when he was told, 'yes.' I quite understood it afterwards. It was thought very dangerous and risky at Jerusalem, the Bedouins having been very bad, and a good many peasants murdered and robbed. However, I felt no fear, only believing that there was as much danger as to make it lively. We trotted through the Jaffa Gate, and when a good bit round by Olivet, suddenly seven Bedouins, mounted on magnificent horses, galloped up to us and joined us. In my ignorance I fancied they were an addition to our escort, and I felt quite charmed at having such splendid fellows with me. Most of them carried very long lances; they would dash off at full speed, draw up like lightning, and drive the spear into the ground. I rode in the very centre. If you could but have seen them! dark faced—almost black—wild and fierce-looking, the trappings of their horses just beautiful. They were all armed, some with immense pistols and guns; the full moon glanced on their spears; sometimes they shouted or broke into a wild Arab chant; they smiled and talked to me, though I couldn't understand a word; and once they suddenly pulled up their horses, stuck their lances into the ground, and looking towards where the sun had set, bowed at their prayers. Against the clear sky, men and horses looked as if cut out of marble.

"The road to Jericho is a constant descent, down and down, over slippery rocks, narrow gorges, and bare barren hills. It became more and more gloomy

as we rode on, not a tree, not a sound but the bells of some camels coming up the Ghor, or the shout of the Bedouin shepherd amongst the mountains. We descended a ravine so horribly black, deep, and terrible, I could not help shuddering; then we crossed the dry bed of a river—it was the Brook Cheroth—and it was up that ravine that Elijah fled, and there that the ravens fed him. At last, weary and hot, about midnight, we went down the last precipice and entered the plain of Jericho—dry, sultry, barren. The few wretched houses which now remain are surrounded with dense thorny bushes. Riding through this we got to a miserable hovel, called, for a grim joke, ‘The Inn.’ Here our wild escort left us with many salaams, and I will now let you into the secret which I did not know till I got back. These seven fellows belonged to one of the wildest and worst of the tribes in the desert of Gaza, and were doubtless off on some plundering expedition. When my escort saw them come and join us, they were in a terrible fright, and thought of instantly returning to Jerusalem for help; but, as Achmet afterwards told, ‘We placed our trust in the great God, and made friends of them.’ They were at enmity, but said, ‘We are all friends; our children are your children, let us be friends.’ But only picture to yourself! Here was I, utterly unable to speak almost one word of their language, riding merrily along with a band of robbers—a terror to the government—men who think nothing of cutting a man to pieces, or a woman either. To me they were most gallant and attentive, for once my horse slipped on a shelving rock, and threw me, and they all rushed to my rescue.

“Resting a short time at Jericho, I flung myself down on a stone divan in a queer-looking dark room, and, closing my eyes, fell sound asleep, amid a babel of sounds, with Arabs and Bedouins flitting around me. About three o’clock I was again in the saddle, and with an additional strong escort set off for the Dead Sea and Jordan. What a wild weird ride it was! Here was the real danger! Once, one of our men saw something in a bush, and, dashing off, fired into it. The moon shone full on the Dead Sea; soon after, daylight broke over the hills of Moab, and lighted up the dark ravines of the wilderness of Judea. I sat down on the gravel at the edge of the sea, my escort had flung themselves off their horses, wrapped themselves up in their long cloaks, and were lying in little black heaps over the plain. The sea broke in gentle ripples, and I felt as if transported to some strange and unearthly land. How solitary! how mysterious that silent, deep lake, in its gloom, and yet gorgeous beauty of colouring! But the Jordan had to be seen, and the heat would soon be terrible and even dangerous; so we were soon in the saddle again and off over the salt and parched plain. My first sight of Jordan was disappointing, but when we got to the proper point I was entranced. Sitting down amongst the exquisite foliage along its banks, with the cooing of the doves, and curious calls of the birds, what a host of hallowed thoughts crowded into the memory! At this very spot the Son of God said, ‘Suffer it so to be;’ and then the Father accepted that and said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ Here John walked and taught; about here Elijah divided the waters, and shortly after went up to glory. Near this the ark, and the priests, and the hosts of the Lord crossed; here they encamped; across the plains had been heard the ring of the trumpets that presaged the fall of Jericho. There Elisha healed the waters; and away down to the south had once stood the guilty cities. How I thought of Abraham as he stood by the light of the risen sun, and saw the smoke ascend from this very plain! Except in Jerusalem and its vicinity, I never felt so utterly fascinated; I could think and dream of nothing else, all was so mysterious, and wild, and strange! The ride back was unspeakably hot and weary, and I felt utterly knocked up. But I rode most triumphantly into Jerusalem, very proud and pleased; and there received lots of congratulations.”

Some later experiences further north are thus narrated :—

“ Finally my guide, who could not have been at Nazareth before, lost his way, and we wandered into filthy villages, where the people all rushed round me, squatting in a row, gazing and grinning—let us suppose admiringly. My hair was freely commented upon : Did they fancy it a wig? My gloves were taken off ; my umbrella caused shouts of laughter, and they held it over their own towsy heads ; but the climax was reached when I took out my pocket handkerchief and used it. Then their admiration knew no bounds ! One village I felt uneasy in ; they looked so wild as they surrounded me, and could easily have stolen all my belongings,—but *One* was watching and keeping me out of danger. After *ten* hours in the saddle we got to Nazareth. I went to friends of Walker’s, and their horror, when they saw my guide and heard where we had been, quite startled me. They kept on saying, ‘ Thank God you are here alive.’ I may tell you what they then told me. Only the other day, a young Englishman, *armed*, was found brutally murdered under a tree in the woods where he had been, these being a favourite haunt of the Bedouins, who hide behind the trees, and then attack travellers unarmed or alone. . . .

“ Lonely Tabor ! Was it here that Peter uttered his strangely loving, dreamy request, ‘ Let us make three tabernacles ’? I think so, for John told it to Polycarp, and he gave it to Jerome, and so on. At the top I had a *very* heavy fall from my horse—was in the act of dismounting when it started off, and I was violently flung over its back, and stunned, my right shoulder being bruised, and still sore. I felt rather shaky, specially as I had still five hours of riding under a blazing sun before me. However, *Providence* and pluck helped me. I got the monks to give me a needle, and mended my habit, which was badly torn, got my dinner with an old monk, holding a most interesting conversation with him, consisting of one Spanish word, one Arabic, and any number of French, none of which he understood. I paid my ‘ backsheesh,’ mounted my beast, and set off. Oh ! what a long, hot ride, and how ill-natured I felt at those long strings of plodding, calm, cool-looking camels, coming up by the valley of the Jordan ! My bones ached, my flesh was broiling, my hair was dripping. I expected, and patiently waited, to see my substance fall or drop, and *the shadow* flit along to Tiberias ! But spectres are not granted now to mortals, and I found I was mortal still. On, on, up one hill, down another. Oh for Tiberias, or rest ! Up yet to the brow of that hill ! What’s in the valley ? Suddenly it burst on me, I held in my breath—it was Galilee’s lake ; so blue, so calm, so lonely, and there was a little white dot on its bosom—a small ship crossing, just such a one as *He* would enter.”

The following, written to another friend, reveals something of her spiritual condition at this time. After giving an outline of her wanderings, she says :—

“ Has *He* been with me all through these journeyings ? Yes, without doubt ! I *have* found, I *do* find Him unspeakably precious, and by His grace can indeed say ‘ Old things have passed away, all things have become new.’ I long more and more for nearness to Himself, likeness to His blessed image, growth in grace, and to be rooted and grounded in love. I was a little afraid I might get cold and careless when obliged to mix with the world, but I have proved ‘ He is able to keep *me*, one of the weakest and most feeble, from falling ;’ and I believe He will present me, even me, faultless before the presence of His Father’s glory, for His own name’s sake.”

We may here, in part, transcribe, though it was written at a later

date, an account of Jaffa and of her friend's work there, which Miss Fletcher published in the *Family Treasury*:—

“Situated on a rising ground, overlooking the ancient town of Jaffa, stands a large square building. It is a Mission Home. The site is interesting, and the history of the Home much more so. It was on this spot that one of Napoleon's hottest conflicts in the East took place; and when digging the foundation the Arab workmen found quantities of skulls, bones, and bullets.

“During a visit of three months last summer, I saw much which deeply interested me. The Mission is conducted by Miss Walker Arnott, a Scotch lady. Its origin and growth is one of no ordinary interest.

“Led by delicate health to the sunny East, deeply touched by the ignorance and degradation of the Syrian women and children, Miss Arnott laboured for seven years quietly and unobtrusively in Jaffa. The first mission premises, if such they could be called, were in the very heart of the town; a narrow stone stair led to the small and stifling rooms. At the foot of this stair was a camping-ground for camels and their Bedouin drivers; and here, too, they cast the offal and vegetable refuse from the adjoining market.

“Through repeated visitations of cholera, plague, sickness, and more than one or two alarms of a rising amongst the inhabitants, Miss Arnott held on her way,—now nursing a cholera patient, now holding a draught of the water of life to the parched lips of some poor dying Arab, or looking after the wants of fever patients. Her scholars increased; the rooms became uninhabitable, for during the wet season the rain completely soaked through everything; other and better premises became a necessity.

“Putting the Lord's work into His own hand, and going forward in His strength, Miss Arnott bought the piece of ground above mentioned. No sooner were the papers signed and the transaction closed, than it was discovered there was a flaw in the title-deeds, and a tedious and probably unsuccessful lawsuit loomed in the future. To the amazement of all who knew the circumstances, the case was gained. The Lord stood by His lonely and fragile servant; and so manifestly did her help come from on high, that the Arabs were wont to say, ‘That lady has a Father in heaven; He cares for her, for she cares for the orphans.’

“The building progressed. The stones of the old city walls were for sale,—these and stones from the ruins of Cesarea were got at a bargain. Many difficulties, much opposition, and severe trials to faith and patience were experienced; but one bright day the Mission Home was completed and opened. And a beautiful building it is.

“On entering, there is a large hall for meeting purposes, with a good harmonium. Three pillars of white marble arch the entrance, and passages of Scripture are interlaced all along. These pillars cost seven pounds, and the girls paid for them out of the proceeds of their work.

“The bed-rooms, class-rooms, and sitting-rooms, are large and airy, the roof being particularly lofty, and the arrangements for health and comfort admirable.

“At present, and during my stay, Miss Arnott had sixty-five children living in the Home, besides day-scholars,—Greeks, Moslems, Jewesses,—and a deeply interesting sight it was to see them all filing in to prayers. Some of the Jewesses were very pretty, having the peculiar and distinctive features of their race. Greek girls from Lebanon,—hardy, active, intelligent. But some poor little waifs bore on their tiny faces the trace of early suffering and hardship. It made one's heart glad indeed to hear those voices singing sweetly, ‘Safe in the arms of Jesus,’ and most of Sankey's finest hymns. The children are taught to read Arabic and English, arithmetic, writing, sewing, and household work; along with this, earnest Bible instruction. They are remark-

ably warm-hearted and affectionate, those dear children. That dark-eyed, rollicking-looking girl is 'La Beebie;' and, just crossing the hall, with tear-begrimed cheeks, is 'La Leefie,' the Topsy of the school. Little Katrina, too, you would take at once for an English girl, bright and open-hearted. Whilst I was there, Miss Arnott was presented with a cuckoo clock, which afforded the children unbounded delight, and they watched eagerly for the different hours to strike. Little do our children at home, surfeited with toys, know the wild delight with which the simplest playthings are hailed by those Eastern children."

The communings of soul which Miss Fletcher had during that summer of 1878, with the restored companion of her girlhood, were very precious and memorable to both; and their hearts were drawn so near together that they began to look forward to a more permanent association with one another in the Lord's work in Palestine. It was decided, however, that in the meantime, Miss Fletcher should return home to apply herself to whatever work the Master might have for her there in the ensuing winter.

It was in a new spirit of entire and joyous consecration that she returned to Glasgow, and the success attending her labour of love was such as she had never known before. "She had such a keen sense of her own shortcomings," says Miss Arnott, "that she feared that many who had previously known her would not believe that her profession was sincere. We had many talks about it, and also much prayer, and before she left, she seemed quite determined, with the help of God, to go forward, and to show herself decidedly, on the Lord's side. She said to me, 'it is not in my nature to do anything by halves, and now I must be whole-hearted in the service of Christ.' In this resolution she returned home, and at the commencement of her winter's work, she wrote the form of self-surrender, which was found in one of her note-books after her death, which, as she told a friend, she was in the habit of renewing weekly."

Here are the emphatic terms of this dedication of herself to God, which we copy just as it is found in Miss Fletcher's note-book here referred to:—

"Oh, Lord, I now give myself up to Thee. I yield to Thee my whole heart. Oh fill it full with Thy love! Enter in and take *complete* possession. Be my Master, Lord, Redeemer. I yield up to Thy service every talent: time—memory—every power Thou hast given me. Oh! use them in Thy service, utterly unworthy as I am. Take my body: I yield it as a living sacrifice—tongue, lips, hands, feet. Oh, may I *ever* remember I am not my

own. 'Wholly dedicated to the Lord,'—let that be my constant spur. Oh, give me Thy grace, Thy strength to do *all* in my power, by every energy, every opportunity, to draw others to Thee. And, Lord, *do* give deep, burning love to Thyself, Thy Person, Thy work, Thy kingdom, that so in *Thy sight* I may lead a devoted life. Oh, Lord, I long that *Thou* shouldst say of me as of her of old, 'She hath done what she could.' I am sadly conscious of *miserable* failure and cold half-heartedness in Thy cause; but oh, revive me; give me daily, hourly, at each moment, to realise more love to Thee, and the drawing, winning power of Calvary's cross. Oh, keep me this year. If it be Thy will, let it be my last; but, oh, be near me, and keep me very near!

"Signed by my hand in Thy sight—E. F."

How utterly weak Miss Fletcher was feeling herself at this time is reflexly seen in the following extract from a letter written to her, by Miss Arnott, from Jaffa:—

9th November, 1878.

"You say you seem to have *now no strength*. When I read this, I smiled to myself and said, 'Thank God for that.' I don't *like* 'spiritual paralysis'—I was feeling something like it this very day—but the 'utter inability to go on,' the 'no strength' of which you complain—ah! do you forget?—that's what we so often prayed together for. You speak of 'courage, life, and power having left you,' of being 'absolutely empty, faint, and done,' and I just thought—Ah! this is like cutting down Gideon's strength when God was going to send him against the Midianites."

But the fruit of her fuller consecration soon, by the blessing of God, appeared. Miss Fletcher was upheld under the labour of conducting two crowded religious classes every week, in addition to her ordinary work—the one on the south, and the other on the north side of the Clyde; and the Lord manifestly brought home the truth she taught to the hearts and consciences of many of her hearers. It was, as Miss Arnott states, and as the Great Day will fully reveal, "a very remarkable time of blessing to herself and her class." "All that Winter and Spring," she adds, "the Spirit of God was working in their midst; and almost every mail I received letters from her, telling me of the wonderful work going on. She said often that it filled her with awe and wonder and the deepest humiliation, to think that God should thus make use of *her*."

The proposal that she should return to Jaffa to co-operate in the work there, was revived in Spring, and was seriously entertained for a time by Miss Fletcher.

There is interesting evidence of the welcome which others besides Miss Arnott were prepared to give her, in the following, which are only specimens of the simple letters addressed to Miss Fletcher by some of the native children in the Jaffa mission house :—

JAFFA, *March*, 1879.

MY DEAR KIND LADY MISS FLETCHER,

I have received your very kind Salaams in kind Miss Arnott's letter. We want to wait for the answer for this letter, if you will tell us in it when you are coming, that Miss Arnott and me may come and meet you, believe me we can't wait at all without you. I wish you could have seen how Miss Arnott is unhappy without you, and she always thinks of you and Miss Fletcher is always in her thoughts, and I always tell her that the time is going quick, and it is near the time for you to come, and when I tell her this, she get a little glad. Always whenever we plant anything in the garden I always say, "That will be ready for Miss Fletcher to see when she comes." And when we planted the trees the other day, we thought that Miss Fletcher will come and see everything look very pretty, and then she gets happy, and I always ask the Lord Jesus to be with you and help you with all your work, to let you finish all your work quick, and come to us very soon safe. I send you many Salaams, kind Miss Fletcher, and I remain your obedient

KHALEEL.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I hope you got safely to England. I have missd very much. I will never forget you, and I will not forget your sweet words that you spoke to us. I am reading the Bible at home for my mother and my sisters, and our naburghs, and they like to hear it. I am glad to tell you that our holydays is finished, and the school is began. I am trying to help Miss Arnott, and not to giv her eny trouble, and when I find something difecult, I will do as you told to go and pray to Jesus Christ. I have try it so often, and He has help me—don't think I will forget you. Mother is very ill. I think you will get tired to read my long letter. I hope you come next year. I want to see you very much, please send me your picture, don't mind please my bad writing, many salams, and a great meny kisses to your self. I remain your pupil,

LABEHEEII.

All the while, however, there were strong forces pulling the other way, and Miss Fletcher was for a season "in a strait betwixt two,"—feeling as many a minister does, when a call comes to him which he knows not whether it is his duty to accept or to decline. At length she reached what was no doubt the right conclusion. The leading considerations which prevailed with her may be gathered from the following letter addressed to Miss Arnott by the Glasgow Class :—

GLASGOW, *12th May*, 1879.

DEAR MISS ARNOTT,

Allow me, in name of our beloved Miss Fletcher's class, to write a few lines in favour of the decision she has arrived at to remain amongst us. No doubt the disappointment to you will be very great, but the dear Lord has blessed her work so abundantly this winter, that it speaks volumes in pointing out the path of duty. Our West End Meeting, which commenced with a small

number, is crowded to overflowing, and has been productive of the most blessed results; and out from it a large field of usefulness has been opened up in a most wonderful manner, extending over a good part of Glasgow.

Many weary, heavy-laden, aching hearts have had their doubts and fears removed, and are now rejoicing, being rooted and grounded in the love of Jesus; and the beautiful lessons we have had on the glorious work of redemption, and the power of the precious peace-speaking blood have touched many hearts, and are bringing forth much fruit. And our beloved teacher's deeply earnest and persuasive way endears her to every one, and wins so many. A number have told me they have got far more good from Miss Fletcher than ever they have got from any minister. And her yearning zeal to win souls has been abundantly rewarded, for many a sheaf she has in Glasgow to lay at the Master's feet.

I often think of the welcome she will get from her dear Lord, whom she loves so intensely, and serves so faithfully; the "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Our dear class has been greatly blessed this winter, and the numbers have been so much increased that we have hardly standing room, and will require to get a larger hall.

There is also a silent work going on in one of our mills, through the influence of some of the girls who attend the class, and which we hope and pray will end in large showers of blessing.

Had Miss Fletcher gone from us for good and all, she would have left behind her many a broken, bleeding heart; and to us who know so well how precious her lessons are, and the priceless value of her teaching, the loss would have been irreparable. And then, what a solemn thought—how many souls she might be the means of saving while she was preparing for her work in Palestine. She would have the languages to learn, and a good many difficulties to overcome before she could be in harness; and what would become of the blessed work here, and the many who are depending upon her from week to week for new light and new help in their pilgrimage journey. Having such deep experience herself, and taking such a large grasp of her subject, she is able to help them on with a strong and loving hand; and oh, what need we have of such teaching, when in our own Christian land so much error and false doctrine is afloat.

Thank you very much for your kind letters and earnest prayers on our behalf. Many a prayer ascends for you out of our dear class to the throne of grace; and now, since we look upon one of the little children as our own, we feel a double interest in you and your noble work.

May the Lord prosper and bless you more and more; and it is our earnest prayer that He will in His own good time and way raise some one up who will strengthen your hands and encourage your heart.

And thus, the end of it was, that though Miss Fletcher, in that summer of 1879, paid another visit to Palestine which greatly refreshed her, she did not go to stay there. God, as she felt, and as her Jaffa friends were more and more convinced, had work for her to do at home.

“ Finish thy work—
The time is short—
The sun is in the west—
The night is coming down—
Till then,
Think not of rest.”

—*Bonar.*

CHAPTER XI.

REDEEMING THE TIME.



THE so-called "Romance of Missions" had no doubt much to do with Miss Fletcher's early dream of going to labour in the foreign field, and, if so, the Duchess of Gordon did well to discountenance it. But when the same desire showed itself again and again at a later period of life, it was freed from all illusion or enchantment, and was prompted by the pure motive to be of the greatest possible service to the Master, by holding a place in "the hottest part of the vineyard." Yet, even then, God showed her that she had not to go across the seas to find her proper sphere. She was to be a missionary indeed, but a missionary at home; and she came not only to recognise God's will, but to blame herself for not having sooner reached entire and cheerful acquiescence in it. "What would work be," she said, not far from her life work's close, "if you helped yourself to it? Often, often did I pray to be sent into the hottest, hardest part of the vineyard. What were the ingredients of that prayer? I see now—self-righteousness! Thus—'Oh it will in part atone for the past.' We don't know our hearts; how can we, when He says—'Who can know it?'"

There can be no question that the part of the vineyard which Miss Fletcher occupied during the last five or six years of her life was as hot and as hard as she could well have wished, or could have found anywhere. She was living all that time under the power of the world to come, and working with both hands earnestly, in full view of eternity, for the glory of her Lord and the everlasting good of souls. To those who knew her at this period, it will not savour of exaggeration to say that she compressed well nigh a lifetime of Christian labour into her few last years, so ardent was her spirit then, and so unremitting her devotion. "Oh," writes one of her Class, "if I could do in my life what she did in a month, I should be happy!" "She was never at rest," says the lady with whom she resided, "but when pointing sinners to Christ, or pleading for

them at a throne of grace ; and latterly, especially, she not only spoke as one who felt that her race was nearly run, but strongly impressed others with the same conviction."

From the time of her own spiritual quickening, and especially after her entire and trustful surrender of herself to Christ, Miss Fletcher's work kept steadily growing on her hand. To the south-side class, which she held on Wednesday evenings, first in Free John Knox's Church hall, and afterwards in the hall of Cunningham Free Church, another regular Tuesday evening class was added, in 1878, on the north side of the Clyde, in the hall of St. George's Road Free Church. And not only were both of these continued till Miss Fletcher's death, but during the last two winters of her life she regularly conducted a third class, first on the Thursday evenings, in Kelvin Street Mission hall, and afterwards on the Friday evenings, in Dowanvale Free Church hall, Partick.

The Rev. Ralph Smith mentions that his hall in Bedford Lane was sometimes so crowded that the class had to retire into the church ; and he states that, though never present at the meetings himself, he had repeated indications from some of his people of the good that was being done. We may here adduce the more personal and detailed testimony of the three ministers whose church halls have just been instanced as the centres of Miss Fletcher's regular class work in different quarters of Glasgow.

The Rev. A. Andrew, of Cunningham Free Church, gives the following reminiscences :—

"My first acquaintance with Miss Fletcher was through an application, made by some of the members of her class, for the use of our church hall. I had occasionally heard of her success as a teacher, during the time her class met in the hall of John Knox's Free Church—indeed, it was her remarkable success there that compelled her to seek for a larger place elsewhere. Our Deacons' Court very cordially granted the use of our hall, on Wednesday evenings, during the Winter months.

"There came a letter expressing thanks. It was quite characteristic—one or two warm sentences in a flowing handwriting, and on paper that had on its left corner a curious device, representing a bar of music, which was always a mystery to me.* The only thing I could take out of it was—put some music into your life!

'O sing a new song to the Lord,
For wonders He hath done.'

"In due time the class was transferred to our hall. This led some to attend, at first out of curiosity, but afterwards out of real interest in the truth taught. Indeed, the women felt that there was such a magnetic influence at work in our hall, that once under its spell, you could not stay away. And this influence not only affected the women, but the men ; for although, as a rule, they were

* This device consisted of the two notes E. F., Miss Fletcher's initials, on the staff notation scale.

not allowed into the class, yet I have seen them 'eaves-dropping' in a good sense, furtively standing in the passages, and catching the echoes of a voice that was felt to be so impressive.

"Three times she most kindly came and addressed our Sabbath Schools on the Communion day. Our custom is to gather all the young together on the afternoon of that day, while yet the white cloth remains on the Communion table, and have one or two short gospel addresses delivered to them. Some of our teachers said, 'Get Miss Fletcher, and no doubt she'll catch the children's ear.' She did. In about twenty minutes, on every occasion, she managed by her lively, vigorous style, and her fund of stories, to keep an audience of at least 600 young people in rapt attention.

"Her last appearance was in April, 1883. Her subject was *The Bible a Lamp*. 'Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,' &c. And the different uses of a lamp, especially in the narrow streets of an Eastern city, in a dark night, were beautifully brought out, and very forcibly applied to the Bible. 'O children—dear children, love the Bible. Keep it near you. Let it be in your hand every day, and if you walk by its teaching, it will fetch you up—up—up to our Father's house of many mansions, where there shall be no more night.'

"At once, you saw she had the art of rivetting the attention of the young. It was no hum-drum style hers. It was vivacious, sparkling, fresh, and well-prepared—addresses, in which, every here and there you had stories—good stories which, like windows, let in the sunlight of heaven upon the subject handled. And there was always such a heartiness in what she said, that the young people could not but feel that they had a friend before them, who was interested in them, and had something nice to tell them. Then, what a humour she had, that every now and then peeped out, and helped to keep her audience in good relation to herself and to her subject. She had an eye to see the funny sides of things, and it seemed as natural as possible to give expression to her fancies. Especially did her humour flash out when giving a lecture on a week-night for the benefit of the older people."

After instancing two lectures which Miss Fletcher gave in his church—the one on Palestine, the other on America—Mr. Andrew goes on to narrate that it was in Gibraltar that he received the startling intelligence of Miss Fletcher's death, and that even there he found trace of her influence in the most casual way:—

"Two ladies happened to call at the time, presently working among the soldiers, and when the news was broken to them, it seemed almost too much for them. For a moment silent astonishment took possession of them. Years before they had known Miss Fletcher, and had received much spiritual good through attending her classes; and now the news that they were to see her face no more, caused them to shed bitter tears. It was touching; and then what fragrant memories of the past were recalled, and on to the twilight we talked of the unseen, and of the glorious future in store for the saints."

Then it is added:—

"To my observation it was clear that Miss Fletcher was intensely beloved by all the members of her classes. She had a warm, affectionate nature herself, and loving much, she was in turn much beloved; for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again. And then, her burning earnestness to fetch all within her reach to the Saviour, helped to bind her to those that

listened to her appeal. 'O my dear class,' she would say, 'how I long to see you all saved, and how I wish that every one of you may have the joy of standing on the right hand of the great White Throne, on the Great Day! How *beautiful* is that land beyond! Shall we not all strive to reach it?'

"Most clear she was as to a sinner's ground of hope—not any goodness or obedience on our part, but the blood and righteousness of the Surety, the Lord Jesus. The language of her heart was :—

'My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name;
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.'

"Miss Fletcher was a hard student. She never, as a rule, came to her class ill-prepared. She seldom gave what cost her little. Generally a clear grip she had of her subject, and well did she know how to reach the heart. Just at the fitting time she would introduce an anecdote or some recent event, with which to clench the truth, while everything was delivered with such amazing vigour and force.

"No doubt many have received saving impressions at her meetings. Some I know have abundant cause to bless God, for making her the instrument of their conversion, or helping them through the great change; while not a few have expressed their high appreciation of the quickening and stimulating influence that their honoured teacher exercised over them."

The Rev. John Torrance, of St. George's Road Free Church, writes :—

"I had no knowledge of Miss Fletcher until application was made on her behalf for the use of our hall for a female Bible Class. On making a little enquiry concerning her, I found that she was well known by many Christian friends on whose opinion I could rely. When these opinions were laid before the Deacons' Court, they very cordially granted her the use of the room. Knowing that her meeting was for women, and hearing that she promptly dismissed the church officer when she was about to begin, I felt at first debarred from even trying to make her acquaintance. Although frequently I heard the sound of her voice, I did not see her for some considerable time. I was kept continually informed, however, by reliable members of the congregation who attended the meetings, of the character and success of the work. Soon the hall was filled, and the reports I heard became more and more favourable. After a second or third attempt, we got her to come to our 'Workers' Meetings.' Her short address fairly captivated us. By-and-bye she was asked to speak at the evangelistic meeting one Sabbath evening. As she was perfectly aware that her audience would be a mixed one, I felt at liberty to go in. The hall was packed almost to suffocation. Then, for the first time, I had a full opportunity of forming my opinion concerning her. On several subsequent occasions I enjoyed similar opportunities, which only confirmed my original impressions.

"The matter of her discourse was good, substantial Bible teaching. Thoroughly evangelical in character, it was directly evangelistic in its aim. She preached Gospel truth in its simplicity and fullness; and she preached it with the direct object of bringing sinners to repentance. She was not less effective when addressing Christians. She knew how to speak for the comforting and edifying of believers, as well as for the converting of the ungodly. Her style was simple and direct. Her manner was often dramatic; always

impassioned. Frequently she thundered with tremendous energy, and as frequently her speech distilled like the dew and like the small rain on the tender grass. She had a great store of most thrilling anecdotes, which she told with telling effect—never, however, for the story's sake. In everything, she left on you the impression that she was full of fervent love for souls, and burning zeal for the glory of God in their salvation. For four winters she conducted her classes in St. George's Road, with ever increasing success. Indeed, the church was required on several occasions, when she gave lectures on Palestine, etc. These were exceedingly racy and instructive, and afforded immense gratification to those who heard them."

Reserving, for its proper place, Mr. Torrance's account of Miss Fletcher's funeral, we here adduce the further testimony of the Rev. James Wallace, to the excellence and value of her work in Partick:—

"Miss Fletcher conducted a Bible Class in Partick for two winters. During the earlier of these, she met with her class in the Mission Hall, Kelvin Street, on Thursday evenings. As this arrangement, with her other engagements, involved her in regular public work on three successive nights every week, she sought to change it, and at the end of 1882 she got the use of the Downhill Free Church, for Friday evenings. There she continued her work till the end of it all came.

"As regards her method of conducting her class. She began with an exposition of a psalm, always insisting that an intelligent acquaintance with the words to be sung was a first requisite of acceptable praise. Her lessons, last winter, were taken from the life of Jacob, and these she made peculiarly interesting by her reminiscences of travel in the East. One evening, when I was engaged in a room adjoining the hall, I heard a portion of her address. I was struck with the evidence it gave of wide and varied reading; she evidently gathered her materials from all available sources. This same impression, but in another form, she made on the members of her class. They all believed that Miss Fletcher worked, and prayed, and read, and travelled for *their* benefit—that, in short, she lived for them.

"This consecration of herself to her work was one element, I believe, in the fascinating power she had over her hearers. They came under her spell. Many of them attended all her classes, and followed her to all her public meetings. Some of those who thus knew her well, tell me that there was latterly a change in the character of Miss Fletcher's addresses. She was always didactic—she seems to have been a born teacher—but latterly she became more intense and pathetic in her appeals to her hearers to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. She seemed to become more and more weighted with a sense of the nearness of eternity, and with the consciousness that her own work was almost done. She expressly told her class in one of her last addresses that they were not likely to see her again. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that there was anything sombre in Miss Fletcher's teaching. She often made her audience weep, but she often made them smile at some little flash of wit. She was very practical also. Her class saw that she knew the details of household life, and they were sometimes amused by her frank and humorous reference to their domestic duties. She would tell the wives and mothers that if there were neglected husbands and children at home, if little garments were without the needed patch, if shirts were buttonless, those who neglected these duties had no right to sit in her class, for home had the first claim upon all women."

The reader is referred to the Letters to and from the Classes, printed in the subsequent portion of this volume, for further touching and ample evidence of the burning enthusiasm, and wakeful intelligence, and Christ-like sympathy with which Miss Fletcher entered into this noble work among the women of Glasgow. Wherever she went, her classes were on her heart, and the cases of individuals in them were to her, as her letters show, a personal concern. She was often wearied *in* the work, but never of it; and many a soul she guided, by the Spirit's blessing, to the light; and many a heart she helped to ease of its load, "through her work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." The women's letters to her, on the other hand, prove how warmly her Christian service was appreciated, and her affection returned; and, best of all, they abound in testimonies which many a minister might covet, to the saving efficacy of her work among them. The number of letters which passed between Miss Fletcher and the members of her different classes is quite amazing, and some of hers to them have been evidently well-thumbed and often wept over, and are counted still among their treasures.

As regards Miss Fletcher's style of address in her class meetings, readers who have personal reminiscences will need no description, and those who have not, need expect none that will at all bring before them the reality. In both her personal appearance and her manner there was a dash of what may best be described, perhaps, as masculine force, but it was strangely blended in both with feminine modesty and womanly tenderness. There was a singular light in her eye, whether it flashed with earnestness or gleamed with humour, which had its own peculiar fascination; and to a voluble and often eloquent utterance she added a rare power of gesticulation, which enabled her, in description or appeal, so to "suit the action to the word," as to keep her audience sometimes spellbound. Her histrionic ability, indeed, was such, that, in her careless days, she had thoughts sometimes of "going on the stage," but, happily, shrank from the kind of company she would have had to mingle in, and thus reserved her gift for better uses. It enabled her in a wonderful way—as the writer can testify, though he only heard her *lecture* twice to a miscellaneous audience—to lose herself in her subject and carry her audience along with her. But those who were privileged to attend her religious classes, in her later years, did not feel that there was anything of the nature of "acting" in the mode of her address. She spoke to them in no professional or even conventional way, but with the passionate intensity of one whose heart was hungering for their salvation, and her soul aglow with a love both vehement and tender for their souls

We may here give the first impressions of a Christian lady, who afterwards became a familiar friend of Miss Fletcher's, and esteemed her highly in love for her work's sake :—

“From the first, I was struck with her, and thought her a person quite out of the common ; I liked her bright smile and her racy way of putting things. I remember when we got to the Bible-woman's house, where we went for a few minutes before crossing to the mission hall, she seemed to wish to be undisturbed, and to prefer that others should choose the hymns to be sung, and make the arrangements, leaving her to herself.

“When we went into the hall, and she proceeded to take off her hat and gloves, and to place the table as she wished it to be, I felt a little anxious, and wondered what she would do next. But when she began to speak (her subject was—‘The precious things of Peter's Epistles,—Precious Blood, Precious Faith, Precious Christ, Precious Promises) all my cares ceased, and I gave myself up to listen, with surprise and delight, to an address, the wonderful power, freshness, pathos, and persuasiveness of which I had rarely, if ever, heard equalled. I thought, If this is how she is to speak, I don't care what her peculiarities in gesture or in anything else may be. If she has consecrated herself, with all her peculiarities, to God, surely it is all right. I was greatly impressed, and I think, that very night, before I went to bed, I wrote a note to her, thanking her for coming, and telling her how much I had enjoyed the meeting. Our friendship began from that time. I remember, some time after this, she allowed me to accompany her to her class—then held, I think, in the hall of the Rev. Ralph Smith's church. It was the last night she was to hold it, before she started on her first visit to Palestine. I was again greatly interested in all I saw and heard, and it was evident she had the power greatly to interest others, for there was a very large attendance of young women—some seated on the window sills, and some, I think, on the stairs outside.”

Here also is a good description by one who heard Miss Fletcher only once :—

“I wish I could put into words the impression that still lingers with me of a meeting of Miss Fletcher's you took me to. She was undoubtedly a woman of power, the power that belongs to an intense nature. I cannot forget the interest and solemnity I felt as she, on entering the meeting, bowed her head with an expressive gesture on the low table beside her, and abandoned herself, as it were, to a very agony of supplication. Her emotion and action seemed altogether natural. Her voice struck me as being very much in unison with her appearance, bending itself to the warmed imagination and touched soul, and conveyed to you a sense of her deep earnestness.

“I can hardly imagine any one remaining indifferent, while she strove, by vivid pictures and urgent appeals, to awaken the consciences of those she addressed to deal with spiritual realities, so urgent was the tone in which she pled, so compelling in its urgency. And this reminds me of one of the most interesting features of the meeting—the wonderful attention with which all listened ; while in the rapt expression of some you felt solemnized, as in the presence of a partly revealed soul-history.”

The mould of Miss Fletcher's religious addresses may be as fairly conceived as it is possible now for a stranger to her style, from the sketches with which the reader of this book is furnished. The lady who supplied these, from notes and memory, would be

the first to admit that they form, at most, only an approximate idea of the addresses as they were delivered. Many of Miss Fletcher's best things were never written by herself, and could never be transcribed by others; and for her to re-deliver an address was almost to re-construct it. But this much may be easily gathered, that her addresses were earnest and interesting throughout, and every now and then lit up with some flash of originality, or some apt illustration, which made way for the impassioned and often meltingly tender appeal, which fused a whole section of the address together, and brought it all to bear directly on the heart and conscience of the hearer. Miss Fletcher had a remarkable memory for facts, though none for figures, and had an immense store of anecdotes on hand. She could also lay her own observation under ready contribution for the illustration of almost any subject,—besides all which, she was a voracious reader, and for five nights in the week, during eight months of the year, sat up for purposes of study till four o'clock in the morning, rising again for her daily duties at half-past seven! But undoubtedly the outstanding characteristic of her addresses, and the secret of their power, was their downright moral earnestness and consecrated passion. In her later years we see her—having herself sounded the depths of spiritual misery and abandonment—standing now “*on* the Rock, and *in* the Rock” (to quote a favourite phrase with her), and eagerly holding out the helping hand to draw up others there.

The two poles of her teaching were the two grand impossibilities—for any out of Christ to be saved, *and* for any in Christ to be lost. A deep sense of the truth of both had been impressed on her own soul, as we have seen, in the course of her spiritual experience, and out of the fulness of her heart she spoke of them to others. Here you have the key to her later life, and the main-spring of her work. In the words of Mr. J. Campbell White—“She watched for souls; and God gave her what she sought for.”

We have found in Miss Fletcher one good combination—in the blending she presented of masculine strength with womanly gentleness. There was another, not less important and impressive,—the union in her of a keen and tenacious Calvinism with a spirit of Christian sympathy the most catholic and unconstrained. A loyal member of the Free Church in Glasgow (the writer is also pleased to add, of St. Matthew's congregation), she was at the call of all who could open a door of Christian usefulness through which they could show reason why she, in her Master's name, should be ready, if possible, to enter.

As time went on, the demands made upon her Christian service

were really overwhelming. Bearing in mind that she conscientiously prepared a separate subject a-week for each of the classes aforementioned, it might be supposed that these three regular evening engagements, coupled with her secular teaching from nine till six throughout the day, taxed to the full both her strength and her time. But a list of her incidental religious services would fill pages.

She had occasional meetings not only in every quarter of Glasgow, but in Whiteinch, Govan, Maryhill, Hamilton, Motherwell, Paisley, and other neighbouring towns and villages. We find her addressing a Young Women's Association here, an audience of *Cumberland* boys there, the inmates of an hospital, or even of a Lunatic Asylum in some other place; and however diverse the audience, able always to suit herself to her surroundings, and to gain not the ears only of her hearers, but their hearts. Latterly, she had seldom so much as *one* night free in Winter from such engagements, even Sabbath evening being generally given, not to much-needed rest, but to the work of soul-winning, apart from which she could not rest.

Her intimate friends sometimes playfully called her "Elisha," and she had undoubtedly spiritual kinship with that fervent prophet, as well as with her favourite apostle, Peter, whose character, in its outstanding features both of strength and weakness, her own so much resembled.

There was one department of usefulness, which is worthy of special notice, not only as having engaged a good deal of Miss Fletcher's time, but as having had a special fascination for herself. This was her weekly attendance at the Royal Infirmary, for the purpose of ministering both to the bodies and to the souls of the weary patients in the surgical wards there. Every Saturday morning, she used to leave home for the Infirmary at half-past seven, and remained there in active employment during the day, and sometimes till far on in the afternoon or evening. Her enthusiasm led other ladies to take an interest with her in this valuable Institution; and apart from that, her boundless sympathy and cordial cheerfulness made her personal visits a weekly benison both to many of the patients, and to those charged with the more constant supervision of them. In the evenings she would return home full of what she had seen, and heard, and done at the Infirmary, and often seemed to carry the sorrows of the poor sufferers there, as if they were her own. Her personal regard for the Infirmary work appears from various letters which survive. She writes, for instance:—

"I have had a great Winter's work in the Royal Infirmary. The wards I attend are all surgical—one an accident ward, and two of them chronic. Some-

times on receiving days, our ward is like a field of battle. We have had a number of deaths—chiefly railway smashes, and sometimes pit accidents. I do not know of any work that has such a fascination for me, or work I love so much. I think I could set a broken arm or leg now.”

And again :—

“ My great delight is in attending the Royal Infirmary, which I do as often as I can. I have the privilege of learning to nurse, attending operations, and seeing the work. It is only surgery I attend, and I have three wards I dress in. Many a terrible scene we have ; but when you can throw a little bit of sunshine across these poor suffering creatures, it *is* pleasant.”

As already hinted, this work gave Miss Fletcher sometimes direct opportunity of doing good to the souls of the patients, of which she was not slow to avail herself. And on the other hand, it furnished her not seldom with telling incidents for her evangelistic meetings. The following may be taken as illustrating the truth of this statement in both its parts. In addressing a class of girls, one day she said :—

“ On one of my Saturday visits to the Royal Infirmary, I saw a poor man dying of galloping consumption, and what was more, he was apparently without an interest in Christ and His precious salvation. He said, ‘ Miss Fletcher, I feel I am too great a sinner ; I have no right to come.’ I said to the man, ‘ Look at me. Am I ill of consumption ?’ He stared at me and said, ‘ Oh no, ma’am.’ ‘ Well’ I said, ‘ I have no right to be received into the Infirmary ; but you have a right because you are unwell, and hence you got a line of admission, and here you are. Well, it is just because we are all diseased by sin, that we are entitled and asked to go to Jesus, who saves His people from their sins. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ ”

How effectual, under God, some of her Infirmary illustrations were, may be gathered from this one instance, which we adduce from a letter written to her by a lady, at whose request Miss Fletcher had addressed a meeting in Govan :—

“ I have so much pleasure in telling you that there have been four conversions, the result of your address the night you were with us—two of them from what you said about the young man in the Infirmary. I am sure many were impressed that we have not as yet heard of. I like to tell you the result, as I know it will cheer and encourage you in your good work.”

The estimation in which Miss Fletcher was held in the Infirmary itself may be gathered from the testimony of a Doctor and a Nurse, who well knew her there. The Doctor says :—

“ There are very many people, who are more heard of in the world who would be much less missed, if death removed them. In saying this, I think especially of the unaffected kindness, and skilful aid she used to extend so ungrudgingly to the patients in my wards in the Royal Infirmary every Saturday. Her regularity and earnestness in the discharge of this self-imposed and gratuitous

labour were most astonishing ; and I only trust that the fact of her thus having devoted what should have been her hours of rest and leisure to hard, exacting and often exciting duty, may have had no share in undermining her health. And yet, on second thought, what if it had? Verily, she had, and still has, her reward. How contemptible, by contrast, are the objects for which most people are willing to imperil health and strength."

To which the Nurse adds :—

" I have so many glad memories of all the hospital work she helped us with in the dear old Royal Infirmary, that will now be very sacred to me. Oh the happy Saturdays there, when Miss Fletcher always brought sunshine into the wards. Patients, nurses, and doctors loved her dearly, and I know how much she will be missed in the time to come. Kind words and cheery looks were never lacking from her. I was often afraid she was working too hard, and yet she never complained."

A young lady gives the following interesting illustration of how Miss Fletcher's enthusiasm was wont to impress itself on others :—

" Once, returning from the Infirmary very much dissatisfied and disheartened with an interview I had had with a dying girl, I met Miss Fletcher. We were walking home together as I told her about it, when she turned round and faced me, as if to enforce her words, ' Oh! that will never do, you must go back.' And back I went, very glad, afterwards, I had done so, for the girl died before my next visit. Miss Fletcher could tolerate no half measures. Once she had made up her mind that this or that had to be done, she would take the straightest and quickest way, however unconventional. Therefore, I think she was apt to be misunderstood, she so seldom did things in an ordinary way."

And thus the labour of love went on from month to month and year to year—her every talent and opportunity being made contributory to the one great end of rescuing the perishing and bringing the light of Christ's love to bear on a sin-darkened world. It was a work which implied no slight strain on body, mind, and heart: but even in the doing of it, it brought a recompense. Miss Fletcher herself writes—

" I have had a *very* heavy but, I think I may venture to say, very blessed winter's work. I had my usual Tuesday night and Wednesday classes ; in addition, I had one every Friday night, in Mr. Pirret's hall ; then, besides, I had often meetings every other night. And this, with my Infirmary work made it heavy, but I rejoice to know of some who, I trust, did get a blessing."

To another friend she says—

" I have longed to write you over and over again ; but you see I have had to prepare for six meetings this week, and seven are coming on next week."

And to another she writes :—

" The last few weeks have been singularly busy ! I had ten meetings one after the other. You are, I think, interested in them, and I may tell you, they have been *very* interesting. One Tuesday night, very specially, a few weeks ago, after the meeting a calling card was handed to me with the visitor's name

and address, and in a trembling hand in pencil the following : 'Dear Miss F——, what must I do to be saved?' I wrote a long letter trying to make *the way* very clear, and on last Tuesday, such a nice-looking young lady met me, and told me she was the writer, and that Jesus was now precious to her! I do think there is a very deep impression just now, and our meetings are *awfully* solemn! I took a large class of young women the other Tuesday night, and it so happened I was feeling the very light of eternity on my own path. It seemed as if the Spirit *was* present, and we all felt deeply solemnized. I think some were aroused that night."

How humbly she was thinking of herself, while the Lord was so abundantly blessing her labours, will be seen from the following out of many extracts which might have been given from her correspondence :—

"Oh! I do so seem just to be creeping along; indeed, hardly that. And then such coldness of heart to this Jesus, who bore the agony and shame! We had a nice psalm last Tuesday. 'Nevertheless, continually, oh Lord, I am with Thee.' With Him in three ways. 1. Continually on His hand. 2. Under His eye who now sleeps, and 3. On His heart like the breastplate of the High Priest, and then—the *reception* day. And then the glory afterwards! Oh! to be ready, to be getting ready! I do feel as if I *could* gladly welcome any means He saw needful—to fit me for such a reception. It was surely a fine definition of faith a poor man gave—'The grasp of the drowning.'

The next quotation will show how strangely possible it is for a child of God to have seasons of darkness, while all the time made instrumental in bringing light to other souls :—

"Our Tuesday night is just beyond speaking about, and I'm thankful to say there has been a breaking up in our Wednesday night class. The Friday night, too, is full of deep and solemn interest. In addition, there are other meetings all over the city, and *every one* encouraging. This is the *bright* side, but there *is* a shadow, a deep shadow. I can't help telling you that I have been walking in deepest darkness, and experiencing the din and gloom of a hard conflict. Somehow it came over me with *such* a wild sweep, What if after speaking to so many I should be self-deceived, or, as Paul has it, a 'castaway.' Oh, I suppose it's good to be shaken to the very depths, but it's terrible work. The best of it was and is, *such* a longing after a *full* and *large* and *great blessing*. I think I've been knowing a little of the meaning of that verse, 'Blessed are they that hunger,' and again, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' as I have had to cling to Jesus with *such* a tenacity; and the more I thought of *Him*, the more my heart went breaking after Him."

Happily both for herself and her work, Miss Fletcher had occasional seasons of relaxation, in which, while her bodily strength was recruited, fresh tone was also given to her mental and spiritual nature. Her love of travel came in as a kind of safety valve for the intensity of her life, and in the intervals of labour she had journeys to the Scotch Highlands, Wales, Norway, the Mediterranean, the Danube, the United States and elsewhere, which were to her both a keen actual enjoyment, and a refreshing memory. On her return, she delighted to recount her fishing

adventures in the North, and would describe a Highland funeral, or a Highland communion with much zest ; while her classes, and sometimes a yet wider public, got the benefit of her longer excursions, through the graphic descriptive lectures which she delivered to crowded and delighted audiences. Two among these were specially notable—those on Palestine and America. The latter narrating a tour taken in the summer of 1882, and embracing a vivid account of Niagara, the Salt Lake City, the Yosemite Valley, San Francisco, and the Kentucky Cave, was much sought after in Glasgow in the ensuing winter, and enabled Miss Fletcher to contribute upwards of £50 to various charitable institutions, including her beloved “Royal.”

It was her delight also to bring home relics, as well as reminiscences. But for her native habit of freely giving away to others whatever she thought would interest or gratify them, she would in this way have accumulated, in course of time, a considerable museum. As it was, she by degrees gathered a very miscellaneous collection of varieties and oddities, which were themselves reminders of the various scenes from which she had brought them. There were war clubs, a battleaxe, a bow, and poisoned arrows, and boomerangs from Australia ; camel bells, a queer old blunderbuss, and a flute, said to be like David's, from the interior of Palestine ; besides earthenware from the Pyramids of Egypt, and numerous stones from different temples and other ruins which she had visited in various quarters of the globe. Parrots and other live birds too, she had such a liking for, that her arrival home was sometimes awaited with apprehension, till it should be seen how many her companions of that ilk might prove to number ! But of all her curiosities, the most rare and interesting was a strange old lantern, with a little gilt remaining to speak of better days. It was a relic which had long been preserved among her ancestors in Rushden Hall. But it had more than a mere family interest associated with it ; for it was none other, as the History of Northamptonshire explains, than the veritable lantern with which Guy Fawkes, of seditious memory, attempted to elevate both Lords and Commons higher than the peerage !

In speaking of Miss Fletcher's travels, and the good resulting from them, it is not to be forgotten that even while she was away from home, she found frequent opportunity of doing as well as of getting good. One lady, whom she visited one summer, writes :—

“Miss Fletcher at once answered that she would have the meetings, saying, ‘She never refused when the way was open for her.’

“I have some notes of a little address given at Torwood School-room, which

I have copied, if they will be of use ; but they seem different *read* to *hearing* her, she was so earnest, so solemn, and many tears were in the room that evening ; hearts were touched and, I trust, good was done. One who had been long in a far-off country was there ; his friend told me he was much impressed, and had ' never before felt as he had done that night.' These were his own words. He is now gone, and we will hope these gentle, loving words given to Miss Fletcher to speak, were the beginning of a new life to him."

The following, from Miss Fletcher's own hand, gives some interesting glimpses of her in the country :—

" I have had some nice meetings: Mrs — arranged for two at Dunkeld, and they were very interesting. The last few days have been rather too much given up to pleasure, and I have been too much taken up with enjoying drives, etc. I always feel vexed at this, and it convinces me that *work* and *shadow* are the best ingredients for my getting on. I agree best with bitter herbs. I *quite* agree with you that we have indeed the *constant* tendency to 'depart from the living God.' *This* at *all* times, but at no time so much as when the sky is clear, and the sea smooth, and our hands idle ; and then the spirit becomes listless and dreamy. I speak at least for myself, and this seems to throw much light upon a pathway more darkened than bright.

The same letter contains a touching reminiscence of her earliest friend :—

" We have had some delightful drives—one of fifty miles, as I was anxious to visit *The Burn*. That was the place where the Duchess of Gordon was born, and spent the happy days of her childhood ; and it is one of the wildest and most romantic places one can see. But my thoughts were more with her where she now is, even *with Him*, beholding His glory, and that *must* be heaven."

And lastly, in this connection, we give from the pen of a much esteemed church office-bearer in Glasgow, an account of what he saw and heard of Miss Fletcher, on board of the Atlantic steamer, which conveyed them to New York in the summer of 1882 :—

" Often in the course of work in Glasgow had we heard of Miss Fletcher. To meet, and hear one who seemed to have gained so entirely the affection and admiration of those who were in the habit of attending her Bible Classes, had been a long cherished desire. It was on board an American Liner, on the voyage across the Atlantic, that our wish was realised. One did not require a lengthened acquaintance to see the qualities which attracted so warmly the admiration of her Classes. One thing struck us forcibly, *viz.*, Miss Fletcher's desire, even when on much needed holiday, to be of use to those around her. On board our ship were some hundreds of emigrants of all nationalities. For these, evangelistic services were conducted daily on the fore-castle deck. On several occasions, Miss Fletcher kindly yielded to the desire of friends, and addressed these meetings, doing so with power and effect. At one, the subject was, 'The Brazen Serpent,' and many in the group of listeners were apparently moved by her earnest entreaty that they, too, should 'look and live.' At another, the topic chosen was 'The Voyage of Life.' We cannot forget the scene. The evening sun was sinking on the horizon, lighting all around with its golden beams. The air was still ;

the waves were at rest. As the speaker used the various incidents of the voyage to illustrate the longer voyage on which all were bound, the attention of her audience was captivated. We were fast approaching the shores of the new world—the haven we desired to reach ; and this, too, was used to remind them of the place of rest after the dangers and turmoils of earth's voyage, which Jesus has prepared for them that love Him ; and they were urged to choose the great Pilot, who knew the way, to guide them safely there. We believe that many of those who listened to those addresses, would carry with them, to the various quarters of the land of their adoption, whither they were bound, thoughts regarding 'a better country' to which they had hitherto been strangers. Miss Fletcher lived as if she knew her time was short, and the foregoing illustrates how she 'sowed beside all waters.'"

Nothing was more significant of the reality and fulness of Miss Fletcher's consecration to Christ than this—her readiness to find, where others would have been willing enough to miss them, opportunities of speaking some word, or doing some work for Him. "Whose I am, and whom I serve," was a motto which she adopted from Paul, and which, with much of the Apostle's fervour, she sought to *live*. Wherever she went, she tried to carry with her the Master's own Spirit, and to be, like Him, "continually doing good."

“ It is the evening hour,
And thankfully,
Father, Thy weary child,
Has come to Thee.
I lean my aching head
Upon Thy breast,
And there, and only there,
I am at rest.
Thou knowest all my life,
Each petty sin :
Nothing is hid from Thee,
Without, within.
All that I have or am
Is wholly Thine ;
So is my soul at peace,
For Thou art mine.
To-morrow’s dawn may find
Me here, or there ;
It matters little, since Thy love
Is everywhere.”

—*Anon.*

CHAPTER XII.

SUNSET.



HE last winter of Miss Fletcher's life was, if possible, more absolutely full of work than any which preceded it. She seemed to enter, as few have done, into the meaning of the Psalmist, when he wrote—"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." In all too literal a sense, —since, in the ardour of her spirit, she often neglected necessary sleep and food—she was "instant in season and out of season," to the apparent prejudice of her own health. It was noticed in the annual gathering in the Royal Infirmary, on her last New Year's Day, that she joined with extraordinary fervour in the words of the simple hymn—

"O the good we all may do,
As the days are going by :"

but though her manner was blythe as ever and her spirit incessantly active, the more intimate and observant of her friends had begun to remark in her, even before then, a worn look which they did not like, along with a mellowing of nature which seemed to tell them that the time was not very distant when she would be taken Home.

All spring, however, her classes and other meetings were conducted with unremitting energy, and she found snatches of time for carrying on a varied correspondence, outside the circle of devoted women who had come to look to her and lean on her so much, as at once their teacher and their friend.

Her views and feelings at this period are faithfully reflected in some of her letters which survive. We find her writing, for example—

"I have been in the depths feeling so utterly cold and dead—indeed, reduced to, 'Am I His, or am I not?' but I like the wee boy's definition of faith—'clinging to Jesus with your heart.' I am sure He is my only Hope and Refuge, yet this coldness of heart is awful. Yet says one, 'He never looks on an iceberg except to melt it.' Don't you sometimes feel as if you could do nothing but lie at His feet, feeling, 'Ah! He knows and sees what I can't put into words.' On such occasions all I can do is to go back to my old *moorings*. Oh! I remember the joy it was when I found Mark ii. 15-17. Just to think of those 'sinners' sitting together with Jesus! I felt—then there's a place for me there too. I *can* claim *the* sinner's seat! Oh! it *was* so comforting, and I have

just to go back on that again! Oh! *how* I wish I knew what so many of His children know—His beauty—His love—how I long to get a glimpse of Him, such as He gives to those that love Him; but *my* lesson seems to be, the one taught to Thomas, to trust nothing but the bare Word, to have no ‘comfortable feelings’ at all. In place of being a ‘mirror’ reflecting Him, I am like the dark shadowed loch, which *won’t* catch the reflection *at all*. Sometimes I seem to catch a dim, far away idea of what it must be—this life of entire dependence, which seems to be given to some; but I must confess those expressions, such as when people speak of ‘having *continual* fellowship—walking close to God,’ and so on, stagger and terribly dishearten me. But it must be my fault. I know I am, oh! so far, far behind! Oh what joy to be safe within the city! what joy to have a warm, deep love to Jesus! what joy to say farewell to depression of spirits and fears by the way! But I mustn’t write of shadows or tempest! I often feel my experience is much liker John Bunyan’s, than anyone else. I always feel John Bunyan could understand *me*. I was greatly charmed with a remark I found the other day—‘We are not only *on* the Rock of Ages, but *in* the Rock.’ I daresay it’s a remark that has nothing in it of freshness to you, but I do like to think of those two positions—‘*in*’ ‘*on*.’”

Here are some of her farther aspirations:—

“Oh! I am sure if there’s one blessing I long for more than another, it’s to have a very hungry soul after Him. If we could only be like Mary of Bethany! Have you ever noticed that in all the glimpses we get of her, she is always at His feet. The first time, sitting, listening; the second time at His feet, in silent, speechless grief; and the third and last time, with her precious box of spikenard at His feet, anointing them, and oh! the sweet perfume seems to come down to us yet. Speaking little, thinking much, she evidently heard from Jesus what the others did not. Oh! for a closer walk with God! Don’t you think this attitude—sitting, and listening, would make us very happy. There is nothing I dread like that deadly chill that creeps over me so often. I do think the hardest conflict, the deepest soul struggles, are infinitely to be preferred.”

The following verses which she has left behind her, entitled, “The Wild White Rose,” whether they were written by herself or not, had undoubtedly their counterpart in her personal experience. They close, it will be observed, with the characteristic hope which shed such a light upon all the later years of her earthly life:—

“It was peeping through the brambles—
That little, wild, white rose,
Where the hawthorn hedge was planted,
My garden to enclose.
All beyond was fern or heather,
On the breezy open moor;
All within was sun and shelter,
And the wealth of beauty’s store.
But I did not heed the fragrance
Of flow’ret or of tree,
For my eyes were on that rosebud,
And it grew too high for me.

“ In vain I strove to reach it,
 Through the tangled mass of green—
 It only smiled and nodded
 Behind its thorny screen.
 Yet through that summer morning,
 I lingered near the spot ;
 Oh ! why do things look sweeter
 If we possess them not ?
 My garden buds were blooming,
 But all that I could see,
 Was that little mocking wild rose
 Hanging—just too high for me !

“ So, in life’s wider garden,
 There are buds of promise too—
 Beyond our reach to gather,
 But not beyond our view—
 And like the little charmer
 That tempted me astray,
 They steal out half the brightness
 Of many a sunny day.
 Oh ! hearts that fail with longing
 For some forbidden tree,
 Look up and learn a lesson
 From my white rose and me !

“ ’Tis wiser far to number
 The blossoms at my feet,
 Than ever to be sighing
 For just one bud more sweet.
 My sunbeams and my shadows
 Fall from a pierced hand ;
 I can better trust His wisdom
 Since his heart I understand.
 And maybe in the morning,
 When His blessed face I see,
 He will tell me why my white rose
 Grew just too high for me !”

That the thought of death was no stranger to her is abundantly apparent. The shrinkings of nature and the anticipations of faith had a frequent conflict within her, as she thought of entering the unseen : and this conflict expresses itself sometimes within the compass of a single letter :—

“ Another thing which has been greatly overpowering me, and is still, is the almost constant and awful realising of eternity. I think I know what Duncan meant when he said he felt as if eternity was on his eyeballs ! I seem to be held over the edge of the world to come, and made to see its awfulness. This clouds one, and causes a sadness and depression which I cannot describe. Now, I don’t think, perhaps, this is right. Can it partly arise from having constantly to prepare solemn addresses, with the mind dwelling specially at night, and all night, on those awful subjects ?

“What will it be to enter that *Urbs Beata*, where there will be no more sin, therefore no more fear, or doubt, or tears! I *am* better now, just clinging. I often like to go to His feet, and repeat Peter’s confession—‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Taking Him at His word is so sweet,—seeking to hold up that Robe of Righteousness, and from behind it to say, ‘Is this thy Son’s coat?’ ‘Yea, it is.’ ‘Then am I accepted in the Beloved.’”

Among Miss Fletcher’s latest letters are several which show how decided her religious opinions were, and how far religion was from being a mere emotion with her. We have seen how truly catholic her spirit was. The subjoined extracts will indicate that the religious world of the day furnished even her, however, with a “pet aversion.” The narrowness of professed unsectarianism and the conceit of religious exclusiveness were peculiarly abhorrent to a nature like hers, and in dealing with religionists of the so-called Plymouth *Brethren* type, she did not scruple to express herself strongly where she strongly felt. The following needs no further introduction than the explanation that it was written to a young friend in England, who, she feared, was in danger of coming under Plymouthistic fascination.

“MY DEAR ———

Are you getting into mist and clouds? Do let me write to you just as I’d have tried to speak. Are you not conscious you are drifting off from the clear, grand old mooring ground? When you wrote to me that your dearest friend had become a Plymouth sister my heart sank within me, for I know, when we care much for any one, how apt we are to be influenced; and the doctrines of that sect are, in some respects, fascinating to an earnest spirit. I know your aspirations after a closer walk with God, and I wish I had more of such longings; but, my dear ———, do take it from me, I can tell you I know only too well the effect of their teaching. It will warp your judgment, it will encase you in self-righteousness—producing an amount of self-conceit that is awfully injurious. It will blight your Christian graces of Charity, Zeal, Love, and Sympathy. You will get into a narrow and most hurtful groove, and, in place of finding what you seek after—‘a closer walk with God’—you will be lost in dim, hazy, speculative ideas, which you don’t thoroughly understand yourself, much less anyone you try to talk to. Now, do not think I am a novice in this; the very contrary. They have tried very hard to get me over, and one of their most eminent men in London argued with me by the hour; but I thank God the Cross of Calvary, and the glorious old, old story of substitution was too precious to be mystified. And then they put such extraordinary and hazy meanings on the simplest Bible truth. There is a young lady here, who, earnestly seeking closeness to Jesus, thought she would get it with the ‘Brethren.’ She was obliged to leave after a couple of years, and she has told me repeatedly that the arrogance, and self-righteousness, the drifting into outrageous views of simple gospel truth, was dreadful. My dear ———, I assure you, that your career as a child of God, and a worker in His vineyard will, if you adopt such views, be fearfully hindered and blighted. You can never have the same influence over your brothers, or relatives. There’s nothing like the simple, plain doctrines of the Cross. Oh! ——— dear, do come back to them. Stick to what is so clearly revealed. I tell you, if God has given me any success at all in His work, which I trust humbly He has, the

secret is this—telling poor sinners of the simple, earnest story of the Cross. And —— dear, do beware of this so-called Higher Christian Life. I tell you the Higher Christian life is to be found deep down in the Valley of Humiliation, not in the heights of self-exaltation, and in asserting, as such do, that they sin no more, or if they do, they have no conscience of it. Do let me tell you, my dear ——, what I try to tell myself, the Higher Christian life is to be found in keeping close to the side of Jesus, fighting a daily, hourly, every moment conflict against sin, within and without; not in some extraordinary mystery called, 'the blessing;' not in some sensation called, 'a new revelation;' but simply in the closer grip of a real, living, personal Saviour. Oh! how happy I would be to know you were grounded and rooted in these simple gospel truths, and not easily led aside by every wind of doctrine. Don't you remember how the Apostle says not to believe any such—no, not even an angel from heaven. Let me tell you too, that now-a-days, the world, the Christian world, seems going mad in its religion. Oh! remember that awfully solemn word, 'If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.'

"Now I am done. It's because I love you, dear, as I do, that I have written thus, and can't bear to think of your usefulness blighted, your spirit clouded (unconsciously to yourself), and your whole joyous nature warped and narrowed—as it must be if you adopt such teaching. I do pray the dear Lord to take you gently and tenderly in hand—His own hand, and, drawing you closer and closer, lead you into all truth.

"I don't know, maybe you will not be pleased at me writing thus. I'd a thousand times rather have spoken, but I got no chance. I do wonder if we shall ever meet again! *My* prayer ever is: Suffer me not to lose my way, and bring me home at last."

This letter was soon followed by another, expressive of Miss Fletcher's satisfaction that her fears as regarded her young correspondent were without foundation:—

"I am so glad to know you have been kept so strong in the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. I know how alluring some things seem to an earnest spirit. But, my dear child, you will find the higher Christian life the life of sore conflict and self-denial, and that till you step into the river, and enter the gate of the '*Urbs Beata*.' A lady told me yesterday that she asked one of those 'higher' people, after an address in which he said he could never come down in the morning without uninterrupted communion with God, and how he always had it: 'What would you do if six or seven knocks came from little hands, to pin on collars, etc., when you were so engaged,—would you not feel ruffled?' He was forced to confess—'I don't know what I'd do.' Ah! these people are not brought face to face with the every-day small worries of life; in fact, they don't know what they are talking about. May the dear Lord keep you very, very close to Himself, and then you will be safe."

As the spring advanced, Miss Fletcher lived and laboured with the intensity of one who seemed to know that her day on earth was nearly done. When her classes broke up for the season, the members little thought that they were to see her face no more. But she herself seemed to have a strange presentiment that it would be so, and gave more than one expression to this feeling, which those who heard her, though they thought little of it at the time perhaps,

were too soon to regard as a sad prophecy fulfilled. A gentleman says of one of her last meetings, held in Whiteinch :—

“I can well recall her last appearance when she stood before 500 working women, and spoke to them on the subject of ‘taking their own way,’ and in closing, made use of these words, uttered solemnly, almost sadly, ‘Very likely I may never speak to you again—will you not come and serve the Lord Jesus?’ We never saw her again. All too soon (so we think) this able and talented servant, noted, perhaps, most of all, for her *great willingness* ‘to spend and be spent,’ has been called to her reward.”

Miss Fletcher had announced to her classes her intention of spending part of the summer of 1883 in Palestine. One main object with her was, to gather fresh material, if God spared her, for the ensuing winter’s work. Another was, to have a time of quiet meditation, as she sought, both in the literal and the spiritual sense, to trace the footsteps of the Son of Man.

“God sees,” she writes to a friend, just before starting, “I need to be left much alone. As some one says,—‘There are some flowers which grow best in the shade, deep down in the valleys, and can’t stand much, or any, sunshine.’ I think that’s me. But oh, surely it’s grand to be under His leading, let Him lead where and how He will. I sail from Liverpool to-morrow, and hope to spend my time, during the long sailing, in quiet searching of His word, and seeing to it that I really am on *the* Foundation. . . . Good-bye for the meantime, I hope to tread once more where His feet trod; and, indeed, to follow Him there is one, if not the principal, object of my visit to Palestine.”

It was after not a little vacillation, and with a burdensome foreboding on her heart, that she set sail for Egypt, on Saturday, the 9th June, and during her voyage she had many a longing back look toward home. Almost immediately after sailing, she wrote home, posting the letter from Malta :—

“How thankful I shall be to be ‘Homeward Bound’ no one knows, and I’ll never come out here again without you. When all is so lovely, I often wish you were beside me to enjoy it; but then when it gets so hot, I feel glad you are not here. I think this trip will do me good; it brushes away the cobwebs, and makes one thankful for the ‘old country.’ Then, it does give a certain amount of fresh ideas and thoughts for others. Still, I take terrible fits of ‘home sickness,’ and such a longing to be back.”

On her voyage, Miss Fletcher kept a pencil diary, from which we may cull a few brief extracts.

Off Finisterre she writes :—

“Have felt much longing after being really His. I do think being thrown into this society makes me yearn intensely for Him, and an interest in Him. When you are constantly associating with His own, you are apt to be more careless, and yet how little am I like His if at all! Oh! it’s so awfully difficult to make a stand, to be brave, and yet the captain here is not ashamed to own his owner, Papayanni, and why should I be ashamed to own Him as my owner.”

Between Algiers and Malta she records :—

“Yesterday, a very wretched day, heavy swell, sick, and utterly limp, and down; did nothing all day but lie about; night, full moon, but motion unpleasant all night; rolling to-day calmer and pleasanter. In looking back, how much you see of the way being the best way! I see this—at the time how you feel you would like another way, but afterwards you feel it *was* the best! I can see that though I am in some respects lonely, yet better that, than some portion on earth of misery without God. I do not think I ever felt how dreadful it would be to have no God, and no Jesus, and no home beyond this hollow world. Oh! what a hollow world; and how the love of God in the heart makes a reality even in the very character!”

A little later she says :—

“I did, I think, a very little bit realise His Personality and nearness, and as the sun was setting without the vestige of a cloud, I sought to put my soul into the hands of the Maker of the sea, that blue, lovely sea, and of that exquisite sky and glorious sun. How it reminded one of a dying believer, setting, sinking, so gradually, to live in another brighter world. I have remarked that though a cloudless sunset is not so beautiful as a clouded one, for the clouds set off the bright rays and golden light, yet a cloudless sunset is much finer often, leaving a golden and crimson flush, long after the sun has sunk.”

And again :—

“What a lovely flood of light and blue, and calm! What a sun! what a sky! what a sea! And if He gives the earth such luxuriant calm, will He not give abundance of spiritual blessing? Yes! over and above what we can ask or think. ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ Felt so sure all would be well.”

Off Port Said she writes :—

“A dreadful scare! Cholera has broken out at Damietta. Almost sure not to be allowed to get out at Jaffa. I feel utterly upset—it seems as if I never were to get pleasure; but I feel, too, as if all will turn out for the best. He will guide me.”

Her fears about landing at Jaffa were happily disappointed on the 26th of June :—

“In a terrible state about quarantine—eagerly watched the boats as we made for Jaffa. The boatmen swarmed up; oh, how I tried to thank God! It turned out that if I had only been a few hours later, the telegram would have arrived ordering ten days’ quarantine. Surf heaving, leapt into boat, got on well. As I neared the house, heard a cry of joy; warm welcome; such pretty children.”

Miss Fletcher’s feeling of relief on safely arriving at Jaffa was proportionate to the anxiety she had felt about reaching it. Sitting on the balcony of Miss Arnott’s Home, on the following day, she said to her—“Oh, this is such rest! I feel as if every care and

burden were gone." But the circumstances were not favourable to prolonged tranquillity of feeling, and in the course of a day or two we find Miss Fletcher writing home :—

"I am sorry to say matters are looking very bad—quarantine in all the steamers leaving Egyptian ports. There is great fear of cholera here, and there is so much sickness. I am beginning to long to be home. I go up to Jerusalem on Monday night. If matters do not improve, I will try and leave the country as soon as possible, especially as I have a long quarantine before me. It's been a strange time from beginning to end, and who can tell what the end may or will be?

"I shall certainly not remain longer than I can possibly help. There is a terrible scare here, and preparation to meet cholera; there are such numbers of deaths all over the country. I have kept well up until to-night, and feel rather down. But He who has helped me here so wonderfully, will, I think, help me home too; or else take me to a better home than even High Windsor, though that is a dearly loved home. I must try and keep up, and hope!"

Her journey to Jerusalem and Hebron occupied only a few days. On the 4th July she returned to Jaffa, much fatigued. During her short remaining stay there, she addressed a meeting of native women, with the aid of an interpreter. It was the last meeting she addressed on earth, and she greatly enjoyed it. Her theme was the most appropriate she could have chosen for the last—the 55th chapter of Isaiah. A few days before, she had written to her own beloved girls at home, the remarkable letter of 28th June, whose closing sentences, for last words, were equally significant—

"If I am spared to return I will have much to tell you; meantime you know how near and dear you all are to my heart, and I pray that in that great and terrible day not one may be found missing. Oh, let us be earnest and prayerful! Eternity seems near—how near. Awake, my dear class—awake! Let none of us tarry on the enchanted ground and get sleepy. Stir up one another. Ask, seek, knock. Do not be content just to get into heaven, but strive after the abundant entrance. So may you and I and all near and dear to us be forever with the Lord."

Restless and ill at ease, she now turned her face eagerly homeward. Alarmed by a rumour that no more steamers were to call at Jaffa, she started in the second week of July for Beyrout, in a sailing boat. The Arab captain treated her with great kindness and respect, but the voyage lasted thirty hours, and she suffered severely from sickness all the way. At Beyrout she rejoined her friend, Miss Arnott, who had preceded her there on her way to England, and the two had an anxious week waiting for a steamer to take them home. Miss Fletcher was greatly troubled on noticing a telegram about the "Daphne" disaster on the Clyde, and, in her nervous state, was haunted by the fear that many of her friends would be among the lost.

At length, on the 17th, finding that the English steamers were to be delayed, she left by the French mail boat, by way of Smyrna. At the latter port she visited the grave of Polycarp, and, along with some of her fellow-passengers, took a run by train to Ephesus—whose ruins and picturesque surroundings greatly fascinated her. Her course from Smyrna lay through the Straits of Messina to Palermo and Marseilles. We are indebted to a gentleman who sailed with her all the way from Beyrout for the following particulars of her homeward journey:—

“Being the only English passengers on board, we were a good deal together, and from the first I was much interested in her companionship. Indeed, she was a general favourite on board—she was so agreeable and cheerful, and so interesting in conversation. The first couple of days she was somewhat unwell—complaining of severe headache, owing, she thought, to being out too much in the sun the day she set sail. She got a tonic from the doctor, and was soon all right.

“When we reached Smyrna on the 25th July, (where we remained over two days) as she was in good health, and anxious to see the places of interest there, we got donkeys, and rode about the city for an hour or two. On the second day, we took the train to Ephesus—a place Miss Fletcher was most anxious to see—and got a guide to take us through the ruins there, where we wandered about for two and a half hours till the train returned. This is the only time I can think of that she walked any considerable distance. We only rambled about slowly, however, and although we were both very tired when we got back, yet she afterwards spoke of being the better of the exercise, after the quiet monotony of the ship. The following days she was in good health and good spirits, and when we reached Palermo, was desirous of going on shore to see the city, and anxious, she said, to get some presents for some little friends at home. We were refused admission there, as we had come from the coast of Syria. After that, there was a good deal of conversation among the passengers about being put in quarantine at Marseilles. It was considered probable. Miss Fletcher was considerably annoyed and frightened at the thought of it, and particularly at the last, when we were kept in suspense in the harbour for three hours, till it would be decided whether or not. And afterwards, when we got into Marseilles, when she spoke of being weak and tired, I thought it was the reaction after the feeling of anxiety about escaping quarantine. She could eat little or nothing then, and seemed to be ailing from the time she got into the train. Two gentlemen of our passengers, who were with us, said jokingly: ‘You needn’t be sea-sick now, Miss Fletcher, when you are on solid land.’ She thought, I believe, it was owing to the French fare on board, that neither of us—used to the English style—liked at all. She took a cup of tea once or twice on the way, and seemed somewhat the better of it. It was a pleasant passage across to Dover, and she seemed to be nearly all right there, but when we reached Charing Cross, she was ailing still. I wanted her to go to some quiet Hotel and rest a while that day, as I saw she was scarcely fit to continue her journey. But she was most anxious to get on, and so I saw her into a cab for Euston Station, finding she would be in time to catch a train for Glasgow.”

The mournful sequel to this narrative is soon told. On the evening of the day on which she started from London (Saturday,

the 4th August), she tottered across the threshold of her familiar home with trembling limb, and features blanched and shrunk, exclaiming to her friend Mrs. Clark, who met her at the door, "A dream! a dream! I've got back to leave my bones with you in dear old High Windsor." She was got to bed, and next morning was rather better. By afternoon she had so much rallied as to be able to rise for a time and recline upon the sofa. She said—"Oh how earnestly I have prayed that God would permit me to reach home. I thought I would have to go to an hospital in London." Later on in her illness she said—"How I revelled, coming down on Saturday, in seeing the green grass, and wimpling burns, and the mist of Scotland!" Mrs. Clark answered—"I thought you disliked the mist." "Ah, but," she said, "it's my 'ain countrie." And then she added—"Shall we ever see its blue bells again, or wander over its bonnie hills together!"

By the Sabbath evening she was so ill with sickness at the heart that medical skill had to be called in; and everything that it could do was done in the succeeding days to save her valued life. But the time had come for the transference to the Father's house. She gradually sank on the Monday and Tuesday, revived a little on Wednesday, and grew decidedly worse again on Thursday. On the afternoon of that day, Mrs. Clark said to her—"I hope you'll be spared, and that we may have many happy days together yet; but if not, Jesus will take you to be with Himself." "Yes," she replied, with emphasis, "and *much sooner than you think.*" Her words came true. In the evening she sank into a deep sleep, from which there was no awakening on earth. Shortly after midnight she gently passed away, to awaken satisfied with her Redeemer's likeness, and to know by blessed experience the force of her oft-repeated expression—"What must it be to see His face! What will the first five minutes with Jesus be!"

The immediate cause of death was paralysis of the heart, complicated with congestion of the brain and other disorders. One of Miss Fletcher's lungs had for many a year been all but useless; and her general system, ere she died, was thoroughly spent. How well that much of its best energy had been transmuted into works which will last, and do still follow her!

Her last illness was borne in calm and chastened Christian fortitude. Her old impetuosity was stilled into the quiet gentleness of absolute submission. She had a desire to live, but a greater desire to yield herself to the will of God. Perplexing questions troubled her no longer; she was content to trust her Saviour as a little one. "If there's one thing I've learned in this trip to Palestine," she said, "it's patience." And by the end she might

have said, with the Psalmist—"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of its mother; my soul is even as a weaned child." There cannot be a doubt, however, that a prolonged illness would have been specially trying to one of her active, eager temperament. But God spared her that; He made her progress through the dark valley both short and easy. Like one of those Mediterranean sunsets she so much admired, the sun of her life went down in the brightness of strength, and with almost startling suddenness. But its setting *here* meant its rising *yonder*. The apparent sunset was the real dawn.

The lessons of the career thus closed in God's own peace need no deciphering for those who read in sympathy; and to those who have not this, we care not to interpret them.

Subjoined, at her request, is a statement by Mrs. Clark, which comes with the interest and authority of long and intimate acquaintance:—

"During the last nineteen years of Eliza Fletcher's life, she spent the greater part of it with me, and I think it is due to her memory, and due also to the members of the Classes which she so long and faithfully taught, that I should state what I believe regarding her conversion. That that preceded her second trip to Australia is certain, and took place long before she could say, 'I know in whom I have believed.'

"The glorious doctrine of Election she never doubted. The high standard of Christian life which she knew God required of her, along with her painfully sensitive nature, and her overwhelming sense of unworthiness, made her at times doubt her own conversion, and always caused her to write bitter things against herself. While thus condemning herself, her generous nature sought and found in others what she felt she was only aiming at, but what those who knew her best were persuaded she was not only longing after, but really living out.

"With such a sense of insufficiency, it is a great comfort to remember how peaceful her end was. She returned home five days before her death, and much of that time was spent in silent prayer, and in communion with God. It seems to me that her heavenly Father, in a most gracious way, spared her what she often dreaded—the physical suffering of death; and her entering into the unseen was, in tender mercy, through a calm and peaceful sleep, to awaken in His likeness."

Miss Arnott, likewise, says:—"She had an instinctive shrinking from death—not that she doubted her acceptance in Christ, but it was a dread of passing into the unknown world. She often expressed this feeling to me, and I tried to comfort her by telling her that I believed many who were thus in bondage during their lifetime had all that fear taken away when the time came—and often I made it a subject of prayer that she might be quite delivered from this feeling. When I heard how peacefully she had passed away I was filled with thankfulness that that prayer had been graciously answered, and her heart's desire granted. Her dear Lord and Master Himself drew nigh in that sick chamber and spoke His 'peace be still,' and, gently laying His hand upon the heart of His child, she quietly and peacefully fell asleep in Jesus."

And thus, as her hand relaxed upon the world and the things of time, she clasped at length the "White Rose" she had sought to reach so long. The struggle was over; victory, reward, and rest had come!

Appreciative notices of Miss Fletcher appeared in various papers, and in particular in the *Christian Leader*, from whose "portrait" we take the following reference to the obsequies:—

"On the day of the funeral several groups of women, with tearful countenances, gathered near the house, and were admitted, as far as possible, to the service in the drawing-room, which was conducted by Mr. Russell of Lochwinnoch. When the procession started from 6 Windsor Terrace, West, on its way to the Necropolis, an unusual spectacle presented itself. It was found that all the shops on both sides of the road, as far as the Kelvin, had their blinds down and their shutters closed while the procession passed. On reaching the place of interment in the Necropolis, the mourners found themselves unexpectedly reinforced by a company of nearly two hundred sorrowing persons, who had voluntarily assembled to pay a farewell tribute to Miss Fletcher's memory."

The narrative may be continued in the words of the Rev. Mr. Torrance, who, in the unavoidable absence of the present writer, was the officiating minister:—

"The scene at her funeral was a very impressive one. As I was an eye-witness of it, perhaps I may be allowed to record what I saw. A good many of her class gathered round her residence to see the solemn procession start, but most betook themselves to the cemetery. Immediately inside the gates of the Necropolis—at the East-end of the bridge—there stood a company of weeping mourners. The path up the hillside was also lined with them. But the great mass had congregated around the open, empty, expectant grave on the summit. These, when her remains arrived, converted the place by their tears into a 'Bochim.' No arrangements had been made for any service at the grave. It

became obvious at once, however, that something must be said or done. So after a few impromptu words had been spoken, and a brief prayer offered, all united in singing her favourite hymn :—

'How bright these glorious spirits shine !
Whence all their white array?
How came they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day ?
Lo, these are they from sufferings great,
Who came to realms of light,
And in the blood of Christ have washed
Those robes which shine so bright.

'Now with triumphal palms they stand,
Before the throne on high ;
And serve the God they love, amidst
The glories of the sky.
His presence fills each heart with joy,
Tunes every mouth to sing ;
By day, by night, the sacred courts
With glad hosannahs ring.'

"When the coffin had been lowered into the grave, the friends present were allowed an opportunity of taking a nearer and last look of it. As they did so, many of them plentifully bedewed with tears the earth that was soon to cover it for ever from their eyes. But all felt that the task they were engaged in was not merely the committing of 'earth to earth, and dust to dust.' They were laying away, as on a bed of spices, the body of a sleeping saint, which 'being still united to Christ,' should 'rest in the grave till the resurrection.' They were planting on the bosom of earth a seed destined to yield a glorious harvest at the coming of the Lord. Then the grave closed its mouth for a little over the mortal remains of Elizabeth Fletcher.

"It was felt that it would be well for the members of her class to meet together ere long for their mutual comfort. So it was agreed upon the spot to assemble on the following night in their old meeting-place, St. George's Road Free Church. Although little notice had been given, the church was filled with a deeply solemnized company of mourners ; whose sorrow, we hope, was at least partly alleviated by the consolation contained in the precious Word.—1 Thess. iv. 13-17."

It will interest the readers of this Biography to know that since Miss Fletcher entered into rest, others have entered into certain of her labours. Two ladies, fired with much of her spirit (Miss Jane Hay and Miss Jane Hope Grierson), have been conducting the Tuesday and Wednesday classes, with both devotion and acceptance. May the Sower, and the Reapers, and the Harvest all rejoice together "in that day!" And may all of us who share the Christian hope lay to heart the motto which Miss Fletcher being dead yet speaks—

" IF WE CAN'T ALL GATHER A SHEAF, LET US
ALL GLEAN AN EAR."

F I N I S .

STRAY THOUGHTS.

(FROM NOTES OF MISS FLETCHER'S ADDRESSES.)

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Joseph had to get a deal of chiselling, to fit him for his place. So in God's quarry every one has a peculiar discipline.

Diamonds are very hard to polish. The first thing done to them is to grind them; then comes the polishing work. What queer specimens we were when He got us!

There is a class of people in Glasgow, just now, sailing in balloons—the perfectionists. The dust is better than the air. Spurgeon says, "Till I get wings I shall stay upon my legs."

Is there a word in the Bible that says, Wait before you come?

It is a popular idea of waiting, "I will do my best." Precisely so. You are at Bethsaida Pool. Such waiting is the devil's laudanum bottle.

Christians are not put into the world to see how comfortable they can be. It is the devil that keeps gardeners to keep the religious pathway smooth. The path of sorrow is not, for Christians, an untrod path.

The "fear nots" in the Bible are God's "forget-me-nots."

I put Herod up as a beacon before you. The lips that never refused to speak to the woman of Samaria or Mary Magdalene, were sealed to that haughty king. Hardened souls, beware! the silence of Jesus is awful.

It isn't a sermon worth preaching, unless Christ is in it. It is like a whaling ship finely officered, with plenty of life buoys, and plenty of fish round, but no harpoons aboard. Every Sabbath school teacher should have his harpoon, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Take a crust from God. It is better than a meal from man.

Rather walk with God in the dark than alone in the light.

Prayer meetings are first-rate things, and so are fellowship meetings; but they can never make up for aloneness at Jabbok's brook.

Don't let us think of the worldly employments first; but don't let us neglect our ordinary duties, while having our eyes fixed on Eternity. I don't approve of mothers running to meetings, and neglecting house duties or comforts. Make home as happy as you can, so that you may bring your dear ones in with you. Let your religion shine in the family, not only in the prayer meeting.

The sharp scythe of bereavement; then the thrashing of trial; then the mill grinding. You were never in such a mill as Job, or Daniel, or the three Hebrew servants.

Joseph in prison learned to lean on no earthly friend. A very difficult lesson to learn.

God takes us into His hand, and makes us the instrument to bring about His purposes. I can actually help God to bring about what He has foreordained.

"I remember my faults to-day." You can always remember some other body's. Go home, dear soul, and confess your own.

If the famine had not got the length of Canaan, they would never have found Joseph. Just so, if there had not been a famine in my soul, I would never have come to Jesus Christ. Never have met Him at all. Ah, my dear soul, pray for a famine visit.

Dear soul, it matters not how you come, nor by what road, but hast thou come at all. Such a Saviour! Not in His heart to chide—how different from us—nor in His heart to throw a stone. Only find thy way to Him. Let hunger bring thee. Except for hunger they would not have gone down to Egypt. Just so, my soul, I will never go to Jesus Christ till He starves me.

Must I give up my idol? Benjamin, or corn! Yield up my idol—find Christ. Keep my idol—lose Christ. If God is resolved to save you, He will soon bring your “shall nots” and “will nots” to an end. “Lord, I shall not give up my idol.” What does God do? He quietly starves the soul, and then we are made to cry,—“Lord, let my idol go, but give me corn from heaven.”

There are spurts when we forget past sins, but forgotten sins are not forgiven sins. Go home this night, and try and remember forgotten but unforgiven sins, for they are remembered by God.

In every life there is a turning point, as in a fever. A turning point that brings either life or death. Napoleon says, “In every battle there are ten minutes on which hangs the fate of nations.” So I believe for every soul there is a moment when that soul’s future weal or woe is decided. What a tremendous interest circles round our every-day life! What is the destiny of nations compared to that of the soul!

What makes the critical times in life more fearful is the silence with which they come,—as the snow falls from the heavens when you are sleeping. It is a solemn moment when a soul hears the Gospel—a solemn moment when we are called to decide between the right and the wrong—a solemn moment when the soul looks on death for the first time—a still more solemn moment when a father, mother, sister, or friend, says to you, “Meet me in heaven” —a still more solemn moment when the Spirit strives with you, saying, Come to the Master. Hundreds of soul’s battles are fought and won within five minutes. Unspeakably solemn are the silent-ness and quickness with which these battles are fought. What a moment was it in that young man’s life, who came to Christ and went away sorrowful. What a moment to Agrippa, when Paul reasoned with him, and he felt a striving in his heart, “Almost thou persuadest me.”

It is an awful moment when we neglect duty, and that moment never comes back to us again. Watch against the first appearance of sin. O how the three disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane would regret sleeping when they should have watched with their Master. I believe they regretted it all their lives through. What Gabriel, the archangel, might have longed to have done, these three men lost the opportunity of doing through their slothfulness.

“Look and live.” It did not need much theology to say that, and they could see from any point. Calvary’s cross!—what millions of eyes have looked there, to the Lamb of God. From India, Africa, South Sea Islands; from the soldier’s ranks and the sailor’s ship. Friend, look to Christ. You know He lives: and you shall live also, not through the look, but what you look at.

Moses lifts up his rod, and the waters divide. The Red Sea opened up step by step (this is my view of it), as they went forward, and thus it was a walk of faith. Learn this lesson, friend. Take the first step, and God will show you how to take the second step, even in the dark.

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,”—the hills of His glorious character, His finished work. To such hills as these I will lift mine eyes from the prairie land of our troubles, and afflictions, and sorrows.

The last moment of life will come to me, but what matters it where and when if I am safe in Christ Jesus.

The disciples took three steps. 1st, They sought. 2nd, They followed. 3rd, They stayed. These are three steps that must be taken by every soul.

Do you know as much of your Bible as of the evening newspaper?

The best way to know Christ is to try Him. Will He forgive my sins? Come and see. Will He give me that peace that passeth understanding? Come and see. Will He guide me through the dark valley? Yes, He will. We often recommend persons and are disappointed, but not this Friend.

Don't be tramway horses, jogging along. What views of the Atonement have you had since last week? There is not one of us but could be on Mount Tabor's top.

This earth is full of variety. The very gems and diamonds have a peculiar flash of their own. So is it with the flowers, insects, birds, fishes: God does not use the same mould or shape. Take your telescope, and you will see the stars have each a different form and a different pathway. So there is as great a variety in the world of grace. Conversions are all different in some way—not brought about as a baker throws out his loaves. The method in which God brings souls to Himself is as marvellous in variety as in the other things I have shown you. The same fountain, same robe, same home,—yet every one brought home in a singular way, as if there was no other one but himself. The dear Master is building a great many houses: there is the same Builder, same material, but different shapes. I would like to be a M'Cheyne, says some one. Exactly so: clipped into a M'Cheyne! All on one pattern! But God does not prune His trees after the method of the Dutch gardens.

Mephibosheth's soliloquy.—“I wonder what David will think of me, poor lame thing.” But David never cast up to Mephibosheth what a poor cripple he was. He fell on his face, poor sad Mephibosheth. He did not know what David wanted with him; perhaps it was to slay him. A picture of a poor soul coming to Christ. Perhaps He will slay me, but perhaps He will save me; and we catch at the straw like a drowning man.

I do not see you as human beings at all: I only see you as immortal souls.

I would like you all to shine for Jesus. Girls, be a light in the warehouse, be a light in the mill. Mothers, be a light in your families. Sisters, be a light, a steady light, to your brothers and sisters.

Do not try how near sin you can come, and not be brought into contact with it.

Do not argue with Satan. Just say to him, "Well, Satan, I give it up: I am a sinner, but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

I have been walking through the streets of Glasgow in a maze, wondering what they are doing at home (heaven).

"We have been toiling all night, and have caught nothing." What was the reason? They were not raw hands; nor were they lazy; nor was there a lack of fish. There is a providence in everything. It was to show them that toil, the sleepless night, mere human instrumentality, avail nothing. "Without Me ye can do nothing." They had not Christ with them, and caught nothing. See that ye have Christ in the boat!

Deep waters are very still and placid, but those who go down on their knees and look into them discover their depths unseen. So if you go down on your knees and study this Psalm, you will see the depths of it.

Psalm cxix. 129-133. The idea seems to be that of a dark cave. So is it with your heart. There has got in by the entrance a little light now, but what will it be by and bye! Some people put a stone at the mouth of the cave—conceit, selfishness, worldliness, folly, prejudice. It is good when the Lord breaks open the mouth of the cave, and lets the light in. The entrance of the Word gives light. Even a threatening, for when a threatening gets in, a sweet promise is sure to follow.

"Oh, let my footsteps in Thy word aright still ordered be." 1st reason—Because I don't know where danger lurks. Satan may come to me, clothed as an angel of light. 2nd reason—Because every false step makes the path more difficult. 3rd reason—Because the eyes of the world are upon me. The world can, in its own case, swallow a camel, but it strains at a gnat in a Christian. 4th reason—Because my Master's eye is upon me. And should that not make me watch—the thought of that gentle, tender, loving Saviour's eyes being upon me. "Let no iniquity obtain dominion over me." What iniquity we have in our hearts! A look has often been a lucifer match.

“Who in the Lord’s most holy law do walk and do not stray.” They walk: that means progress. But remembering that David sometimes felt himself “ready to halt,” there’s comfort for you, if you are in the way, *though* a Ready-to-halt. Luther, Calvin, Henry Martin, Rutherford, M’Cheyne are all Great-hearts; but, thank God, He cares also for the Ready-to-halts. You are as true a pilgrim as Mr. Great-heart. Because you are weak and sickly He will not fling you out. He has provided beautiful crutches for the ready to halt, and exactly fitted for each one’s shape and size—beautiful promises. “He knows when you are tempted,”—tuck that under one arm; “He is able to support and deliver you when you are tempted,”—tuck that under the other arm. Only be in the way; then the progress may be slow, but it is sure. Mr. Ready-to-halt flung away His crutches when he came to the river of death, and said, “Welcome, dear life.” So may you.

This light shines athwart the wildest ocean and into the dreary spots of earth. O the comfort it gives. Does this Bible comfort *you* when the storms pass over your soul? Do you get your comfort from this lamp? It comforts me in the sorest trial. It will give me comfort in trial, in affliction, in death.

Have you got in you a light that will stand the damps of the dark valley? If we have not a better lamp of truth than what the minister sees in us or our friends see in us, will that suffice? Nay. It’s what God the Father, Son, and Spirit sees of reality in us. Pray that He may make us real now.

It is a very solemn thing to die, to leave the scenes of earth and enter the dark valley, but more solemn still is the beyond. What a comfort to have this lamp through the dark valley, and down to the river’s edge, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” Many a soul has been lighted over the river by that promise, to the golden gates.

I am so frightened lest we have not the real light. There are so many counterfeits. Go to God, and pray, like David, “Search me, O God, and try me.”

Whatever objection men make to the Bible, it will light you home. Though you have to go comfortless and in darkness through this world, “hope to the end,” and this lamp in your hand, by God’s grace, will light you home.

Don’t carry your lamps too high. See that your light strikes everywhere around you. Some ministers carry their lamps too high. The perfectionists of the present day carry their lamps too high. Let the lamp strike down to the very depths.

Beware of going amongst tar, lest it soil you. You cannot possibly come in contact with it, and not be defiled. But if the path of duty lies near temptation, then, if God has placed you there, He will take care of you. "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." Let us watch and pray, and pray and watch.

God's word is a wonderful lamp, because it sheds such a light. Think *how long* it has been burning—6000 years since it first lighted up in its first faint flicker—when the promise was given to Adam (Gen. iii. 15). How bright and ever brighter it gets, as time goes on. Isaiah holds up a beautiful light to us. And so it shone on and on till *the* Light came into this dark world. Think *how far* it sheds its light—I mean the Word of God. A lighthouse can only shed its light, at the farthest, twenty-five miles over the waters. But this Light has come down from heaven, and, lighted up yonder, has sent its radiance quite over this dark world. The light from this lamp will enable you to see the golden gates, and the redeemed around the throne, and the Lamb in the midst thereof.

The people of this world are portionless. It is quite possible to have everything here, and yet have nothing at all. And you may have nothing down here, but everything up yonder. Isn't it passing strange that the world will not take this portion; but not so marvellous, when we were so long ere we took it ourselves.

A tree in South America, called the Judas tree, has beautiful scarlet blossoms, but it has a deadly opiate. The insects are charmed with it. But under and all round this tree there are millions of dead carcases lying. This is the world's portion,—sucking a deadly opiate.

"Nevertheless, Thou art my sure portion." If sorrow or death comes, Thou art my *sure* portion.—My *only* portion.—My *own* portion.—My *settled* portion.—My *all-sufficient* portion.—My *everlasting* portion. Nothing can separate me from the love of Christ.

Christ rejoices over *His* portion. "I rejoice over Christ, but I can't quite believe He rejoices over me," says some one. Yes, but God says, "I will rest in My love. I will rejoice over you with singing." The idea: a mother doting upon her child.

Sweet mercy comes in and slays the "ifs." One says that "eternal 'shalls' and 'wills' make glorious havoc of the 'ifs.'"

"They mocked at him." Unbelief is a flower that grows only on this side eternity.

Friend, hell is full of those who have wept for their souls.

Suspense is an awful thing to bear. Even Jesus said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." Why?

"If God will be with me." A pot of ointment with a fly in it. The "if" is the fly. Did God say "if?" What business had Jacob to preface with an "if?" It is the sinner that supplies the "if." Don't do as Jacob did.

God does not send us troubles that we cannot suck honey from.

Notice this very remarkable circumstance. In Eden, when all was life, God spake of death. Now, on the contrary, when all is death, God speaks of life. Death then, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" life now, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

There is no real safety but in holding to all Scripture, let them sneer who list,—the moorings by which old Bible worthies held leal and true. The evil which is now spreading its deadly blight over so many of the churches and homes of our nation is the self same which swept in deadly blast over Eden's fair garden, and left Eve's and Adam's heart in misery. "Hath God said?" This is unbelief's step number one; and on and on, down and down.

You and I never have felt what perfect holiness is, and therefore are unable to realise its loss. But Adam and Eve knew what they had been, and what they had lost.

The first sign of the recognition of guilt in the soul is a shut mouth. Plead quietly.

We often feel no progress; but though there may be many a cold day in April, we don't say we are going away from summer. So there may be often a cold heart, no progress, but, clinging to the mighty Conqueror's arm, you shall one day pass through the gate, and see the King in His glory.

The air of Calvary is perfumed with love.

I have one fear, that though I have made the sparks of hell fly about your ears, like the blacksmith's dog you have got so used to it that you are asleep.

Our hearts are like a tinder-box. Satan blows the bellows, and does not let the flame die for want of sparks. He does not bring the sin, but causes the sin in us to make us sin.

When the Spirit blows upon us, the stumps of self-righteousness wither up. Better, meantime, to be left with nothing but Christ, than to be found standing at the judgment seat with Satan and self.

A dish of moralities, or a plate of beautiful phrases, will serve a poor dead soul, for the dead cannot eat; but when a soul begins to live, it says, Give me Christ—"My soul doth thirst for Thee."

I don't follow the new fashion, "Lift up your hands," but "Lift up your hearts." Jesus Christ says, Who wants Me? I, says one. Then ask Him.

A good dose of Divine grace, and a few grains of Divine love, and a bracing healthy walk on some errand of kindness, make a good receipt for a bright sky.

Many a soul avoids the whirlpool of vice, but anchors on an iceberg of worldly conformity. Ah, soul, once very warm towards Jesus Christ, but now how cold, resting your anchor on the iceberg!

It is hard to carry a full cup. In the Vale of Humiliation you may run, yea, leap; but on the heights, beware!

You stand over hell on a rotten plank, held by the brittle thread of life. That is the only thing between you and everlasting woe. Oh, pitiful sight! a poor soul feeling the first drops of coming wrath in going down the valley. Hear the weird echo: No shelter, no shelter!

Beautiful thought: If the Head is above water, the body will not drown. Above great water floods of temptation, Christ rose where we would have sunk.

I think if I went round each one here, I would find a spiritual infirmary. I shall walk down the wards. My pulse beats very low to Christ, says one. My heart beats slow, says another. I have a fit of palsy; I, a turn of ague; I, general paralysis, groans a fifth. Then I will bring you out to where the sun shines—three spots where it is always shining. First, Gethsemane's garden; second, Calvary's cross; third, Joseph's empty tomb.

What a scene in this first chapter of the Bible! Try to realise it. The time is before time was. The Speaker here is God. Observe the abrupt and startling manner in which the Holy Ghost opens this sublime book. We are at once introduced to Genesis. No preface is needed. It is to God we are brought. We hear, as it were, His voice breaking the awful silence which has weighed upon the world. We see Him shining into the dense terrible darkness which has brooded there undisturbed. And all for what? That this earth of ours might be the scene of the mighty, the glorious scheme of redemption. There are no curious theories here, and though there has been no verse in the Bible more fought over, let us take it in its grand and sublime simplicity—content that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. Many with their speculations are like the child wishing to open the bellows to see where the wind came from. Let them who can afford to do so look for the wind; but let the simple, honest hearted disciple hang with holy joy over every word of inspiration from the very first verse here written, to the last in Revelation.

Only if your own feet are on the Rock of Ages need you try to pull another out of the depths.

Why does God see the light? Because He made it; and you remember that beautiful text, "For Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken the work of Thine own hands." So we have this exquisite lesson. God sees light in a soul, when you and I often cannot. He knows where it is, and sees it. Away down in many a pit lies a sparkling gem, a diamond, or other precious stone, covered with mud and earth, so that no eye but His discerns it. So in many a poor-house, factory, and warehouse, shines a light in the soul perceived only by the eye of God.

Light was needed, for no other work of God could be seen without it. So until I have Jesus I see nothing. I may see wonders of nature, and dive into the mysteries of earth, air, and water; but until I see Jesus, I see nothing. But when I see Jesus, the Light of light, then I see God's other works, and perceive God's glorious character. I see His love; I see His tender mercies over *all* His works.

Let us beware of such a prudence as will end in indolence or selfishness.

The battle of Christian with Apollyon lasted only three hours, but the battle with sin, self, Satan, all the way from the Wicket Gate to the River of Death.

Christ's Banner, unfolded outside Eden, Abel beheld and entered heaven. It ever floated over Israel's camp. Never did the breeze moan so mysteriously through its crimson folds as on Calvary, where the dying thief saw it and lived. Thank God for the noble band of missionaries of the Cross, the Livingstones, Duffs, Judsons, who are waving it aloft in toil and heat, the world over. Thank God for the noble band of workers at home too, in the dark places of the city, striving beneath the same blessed Banner.

God does not work miracles to help His poor people; He uses His poor to help His poor.

All pilgrims Zionward must needs pass this way—it is the King's highway—the way which winds round by the base of Sinai, on to Calvary, and loses itself in Mount Sinai above. Look, oh, soul, were thou mayest trace the footsteps of the flock.

Love, the passion flower, grows deep down among the leaves of godly sorrow.

Caleb, according to one interpretation, means "All heart." It is a great blessing to have a heart, but a greater to be "all heart." Some have so little, you could put it all into a nut shell. They have plenty of head, but little heart. Ah, I have often met such icebergs. When they approach, you seem to smell the cold, and take a sudden chill. And when they shake hands, you feel like taking hold of a dead fish. You come out with some strong assertion, warm thought, or glowing hope, but they answer with a cold look—a frozen yes or no. Oh, the shivers they send through you—like mountains covered with snow, very beautiful at a distance, but near, no, no! Ah, Caleb was not of that sort. He was "all heart;" one to do everything with a true ring; one to pray, work, and fight with a will and a heart. Oh, let us fling our whole heart into *all* we do. Don't dilly-dally, either in your heavenly or your earthly master's work. Some fall into the mistake of thinking they are to keep their heart for Christ's work, but do their secular work half and half. No, no: "whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not to men."

Some dear souls run before God's providence, and picking their own steps, plunge and fall. If you go before the pillar of cloud, you get into the clouds. The sheep *follow* Christ. He points the way, I follow.

"We are able." Ah, I like that plain spoken English. Not, "It's possible," or, "But are we able?"—Oh, to be real and leal before God. Caleb followed cheerfully. God has a number of followers, who might be called the "Grumbling Regiment." They follow; but, woe's me, what a following! Constant wails or groans! And a curious thing about them is, they are rather proud of their groans as a mark of great grace!

God set His seal on Caleb's youthful brow, and he was God's when it was covered with grey hair. His was a long, long life, and at eighty-five we find him as strong as at forty—still able to face the enemy. It is pleasant to see old saints who have been faithful young ones—veterans who have done more than smell powder, and can show scars everywhere but on the back.

How many have calculated on their day being long, and have found it suddenly ended, and themselves hurried into a dark lost eternity. So your day may close in a moment, and your sun go down at noon.

See! the chickens have ventured away from beneath the parent's wing. Lo, a black speck in the blue sky. It is the hawk, swooping down! Flee under the safe sheltering wing!—Ah, souls, there's a danger more terrible for you! Let conscience be aroused, hell's yawning gulf seen, God's just anger realised,—then the cry, wild and despairing, will go forth, Oh, for refuge! Is there such? Yea, verily, men and women, high as heaven, wide as infinity, there stands a Refuge, unchanging, sure. Christ is a Covert from the storm.

If we stand on some crag, as day begins to dawn the lovely landscape at last gradually unfolds itself, until all is flooded with light and beauty. So in the kingdom of grace, pictures never seen before unroll before our eye, and we are enabled to read the kindness, and love, and grace of our Saviour, as we never did before.

At Gibraltar, I was told there is a man, with match in hand, standing at the entrance to the tunnel of neutral ground. If there were any insurrection, he could at once light the whole train and blow the tunnel up: and to ensure alertness he is relieved every two hours. If only we were as watchful in spiritual things!

I *often, often* feel how happy Abraham must have been *to know* he was walking in the very road God wished him to go. What a happiness just to have God say, "Fear not: *I* am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward!"

The man who was most intimately acquainted with Christ's humanity gives the clearest and most emphatic testimony concerning His Divinity—John.

I have been thinking of the *purity* of Jesus. How would I feel in the company of a perfectly sinless one? I have such a *true* persuasion of Jesus as a Person, and of the reality of the tremendous events in the deep future, yet how little am I *habitually* influenced by this!

We shall enjoy the society of angels. The saint on reaching heaven will find the angels to be not strangers but old friends, who have known all about him from the day of his birth until the hour of his death.

Three precious things: He is able (Heb. vii. 25); willing (1 Tim. ii. 4); sweetest of all, ready (Matt. xxii. 4; Isa. xxxiii. 20).

Here is a well of water springing up. In the silent night watches, when no eye gazes on it, the spring bubbles on. In the hot broiling sun, cool and clear it rushes up, in its perpetual motion. In frosty weather, when the rivers are frozen, the spring on the hill-side flows as ever; icicles fringe it, yet the stream still gushes out. So should it be with the believer, in the worst situation. He may have no Christian friend, yet the life within cannot freeze. Poor, but in faith rich; in bodily suffering, yet full of love.

What a wonderful thought—the two growths in a believer. He grows weaker in self and grows stronger in Christ. *He* must increase; I, the I dwindles away, until at the river it is lost in the waters of death.

What gems sparkle out of chapters in which there seems to be nothing! Jeremiah xxxii. 18, 19 suggests the curious thought that it would be a good investment to buy land in Palestine, only I fear it will never be realised in my day!

Jesus the Shepherd carries the lambs, washes them, puts name on them, loves them.

Ye are the light of the world: let your light shine. Light has a quiet, silent influence—this is the character of believers. But remember you must get light before you can be light—get it before you give it. The great transition is “out of darkness into marvellous light.” Have I got the Light?

Light is *visible*. During the darkness it shines the more. Is it so with yours? Light *guides*. It shows the traveller the way, the sailor the track, the solitary one the road. Ah! he says, yonder are the lights: all is right. Are you guides to others? Eyes are upon you. Show me a man walking in footsteps of Christ; he is the best guide. Light *reproves*. It discovers defects. Does your look, your presence rebuke gossip, the oath, the mock at sin. Factory, two foremen, one converted, profanity ceased. Light *gladdens*. It is an attractive, cheering thing. It makes the birds sing in the early morning. After a weary night to the invalid, she hailed “dear day.” It had been a long night. But as the first ray of light fell on the wall, she was ready to welcome “dear day.” Do you carry sunshine wherever you go? Is it good to be where you are? Do you seek to be not a bug-bear, but sunshine. Light *gives health* and beauty. “Let the Light in.” It will be life.

Lighthouse. Man fell asleep—dismissal—crime, letting light go out. A passing ship might have been misled. Some eye may have been on *you*, seeking guidance!

How shall we continue shining? By drawing our supplies from Christ. We have no resources of our own. Only in proportion as we look to Jesus, will our light be clear and bright. What an incentive to holy living—“Ye are the light of the world.” The world, the Church, enquirers are looking at you; trim your feeble lamp, my brother! The world needs the preaching of the Gospel, but it also needs the Gospel in the life of believers.

No man ever had true faith, until he was sensible he could not believe; and the man who feels this, and sees the sin of unbelief as the greatest of his sins, is in the highway to obtain faith and salvation.

Diamonds will not shine when removed from the light; in the darkness they give no light. So with the soul away from the Sun of Righteousness.

Remember, the gold is put into the furnace because it is gold. Men don't refine chucky stones or rubbish. It is corn they thrash, not dockens or dandelions.

Read your novels in the light of a candle and a death head.

Artificial flowers are not affected by weather. But the sweet lilies of genuine love and faith often droop.

I have trod the awful solitudes of the ice world, in the recesses of the higher Alps; I have seen the waste of the desert sand, and have experienced the loneliness of the dark Highland moors and inland lakes, with no blade of grass, nor song of bird, nor hum of bee, to give life to their rocky shores and precipices; but never have I seen any spot on earth which so impressed my imagination with all that was wild, desolate, and weird, as the desert gorges which connect the dead sea with Jerusalem.

If He were thy Father, He could, by a single word, bring relief, and dispel the cloud, and bestow the blessing, but He does not. Is He thy Father then? *Does* He love thee? Blessed be God, His Son, in whom He was well pleased, was led into the wilderness, to be there tempted of the devil; and He suffered hunger, loneliness, deepest anguish. The tempter always professes to have our good at heart, and to sympathize with us: Satan *pities* this Son so ill used by His Father.

The Bible is a lamp shining in a "dark place," (2 Peter i. 19), full of phantoms and shadows, unrealities, illusions, dreams. The word shines into the heart. Pore over the Book, until One who caused the page to be written makes it speak.

Notice, Simeon stood at the temple court. There came a woman carrying an infant, accompanied by her husband, poor in dress, with little to mark the occurrence, in the eye of others; but when a man has communed all his life with God, watching His hand, and looking for His presence, he sees what flesh and blood cannot see. In that little child Simeon sees "salvation."

What Simeon saw was Christ Himself. It was a little child, to which he gave the name of God's Salvation. Wonderful faith. Simeon was enabled to look beyond all that was visible; beyond the helpless and unconscious Babe; beyond the long years ere the voiceless lips would utter one word of wisdom, or the little hands perform one work of power, and ere He who was then the Babe should have completed His round of toil and suffering. To see Christ is to see Salvation—to see Him, as Simeon saw Him, with the eye of faith, though everything, to the outward eye, was against His being so.

"That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." By their treatment of Christ men show what they are. The veil is stripped off them by their language and conduct with respect to Christ; their estimate of His character, life, doctrine. Judas betraying, Peter denying, Herod mocking, Nicodemus confessing, Joseph of Arimathea befriending, weak women cleaving to Him—what a revealing!

Christ got into His pulpit—perhaps a mountain—and opened His mouth at Eden to four hearers. He gave each of them his bit. He didn't begin with—"Christian brethren," but gave each his bit. Adam, where are you? there's your bit. Eve, I see you. Devil, come here.

England, proud England, *poor* England, saying farewell to the Sabbath and to God. Scotland, *poor* Scotland, dear Scotland, land of your birth; may we not say, land of your second birth!

Adam never sent a message to God, a telegram to heaven, saying, Oh, God, come down: I've got a sore heart. God came first. Adam would rather have gone to hell than go to God.

If you are not bound for the Cape of Good Hope, you must be bound for Cape Wrath.

Christ has a school. He teaches gratis. He teaches sums of reduction—reduces the world and self. He finds the mind in confusion, needing to unlearn much, as the child when it goes to school has to unlearn the pronunciation its grandmother has taught it. Do you love your Teacher and attend regularly? or are you inclined to say, Mother, I've got a headache; I will not go to-day. When children come to school they bring a book. We bring a book—conscience. Look at each leaf—guilty. Some, remember, are turned out of His school. The Jews, after much training, couldn't spell Messiah, and they were turned out.

When God brought that deep, mysterious sleep over the second Adam, there was taken from His side blood and water, which produced a Church—an help meet for the Second, as certainly as Eve was to the first Adam.

Some take sun portraits, and send them to parties at a distance. Jesus has a real photograph of His bride, drawn in eternity. John got sight of that photograph. He said, "We shall be all like unto Him."

How sad it is to think that "many a tongue that has spoken much about Christ, and regeneration, and the Holy Spirit, shall want a drop of water to cool it in the burning lake."

This is a beautiful prayer—"Take my heart, Lord, for I cannot give it Thee; keep it, for I cannot keep it for Thee."

The rarest conversion in the world is that of a hardened hypocrite.

If it were always the trade wind we would settle down; so God sends us Euroclydon. Such weather impels men to take refuge in the harbour.

It's sweet to think that all vile as I am, He says, "How can I put thee among the children?" Lord, wash me with the blood, cover me with Thy robe, and then I, even I, will be as clean as they.

There is nothing more hollow than worldly friendship. The bees suck all the honey out of the flowers, but when the winter frosts come, their friends the bees are gone.

What is hell? God gathering all His family home, and you not among them.

There can be no intrusion permitted, there must be a single-handed combat—hand to hand, heart to heart; alone seeking, alone finding, alone starting, alone running, alone encountering enemies, dangers, difficulties; alone entering the river, alone passing over and through the gates. *Then*—with the family, for ever and for ever! No more lonely midnight wrestling, no more brook Jabboks, no more heavy, weary hearts!

Yes, dear soul, this is the way—by briers and thorns, under sharp and cutting winds of adversity—that all the children of the kingdom march home.

Ah! remember it wasn't the mere life of our dear Lord that satisfied divine justice. Had he gone about doing good for thirty, forty, or a hundred years, it would not have availed. It would not have done much for me. It was His death that rent the veil and opened up the way of return.

Oh! to get such a grip of Jesus, such a hand hold of the Lord, as, though lame and halt and full of fear, to cry, "I will not let Thee go."

Look at your mercies with both your eyes, and at your troubles with half an eye.

God is a great housekeeper. He provides for His birds and beasts; so be sure He will not let His babes starve.

The other day there seemed to me such marvellous sublimity in those words spoken to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." What a light they cast over the sleeping place of every one of His dear children!

God delights to rebuke our poor, cowardly, unbelieving hearts. Dreaded Esau meets, embraces, kisses Jacob. Yet how doubt creeps in, notwithstanding all God's faithfulness.

O the hunger of the soul, and how awful to see its noble aspirations crushed, dragged, trampled in the mire of dissipation, aye, or of the elegant follies of decent outward morality. O the emptiness of a soul that has not Jesus in it! O the weariness of yearning—O the solemn, silent, death-like moments that visit such! Then, when some sudden blow tears away the veil, the anguish is seen—the cry is heard for a Guide and Helper. O soul, above the din and disappointment of earth, hear this loving, tender word of Divine entreaty, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.”

Temptation is the match; sin is the gunpowder.

I have attended the funeral of Self many a time, and had its company all alive the next morning.

Abraham had to use means. Men are not saved while fast asleep. You wont get to heaven on feather beds.

You are not to fancy you are in the wrong path because beset with difficulties and trials. That would be walking by sight, not by faith.

Some birds build in fields; the harvest comes, and their nests are swept away. But those who build in the rocks are safe.

I wonder if others feel that *intense* craving after *sight* that I do. How often I long to see Jesus; to “*know it all!*”—the deep mystery of the unseen; to hear Him say to me, “THOU shalt see my glory soon.”

It is no child's play to die—to meet the last struggle. I confess I have an intense longing for it to be over. Lord, give me a grip of Thee. Meet me in the valley.

We *have* "expectation" beyond this life. Do we not expect when we lie on the bed of sickness that He will send angels to carry us to His bosom—when the pulse is faint, and the heart heaves heavily, that some angelic messenger shall stand and look with loving eyes upon us, and whisper, "Sister spirit, come away." As we approach the heavenly gates we expect to hear the welcome invitation, "Come, ye blessed." We are expecting harps of gold and crowns of glory. We are hoping soon to be amongst the multitude of shining ones before the throne. We are looking forward and longing for the time when we shall be like our glorious Lord, for "we shall see Him as He is."

There is nothing so grand to me as the singing of a multitude such as meets in Spurgeon's Tabernacle. Think, then, what must be the sound across the boundless plains of heaven, when myriads of sinless voices, unbroken by one sob or sigh of old earth's sorrows, sing praises unto Him!

NOTES OF
ADDRESSES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

Matt. xx. 1-16.



THE great idea here is—God as a Householder. As such He has work to be done, and servants He *will* have to do it. He hires labourers, not because He needs them, or because He could not get His work done without them; but that they may have the glory of the reward, and that they may show their love and devotion to Him.

The Householder goes out to call in labourers, and goes out at different parts of the day. Where does He go to? To the *market-place!* What is that? A place of concourse, noise, bustle, worldliness. The Householder comes there, and He sees in it idlers and loungers. To them He cries, “Come away from this place! Come, work in My vineyard! I’ve work for all, and wages for all! Come, leave off idling. Oh come!”

Let us try to read the meaning of this.

All of us by nature are standing idling. The soul of man stands ready to be hired into *some* service: God by His Gospel calls “Come, work to-day in My vineyard!” There are two who frequent the world’s market-place for hiring purposes,—*God* and *Satan*—and the question is, To whom have we given heed? Each of the two gives a very different call. Listen that we may hear it.

“Come,” cries the loving Householder, Jesus. See Him, as He stands by the Lake of Galilee, and cries in the market-place, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden;” see Him amidst the crowds that throng Jerusalem, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink;” and hear His last call to this world of sin, “Whosoever will, let Him take the water of life freely.” And still He cries; every time that a voice reaches us through His ministers, or by sorrow and trial, He cries; and the word is, “Why stand ye here all the day idle? Come to *Me!* I know you are not happy.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? Your soul is empty and void: come to be pardoned and blessed! Waste not precious time: the day is fast passing! *Come!* There is work for you here: and there are pleasures for evermore at My right hand." Oh, touching sight: the Lord of glory pleading with poor souls to be happy, to flee from the wrath to come; and, oh, mystery of mysteries, *He often pleads in vain!* Tell a man of some advantage in trade, of an opening whereby he may make some money, of some grand speculation,—or tell him of pleasure to be had,—and how eagerly he will rush to it almost unbidden. But *this* true and faithful Witness, this Alpha and Omega, this Lover of men's souls, says, "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded!"

The other who frequents the market-place, and, never slumbering, is ever there, is Satan, the arch-enemy of man! *He*, too, calls; envious of man's happiness if he accept Jesus, he strains every nerve to destroy him. Does Jesus draw nigh to persuade the soul to come? Satan, too, draws nigh, and *he* cries, "Come to *Me!*" Jesus yearns over those who seek Him not, but Satan is bent on their eternal ruin. I often wish some power could be given to poor souls to show them Satan in his true colours—seducing; and having seduced,—*laughing*; plying every false argument; and, having succeeded, sneering at the very simplicity of foolish souls in believing him! His great object is, *to get souls to idle away their day of grace in the market-place*; and then, when the Householder has for ever withdrawn, to taunt and bear them away to his awful abode, prepared for himself and his angels. Look to our crowded theatres and public-houses, our throngs of Sabbath-breakers and pleasure-seekers; then look to our empty prayer meetings and half filled churches; and you will, alas, see too clearly what crowds in the market-place obey Satan and his call, and how few, how *very* few, follow the Good Householder, and become His willing servants. The time is fast coming, too, remember, when, if you neglect Christ's call, *you* shall call, but it will be too late!

Note 1. *They were all called.* How wise is the call of God! "Unto you, O men, I call; and My voice is to the sons of men." God called Abraham from his father's house, and Zaccheus from his leafy hiding-place; David from his sheep-folds, and Paul from his persecuting madness; Peter from his nets, and Matthew from his money-changing; Luther from his monkish cell, and John Bunyan from his swearing and profanity. Yes, and *you*, too, are called! All this winter we've sought at least, however feebly, to beseech you in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech you by us, "be ye reconciled to God." How does God beseech?

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." Oh the tenderness here, the matchless pleading! "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." And mark the gentle upbraiding, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? Mine heart is turned within Me."

My dear class, I fear lest the call has been so frequent that you have got used to it. A gentleman once went into a blacksmith's smithy, and there he saw a collie dog calmly asleep, close to the forge, with the sparks flying thickly all around it. "Is your dog not afraid of the sparks?" said he. "Oh, not at all, *he's quite used to it!*" Ah, my beloved class, can it be that the sparks from hell have been flying about your ears so long that you have got used to it!

Careless soul, Christ is calling for you. The Shepherd seeks His sheep; no sheep returns of its own accord. The woman has to sweep the house diligently for her lost piece of silver; the prodigal would never have said, "I will arise and go to my Father," unless the Father had sent the famine, and the hunger, and the longing look homewards. Oh, what comfort there is here! for, dear soul, if thou hast *one* yearning thought after Jesus, it is Jesus seeking thee! I beseech thee, listen and live; hearken and come; obey and follow!

2. *What are all called to*—Service! "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." Now, *man must have a master*—he cannot be his own. He thinks he can, and he boasts, "I am my own master." No, O man, for unless the Lord Jesus is thy Master, sin and evil habit is. Man can serve only one master, and so the tremendously solemn question is, "*Who shall be my master?*" "Come," says this Householder, "I will be thy Master; thou shalt be My happy servant."

You who have obeyed, and changed masters (and I trust there are many such here), tell me, wasn't it a good change? Many servants last week changed their places, some for better, some for worse. But all who have changed the service of the devil for that of Christ have done well. Look back! You once wore Satan's livery. "Ye were the servants of sin." Behold a man in the full dress of Satan's service! A lovely garb truly—rags, misery, and shame! Do you wish to see such in full dress? Go to our prisons and convict cells; go to our public-houses, just as they are about to close on Saturday night at eleven, particularly if it has been a "big pay-day." Of course, *all* are not so degraded and hideous. Outwardly, many are amiable and moral. Yet their *heart* is not Christ's, and he that does not own Jesus and obey Jesus belongs to Satan, though they try to shirk it now-a-days by talking of a "middle course," which *I* don't find in the Bible. "Now ye are servants to

God." Ah, happy change when you obeyed the call! The first thing He did was to wash you and clothe you, and then He sent you to the vineyard to work. He set you free, He struck off your fetters, and now, as you serve Him, you can sing—

"As far as east is distant from
The west, so far hath He
From us removed in His love,
All our iniquity."

True, sin hides in holes and corners yet—"the Canaanites still dwell in the land"—but sin has not *dominion* over you, and one day you shall flee like a bird to the eternal hills of glory, to the land where nothing that defileth shall enter in. You are already, indeed, dead to sin and Satan: and, of course, when a slave dies, his master's possession of him is ended. Sin comes to me, and says, "Obey me;" but I answer, "No, sin! No, Satan! I died ten, twenty, thirty years ago!" Then, like Apollyon, in the "Pilgrim's Progress," he rages and storms, but greater than he is my new Master, and with *Him* I am well pleased, He is "altogether lovely."

3. *Some were hired!* Now, if I am hired, I must not work for another, but for my Master. Jesus calls me to work vineyard work—pruning, watering, fencing, dressing, weeding—and in it there must be no idling or slothfulness. A man may idle his way to hell, but the road to heaven makes souls busy. Dear soul, if you belong to Jesus, what right have you to work for any one else? Many, even of His own, seem to do all for themselves—putting self first, and God second. But you—how much do you spend for Jesus? How much time? How many opportunities? Oh, seek to be more and more the property of Jesus; seek to be willing to follow the Lamb by the bleak side of the hill, as well as by the sunny side, and through the battle when it rages fiercely. And how do you find His service? Just as when a servant goes home to visit her friends, and they say, "Well, how do you like your new place? Do you get plenty of food? Is the work hard?"—so tell us, has Jesus, thy Master, treated thee badly? Must you not answer, "Never had the like! I've been as one of His family! The food! He Himself has been my meat and drink! I've often been sulky, and idle, and grumbling, yet He has never turned me out, or given me my leave. My cup runneth over with goodness, and I never weary of His service, though I'm often sick at heart that I do so little, and am so weak and idle. Then my future prospects! When I am old and unfit for work, He will take me to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!"

Oh, I *do* appeal to you all! Come! Come! Leap out of Satan's ranks; will you cleave to *him*? When Wallace called his men, it

was in these terms, "Every lover of his country, let him gather to my standard." Jesus says, "Every lover of freedom, holiness, glory, eternal glory, let him come unto Me and live!"

Next, 4. *The different times* at which souls are called.

Some are called *early in the morning*, when the sun is just up, and the dew is on the grass, and the birds are singing in the trees. As the Householder cries, "Come from the market-place," they early obey and follow, and some have wrought a good day's work, even by their mother's side. "Whom the gods love die young," said the old proverb; and so sometimes bright young lives are just allowed to look for a few years on this sad earth of ours, and then they early enter glory: fair young rosebuds, transplanted in their first bloom. "Early in the morning" also applies to the opening years of strength and vigour. Ah, dear young friends, I congratulate you on your early happy choice; better far to be following the footsteps of the beloved Master, and working for Him, than to be sporting idly in the market-place!

I was much struck by reading a remark made by an earnest minister of one of the largest congregations in England, "I have noticed that among all whose slips and falls which have caused us sorrow, we have had but little sorrow from those who were added to us in early youth." Why should this be? I think for two reasons. First, because the habits of sin are not so strong, and therefore not so difficult to overcome, or so apt to re-entangle. Second, because the first grip of the hand of Jesus, and the first knowledge of His heart of love bind the soul very close to Him. Yet don't be puffed up, dear young souls; seek to work still better than you have done.

There is a sweetness about the early dawn of day that's indescribable. The dew sparkles on the tiny blades of grass, and the early light shows a fresh beauty which those lose who waste the morning hours in bed: so Jesus sees in the dew of youth, in the opening dawn of light in the soul, an unutterable freshness and beauty. Says one, "If I must choose that part of Christian life in which there is most joy, next to the Land of Beulah (which, being nearest Canaan, is first and foremost), I would choose that tract of Christian experience which lieth toward the sun-rising, sown with the pearls of love, and cheered with the delicious music of the birds of hope."

"Early in the morning," too, work is easy; the cares and burdens of life are light; there is nothing to do but to serve God; and then such have not learned to stand idling in the market place. Young colts, early broken in, take kindly to the road and the bridle. What a prospect have those of a long long day in the vineyard,

and of walking and working with the Master. Many sad regrets they are spared; they have learned to fly while their wings are strong. But ah, many an otherwise strong and beautiful bird has had its wing broken by sin, or sorrow, or sadness, and been left to flap wearily on to the end!

The Third Hour seems to point to the time above youth—to young manhood or womanhood. It is late, when you think of the opportunities that are lost, past re-call. Dear soul, a quarter of the day has fled—fled *for ever!* The sun has melted the manna—it is gone. Thou mayest yet have the Bread of Life, and welcome, but the freshness of gathering it ere the dew melted has gone—gone *for ever!* Oh, be stirred up, for there's not a moment to lose! The Master is calling for thee! Go work! What if it be too late? What if no more calls come to thee? What if this be the last? Oh, it's late—very late! Listen, come! It is sad to know so much of sin and so little of the love of Jesus: yet come! Forget the things behind! Say with Paul, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" It is not too late! No, no! You've grand time yet; time to leave marks behind for others to follow, as you follow Christ; late, *very* late in some ways, but you may still win a crown and save souls. Oh, reckon nothing too hard to win a crown of glory; plunge thine arm into the coldest, muddiest water, if so be you may pick up a precious jewel, a soul for Jesus!

The Sixth Hour; about twelve o'clock. The sun is up, the heat is great, it is now mid-day—half the day is over; who cares to engage a labourer *then*—a poor thing, indeed! But this Master is not like earthly masters; for grace, free grace calls at the sixth hour: "Come unto Me." I thank God some then *do* obey this call and pass into His service, beginning work for Jesus; ah! but it's late, very late, and, remember, in many cases the sun of life goes down ere noon. Some flowers, again, only open at noon, but the scythe of the gardener cuts them down ere they are fully open. How much zeal, energy, and buoyancy hast thou misspent? and, then, how long the Master has watched and waited—what a blessing that He still calls thee! Oh, unconverted soul, tremble if thou hast not yet obeyed the call! Ah! every moment you will find that more difficult, for the cords of evil habits will draw closer and closer around you. Have you not heard of men who, though saved by grace, have had to their dying day recollections of days of sin—for sin is a clinging thing, it sticks to the memory. It's late, very late, but not *too* late! Oh, enter the service—pass into the vineyard—bend thy back, never mind though it aches—put on the steam, work it at high pressure—lift up thine eyes from thy work only to the hills from whence

cometh thy help! Look at Brownlow North, at John Newton, how *they* left marks behind them. I suppose Paul had reached this hour in the market-place before *he* cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

The Ninth Hour; three o'clock in the afternoon. There's only now time to work from three to six. But still the Householder calls. Ah! this is not the manner of men. Oh God! this is indeed the hiring of free grace and dying love. The prime of life is gone, the memory is impaired, bloom and beauty have departed, the candle is nearly at an end—a few flickers and the light will go out. And these bygone years you have spent—doing *what*? Oh, if there are tears shed in heaven, it will be over this. And *I* believe there are, for so it is said: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Oh what good the idler might have done—what a large part of the vineyard he might have dug and kept—what beautiful flowers of grace he might have reaped—what fruit, mellow and ripe, might have been gathered by the hand so long given to the service of Satan. What can be made of him? *Grace* has done it all. It's late, awfully late, yet not *too* late! The door is beginning to turn, but if thou dost make a leap, thou mayest yet enter in. I have watched the sun set; how gradually it draws to the edge of the horizon—lower and lower it dips—there! it is just going out of sight, you see only a rim of golden light—'tis gone! Poor Christless soul! the Sun of Righteousness is about to set on thee, His light is withdrawing, getting lower and lower—it is not yet *gone*; for, once it has been said, "Gone," ah, poor soul, for thee remains outer, utter darkness, for ever outside God's family, for ever in the dark!

The Eleventh Hour—Will the Master visit the market-place? Surely not! The shades of evening are fast gathering; already the day's heat is cooling down. Who would hire *then*? Who would pay wages *then*? Five o'clock!! Why, those who have been working since day-dawn, see what they have done! Ah! they are weary, very weary; they bear the marks of service, they are pale and careworn, but oh how happy, how glad! They expect very soon to hear the six o'clock bell ringing to gather up the sheaves and take their last look of the field, and then the Master's voice—"Thy warfare is accomplished, thy work is finished. Come home! come home! Well done! good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" But behold that downcast labourer entering, almost ashamed to begin work so late. Will anyone in the vineyard welcome *him*? Oh yes, even then! "It's never too late to mend, old friend," says a labourer, as he plies his busy toil; "Welcome, right welcome! Thanks be to the grace, dear old friend, that sought thee and brought

thee. I will even give thee a few friendly hints as to how thou mayest work well and quickly!"

An old man of eighty-one had heard, when he was fifteen years old, the celebrated Mr. Flavel. Instead of pronouncing the blessing, Mr. Flavel had said, "I cannot bless you! How can I bless those who do not love the Lord Jesus? If any man love *not* the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *accursed!*" The solemn sentence came into the old man's remembrance in America, and at the eleventh hour he entered the vineyard. Oh, it is late, *very* late, *AWFULLY* late, *yet not too late!* The thief was called then, yet he did a good work: he confessed the Master, he justified the Master, and he prayed such a prayer that it has become a very model.

5. Look at *the Wages*. "He gave to every man a penny." The Roman penny was worth sevenpence halfpenny; but not such are *His* wages. An eternity of bliss, a royal welcome, a crown that fadeth not away, and to be for ever with the Master! Oh, what wages are these!

Then, 6. Consider *the Reckoning Time*.—"When evening was come." When the evening of death, the evening of the resurrection day, has come, all shall receive their reward, "according to the deeds done in the body." The last trumpet shall call the labourers from the fields of India, and Africa, and China, from Glasgow and Edinburgh. I believe in degrees of glory. But *every* vessel shall be full,—some with greater capacity, some with less, as a large cup must hold more than a small one; but, great or small, *all* will be of grace.

And now, my beloved class, *Farewell!*—This is a solemn night for us, for it is a solemn work, and these are solemn words. I have come many a Tuesday night to this hall, bowed and crushed by the solemnity of eternity—by the thought that some of my dear class may not be hidden in Christ—by the sight of the Judgment-seat, and the souls on the right hand and on the left. O my beloved class, *whatever* you miss, may the grace and love of Jesus be with you. May none of you fail of the grace of God. Only let Christ be your Alpha and Omega; only be hid in Him. We shall come to the end of life soon. May each of us answer the call from the different parts of the vineyard, and hasten Home! And when the trumpet sounds, and all arise from the grave, may *every* member of this class be found sheltered—hidden in Jesus—"ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED." Take this parting text, "That I"—girls! young women! mothers! *listen*—"That I may win Christ, and be found IN HIM."

“And Sitting Down, they Watched Him there.”

Matt. xxvii. 36.



WE are about to follow Him—the Man of sorrows—through the agony of the garden, the anguish of the betrayal, the shame and mockery of the soldiers, and the sorrow of His cross-bearing progress through the streets of the city. We trust, as we watch, we shall get comfort for the pilgrimage of sorrow and peace for the thorny pathway.

Watch, then, as silence having fallen on the city, He, the Man of sorrows, issues from the gate. Moonlight is on the still mountains that stand about Jerusalem, and yet the deep ravine that lies before Him is dark, for the hills close in steep and sharp. We watch the little band, as they enter the garden, and pass amongst the olive trees. We listen to the brief broken prayers uttered there. O dark Gethsemane, thou hast no flowers, no fragrance, no beauty. A very oil press indeed—a wine press of the wrath of God. Yet as on great battle fields, they tell us, grow the most luxuriant flowers, so surely here spring best and sweetest flowers of hope and trust.

Watch Him there, and watch with Him there, when in that hand to hand fight with all the hosts of hell, being in an agony (which word means wrestling), He struggles with the tempter, even as Jacob with the angel; and hear, too, the loving warning, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” Do you remember Bunyan’s picture of Christian fighting with Apollyon? That master painter has sketched it to the life, “the sore combat lasted for about half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. I never saw him all the time give so much as one pleasant look till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword, then, indeed, he did smile and look up, and it was the dreadfulest sight I ever saw.” They tell us that the gum which flows from the precious camphor tree without cutting is always the best: so this precious camphor tree yielded its sweetest spices as He sweat the great drops of blood on the

cold ground. Yes, watch Him as He thus pours out His soul an offering for sin. And watch as the angel draws near, and hear him whispering sweet promises, and telling of the glory of the victory, when He, this same Jesus, shall reign from sea to sea.

And is not the sight of Jesus bearing our sins one that we can never forget? Have you ever dwelt much on that Cross? “His visage was so marred more than any man.” Behold this stricken one, what awful sorrow He passed through. The Jews took Him to be fifty years of age, though He was scarce thirty—so worn, so haggard did He look, this Man of sorrows. Doubtless He smiled as He cheered others: as He handed to the widow of Nain her son, and saw Martha, Mary, and Lazarus go home together from the grave, and deep down in His own heart there was a wondrous joy that He was redeeming His own. But still on that brow sat the deep shadow of sorrow. O, to love Him—the person of Jesus!

It seems as if in the garden of Gethsemane, one part of Christ’s work was finished, perfectly finished, namely, His conflict with Satan. In the garden, as He rose from His knees in prayer, the temptations of Satan were overcome. In the few hours spent in the garden, all that rage and malice could devise was tried by Satan on Jesus. It may be that all the spirits of evil were present there to pour their united malice upon Him.

Next, hear that calm utterance to the traitor, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” Then see how they bind Him. The ancient fathers tell us that the cords cut to the flesh, even to the bone. Along the road which crosses the Brook Kedron they hurry Him—how like to David the King crossing that same brook, weeping as he went. Follow Him as He is led into Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate—the gate through which the lambs of the Passover, and the sheep of sacrifice were always driven. Ah! poor blind men, little did they know that in so doing they were fulfilling to the very letter the type, “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.” Hurrying on, they bring Him to the house of Caiaphas, where, though it is dead midnight, many members of the Sanhedrim or Council are assembled. In a short time all are gathered together, sitting down with joy to the awful work. Shall we not watch this scene—not like Peter, afar off, but like John; and then, with our Saviour, come out, and with Him reach Pilate’s Hall. We never, never can watch enough, or gather up and treasure too carefully every look, every word—for precious indeed they are—even as goldsmiths sweep their shops, to save even the filings of silver.

Condemned by them, spat upon and insulted, they bind Him now, in the same cruel manner, and lead Him away to Pilate.

The distance is about half a mile: already He has suffered most terribly, yet they hurry Him along without rest or refreshment, and just as the morning breaks, Pilate receives Him bound. O, how eagerly we watch Him, as the proud Romans, after examining Him, and perceiving that the kingdom He claimed was not of this world, ask for what He came into this world, and receive the answer, sublime and glorious, "To bear witness to the truth."

Soon after He is hurried away to Herod. O, I think I see that blessed Lamb of God thus led forth. We are too apt to fancy that the sufferings of Christ were confined to Gethsemane, or the Cross. Not so. Think of the innumerable blows and insults which He has to bear even in the streets. Herod puts on Him the costly white robe. Yes, He had two robes put on Him—the one by the Jews, the other by the Gentiles—the one white, the other crimson—fit attire for "the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley."

Watch Him, as again He is brought to Pilate and scourged with the Roman scourge, a most dreadful instrument, made of sinews of oxen and little sharp pieces of bone, producing terrible laceration. See them place on His brow the crown of thorns, and cover Him with a purple robe. Then hear Pilate say, "Behold the Man!" "Now I have wounded Him; see Him! surely it will melt your hearts to pity."

The mockeries of the judgment hall ended, Jesus is led away to Calvary. O, how often our steps have wandered thither, and how lovingly have our souls dwelt there; every Communion Sabbath we have sat alone, and gaze with tender, tearful wonder. For faith there sees the Lord's body broken for us; the air of Calvary is redolent with the love which first loved us. And is it not there we are constrained to say, "Here I am, I give myself to Thee."

Stripped of the purple robe which they had thrown around His bleeding shoulders, it is not said that they took the crown of thorns from off His bleeding brow. But the nails are now driven in to His blessed hands and feet, the vinegar has been given, the garments parted, and now (verse 27), "Sitting down, they watched Him there."

Who, let us ask, watched Him? Who were *the watchers* at that memorable hour? (1) *God the Father* watched His Son with a love—the love of the eternal Father to His Son—which no seraph, no cherubim, can fathom. "Behold Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth." O, the joy Christ had found in realizing this love. Our human minds cannot grasp the faintest portion of it; the keen intellect of the highest angel cannot pierce it or measure it.

Yet that beloved Son is made a sacrifice. He, the only begotten

One, is smitten and afflicted of God, and cries, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” But never was He more His beloved Son than at that moment. Around Calvary there gathered a great crowd to behold the Redeemer die, yet the Father and the Son were alone, when He poured out His soul an offering for sin. O, surely, as you sit at the table of communion, it will be with tearful eye and melting heart that you look to His Father and to Him.

The full bright sun of an eastern sky has been gazing on this strange sad scene, mid-day has come, when suddenly there falls a darkness which swallows up the light, and hangs a funeral pall around the cross. Men might gaze rudely on the sight, but the sun refused to behold—hiding his face for a season. O, who can imagine what He was feeling in that dread and awful moment? No eye perchance pierced the outer darkness that mantled the Sufferer’s body, still less could any eye penetrate the deeper darkness which shrouded His suffering soul, but they might hear that startling, agonizing cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” which told of profoundest depth of woe.

Ah, let us think of all the vast accumulation of iniquity—the iniquity of those to whom He had linked Himself in undying love,—all the sins of that world He came to save gathered in and pressed down on Him. Let us remember the separation from God—the banishment from His presence, the shadow of such a darkness, as the Father turned away His face, and His smile seemed obscured. *Then* we see, yet, oh how dimly, the meaning of that cry.

Yet, as He, the Father, watched Him, there never was a time at which He was more pleased with the Son, for the Father was being honoured, and Divine justice fully displayed. It was the sensible comfort only of His Father’s presence and favour, which were for the time withdrawn, but what a time of agony was that to One who knew, as none other could, what it was to bask in the light of His countenance.

Ere we pass, let me ask, Are you sheltered behind the Cross? Are you hid in the clefts of the Rock? Say, poor soul, have you crept into His side? Do you feel that He must be your shelter till the tempest is overpast?

(2) *Angels watched Him.*—How beloved was Jesus by those bright spirits before the throne. They stood night and day, with wings outstretched, waiting for His commands. Oh, how surprised, then, were these angels, when they knew that Jesus, the Prince of life and light, was going to become a babe, to live and die. What a strange wonderment! Could it be true that He, who was the immortal and ever-blessed One would one day be nailed to a tree?

"They desired to look into it, and when He descended they followed Him."

Jesus was "seen of angels." With what rapturous amazement they hymned the joy song on Bethlehem's plains, nor would they go back till they got the shepherds to hasten to Bethlehem, and worship, in holy wonder, the new born King. Was He not watched by holy angels in the wilderness, when they came and so gladly ministered unto Him? Did not an angel minister unto Him on Gethsemane? Dr. Duncan says, "I have a favourite angel, but I do not know His name. It is the Gethsemane angel—the angel that came to strengthen my Lord when He was in His agony. If ever I get to heaven, as through the grace of the Lord Jesus I trust I shall, I will like to see that angel."

Surely the angels lingered lovingly and wonderingly around Calvary, watching and pressing to behold the wondrous sight of the Lord of glory expiring. And, oh, if angel eyes could have known how to weep, surely in glad yet sad surprise they would have wept. Ah, I believe that the moment He cried, "It is finished," and the shadow of death flitted over that regal drooping brow, they sped back, and spirits made perfect came forth to meet them. "Lift up your heads, ye gates," they cried, "for the King of glory is coming in," and then they hurried back to be witnesses of His resurrection, and again they met Him as He ascended.

And you are dead and cold to this dying, bleeding love to the Father! O, dear soul, does your heart not burn within you? Look on all you possess, and say, Christ bought this for me. Look on every promise, and see the blood marks that seal it as thine. Look up to thy crown, and harp, and home, and say, "By Thy stripes I am healed." O, Jesus, by that head that once was bruised, that is mine. Ah, remember, as you sit at His table, that if He had remained in heaven, you must for ever have remained in hell.

(3) *Satan and his hosts watched Him.*—O how it must have rung through the gloomy caverns of woe. I think I see Satan watching through that agony on the cross. "He will fail," he cries, and as the darkness comes, the awful cry is heard, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Satan rejoices, and sends an express to his gloomy abode. "Go, tell them He fails; He is forsaken." But the sky clears, and from the dying lips of God's dear Son rings clear and sweet, "It is finished." Satan rages in wrath. "I am defeated," says he, "My hopes are blasted. Never shall one blood bought soul be found in my dominions." Lost souls hear the news, and it is as if their chains are doubly riveted, for, say they, the justice which suffered not God's Son to escape, will not open our prison doors.

(4) *The saints who had reached glory, watched.*—Saved, as

it were, on credit, they had entered heaven. God had taken His Son's word for it, so to speak; and oh, how eagerly they watched. Will He bear it all? Will He fail? If so, surely we must leave our bright abode, and suffer for our own sins. O, what watchers around that little spot on this little earth of ours. But tremble not, ye blessed of the Lord. “It is finished.” And the oath, and the covenant, and the blood make your home in the many mansions safe—safe eternally.

(5) “*I watched Him,*” may surely say every child of God. “Sitting down,” I have often done so. I seemed to hear the noise and tumult, the uproar and shout of angry voices, “Away with Him.” Yet these appeared so far away; for oh, I had gotten my eye fixed on that One, and all else I heeded not. I watched Him there, and it seemed as if a light and glory hung around Him which dimmed everything else, and made the world, and sin, and self, retire. I said, “Let me draw near and see this great sight,” and all else faded away. I watched Him. The shadow of His glory so filled my soul that again I said, “This is my Beloved, this is my Friend, my Redeemer.”

“Sitting down.” No, the attitude was too cold. He, the Master, *stood* there. Could I *sit*? I stood and watched Him, oh how intently, as the rough soldiers led Him forth to Calvary. It was a sad, lonely walk. No loving hand to help Him then, who so often had helped others in *their* sorrow. I watched, and not one word of love or sympathy fell across *His* path. I watched Him, on and on to Calvary. I drew very near—nay, went close, and hung about the Cross. Not a look of anger was on that face, but oh, it was *so* marred with the long, long watch in Gethsemane's sad garden. Then, sitting down, I watched, as they placed the thorny crown on that holy brow, and I saw the bloody drops fall one by one, and I bowed my head, and said, as the tears flowed very fast, “Rock of Ages: cleft for me—Jesus, lover of my soul.” I watched Him there, and those weary eyes looked right past *me*, as if gazing into some coming anguish which only He could see. Then I watched them pierce those weary feet, those blessed feet, that had stood all night, that long night in Pilate's hall, and as I sat there and watched, I seemed to hear a voice, “God has provided Himself a Lamb,” and my heart bounded, as Jesus, this Lamb of God, was led forth to die for me. Then it seemed as if He turned and looked at *me*, and said, “Is it nothing to *you*? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.” That look broke my heart; I rose, and falling at the foot of that cross, I clasped it, saying, “Dear Saviour, Thy face to me is altogether lovely, I hate the sins which nailed Thee to this tree.”

As I sat and watched Him there, it was the pain and agony that I thought of, until I remembered that He is beyond it all now, ascended to His Father and our Father, to gather in His ransomed flock, who are to go no more out, but to be "for ever with the Lord." Yes, and even as I watched, I saw on that thorn-crowned brow another and an everlasting crown of joy and glory—His mediatorial crown; and jewels sparkled in it, and I said, "Lord, remember me."

And now, how sweet the hope, the blessed hope, that my eyes, these very eyes, shall see that face. O moment of unutterable joy! No more sorrow, or fear, or doubt. So I will wait till my change come, when I shall enter through the gates into His home who loved me—His home who died for me. And it seems to me that if by free grace and dying love I enter that home in joy and gladness, I shall spend all Eternity's long day watching Him who gave Himself for me—*me!* And I think I shall often look down over the battlements of the *Urbs Beata*, and see once more the place called Calvary.

The Barren Fig-Tree.

Luke xiii. 6-9.



UT it down! A short sentence this, is it not? but, oh! how full of doom!

It stood in a vineyard, this Fig-tree, and well do I know the appearance of a vineyard in the East. A vineyard is always planted in a sunny spot, well enclosed and fenced in, and carefully watered; and the work of dressing and keeping it is very laborious and fatiguing. Often have I watched the owner of a vineyard going from tree to tree, looking carefully at each as he passes. Nothing is more enchanting than such a spot in the sweet spring-time, when the March and April air is loaded with the mingled perfumes of apple, apricot, plum, quince, and fig-tree blossoms; while later in the season the owner sits under the shadow of the trees, rejoicing in two things—first, the shade, and second, the fruit.

Now, in this passage we have such a vineyard; and, amongst other trees and vines, there grew, we are told, one special fig-tree. Again and again had the owner in his visits come to that tree and put forth his hands among the leafy branches, looking for figs, even *a few* figs, one here or another there—but it was useless. “Ah,” he says, “there are none yet. Why is this?” He waits patiently for another season, and all that year he diligently uses means to make the tree bear fruit; then when the fruit-time comes round, he returns, seeking the fruit, but, alas, there is none! Three years, three long weary years, pass by, and still there is none! As each vintage season comes round, there it stands, a blooming fig-tree, to all appearance promising and fair, but underneath the broad green leaves that clothe its branches is found *no fruit!* Then the owner, after standing gazing sorrowfully at it, calls the gardener, or vine-dresser. “Can you tell me,” he asks, “why this tree bears no fruit? Does it labour under any disadvantage as compared with the other trees?” “None,” replies the dresser. Ah! listen to this solemn conversation. “I have come down this grassy walk many a time,” says the owner, “to visit this fig-tree; for three years I have had my eye on it. All that time I have hoped and waited and watched for fruit, but I can wait no longer. This is the last year I shall bear with it—the last time I shall allow myself

to be disappointed—*cut it down!*” Now hear the answer of the vine-dresser: “Lord, let it alone just one year longer. Let the sun and the dew exert their influence upon it. I myself will do my utmost. I will spare no pains, if thou wilt only give it one more opportunity. Wait until one more season comes round, that I may loosen the soil about its roots, and if it bear fruit then—well; if not, *after that* thou shalt cut it down.”

Dear friends, what is this but a picture of the history of a human soul, yours and mine?

Observe, 1. This fig-tree had the *same opportunities* as the fruit-bearing trees of the vineyard, but the same sun that ripens one may rot another. Oh, it's an awful thought that each day I live within hearing of the Gospel, each invitation given me to repent and be saved, each offer of grace and mercy, each token of the loving-kindness of God, either hardens me in sin or ripens me for glory.

2. The *patience of the owner*: he waited three years in vain, and all that time he was hungering after fruit and longing for it. How long, soul, has God waited for fruit from *you*? The fruits *He* longs for are the sweet fruits of repentance, sorrow for sin, love, faith—has He found any? Ah, soul, I fear it looks as if you would never repent, or you would surely have done so long ago.

3. The *means used*. If a fig-tree runs to wood and bears no fruit, the gardener has to dig a deep trench round it, that he may cut back the roots; then he fills the trench with hard dry rubbish, to keep the tree from striking its roots too deeply in the earth again; and then he may cherish the hope that next season he will see fruit. So *the* Gardener has used the knives of affliction and sorrow to cut thy roots. He has done it in mercy, for those that are *left alone* are in a sad plight. But, oh! barren soul, in spite of it all, thou art unfaithful yet! there is not a sign of improvement in thee. The Gardener's spade has struck often and sharply at thee, and yet there is not anything to be seen bearing the smallest resemblance to fruit.

4. The *uselessness* of such a tree. You are of no use where you are, no good to your Master, no good to the world. Like a servant who will not work, a soldier who will not fight, a horse too lazy to draw its load, there you stand, useless to yourself, to others, and to God, *fit for nothing*. Of what use are you to your family? Another one in your place might have been able to pray for those dear to you, or to speak a word to them and try to win a brother, or sister, or friend, but *you* are only a *cumberer of the ground*, only helping to keep the sun off others, as a thick hedge hinders the corn that grows close under it from catching the ripening sunbeams. What have you been doing with your money,

with your time, with your talents, with your influence? How long have you been in church membership? Ten, twenty, thirty years? How comes it then that no tear of true sorrow has ever wet your cheek, and that no sigh, sent from a broken, bleeding heart, has ever been uttered by you? How long will this be? How long must the Master come seeking fruit in vain. Remember, you are *disappointing Jesus*. A mother will well nigh break her heart when her only son disappoints her fondest hopes; but *you* have been all these years grieving the loving heart of Jesus. How old are you by this time? Think, as you name the number of years, how many basketfuls of fruit you *might* have yielded.

5. *The Order*—"Cut it down!" I remember once, when I was a child, being taken to see a magnificent old tree cut down. I stood and watched as a rope was fastened round the trunk, and the men lifted their axes. Oh, the awful sound of the dull *thud* of those axes as they fell stroke upon stroke. Many a wild storm had that stately tree braved, winter after winter, but now its proud strength was to be laid low, and as the crashing blows fell a shiver ran through it from trunk to branch till each twig shook. This was no tempest that mere strength might defy—the *axe* was laid at its root, and the tree shivered as it felt it. All the onlookers then got hold of the rope and pulled. Would it fall? It swayed slowly from side to side; but the roots were too firmly struck—it would not yield. Again came that thud of the axe that went to my very heart, but it sounded not for long. The tree shivered more and more: another pull, and with a mighty crash the giant was laid low! A sad sight it was to see! Very soon the branches were lopped off and the trunk dragged away; it made fine firewood, and no trace of it remained where it once had stood.

Ah, soul, it may be the axe of death is laid at *your* root! You have often been warned; at first very gently, then more loudly, until at last sickness comes and the first crash is heard. Then you cry to send for the minister, that he may read and pray with you; but the order has gone forth, "Cut it down," and who shall stay the awful mandate? Oh, slothful, useless, worthless one! better far to be a wild straggling weed than a leafy, decent, disappointing, barren fig-tree in the vineyard; for the doom of the fig-tree will be far more awful! You never do a hand's turn for Christ in your family or in the world, and yet you call Him your Master; and how difficult it is to get at such as you. "Well," you say, "if I'm not *all* I ought to be, my circumstances are not the same as other people's." Oh, remember that many will be condemned not for what they *did*, but for what they *didn't* --simply for *bearing no fruit*. Are you and I spending our all for

Christ? have we got something to lay at His feet? Then we shall not find Him a thankless master. Or are we living aimless, purposeless lives, which means not *living* at all, but simply *vegetating*? Not to live for Christ, not to be of christian service in our position in life, is to be a barren fig tree.

“What were you doing, boy?” said a master to a school-boy. “*Nothing, sir.*” “Then that is your very sin, for which you shall be punished.” How have you spent your life? *Doing nothing.* Raking pounds, shillings and pence together, doing your best to make both ends meet, and yet *doing nothing.* Could there be a more awful thought—a soul sent away to everlasting punishment for “doing nothing!” Oh, remember the doom of the unprofitable servant, which is just the doom of the barren fig tree—to be sent away from the light of the sunshine into outer darkness—never to be God’s child—never to have the blessed fruits of holiness—to have instead the awful wages of sin, and to *know that you have worked well for them.*

(6) *The Intercessor.* The vine-dresser pleads for mercy for the barren fig tree, yet he names *only a limited time.* “*This year also.*”

He knew well what a poor barren fig tree it was. Ah! Jesus knows all about us, how we have grieved Him, how many years we have had. How have you spent your youthful years, strength, and energies? Have you allowed them to run to wildwood? He saw us misusing these precious golden moments, and He came between us and the wrath of God, and said, “*This year only.*” Oh, how often have you been reminded that the axe is laid at the root of the tree; and yet are you any further on, are you any better? Now you are past the midtime of life perhaps—an old barren fig tree—unsaved at 40, 50, or 60. Ah! friend, it is all because He pleads—“*This year only.*”

Remember what He has done for you! Did you rise from that bed of sore affliction any softer? Did you turn away from the side of that coffin any more gentle, or more weaned from the world? Did the husbandman find in you any sweet clusters of holy longings and yearnings? Oh, the opportunities for usefulness that have been lost! There is a man whose life was spared, and he has snatched the spared time for drinking and cursing God. Or here are you putting off decision; and each day that runs out brings you nearer the end of “this year.” But think of the Intercessor, O barren, Christless soul; He pleads for *thee*, He names *thee* to His Father, and His plea is, “For my sake, spare this soul; remember all My afflictions, look at My wounds, and spare this soul.” Hope in Him, and God will do it. Pluck up heart: “There’s no reason why

He should spare *me*; but He that spared not His own Son, will He not for His sake spare even me!" Oh, catch it up, and plead *that*. There are fifty thousand reasons why you should be cast away, but that plea is enough to cover them all.

"Still I am so barren," you say; "I have borne no fruit." Remember for thy comfort that He who pleads for thee is Jesus Christ the Righteous, and that He pleads at all times. Ah! you thought at your first start none would have such fruit as you; you fancied you saw it hanging in richest clusters; you did not suspect the depth of your heart's blackness. Now you see it and you cry, "How shall I be more profitable, more fruit-bearing?"

Confess it all to Him, dear soul, and go and be more fruitful in the time to come. Fret not so much over the past; but wake up for the future. Do not say, "I have failed and I need not try any more," but try all the harder. He is not a hard master; small services are accepted by Him; the faithfulness of the servant is what He looks to. And remember there are different kinds of fruit. There is love, which, like the passion flower, grows deep down amidst the leaves of godly sorrow; joy, a very tender and easily blighted fruit; peace, sweet peace; long-suffering—the quick-tempered changed into the meek and lowly; gentleness; goodness; faith; meekness; temperance. Against such there is no law.

"This year also," the *fruitful* tree is left as well, for gracious purposes. You are left out of heaven, O child of God, that you may still help others. "Wait this year also, my child. Not now can I call thee home. Thou shalt have a better welcome by-and-bye, and shalt bring more sheaves to lay at My feet." Is this my last year? Then, when my call comes and I am ready, I shall be transplanted from the vineyard of earth to bloom for ever in the paradise of God.

Blind Bartimaeus.

Mark x. 46.



HEY tell us of a certain god, from whose footsteps sprang fair flowers, so that he left behind a lovely track of sweetest beauty. Surely such was the case with our Lord Jesus.

He was now on His last glorious march. Never again did His feet tread the sultry plains of Jericho, or walk by Jordan's rushing stream. His work was fast drawing to a close. Let us follow His last footsteps, as we love to follow those of some dear friend who is gone—tracing and dwelling upon all the little events—the last look, the last words, the last actions.

Let me introduce to you blind Bartimaeus the beggar.

Those who have never travelled in the East can have no idea what the word beggar implies there. Picture his sad state—blind and a beggar—the one bad enough without the other. If we saw such an one on the streets, we would be quite sure to help him. No language can describe the sadness of his condition. The sweet sun shines in the bright blue sky—he sees it not. God's earth is decked with flowers of the loveliest hue—he has no eyes to see them.

Now, this is the picture of a soul by nature *blind*. Jesus, the glorious Sun of Righteousness shines, but we see not all His attractive beauty. Sharon's rose, and the lovely lily of the valley grow all around, but we, poor blind sinners, are utterly unconscious of their glory—we are born blind. Our blindness is not the result of accident, and is of such a nature that, curiously, we think we can see quite well.

Then, too, we are born beggars, driven out of our home by Adam's sin, and left in the depths of spiritual beggary: yes, all of us are spiritual paupers, utterly without food for our souls or raiment to cover them; and, moreover, with no prospects of obtaining these. Well do I remember when I, a poor shivering soul, looked out on Eternity, and saw nothing but the great white throne.

Bartimaeus had sense to feel his hunger, and so he *begged*.

Ah! all of us take to that trade at once; we become beggars from the world, begging for pleasure, for amusement, for *something*. Oh, what a pitiful sight! And the world says, "Oh, yes, I will satisfy you." It's a lie! it never can. But now, observe,

(1) There is *hope for Bartimaeus*.

On the nearest bank he could find outside of Jericho he used to sit begging in the sun, for blind men ever like to bask in the sweet sunshine. He had heard of Jesus of Nazareth. Often had passing travellers spoken of the great prophet, and, doubtless, Bartimaeus had asked, "Who is He, and what does He do?" And one told of the leper healed by Him; another of Lazarus raised to life from the dead. Quick as the lightning's flash, bright-eyed hope springs up in the blind man's breast. "Did you ever hear if He could cure the blind?" "Oh, yes; there's nothing beyond his skill." And one day a passer-by tells of the man born blind whom Jesus had healed. "Oh," says Bartimaeus, "if He would only come my way." How eagerly he drinks in the story; he even dreams of it. "There's hope for me; oh, how I'll listen!" and so he sat waiting and watching. Often would he call to the passers-by, "Can you tell me anything more of Jesus of Nazareth? can you repeat the old story of the blind man who got his sight?" He never could hear it too often, for it kept up his hope, and it was a cool sweet breeze in the noonday heat. "Tell me the old old story;" and so the cherished dream of his life now was to get the opportunity of speaking to this Jesus of Nazareth.

Oh, blind souls, we tell you of Jesus and His love. Why are you not anxious to meet Him and see Him, and live? There is room in His heart for all. He never said to any, "Go your way; I have no healing for you." Never was there love like His.

At last one glad day dawned for Bartimaeus. Oh, happy, happy day! He is sitting as usual, listening attentively. He cannot *see*, but he will make use of what he has got—his ears. And so he *listens*. Yes; it is the sound of the steps of a multitude. The silence is broken by a crowd coming along—tramp, tramp, tramp. Oh, see him! he strains every nerve, he listens with "all his ears;" he eagerly inquires, "What is the meaning of this? Can it be Jesus of Nazareth?" and so the blind beggar is now an anxious inquirer. Oh, to have many such! It is glorious to be asked, "What does this mean? I'd like to see Jesus. What is the way?" and when a man knows he has lost his way, how eagerly he asks in all directions.

The instant Bartimaeus asked, he was told, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." What next? He begins to *pray*.

Here we have the steps of a beautiful ladder to heaven. He inclined his ear; he inquired; he cried. So we have here a cry—a piteous outburst, a short prayer. There was no need of a prayer book, he could not see to read it. Like the drowning boy, whose one cry to the little companion bravely struggling to keep him above water was, “Haud me up, haud me up!”—his is a short cry, but oh! how much in it! “Mercy, Lord, mercy, mercy.” Ah! mercy is very near; and immediately, without delay, “he is up and at it.” Oh, soul, do you pray? “No.” And how, then, are you to get Jesus? What! is heaven such a trifle that ye need not pray for it? Is hell so trifling a doom that ye need not pray to be saved from it? Ah! soul, you deserve to perish if you will not pray.

Oh, it is a glorious fact that our prayers, our cries are *noticed in heaven*. In yonder miserable room lies one sick unto death, and no one cares for her soul. Listen! she cries, “Lord, I am sorry; have mercy on me.” Did the bells in the steeple then ring out a peal of joy? No, no; no one saw her die, for she died unseen; but there was One at her bedside who noted that tear; One who had come to look after that lost sheep. And no sooner was the prayer uttered, than, flying to the pearly gates, He cries as He enters, “One, the chief of sinners, repents;” and the bells of heaven rang out a glorious peal.

The battle has raged and is over; amid groans and agony a dying soldier remembers his mother’s God, and from the field of blood and death rises the cry, “Have mercy on me, Lord, for Jesus’ sake.” And that groan has made all the harps of heaven thrill and vibrate with soft sweet music.

Dear soul, dost thou remember thy first real prayer? Was it at the prayer meeting? Was it by the wayside? or in the yard? or on the ship’s deck? It may be thy father and mother, in heaven, were watching, and the bells rang out. “For whom are they ringing?” said they. “Thy son, down on earth, prayeth.” “I thank Thee, Thou ever-gracious and glorious One, that he who was my child on earth has become Thy child in light.”

A rough sailor heard a sermon on Jesus weeping over doomed Jerusalem. “What,” said he, “can it be true He weeps over a wretch like me; one that’s too bad for any to care for?” At last he came to the minister. “Sir,” he said, “for thirty years I have been sailing under the standard of the devil; it’s time I had a new owner. I want to scuttle the old ship and sink her altogether; then I shall have a new one, and sail under the new colours of Prince Emmanuel.”

Many pray by fits and starts; they are very religious on Sabbath, but it’s all forgotten on Monday. They have made good resolu-

tions enough to pave the way to hell ; but ah ! for eternity you want something firmer as a foundation to stand upon. Blind Bartimaeus, with only one sermon—and that a very short one—“Jesus of Nazareth passeth by,” never leaves off praying till he gets an answer. He thought more of getting his eyesight than of getting pennies. When a crowd goes by it is usually a beggar’s harvest. “I’ll make hay while the sun shines.” But he was too anxious to think of pennies. Do you say, “I am very busy just now, I must make money for my wife and children. I can’t spare time for prayer, when I get old I may think of it.” Ah, dear soul, first see Jesus, then all other things shall be added unto you.

Bartimaeus might have said, “If I get my sight, then I’ll not be so well fitted to be a beggar,” for blind beggars make twice as much as those who have their sight. “Ah,” said one, “I couldn’t stand at the bar of that gin-palace after the Lord met me; I could not serve glasses of gin and go to the communion table.” Soul, what shall it profit thee to have thy coffin fitted with gold, if thou art Christless for eternity ?

He shouted—it was not a whisper. He knew the misery of being blind, and he could not be content so long as there was a chance of cure. Oh, souls, you cannot cry too loud, too earnestly. Yours is a blindness of soul ; not seeing Jesus is a blindness which will shut you out from the joys of heaven eternally. Cry loudly !

Bartimaeus knew Jesus was near. Ah, what a powerful motive. “Here He is! close to me, I’ll cry; it’s now or never.” There may be a time when your prayers come too late. Jesus never did again pass that way, and if Bartimaeus hadn’t used his opportunity, he would never have seen at all. Now or never! To-day! to-day!

(2) Note now his *difficulties*.

Ah, whenever a poor soul knocks at mercy’s gate, it is heard in hell, and what an uproar rises there.

A band of Algerian pirates had taken many prisoners, who were chained to the oars to row their masters. Suddenly ships of war were seen in the distance, and the captives knew there was hope. But their masters came on deck. “Pull for your lives,” cried they. The whip was laid on, and the captives were forced to fly, by their own efforts, from their rescuers.

Oh, how Satan plies this game ! Jesus comes and knocks, the soul is about to yield, then Satan places all sorts of snares for it. “Don’t be too anxious; take things easy.” “Don’t pray,” says Satan, “it’s no use, you’re such a sinner. Just listen to reason! See how black you are. Look at the list of your sins.” Oh, soul, I point to eternity, to heaven, to hell, to thy dying bed, and I bid thee cry so much the more.

So here they tried to put Bartimaeus off. "Hold thy tongue, blind man," said they, "He cannot attend to thee." They told Bartimaeus the Master was going to Jerusalem, and couldn't be stopped by every blind beggar. But he makes a different use of the news than what they intended. "Ah, He's travelling, passing by! He's going to Jerusalem, then I may never see Him again." And so he shouts again at the pitch of his lungs. "Too late," answers Satan. "Lord have mercy on me," is the cry all the louder. The mouth is open before the eyes are; and above the busy hum of the multitude is heard the piercing cry louder and stronger. It seems to me that what Jacob is in the Old Testament, Bartimaeus is in the New. "Let me go," said the angel to Jacob, "for the day breaketh." "Nay," he replies, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

The Master stops and looks around. He can see the poor blind beggar, though the beggar cannot see Him; and we read "Jesus stood still." He was at the time in haste, advancing to the Cross, and yet He *stood still*. Ah! what a lovely picture. He moves not an inch—with His eye on the poor crier, He waits and listens; a blind beggar stops the Master. Sweet mercy arrests Him. Oh! glorious, marvellous sight, the Lord of Glory waits for a poor blind beggar. You remember how the sun and moon stood still at the command of Joshua? But here it is the Sun of Righteousness Himself who stops—a tribute to the marvellous power of prayer. Ah! Jesus is waiting now, the very same up yonder, listening to every sigh, every cry of the needy soul.

(3) *The Welcome*.—"Rise, He calleth thee." They heeded him not when he most needed their encouragement, and little cares he for them now; the Master speaks to him, calls to him, and that's enough. He rises and flings aside his upper garment (probably a poor ragged thing), and the sound guides him to the Master. There beho'd him! who could paint his expression, his eager agony of earnestness, and the calm gentle face of Christ.

Soul, listen! "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden." He calleth *thee*. What hinders thee? Cast away the garment, the robe of thy self-righteousness! Ah! it is a blessed thing when a soul feels, "I'll part with everything that I may win Christ." Come though you feel there is no hope. Come though you be desponding. Come though you feel you are ruined; come *thou*—He calleth *thee*. O Jesus! call, for Thy voice has power to charm away the fear of many. O soul, I charge thee, let nothing stand between you and the Christ.

(4) *The Question*.—And now Bartimaeus must make confession before all. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Look at

his answer. How short and clear it is; there is no stammering about it. Listen! "Lord that I may receive my sight."

If Jesus came in, and put that question to you, what would you tell Him? "Lord, I have a hard heart and blind eyes: I make frank, free, and full confession. Oh, melt my heart; help me to give up my sin; help me to tear it away. I cannot keep my own soul, I give it to Thee, O King." Can you, will you thus trust Jesus *now*?

(5) *The Result.*—"And immediately he received his sight." Oh, see him. It is not a glimmer of light that comes to him, but a bright full burst of sunshine.

And what is the first thing he does? Does he go to see his father, or mother, or friends? Does he go to gaze on Jerusalem and its temple, the hills, and rivers, and flowers? No, no. "Let me look on the Man who gave me my sight." *Their eyes met.* Oh, the grace on the one hand! oh, the gratitude and devotion on the other. And we read, "he followed Jesus in the way."

"Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
Oh, Lamb of God, *I come.*"

Watch him now, close to Jesus! See how full of joy, of new-born joy, he is. May *we* each be able to say, "I know in whom I have believed," and, therefore, to add, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest."

Mephibosheth.

2 SAMUEL. ix.

IF we stand on some crag as the day begins to dawn, how exquisite it is to watch the lovely landscape unfold itself until all the scenery around is flooded with light and beauty. So in the kingdom of grace beautiful pictures unroll before our eyes, which, as we read, reveal the love and grace of the Saviour as these never appeared to us before. In this chapter we have such a picture. The story of Mephibosheth, as the type of a child of grace, brings into view the loving kindness of the Lord.

Notice first, *the condition of Mephibosheth*. Saul has been defeated by the Philistines on sad Gilboa's brow. Jonathan, that fair flower whose character is full of pathos and tenderness unspeakable, sleeps the sleep of death on the dark hill-side. The news of the disaster reaches his home, and all the household flee. In her eagerness to escape, the nurse who is carrying Mephibosheth, at that time a child of five years old, lets him fall; and by the accident he is so much injured that for all his life he will be "lame on both his feet."

Years pass by, and David, seated on the throne of Israel, recalls to memory his beloved friend, over whom he had wailed a note of sorrow so full of tender pathos that I envy not him who can read it with a tearless eye. He remembers the covenant made with Jonathan in the field by the stone Ezel; he recalls the tears shed by both "until David exceeded" (one of the graphic touches of that exquisite farewell scene); and he says, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness *for Jonathan's sake?*" He hears of this lame boy. Where is he living? In LO-DEBAR, which means "a place of no pasture." Immediately David sends to fetch him from his lonely exile, for his heart yearns over Jonathan's son.

Ah, but poor Mephibosheth! he has been afraid of David, and it seemed as if he could not get far enough away from the great king, so he has betaken him to this far-away place beyond Jordan,—to me a reminder of the old story, old as Eden itself, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." No sooner had Adam and Eve sinned against God, than they "hid themselves" among the trees

of the garden: that was *their* Lo-debar. It is just a picture of the sinner far-off from God—who can tell *how* far?—wandering in the “great lone land.” He hates God; he thinks God is his enemy, and he cries, “Let me dwell in Lo-debar.” Oh, if he would *only* believe that “God *so* loved the world,” he would run and cast himself on the loving Father in Christ Jesus.

And here it is a solemn question, “*How far* have you gone from God?” for each day you may be getting further and further away, like a poor strayed sheep. This is not for your good, for Lo-debar is a place of “no pasture.” Contrast with the “green pastures” and “still waters” of the twenty-third Psalm, this desolate, barren, unfruitful country. *How long* have you been hidden there? Mephibosheth had lived there ever since he was five years old; *you* have been *born* in Lo-debar. Are you *happy* there? Nay, in Lo-debar there are no sweet Pisgah views; no grapes of Eschol or palms of Elim grow there, for it is a place of “no pasture.”

But a bright hope dawns for Mephibosheth! “Is there yet any left of the house of Saul,” says David, “that I may show him kindness?” So the Holy Spirit says, “Is there *one* soul to whom I may show the kindness of God?” Oh, dear heart, so far away from God, listen, I beseech you, to the sweet story of grace.

Consider with me next the *fetching of Mephibosheth*. David sent and brought Mephibosheth to Jerusalem. Here is fetching, seeking grace. Man shows kindness to the deserving, God to the utterly destitute and empty. He brings those back to Himself who never would have come. If the earth were left to itself, it would loose the bond which holds it to the sun, and rush away on a fearful journey into the darkness of far-off space, where no beautiful light could reach it. Would it ever get back? No, *no!* Only the sun’s influence could bring it back. So when the soul wanders from God, it has no light wherein to see God, and no power to return to Him. Only in grace is there hope. “He sent from above, *He took* me.” As David’s messengers came to the very place where Mephibosheth was, so the Holy Spirit came to the very door of my heart and knocked. I had gone into the far country—oh! *how* far I shall not know until I stand in the light of heaven, and see the purity of God amidst the perfection of holiness, not till then shall I be able to measure that awful distance and know *how* lost I was!

Mephibosheth did not seek David, but David sought Mephibosheth. So it is with the soul and God. I sometime thought I would seek God; but as the dew that trembles on a plant at early morn melts away under the glare of the noon-day sun, I soon found I had no will to return. I didn’t wish Him to send for me, or come

to me; in place of that I tried to bolt and bar the door against Him. But oh, wonder of wonders! His fetching, seeking, bringing grace reached even me! I knew a sinner—and while I live I must know that one—full well I remember that sinner, living in Lo-debar, desolate and heart-sick; but this Friend of sinners loved that one—*why*, I cannot tell—and He came to the hiding-place, whither He had tracked those wandering steps. Then He gave one look, and that look flung the sinner into an agony of grief and tears. No peace could be found, and yet, oh, there was such a longing to get near to *Him!* At last, one day,

“I heard the voice of Jesus say,
I am this dark world's Light:
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright.
I LOOKED TO JESUS, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun,
And in that light of life I'll walk,
Till travelling days are done!

Yes! He sent for *me*, He fetched *me!* What a Messenger! He told me what a welcome I should get, He told me of all that awaited me; lovingly and tenderly He put the message into my hand; He has never left me since then, and He never will, but by-and-bye He will bring me safe to the Father's house on high.

God has strange and marvellous ways of fetching His own. How did He fetch you? Did He seek you out, as the shepherd seeks his sheep in the cloudy and dark day, bringing some from the mountain top and some from the deep valleys? Did He come to you in the night season, when all was still, whispering to you solemn thoughts of death and eternity? Or did He find you beside the coffin that held your beloved dead? His unseen hand it was that drew you on and on, to weep, and pray, and seek, *until* He brought you to the King's feet.

Mephibosheth, observe, could *not come* to David, and for a very good reason, he was lame on both his feet—a true picture of the state of the soul. A sick man cannot climb a mountain or fight a battle, and one lame on both his feet won't walk from Lo-debar to Jerusalem. So we cannot pray or praise aright: we cannot run in the way of God's commandments, for to every good thing we are feeble, lame. “I would grasp Jesus, but alas, I am paralyzed! I would see the mysteries of grace, but alas, I am blind! I would sing the new song, but, alas, I am dumb!” Oh, friend, art thou willing to confess how utterly helpless thou art? then Jesus will carry thee and help thee. Can Niagara suddenly reverse its course, and return to the river head? *Never!* Yet a greater wonder is found in the story of grace: the lame take the prey, and when

Jesus says, "Come unto Me," He can enable the lame man to leap as an hart. "All that the Father giveth Me *shall* come to Me." Oh, dear soul, only trust Him; He will be such a Friend to thee, and if thou hast now a broken, longing heart, it is a proof that He is fetching thee.

What would Mephibosheth's feelings be as He came? Would he not think, "Oh, my lame feet. I am overwhelmed with shame. Ah, my utter ugliness! What will the king say when he sees me such a poor object?" But we don't find that David ever took any notice of his lameness! Dear soul, Jesus will not cast up thy weakness and sinfulness to thee. "He giveth to all men liberally, and *upbraidech* not."

Next, *Mephibosheth's arrival*, (verse 6):—"Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant." Oh, what a picture this is of awe and fear. What does He expect? "Is it to slay me he has sent for me?" Ah, poor, trembling one, lying there, what a picture of a trembling sinner brought into the presence of God, with a guilty consciousness of his sinful past! He knows not God's heart of love. "Will He slay me? I shall fall at His feet, for if I must perish, I'll perish *there!* Who can tell? I am not sure of mercy; yet, who can tell? I may yet be accepted and forgiven, and one day I may be singing praises before the throne above." A drowning man will catch at a straw, but here we really have a solid Rock to cling to, in this "Who can tell?" (Jonah iii. 9).

Now let us go back in thought to a scene in David's past life: the covenant made with Jonathan. Did you ever visit the home of your early childhood? All is changed, and the old faces are gone, but there lives there, perhaps, one, the child of your dearest friend long since gone home to glory, and, oh, the rush of feeling that comes over you as you look upon him! This is something like what David felt, as he looked on Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, as the poor, lame, trembling one lay at his feet. What a tender sweetness in the voice that spoke! He saw Jonathan, as it were, looking out of the eyes of Mephibosheth, and I doubt not his own eyes were wet with tears as he gazed upon him. "Mephibosheth!" he said, and the word recalls to us a scene in New Testament story, when One said to a weeping woman, "Mary," and she turned and said unto Him, "Rabboni!" which is to say, "Master!" Bygone scenes would rise up before David; he would recall the pathos of an old parting. "Mephibosheth!" Ah, the tone in which he said that word was sweetest music. "Behold

thy servant," replies Mephibosheth. He does not call himself "friend;" he dare not venture on that, for he thinks, "I am not worthy." What then? A *servant*, and lame on both his feet! But David cuts him short—"Fear not, for I will *surely* show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake!"

Ah, here it is, full free grace—not one condition mentioned—for *Jonathan's sake!* In this way God receives every poor sinner. Pointing to the Cross of His dear Son, He says, "Fear not. I will surely show thee kindness." He puts in no "if," no "but": only a "Fear not," one of these sweet Forget-me-nots that lie scattered through the Bible. Here is a grand plea for us to use—"For Christ's sake!" Oh, walk in this green pasture, lie down beside this still water, draw from this source of everlasting consolation, this old, old covenant made by God with His dear Son—this *sure* covenant, "the *sure* mercies of David"—this *immutable* covenant, which neither time nor eternity, life nor death is able to change; as old as eternity, as everlasting as the rock of ages—this *gracious* covenant, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people, *for Christ's sake.*" See Him, the better Jonathan, the messenger of the covenant. Oh, are you lying half dead before God? *Cheer up!* Listen! "I will surely show thee kindness for Christ's sake."

The *reason* why He should show thee kindness is happily a *standing* reason, and cannot change. If it were for *your* own sake, you might feel penitent and sorry one day, and then you would have hope; and the next day you might be cold and hard, and then you would see no motive for God blessing you. But *Christ* is always the same—always worthy; and, therefore, God has always the same reason to pardon and bless you. In London there are certain gardens, which, by Her Majesty's command, are open to the public one day in the year, for Prince Albert's sake. But the gate of heaven is open every day in the year. Why? *For Christ's sake!* See those myriads of saints that have gone before you: all of them are happy, but only "for Christ's sake;" holy, but only "for Christ's sake." Oh, you may cry and weep bitterly, but the gate will never open until you plead "For Christ's sake." Come as you are, with just that plea. Mephibosheth came lame, just as He was; and that was quite what David wanted. He did not say he would wait till his feet were cured. So, dear soul, come just as you are, with all your sins: for

"If you tarry till you're better,
You may never come at all."

And now, see the *treatment of Mephibosheth*—"Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually," says David. We might fancy Mephibosheth saying, "Oh, put me among the servants!"

“Nay, thou shalt sit at *my* table—and not for one day, but continually. Thou shalt not only have one good meal to show the richness of the King’s table and the royal dainties, but thou shalt eat continually.” So grace begun here is the pledge of everlasting glory hereafter. They who are fed by Christ *here* will be fed by Him *there*. They arrive at home weary and footsore, to find a table spread for them with a rich banquet, even the marriage supper of the Lamb. Down here we can have no idea of the joy of those who “eat bread in the kingdom of heaven.” Oh, the unutterable bliss of having even the lowest place in that kingdom, and of gathering crumbs from the King’s table. Yet, so great is the love of Jesus, and so full and free His grace, that He Himself leads us to the banqueting house, and His banner over us is love, for His people’s joy is His. Oh, abide close to Him! Can it be that there is any one here with no part or lot in that feast?

No sooner has this rich stream of free pure grace been poured into the trembling heart of Mephibosheth than (verse 8)—“He bowed himself, and said, ‘What is Thy servant that Thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?’” Yes, he never felt his feet to be so ugly and lame, his weakness and unworthiness to be so great as now. And I think we do not feel sin so much as when we are told to “Fear not;” it is when we stand in the presence of God, full in the light of His free boundless love, that we bow to the very dust and weep bitterly. But, oh soul, don’t stay out in cold Lo-debar! Come in! come in! The King will pity and befriend you.

Mephibosheth did not change David’s heart. It was not that David was angry and needed the sight of Mephibosheth to soften him; oh no, the foundation was laid in *his love to Jonathan*. “God so loved the world”—the Cross was the expression of that—and no tears or works of ours are needful to turn His heart. Oh, you pine after a broken heart—think of this, the love of God in Christ to you—gaze at the Cross, and your heart must melt.

What a complete change now in Mephibosheth: in his *residence*, his *food*, and his *clothing*. Grace brought him from his hiding-place of fear and enmity, and at once gave him all the privileges of a son, and that without one single condition. And if God has given thee life: thou art no longer a servant, but a son, and art admitted to sit among the King’s sons at the table of thy dear Lord. “As many as received Him, to *them* gave He power to become the sons of God.”

The grace which had received, still maintained Mephibosheth. “He did eat of the King’s table,” and *yet* “he was lame on both his feet.” Brought a poor lame creature to David, he was *still* a

poor lame creature (verse 13). *Yes*, it had still to be all of grace. Do some admit the grace that brings a poor lost sinner to Christ, who yet think that after he is brought his continuance depends on himself? Nay, nay; I'll be lame till I enter glory, lame to the last step of the journey, I'll limp down to the dark valley; and if I were at heaven's gate and it required but one effort of mine to get in, I should never enter there. Precious truth! "He did eat continually at the king's table, and was lame on both his feet." Don't fall into the snare of looking always at your poor lame feet, and thinking—"I can't be a child of God because I'm so lame." Don't look at them. Put them under the King's table, and eat the king's bread. Do so on the coming Sabbath. Let thy lameness teach thee *His* heart of love. We are unlovely creatures in ourselves, but "for Jonathan's sake," risen with Christ, we are "accepted in the beloved," for whose sake God sees no iniquity in Jacob, and no perverseness in Israel.

The effect on Mephibosheth was, that his heart was won to David for ever; but Zeba sought to steal the king's heart from him. For the time, which of the two looked best? Zeba did, *until the day of the king's return*, and that was a revealing day (chap. xix. 24). Then was shown the true, leal heart—it was not the land, but the *person* of the king, Mephibosheth yearned for.

Ah! there is a day coming that will reveal all things. You may be misunderstood now, but *then* all will be made clear. Oh sinner, what of you in that great day? Take Christ, and He will stand by you for ever. He will go home with you to-night: you live up three pairs of stairs, but no matter: when you go out to-morrow to work, He will be by you still. In the days of sickness and sorrow He will help you; you may be very poor, He will provide for you; you may grieve Him, but He will still keep you; you may grow cold, but not so He. When you come to die, He who has been with you all through life will not leave you then; when you go down to the brink of the river, that Friend will still be with you, His right arm will be under you, and His voice will bid you "Fear not;" when you pass into the world of spirits, He will come and meet you, saying, "Come and welcome! I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Thou shalt see my Father's face, and dwell in His house all the ages of eternity." Yes; and when earth and sky and sea shall have passed away as a forgotten dream, when time shall be swallowed up in eternity, then on the sea of glass, mingled with fire, you shall stand with Him who sought and fetched and kept you, and who, loving you here, shall love you yonder, with an unspeakable everlasting love.

Home and the Homeless.



HOME! the sweetest name on earth. Home! it may be a palace or it may be a hovel—what matters it? “Home” is the place where our hearts are. “Home” is the place where our father or mother, or dearest ones are, where our heart’s affection sets. The Christian’s true home is in heaven.

To every home on earth a dark faced visitor is sure sooner or later to come, and he quenches the light of the dwelling; his name is *Death*. And what home has not seen the sad changes death can work! But look up! far beyond the skies we have an unchanging home, of which Christ said, “I go to prepare a place for you”—a purchased home, secured by Him, Emmanuel, who left His bright abode, and was content to spend thirty years homeless and desolate, with no place to lay His head (for He said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head”), just that every clinging soul might have a right to enter in through the gates into the city. Listen as He says, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself and bring you home. In My Father’s house are many mansions.”

Be cheered by the thought that yours is a *journey home*. What must it be in heaven—“*at home!*” Ah! it matters little *how* we reach it, if so be we are safe there at last. Is the road thorny? It matters not, if it leads the right way; facing Zionwards. Ah! that’s it; then it matters not whether the road be smooth or thorny, long or short. I see a pilgrim on the road, and I ask, “Friend, whither are you pressing?” “I’m going Zionwards.” “Do you not find the way long?” “Yes, but I’m going Zionwards.” “Is it very dusty, is it very lonely?” “Yes, but I’m going Zionwards, and that’s enough.”

If ready to be downhearted, look up at Christ. A crowded steam-boat was crossing from New York to Brooklyn; the tide was running high, and she came against the landing place with a terrible bang. Everything was in confusion on board, the horses were thrown down, and all were in great alarm. Among the passengers was a little child of five, who was sitting on her father’s knee. As soon

as the vessel struck, the little one became frightened; the lip quivered, and the eyes filled with tears, but she looked up at her father's face and there was a smile in it. Instantly, without any explanation, the tears were dried, the little mouth came straight, and the child broke into a merry laugh. *She had looked at her father's face*, and the look was enough to set her fears at rest.

Each morning let us rise with this thought, "I'll do a day's work for Jesus, *with* Jesus, *looking to* Jesus," and at night lie down whispering, "A day's march nearer home." At the longest it can only be—

"A little more rough tossing,
A little longer on the billow's foam.
A few more journeyings in the desert darkness,
And then the sunshine of the Father's home."

CHRISTLESS SOUL, *you*, too, are going home; yet I fear you can't call it home, that place of unutterable woe! Jesus purchased *this* home for sinners at *what* a price, and yet you wilfully turn your back upon it. Oh, if I could ring it out in your ears! You're standing on a rotten plank, over the mouth of hell; you are held up only by the brittle thread of life,—the only thing between you and everlasting woe! Oh, pitiful sight! a soul in danger! A poor soul feeling the first drops of the coming wrath, and going down into the Dark Valley alone. Hear the cry from that soul as it enters the valley, "Shelterless! shelterless!" Fainter and fainter grows the echo, until it dies away into awful silence. "Shelterless for eternity?" Oh, may God open thine ears, poor soul, to hear the deep solemn sound of the coming judgment!

A minister was dying, and he called his son, who was a thoughtless lad, to his bedside. "Tom," he said, "will you promise me one thing before I die? I only ask that when I am gone, you will go every evening alone for fifteen minutes and say, 'What is eternity, and where shall I spend it?'" The promise was given, and faithfully kept. At first Tom thought little of the words; but he went on doing as he had promised, until at last he was not able to face the awful question any longer, and gave up all to Jesus.

Perhaps you are apt to be discouraged by the *distance of home*. Does not home sometimes seem far away? It's a long road between this and heaven; and do you not feel as a "stranger." That word means, "to be far from home;" and it grows more and more true as the years go by. Youthful dreams cease before the stern realities of life; those who once walked with us fall at our side; the dear friend, the early friend, the sharer of our deepest thoughts, says "Farewell," and enters rest. Ah! how we miss these kind words and loving looks that are over for us forever: daily do we

realize how few, if any, enter into our deepest thoughts; how few know our early days; how few there are with whom we can recall our childhood's hours of brightness. Yes, a *stranger!* Have you not often seen an organ-boy grinding away at his organ in the street? How listless and weary he looks! But go and speak to him in Italian of the blue skies and vine-covered slopes of his native land, and watch how the dull face will brighten, and the heavy eye sparkle. Ah! do you feel like that when you hear the name of Jesus and think of home? Are you not feeling more and more as each year passes away that though the earth is the same, the sky as blue, and the stars as bright as ever, though the flowers have lost none of their exquisite hues, yet it's a strange land. Does not Jesus often seem so far away—our friend. We follow Him, but oh how distant and dreamy it all appears sometimes. Do you not sometimes feel homesick, my dear class? Oh, to have longing hearts for the home-coming! Then it will be no more a day-dream; then there will be no mourning hearts to the dear Lord; no more wandering by Babel's streams and hanging of harps on the willow trees; but the golden harp taken down and strung and tuned, never to be silent through the ages of eternity.

Yet home is nearer than we think. *Sin* makes it look far away, and when we are sad and downcast, it seems a long way off; but suddenly, some day or moment, we may find ourselves at home. The milestones of life only tell us how far we have gone, they do not tell us how far we have still to go. How quietly often His children steal away; as they said of a Messageries steamer that came into the Bay of Smyrna through the night, "She slipped in quietly to her moorings at day-dawn." Some morning we may rise from our bed, weary with the constant conflict, and ere the day passes into noon we may find ourselves safe within the gates of "Jerusalem the golden." Some night we may lay our head on our pillow, sick with sin, and shedding tears of godly sorrow over our failures and falls, and ere the night shades roll away, we may be gazing on the bright and Morning Star.

Christless soul, are you ready for such a call as that? Five sailors, on a wrecked vessel in Dublin Bay, were clinging to the broken mast. A rope was thrown to them from the shore, and a voice shouted through the speaking trumpet, "When I say *Now*, let go, and trust to the rope!" The word was given, four of the men did as they were told, and were hauled safe to shore; the fifth hesitated to let go, held on, and perished! Oh, the awful day when the flood of God's wrath is poured out over this guilty world! Soul, what are you holding on to against that day? Is it to the Rock of Ages? Let it be to your decency and respectability, to the good

opinion of your neighbours, to anything short of Christ, and woe's me for the waves of eternity! Oh, *can* people be so cool, so calm! It should make us weep tears of blood to think of poor souls hurrying along to destruction. We are talking together to-night, and *all* of us are soon to spend our first year in heaven or hell. I know the day will come when you will feel all this is true. I'm too earnest, am I? You won't think that a hundred years after this, if you are Christless! Oh, are you safe on the Rock, or are you drifting yet on the sea of life—which? A beautiful young lady, the idol of her father's and mother's heart, became suddenly ill. Two doctors of the highest skill were sent for, and pronounced her to be "in great danger." The news was broken to her that probably she had not long to live. In a voice of unutterable agony, she exclaimed to those who told her, "I am called, but not ready." The minister came, and spoke and prayed, but in vain. Even as she entered the valley, that despairing cry was on her lips, "Called, but not ready!"

Jesus gives us, now and then, distant *glimpses of home*. Sometimes a traveller will get from the hill-top to which he has wearily climbed, a sweet glimpse of his abode, as away at his feet where the blue smoke curls, he sees in the still evening air his own dwelling-place. What is the effect upon him? Is it not to make him press on and on, knowing that each bend of the road is bringing him nearer? Each New Year to us is as a bend in the road; we're *getting nearer home*. Do you ever catch a glimpse of Jesus, as you seek His word and promise in the Bible, and get a flash of light on a verse that enables you to grip Christ more closely, although the light may be gone the very next moment? Or are you in solitude, and suddenly Jesus seems so lovely that you yearn and hunger after Him, and yet are obliged to pass on? Cheer up! Some day soon, we shall pass the last mile-stone, and see our last New Year, and enter the land where they count not by days and years. The last bend of the road will bring us home. Ah, let us, meantime, seek to take as long looks at Jesus as we may. Think of Him as the Intercessor, and ask Him to speak to the Father for you. A boy at school was asked the meaning of the word, "Intercessor." He replied, "One who speaks a word to God for us." That's it: we have such an Intercessor; and sweet it is to know that when we trip and go wrong, *He* ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Christless soul, *you* too are nearer the end than you think! Do you expect to see Jesus with joy? When you reach your journey's end, where will you find yourself? Ask yourself, "Shall these eyes behold the King in His beauty? or must I wail with poor Balaam, 'I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but

not nigh?" Stop, poor soul, stop and think, lest the day may come when thou shalt be unable to stop. When I visited the Falls of Niagara, there was nothing that took such possession of me as the rapids above the Fall, and I heard a tale of these rapids that filled me with horror. A fisherman, rowing down the stream, fell asleep in his boat; the oar dropped from his hand, and the boat began to drift, at first with a gentle motion, then more quickly, as the current increased in rapidity. Faster and faster she sped along, but the man was still asleep. The crowds on the shore saw his danger, and their shouts awoke him. But it was too late: no power on earth could save him, and he sprang up from his fatal sleep as the awful abyss yawned before him. Another moment, and he was hurled over the rapids into eternity. Ah! how many souls will awake just as the door of mercy closes, and what awful cries will then be heard. "Lord, Lord, open to us." And He shall answer and say unto them, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not."

Think next of the *Light of home*. "The *Lamb* is the Light thereof!" Oh, think of that: Jesus is the Light of our home. Were *He* to be away, it would be dark indeed to us. Dear soul, is He thy Light here? Oh, it may be a very feeble light that you have got, but if it is only *real*, then He will be the Light of thy home for ever up yonder. Who can tell what that Light is!

A lady stood at her window, looking out at the drifting clouds; a heavy shower had just fallen, and across one of the clouds shone a broken rainbow. The lady's thoughts were of one on whom the storms of life had beat pitilessly, and as she gazed on the broken bow, she smiled and said, "Ah, but for that bit of rainbow I should never have known the sun was shining!" Our faith sinks very low often, and when dark clouds rise and terrible conflicts are heavy on us, we think Jesus hides His face from us. Then is the time for us to grasp some invitation, though only a short bit of one; and, like the broken bow in the cloud, the broken text will give us a ray of heavenly light in a dark sky.

Christless soul, for thee there is no sweet light, but the blackness of darkness for ever! Oh, think of dwelling for ever and ever in black, horrible darkness—darkness of despair in thy soul, and darkness all around thee! Oh, how *can* we trifle as we do, when souls are rushing on to such a doom!

Then remember it is our *abiding home*. We need never leave that abode. Many a Scottish emigrant has had to leave his highland home, but *there* shall be no more going out, for "so shall we be for ever with the Lord." There is a deep meaning in this verse. "With the Lord:" wherever He is, there shall also His people be. "For ever." No New Year seasons shall come round there,

reminding us, as this season reminds us just now, of broken circles and well-nigh broken hearts.

Look up, my beloved class! See the gladsome company who have all safely reached home, and shall never leave it again—Oh no, for “they shall go no more out.” Will it not be grand to be there? Does not the thought cheer you, even now? Don’t you think if you had been near Samaria’s well, and had overheard that wondrous conversation between the Master and the sinner He had come to seek—don’t you think if you had heard the tone of His voice, that you would never have forgotten it, but that it would have enriched all the rest of your life? Then, oh, think of *seeing* and being with Him who loved me and gave Himself for me, who kept me from falling, who washed me from my sins in His own blood, who redeemed me from all evil, and who has brought me safely home!

Christless soul, as we are speaking of being “for ever with the Lord,” what, think you, is thy prospect? To be “for ever *without* the Lord;” for ever without His presence, His love, His light, His life, His peace, His rest! Oh, Christless soul, I beseech thee, come to Him to-night!

Let us think now of the *songs of home*. Have you ever sat and listened to the distant murmur of rushing water, and fancied it was a voice speaking from the unseen land. I remember as a child, when they put me to bed in the summer evenings, I used to lie and listen to the rustling of the wind, as it played among the great trees outside my window, and think it was the murmur of the angels singing the music of heaven. But no mortal ear has ever heard the music of that land. “Ear hath not heard its deep notes of joy.” Down here, oh, what broken discordant sounds we utter. Tears choke the song we try to sing, and our hearts are often too dull, and heavy, and crushed for praise. “Oh, how the Lord’s song *can* I sing within a foreign land?” is the frequent wail. Yet, let us remember that if we are only clinging to Jesus, every sorrow here is teaching us to sing the new song there. Some of God’s dearest children have seldom or ever been heard to sing, save one note now and again. England’s sweetest poet just once or twice could lift up his voice joyfully; then the cloud deepened and darkness came upon him, and as he passed into the cloud, he sang,

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.”

Again the cloud lifted for a time, and he broke forth with his most exquisite hymn,

“There is a fountain filled with blood.”

Yet he passed away in darkness. But *now*, with harp in hand and joy on his brow, he sings sweetly of redeeming love, and he will never know a cloud again.

Perpora, the great Italian music master, kept one of his pupils learning the same lesson for three years. The pupil began to murmur, but the master was firm. Four, five, *six* years passed, and yet he was still at the same, until at last, when he began to fear he might, after all, be just at the beginning, the great teacher set him free with the words, "Go, my son, for thou hast nothing more to learn:" and he found himself the first singer of Italy. Ah, my dear class, God keeps us learning the same lesson over and over again, and the lesson is—our utter nothingness, our complete helplessness, our perfect abominableness. Far, *very* far, do we seem to be from knowing our lesson. Yet cheer up, we shall be perfect singers one day. Yes, one day we shall hear the joyful command, "Come home, My child! Thy work is all over. Thou hast had bitter lessons to learn amidst blinding tears, but thy schooling-time is past and thou hast nothing more to learn!" Oh, what a song will ring out then!

"When I stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe."

Christless soul, for *you* there shall be no sweet song. "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced—and shall *wail* because of Him." Ah! what a word that is! These Jews who rejected and crucified Him shall see Him and shall wail; and you who are now rejecting Him shall join in the wail, and it shall be prolonged forever and ever—one long, long *wail*! Ask the Lord to make thee mourn *now*, and weep and wail *now*, repent and turn to Christ *now*, that for thee this home may be prepared, where all tears and sighs shall be done away, and where thou too shalt learn to sing the new song to the Lamb that once was slain.

Think, too, of *the welcome home*. Shall I ever forget my feelings as we drew near to port after our long, weary voyage to Queensland. We were overdue, and those who were expecting us became so anxious that a ship was sent out to look for us. She met our poor weary, battered vessel coming into harbour, and as we dropped our anchor after these long weeks of tempests and tossings, they gave us a right hearty welcome. Ah! my beloved class, be cheered up as you think of *your* welcome, when the storms shall all be over, and the rough gales and wild seas be for ever. As a dying sailor said, "It's the looming of the hills of glory that cheers my soul, and it matters not how rough the voyage may be since the port is here." I

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believe what Bunyan says, that two words will be enough for us to hear—"Well done." Dear soul, is there any one waiting to welcome you? Let us cling to Jesus, let us hold fast to Him who is our life; for, doing that, the everlasting gates shall be flung wide open, and as we enter, all the bells of the celestial city shall chime sweetly on our ears a welcome home. So shall an abundant entrance be ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christless soul, there shall be no welcome for you! It is bad enough on earth to arrive in a strange place where there is no friend to meet one: what shall we say then of the poor soul to whom no kindly hand is outstretched on the furthest shore of the river of death, whom no friendly voice bids welcome. Ah! poor lonely soul, *I am sorry* for thee!

What *glad meetings* there will be in that home! Many have gone before, and at the last all the family shall meet together in the Father's house. "Ah!" says one, "we shall be *quite at home* in heaven." Oh, what a family! All the members, it will be seen, bear the same likeness; all have come through great tribulation; all have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb; all are crowding around the one great centre, Jesus Christ, their Redeemer and elder Brother. I think I see them arriving from north, south, east and west, their work all done, earth's history closed, and a long, long eternity begun. Think of our first meeting with our Best Friend, the One who loved us from the beginning, and continued to love us on to the end; but of *this* meeting I dare not speak just now. Paul has looked in the face of Him whom he loved so loyally and served so nobly. Peter is now safe with the Master, no more to go out and weep bitterly. Luther has laid down his burden, and from the Master received his welcome. And what shall I say more of His weary soldiers who have been called home—the glorious army of martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy. Now for them there are no tears; and it seems almost strange to think they no longer need words of soothing or strengthening or sympathy. Then all our dear ones who slept in Jesus, of whom we took our last look on earth as the coffin lid closed over them, we now behold *them* in glory unspeakable: they are perfect now, aye, *perfect*; holy and pure and lovely. Life's fevered fretted dream is over, and the grand stretch of a glorious eternity before them.

Christless soul, when *thou* dost close *thine* eyes on all things here below, I want to know what is the first thing that shall meet thy gaze on the further shore?

That home is *a home for little children*, but not like the Children's Home just opened, where everything tells of pain and suffering. It is

sweet, when one's heart is sore at seeing some dear little one bravely enduring cruel pain, to bend over the crib and say, "There is a land where the children never suffer pain."

Many a little child Jesus has called to Him. Little Maggie was very ill of a fever, and the van had been sent to take her away to the infirmary. Maggie was dressed and ready, and the noise of wheels was heard. "Maggie, it's time for you to go," said her mother. "Ye ken, mither," said Maggie, "I'll maybe no' come back; will the man wait till I sing my hymn?" Even a hard heart could not have refused, and so the man waited while the little feeble voice sang—

"Here in the body pent—
Absent from Him I roam;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home."

And then they carried the dying child that night, with joyous thoughts like these filling her young heart, to pitch her tent in the ward of an infirmary, whence the last stage of the journey from this to the eternal world is often taken.

Lastly, this home is for *every* brave leal-hearted soldier of the Cross. The great Captain of their salvation has gone there before them. He returned as a kingly victor, and as He approached a cry of triumph was raised, "Ye gates lift up your heads on high;" and the doors were flung open to receive Him. These gates still open wide, for the whole company of the redeemed ones must return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. Is the battle hot just now? Ah! look up, listen to the King's voice, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Be brave, be strong, be true. One second of glory, and what will you think of the sorest conflict you ever waged on earth as you pass through the gates into the city, as you hear from the Master's lips the thrilling words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and catch the Master's look of tenderness and love unutterable. *Then—*

"No more fleeting hours, hurrying down the day,
But golden stillness of glory, never to pass away."

But CHRISTLESS SOUL! what shall become of *thee* in that terrible day? Sitting on His throne, He, the Judge, shall separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep shall be sent to the right hand, the goats to the left. To the one he shall say "Come," to the other, "Depart;" to the one, "Ye blessed," to the other, "Ye cursed." Oh how sharp the sword cuts! Shall that voice strike with *terror* on thine ear? On which side wouldst thou be *now*, if at this moment there should suddenly be heard the trump of doom, and Jesus should be seen seated on His throne? Oh, that awful separation—your brother in heaven and you cast out! Your sister

in heaven and your brother cast out! "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." TAKEN—LEFT! An eternity of woe or of weal is bound up in those two short words! May God, by His blessed Spirit, cause them to ring in the ears of every Christless soul here, till that soul hearken and give heed!

Psalms.

Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

THE object for which David longs is God—the living God—“that come to *Thee* I may.” This psalm is supposed to be written by David when he was driven by Absalom from Jerusalem; but he expresses no regret for his absence from the throne. He does not say, “My soul panteth after my crown,” but, “my God.” His sigh is for his Lord—the God of his life—his joy. As we have seen a huge torrent sweep away in its course all the tiny streams, so all David’s minor sorrows are swallowed up in the cry, “Oh! for my God.” He felt the intense loneliness of his situation. He seems to have heard the shouts of the people at the tabernacle gate, “His mercy endureth for ever,” and the song of the priests; and he longed to join them.

What do you most long for? Perhaps you were once a very active and growing Christian, but now you are dull and heavy, and uneasy that it should be so. Ah! get back to your first moorings. If you want to know how you stand in relation to God, ask yourself, “What do you think most about?” David would have said, “I long for God;” he had only one idea—love for his God. You can tell the bent of your heart by what you thought most of since you rose in the morning. Have you had thoughts of Jesus during the day?

David compares his soul to a hart or gazelle being hunted down the mountains, its whole thought, “I must drink or die.” Thirsty, ah! yes; it does not need to tell it, you can see it by its eye and tongue—they cry out for the water brooks. So, the soul of the Christian knows what it wants; straight as an arrow comes the cry, “I long for God.” We who have tasted of the goodness of God know where to go; we are not like the poor worldling who cries, “Who will show me any good?” The hart has only one thought—the ripple of the cool water brooks; we long only for one thing, “My God.” Give me anything, send me anything, but let me have Christ.

Can you say this in sincerity, "I long for Thee?" How a child "yammers" for its mother! So there is only one thing that can quiet me,—“My God.” There is a sacred sweetness about this terrible longing. Rutherford says, “The bairn in Christ’s house that is most troublesome, is most welcome; he that makes most din for his meat is the best bairn Christ has.” Perhaps you have never felt a longing; you are very thirsty because you are *not thirsty*. Ah! *the very longing to long is something*; be grateful for the very slightest longing. *A sigh will bring Him*,—“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” He does not love me because I feel so and so; He loves me because love comes through Christ. What is thy petition? A hungry heart for Jesus. He says, “It shall be satisfied.”

Psalm xlv. 12-15.

The daughter of Tyre left her father’s house. She was content to be called a dog, like the Syrophenician woman; but she got a new name on coming to the King. She brought gifts with her. She offered a *broken* heart, and in return the King gave her a *new* heart. And her new name was “the King’s daughter.”

In Hamburg, there lived an old cobbler, who had a habit of singing while at work. One day a student passing heard him, and stopped to remark that “he was a good singer.” “Yes,” replied the cobbler, “for I have a good subject for my song: my King. I am very poor but very happy, for I am a King’s son.” The student passed on. Next day he returned, and saluted the cobbler as “Mr. Prince.” The cobbler asked him to sit down, and told him how he had found the King. The student never rested till he, too, became the King’s son.

There are King’s sons and daughters in dark places, in garrets, in the city poorhouses—*outwardly*, poverty, misery, and rags, but *within*, all glorious. What about silks and satins!

Where does the beauty come from? It is wrought in us by the King. We say, “There is nothing beautiful in me,” and yet He says, “Thou art all glorious.” Ah! trust the eye of Jesus! *My* eyes tell me I am black, but *He* sees me beautiful, because He sees Himself in me. He sees us not as we are, but as we are going to be.

The daughter of the King is dressed with embroideries of gold: made ready to dwell in Jerusalem the golden, made ready for the

great presentation day. Look at her! A soul once black going to be presented as the King's bride. She is accompanied to the gate by Mercy on the one side, who says, "I sought thee and found thee;" and Love, on the other side, who says, "I found thee, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." God's Truth shields her: "She *shall* be brought unto the King," and God's "shall" cannot be broken. Bright-eyed Hope, too, accompanies the soul to the gate, and oh! the holy joy with which she is received. The Father sees her enter the gates, and beholds the consummation of the redemption scheme; Jesus the Son sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied; the Holy Ghost sees her—once so rough, now, through Him, so lovely. The angels tune their harps, singing, "Grace! grace!" and it echoes and re-echoes, "Grace, free grace!"

"Lord, do anything with me Thou wilt, that I may get that glorious reception"—brought by grace, and shut in to glory! If it was joy to find Jesus at the cross and weep at His feet, what will it be to enter into the palace! We went in by the weeping gate down here, but there we shall go in by the golden gate. The Palace! We will delay talking about the palace till we meet in it. "There they shall abide." That is a sweet word for weary pilgrims, "For ever with the Lord." There will be no fitting days, no weary days, no lonely days, no funerals, no bereavements; these will be all gone. We shall not have to think, Am I His or am I not? We shall not be afraid in case we lose a glimpse of His face. The glory of that eternal day, who can tell it? If one lamp is beautiful, what would it be to see millions shining? And if one child of God shining down here is beautiful, what will it be to see thousands yonder, catching up the radiance of the Lamb. Will you cheat yourself out of an eternal weight of glory? In view of that reception and that glorious abiding, come to Jesus. Whatever is your trouble or your stumbling-block, fling it aside and come to Jesus. Oh! to be with the Lord! Do not count yourself unworthy of eternal life!

Psalm lxxxix. 30-34.

“If—if!” Two ugly “ifs.” A sad case it is that is supposed here, yet one that is too frequent. If I forget, if I go astray (supposing that I am a child of God),—what then? Is it death and rejection? Ah, no! Sweet mercy in Christ Jesus comes in and slays the “ifs,” as fast as they arise. A writer says, “The eternal ‘shalls’ and ‘wills’ make glorious havoc among the ‘ifs’ and ‘buts.’”

The comfort to be derived here is,—If God’s children forget His laws, shall they be cast out of the covenant? No, most assuredly, no! But here’s the lesson: they are visited with stripes. The difference between the child of God and the worldling is, that the former gets all his chastening down here, and none there; while the worldling is allowed to go on in sin, and get his full enjoyment of the world’s pleasures, only to have weeping for ever yonder. When you suffer adversity or tribulation, don’t think, believer, that God is *punishing* you for your sins, *as under the law*. You have been brought before God as a criminal before a judge; through the blood and righteousness and finished work of the Redeemer, you have received full pardon, (Rom. viii. 1); you have been set free; and that law has nothing more to do with you as a *condemning* law, because you are hid in Christ Jesus, who said on Calvary, “It is finished;” and how can God condemn a soul fairly *hid* in His beloved Son!

Your history is this: Step 1, A criminal pardoned—Step 2, Not only pardoned, but received into His family. I am His child, He is my Father: what follows? If I transgress or go astray, I receive, not *punishment*, but *chastisement*. Do you observe and pick up the difference between the Father’s *chastisement* and the Judge’s *punishment*? Suppose your child is guilty. Do you punish him in the sense that a judge does, in sending him to prison? No, you take the rod down with your own hand, and you chastise the child that the sin may not be committed again; a loving father will not give his child more of the rod than he needs or is able to bear. So the dear Father in heaven chastises with a rod of love, held by a pierced hand. Will He slay His child with the rod? Verily no; it is no sword of vengeance! There is a blessing in the rod of God; I had rather be chastened with that rod than have the portion of the worldling.

I love to think that I am under the loving hand of the Father who will not spoil me. It seems as if some souls through their

whole lives have to undergo a series of chastisements. But remember, *Jesus* drank the cup of penalty to the very dregs, when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He cried, "It is finished; I have borne all that punishment; let them go free." Nevertheless, He has often to say, "That child of Mine must be chastised." Carry on the thought. I receive all through life chastisement after chastisement, and the reason some are so sorely tried is that the chastisement comes from the loving hand of Him who *sees they need it*. But when at last the angel receives his commission, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap,"—when the awful trumpet shall startle all earth's sleepers to life, *Jesus* shall stand between every blood-bought child and justice, saying, "Under the shadow of My wings has he trusted; behold the blood-mark upon him, and let him go free." And what note will I sing? "He loved *me*." Oh that little word, "*me*!" I shall not, at the moment of entrance, think so much of those beside me as of myself. Passing within the golden city, still—"He loved me!" And as I walk on the pavements of the *Urbs Beata*, it echoes far down the streets, "He loved me." Methinks I hear it even now as the distant sound of many waters, "He loved me—*me*—*ME*." An eternal "*me*" of bliss.

Oh happy flock! once so afflicted and chastened, not one is missing! Ah, it often seems as if some *must* be lost! But no! I have tried to place myself in thought beside the ransomed company, and I have said, "Is Peter there, who denied Thee three times, Lord?" "Yes; I made him weep bitter tears of godly repentance, and Peter's here!" "Is the dying thief there?" "Yes; I made him give one look of faith to Me on the cross, and he's safe here!" "Where is the woman of Samaria?" "Safe!" "Where is she who wept over Thy feet?" "She is here, too." My dear class, will you be all there? One hundred years after this, will you have joined the glad company up yonder, where He wipes the tear from every eye? 'Tis worth while surely, to endure all the chastisement, and toil, and sorrow, to win one look of *Jesus*. One glimpse of that face when you pass through the gates of glory, and you will forget all that! Here is a prayer for you: "Lord, chasten me, but give me not over unto death. Lord, lift Thy rod upon me, because I need it, but lift Thou also upon me the light of Thy countenance."

Psalm cvii. 29-31.

There are three things in these verses :—1st, a stormy passage ; 2nd, a welcome home ; 3rd, a song of joy and deliverance.

This psalm teems with praise ; yet if you examine it you will detect an undertone of sadness. It is a miniature "Pilgrim's Progress," only, instead of the Pilgrim being on dry land, he is afloat. Instead of the hill difficulty, we have storms and gales—good for our spiritual health—now and then we have a glimpse of blue sky,—and at last we enter the haven. My dear class, to those who have had the stormiest passage, rest will be the sweetest. Stormy passages, moreover, keep people wide awake ; a calm sea and a clear sky are often treacherous. The prospect of storm makes people look to the fittings of the ship. How foolish a sailor would be to go to sea without either a chart or an anchor ; he might reach Arran, but not Melbourne. And oh, how foolish it is to launch into the ocean of life without the written Chart and the anchor of Hope !

Storms, as God's people know, may be expected. "I have had gales of trouble, and care and sorrow and bereavement, life has been a tempest," says one. Another says, "I have had storms of temptation, making the vessel shiver from stem to stern." And, caught in a wave of temptation, or despair, or fear, you may have said, "Am I a disciple of Jesus or not?" Yea! weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning: with much tribulation ye must enter the kingdom of God. Abel had a short but stormy passage. Jacob said, "Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage;" he had many storms, and little sunshine. Moses had forty years at least of trial. Paul had tempests of sorrow and affliction. And if these mighty vessels met with storms in crossing life's ocean, what can I expect?

But the storm is changed into a calm—it's not always a Biscay gale in the soul. There are calm days, when we feel that He draweth nigh, and we realize His presence, and there is a strange calm. And in the midst of the greatest tempest, we know at least that the vessel is heading homewards. It is a great comfort that He enables us to head home. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." There's a haven somewhere. There's a home for every child of God.

What a multitude have reached the heavenly harbourage! Let us imagine ourselves on a headland, watching the vessels coming into the port. Here's a great man-of-war! Luther by name. Here's

a tiny skiff! 'tis only a little child, but it comes in as glorious as the man-of-war. Storm beaten Peter, too, has an abundant entrance.

Are you to enter? Have you the pilot on board? Yes, Jesus Christ! Then "all's well:" He will not mislead you. He can take you within the port of peace even in the dark. England's sweetest poet entered in the dark.

Is there a child of God who thinks he has been singled out, that there has never been a storm like the one he has met? Nay, dear soul, cheer up in the Master's name! There have been many like thee, and yet they have entered into rest; the sorer the storm, the sweeter the rest. If we have committed ourselves to Christ, we are bound for the same port; and we are getting ever nearer to the same haven of rest. Oh, what will the calm of the sinless shores be! Oh, the perfect peace of the haven of rest! Jesus, remember, does not promise us a calm passage, but He promises us a safe and happy landing!

Then will come the song of deliverance. "Oh, that men would give praise to the Lord!" What a beautiful song it will be when the anchor is dropped in the bay—what notes of joy—"All to Him I owe." We have been singing, "The Lord's my Shepherd;" it will be the same when we enter the house of rest. Is Christ with you on board? Then no matter if it be stormy. There remaineth a rest for the people of God. There is such a thing as hoping even against hope. Teach us, O Lord, to "hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end!" Amen!

THE
TEACHER AND HER CLASSES.

Letters to the whole Class.

MY DEAR GIRLS,

This New-Year I have thought you would perhaps like if I were to write you a few words myself, instead of giving you, as hitherto, the words of others. Not that I for a moment think *my* words would be better than those of others—by no means. I mean simply that, perhaps, I would say a few things to you which a stranger could not. We are not strangers, dear girls, now, to one another; we have often met together, and talked together. But I wonder how many amongst our dear class are still strangers to *Jesus*?—have never yet met with *Him*?—never yet talked a single word to *Him*? Oh! I wonder if there is really *one* amongst us still a stranger to this precious Saviour? and, if there is one, I wonder who that one is? And how many of us are there who, on the other hand, can begin this New Year by singing—

“I once was a stranger to grace and to God.”

Once, not now. Come, then, and let us think over this matter a little. Many of you will remember the first night we began our meetings—how then we took up our “Pilgrim’s Progress,” and looked at a man all in rags and misery—we heard him utter the cry, “What must I do to be saved?” We saw him set out for the wicket-gate; we beheld him disappear within it. Again we traced that one pursuing his solitary journey up the hill Difficulty, down into the Valley of Humiliation. We heard him groan in desperate fight with Apollyon, and sigh bitter sighs in the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death. Now we looked up and saw his figure on the Delectable Mountains leaning on his staff; before we could only hear his despairing cry in the grim old Giant’s Castle, now we saw him travel softy over the enchanted ground, enter Beulah Land, arrive at the dark river’s brink—saw his courage almost fail under that last conflict; but finally, we have beheld him safely on the other side. With him, in imagination, we have climbed the hill which led to the city’s gate; we have almost heard the angels’ song, and the song of the redeemed, as the opened door let out the joy-

ful sound, and we have all re-echoed the closing words of the great dreamer—

“ I wished *myself* amongst them.”

Now, dear girls, I feel there are some amongst our number who have heard all this from Saturday to Saturday, and yet they cannot be called “ Zion’s Pilgrims.”

Now, since last New-Year’s Day, and our last meeting in 1858, not one of our large number has passed into eternity—none are in heaven—none are in hell—of none of our number have those thrilling words been uttered, “ She is gone.” The sad funeral of none has passed through our streets; the green grass of the old church-yard does not yet wave, tall and rank, over one member of our dear class. Many since last year have gone into eternity, left this village and gone into another world, and *we* are all here yet. But oh! dear girls! are we not still called to gaze upon many cold, dead, lifeless *souls* amongst us? Does God look down and behold this awful sight—a dead soul? Does Jesus, the blessed Jesus, bend down and see one dead, cold, lifeless to all His love and tenderness? Do angels not mourn over some here? Do saints in glory not do the same? And oh, are the dark spirits of a place of woe not rejoicing over some bound fast, in the icy sleep of spiritual death! What a thought! our crowded room full of faces beaming with life and health, whilst God, Jesus, saints, angels, devils, may see some wrapt in this death-like, eternal death-like slumber!

First, then, one word to you, dear Sleepers. Let me tell you, you are not the same as you were on the last Saturday of 1858. Your sleep since then has become deeper and sounder. Oh! think a moment—is not this a fearful sleep? You have been born asleep, cradled asleep, gone to a Sabbath-class asleep, passed through the communicant’s class asleep, sat down at the Lord’s table asleep—a sleep this, so profound that it baffles the skill of ministers, of teachers, of friends to waken you. You have gone to church, heard sermons, sat on those forms asleep. Oh! ’tis an awful sleep this; it looks very like the sleep of death; that sleep which knows no waking but by the shivering plunge into a lost eternity. Dear sleeping ones amongst us, what do you mean? You have hearts to weep over the grave of a lost friend; but no tear to shed over the grave of a cold, dead soul! You have bitter tears to shed at the pang of parting from some dear one; but not one bitter tear when you think of an eternal parting from Jesus and a heaven of glory! You even realize and lament over the loss of a “ Royal Charter ” and her three hundred souls! but not one single lamentation for the probable loss of your own soul in the gulf of God’s anger.

If you continue thus, and should God spare you until the last Saturday of 1860, your sleep will be deeper, profounder, more awful! What meanest thou, oh! sleeper? arise and call upon thy God!

Second, To you, dear 'Delayers.' You began this year by delaying, you are going to end it by delaying, are you? You will then probably go on delaying until the delay prove fatal. Death will not delay for you; the judgment day will not put off its appointed hour for you. The grave will not remain closed until you are ready for it. The last chance will come; the door of mercy is open wide just now. Delay—till you see it begin to turn on its hinges; ah! it may roll round on them, and close too quickly for your desperate haste *then*. Ah! the *delayer's* hell must be an awful hell indeed! Will you begin this New Year by burying all delays in the grave of the past year?

Now, a word to you who are thoroughly Careless! Oh! can there be one amongst us careless? Dear Careless One, are you not frightened at your very name? An immortal soul careless! Here is a girl, she sees others finding Jesus, but it is a matter of pure unconcern to her. She sees others shedding tears over sin and misery felt, but *she* has no feeling at all. Others are crying out, "What shall I do?" but she feels no occasion for such a cry. Oh! it will do all very well, this cool indifference, this total apathy *just now*, but you may traverse the whole regions of another world and you will find no careless one *there*; and, rest assured, your indifference, too, will disappear. Had you not better cry *now*, that Jesus would touch your very heart, and make it *feel*?

And now, a single word to those amongst us who have really found Jesus. Have not you found something worth the finding? Did you ever imagine it was such a wondrous thing to find Jesus? Do you remember the first moment when you were enabled simply to trust this glorious One; when, taking Him at His own word, you said, "It is written: 'Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.' Now, Lord, *I come*—the best way I can, I come—and if Thou dost cast me out, I will be the first, but till then, I will hold to Thine own promise." Oh! was not it sweet when thus you were enabled just to *trust Him*? Like the little child, you had been struggling, and striving, and making mighty efforts; but, helpless and weak you lay there, brought *very low*, till at last you were made to *be still*, and allow Jesus to lift you up. Are you His now? Well, go forward, you cannot stand still—pilgrims on an earthly journey may not stand still—no more may Zion's pilgrims—the quicker your steps through the wilderness, the sooner at the Promised Land—the closer you keep to Jesus here, the sooner you

will repose in His presence for ever yonder. Don't be over-anxious for a very smooth and even path. The calm, breezeless ocean, though very sweet and lovely, will not speed forward the vessel. 'Tis the howling blast that drives her fast into her haven—let her head only be turned in the right direction—so sing you as you travel on—

“ I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid.”

Let Jesus be your all—sink down, as it were, and be lost, swallowed up in Him. Like the tender, confiding plant striking its roots into the kindly soil, strike you the fibres of your faith deep down into the Rock of Ages! Strange paradox! Our earthly rocks are bare and barren. This Rock is the only soil upon which an immortal soul can safely take root.

And now, a word to all. Dear Sleeping Ones, oh! I earnestly implore of you, awake! Do you say, I can't *feel*, I'm *so* fast asleep, I can't feel even concerned—I can't make myself awake! No! but you can cry, “Lord, awaken me!” and you *must*—your very sense of darkness should make your cry sound the louder and the longer. One cry will bring Jesus—yes! just one earnest cry. You can, at least, thank Him for not having, ere this, sent you into the long, *sleepless* night of eternal woe! He longs to hear you cry. Oh! then, begin the New Year by a new cry: “Lord Jesus, help me.” Cry on, if need be, cry all the year on; and if you live to see another New Year, you may then have another new cry of joy—

“ He took me from a fearful pit,
And from the miry clay,” &c.

But refuse to cry for awakening grace now, and by next year your cry may not be heard on earth! It may be the cry of another inhabitant of a lost eternity! Oh! *cry!*

Dear Delayers, are you not wearied of this? Would you not rather decide the matter at once? Oh! but you say, “I can't decide; I wish I could.” Well, you too must cry, “Lord, help me.” But if you choose, you *can* decide; you can make your decision easily on earthly matters. The truth is, you don't sufficiently realise the danger of your position; if you really felt in all its awful intensity what it was to be “out of Christ,” oh! you *would* decide. I believe a very important matter is to take some decided step; as it were commit yourself. You know when a parent bird is anxious to teach its newly-fledged young ones how to fly, she leads them to the edge of the nest, then gives them a gentle push; they fall over, and beginning to sink, out fly their little wings, and ere they almost know it themselves, how, or when,

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they are flying. Now, do the same with your soul; as it were, give it such a shove over the nest of sin and death, that, feeling itself sinking, it will stretch out its wings and flee to Jesus, the only refuge. Oh! then, cease this folly; your very indecision shows you folly. Let not an old year pass away, let not a new one begin, until you have made the final leap, bounded right into the arms of Him who waits for *your* decision.

Dear Careless One, we hope you stand alone, but if there's one, your carelessness will ruin you. You are the only one careless about your soul. Jesus was not careless about poor lost ones. God the Father is not careless about them. God the Spirit shows by His frequent visits even to your careless soul, that He knows the worth of it. Angels are not careless. They tune their golden harps over every repenting sinner. Saints in glory are not careless either; they would awaken you if they could. Devils are not careless about your soul; oh! no! they are *so careful* about it, that they do all they can to keep *you* careless about it. Oh! remember your indifference can't last for ever. Shake off this steel casing in which your poor soul is enwrapped, and "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is nigh."

And oh! you who are His dear sheep follow Him closely, even in His very footprints; often think of Him; often think of His home, where He has gone to prepare a place for you, it will make you think less of this wilderness-life; and oh! work for Him. Said a friend to one who had just found Jesus, "Now, what are you going to do for Him?" "Oh!" was the reply, "I'll do all I can." Are *you* doing all *you* can? The reason we do so little for Jesus is because we have got so little of Him ourselves. The full vessel can spare the overflowing drop—the half-filled vessel needs it all. Oh! the full heart must flow over to others; get filled with His love, then, you *must* work for Him.

This has been a year of blessing to thousands. Why not also to one little spot? I do trust many of us have this year experienced a great change. How will *you* spend it? You have found Jesus this year, have you? Then begin the New Year by a complete surrender to Him of your time, health, strength, body, and soul enlisting under His banner, it will prove a glorious service—only try it. Oh! let us all yield ourselves up to Jesus. Lord, we are Thine; we no longer belong to the devil's cruel service; the world will not claim us any more. Sin! we have bid it farewell. Ourselves!—we leave ourselves; and, looking unto Thee, oh! Jesus, we will say—

"Now to be Thine; yea, Thine alone,
Oh! Lamb of God, we come!"

Now, ere I close, just one solemn warning. Is there one of you who feels that God's Spirit is striving with you? You feel uneasy, uncomfortable—Don't you? If you allowed that heart to speak, it would tell a tale of miserable hours: of a still voice ever whispering, "Seek Jesus *now*:" of a constant though silent struggle between God and you. Oh! how awfully solemn! On the one hand, Jesus—the loving Jesus—gently striving by His Spirit to lead you to Himself—to heaven—to glory; the devil, on the other, striving to get you to quench that Spirit, to lead you to everlasting flames—eternal woe! Oh! beware what you do! Better far you had never been born, than that you go on quenching the Spirit. You will succeed one day. Take the alarm. Have you *already* succeeded? Then I leave this question with you, answer it if you can:—When once that sweet and blessed visitor has left off striving with the poor deluded sinner, *who can save that soul?* Who can save *yours*, if *you* be that thrice-miserable one? Oh! beware. Cry, "Blessed Spirit, never, never leave *me*."

Dear girls, I must stop. We have often met together; our voices have together sung many a sweet psalm; we have read many a precious word together. Oh! may the Lord grant that it be the token of a better and nobler song we shall all sing together, yonder—

"To Him that loved the souls of men,
And wash'd us in His blood."

No discordant notes there; no tuneless voice; no song broken by the weeping tear. Oh! here is one concluding word which often rushes upon my mind with a death-coldness. Shall one voice which has mingled in our song below, be wanting in the great company of happy singers above—and if so—*which?* Shall one familiar face be absent from the glorious multitude of faces there—and if so—*which?* Shall we hear one well-known voice cry out the despairing shout for the hills to cover them—and if so—*which?* Shall one dear face be seen amongst the agonised countenances on the left hand—and if so—*which?* Dear girls! may God bless you *all*; may God bring you *all* to Himself in His own time and way. You know the full depth of meaning and affection when I say, I wish you all a happy New Year—a happy New Year begun with Jesus—and happy, too, because you are able to say and to sing—

"Pass away, earthly joys, Jesus is mine."

You will know, then, that should death visit your house, and enter your little room, and stand beside your bed and whisper—"The

Master is come, and calleth thee," you will be able to shout joyfully—

“Oh! death, where is thy sting?
Oh! grave, where is thy victory?”

This may be the last New Year some of us shall ever see; and, if ere another the grave may have been dug, and green grass have begun to wave over some mouldering form once amongst our number, I would have you say, *which?* Is it I? Lord, teach me to number my days. Yes—“*which?*”

Your sincere friend,

E. F. *

MY DEAR GIRLS,

As I cannot write to each one of you separately, I have thought of this plan by which I might say a little quiet word to all.

Dear Girls, I cannot write very much, and must at once go on to speak of HIM, whom so many are now finding very precious—you know His name—JESUS, the sinner's Friend. It is now nearly four months since I was permitted to stand amongst you and speak of Him, and now I often long once more to be in the midst of you, for I feel I could now speak of His preciousness as I have not done before. I wonder if any dear girl amongst you who four months ago knew not the precious Saviour has since then found Him infinitely precious, and can now say, “I have found Him, for He has found me.” Oh! how happy should I be to take that one by the hand and welcome her into the fold. Would to God I could indulge the sweet and blessed hope that every soul amongst you is safe there! Oh! is there one of you still wandering away *outside?* Don't do it any more. It's a cold, dreary, sad path that—away wandering from Jesus the Good Shepherd. Such a dreary path, leading away to a dreary place; such a dismal path, leading away to

* This and the next two letters were printed for distribution in the class.

such a dismal place; such a dark path, leading to such a dark, dark place! Oh! turn, you dear wandering girl, *turn, turn!*

Is there one saying, "I would *like* to turn, but I cannot, for I'm afraid Jesus would not take me." Ah! how foolish! how little you know Jesus! Do you remember that verse (Luke xv. 5), "He layeth it on His shoulder"—doing what? Upbraiding the poor silly sheep all the time for its wanderings? No. "He layeth it on His shoulder—*rejoicing*." Ah! that's Jesus, will you let Him take you up and lay you on His shoulder? What a place for the wanderer! One would think if He *drove* it before Him back to the fold—if He even allowed it to follow Him—no, He will do better than that, for He is the tender loving Saviour. He will not drive the poor sinner before Him, He will not even let him follow—he might wander again, so foolish, so ignorant is the silly sheep. But He will *take it up* and lay it on His shoulder. Oh! think of *that shoulder*,—the shoulder that bears the universe, that bore the Cross, that shoulder on which John leant. What a shoulder! what a resting-place! what a secure refuge! Will you not cry, "Jesus, lift me up, lay me on Thy shoulder?" He will do it.

But there's another word to come: What does the Good Shepherd do all the way back to the fold, as He carries the wanderer along over those dark mountains of sin and departure from God? What does He do? "He layeth it on His shoulder *rejoicing*," so happy to have the lost one found, singing over it.

Dear Girls, do your hearts not melt within you as you think of all this? Oh come in all of you—come into this fold; fly fast to Jesus, hide in Him. Some of you, I hope and trust, do find Jesus very precious. How precious is He to a poor sin-laden soul—how precious *now*, how precious in time, how precious in eternity! Dear Girls, we will all very soon be into that eternity—then it will be seen who has taken refuge under the wings of this precious One, and who has not—who has been content to be thought well of by man, and who has sought to be approved of by God—who has got the precious blood upon her soul, and who has been satisfied to wash her poor soul in a few tears or prayers—who has got fold after fold of the glorious robe of the righteousness of Jesus wrapt about her, and who has gathered together and patched up very neatly the poor torn and tattered rags of her own righteousness. Ah! my dear, dear girls, I do most solemnly warn you to look to it. How do you mean to meet God? Have you Jesus and His blood and righteousness to answer for you? Are you hid,

like a poor worm as you are, hid in Him? Then, you are safe; then, sing Hosannah! praise the Lord! Begin your eternal work even in time—sing a few notes of the song of the redeemed even below.

But oh! if there are any of you, whose consciences, as you hear this read to you, whisper, "Ah! Jesus is nothing to me; I am not washed in His blood, clothed in His righteousness." Dear girl, do you not shudder? O Spirit of the Lord, do Thy work! Come down with mighty and resistless power, and awaken that poor silly wanderer. Seek Jesus! seek Jesus! Be content with nothing short of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Don't be content to go to church unless you meet *Jesus* there. Don't go to your knees and say over a lot of words. Prayer is communion with Jesus. Don't take up with fine feelings and fancied peace unless Jesus be the fountain and source of all. In one word, Jesus must be your *all*, your *first*, your *last*.

And now, a word to you who really are seeking and striving after nearness to Jesus, and conformity to His blessed image. Go on! Strive on! Fight on! it's a good sign when there's a hard conflict within—it shows the flesh is not getting all things its own way. Don't be cast down because you feel and see sin in you. A man here was in great distress about his soul; he thought he was lost, could never be saved, he was in despair. Off he set to a good old Christian who lived in the town, and told him all his distress, winding up with, "Now David, I'm *dead*, quite dead." "Weel Jamie," said the old man, "go away home, ye're no dead yet—na! na! there's nae groans comes frae the grave." So you see, groans over deadness and coldness felt, are not altogether signs of death. Trust Jesus—tell all to Jesus. His promises are ample, full, free; they will meet all your need, and suit you well under every circumstance. He never can be but as good as His word.

I was thinking the other day, that if we could open the window of heaven just now, and ask the bright-robed company of the redeemed ones there, "When you were down yonder fighting away for Christ, was He as good as His word?" What a shout would they all unite in sending up, "Yes! He is the true and faithful Witness." Do not then distrust Jesus for a moment here; trust Him for everything, for health, for sickness, for joy, or for sorrow, for life, or for death, in times of darkness, and in times of light, in times of trouble, and in times of singing; at all times trust Jesus. You have given Him your soul to keep, then let Him do it; and remember He will give you *all* that is really good for you.

Many hymns have been very sweet and precious to me during hours of pain, no lines more so than these:—

“ Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free, and faithful, strong as death.

“ Thou shalt see my glory soon ;
When the work of grace is done,
Partner of my throne shalt be :
Say, poor sinner, ‘ Lov’st thou Me ? ’ ”

Dear Girls, I must draw to a close. I trust I may ere long be permitted to meet you for a night before I go to a greater distance. Pray that Jesus would allow us to unite in praising Him once more together, for His unspeakable love and free mercy. Oh ! that I could be permitted to see the whole of you *one in Him*,—the dear class one little company, all together returning and coming to Zion, travellers onward to the Celestial City—none left behind, none awaiting at that great day. Come, oh come with us, you who are still content with your poor wages which you are working so hard for just now. Oh ! you *will* get your wages. Satan will cast them to you with a sneer at your fearful folly in toiling a whole little life for them. And what are they ? Oh ! *such* payment !—death ; eternal, everlasting, never ending, DEATH ! Dear Girls, I do most solemnly implore of you to come *now* to Jesus. Oh ! His gift is a very different one,—no wages—no working—a free gift—life eternal—never ending life, life up above yonder with Himself, life without death, or sin, or grief. Oh ! come and *take* it, just take it ! “ Lord give them all grace, and power, and desire, to take Thee for their everlasting portion.”

Good bye, dear Girls. Oh ! how many, many prayers have I heard offered up by God’s dear children at my bedside for you. Willingly would I endure all the pain and suffering I have had, over again, to get a continuance of those prayers for you. Could my illness be the means of sending one of you to Jesus, I would willingly cry—“ Lord, send it all back again.” May He bless you and keep you, and bring you all by a right way to the City of Habitation.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.”

“Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?—why, then, is not the health of my soul recovered?”

MY DEAR GIRLS,

As each year has come to a close, you know I have tried to write a few words expressly for you, and this year I wish to do the same. But, before going any further, I want you to do one thing. First, before reading another line, ask the Lord to bless this message to you, and by His Spirit to show you *your* portrait here—to show you if the verses above be applicable to you or not. Don't read this letter just to be done with it; but, oh, read it as I have tried to write it—in view of eternity—in view of your *individual eternity*.

Now, look at the verse we have begun with, what do you think about it? how do you like the look of that little letter, “I,” there?—oh, what a weight hangs on it! How would it be to read, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my sister, my brother, my father, my friend is not saved”? But, oh, how much more sad when, after a few moments' serious reflection, recalling all past opportunities—the present fleeting hour—the vast unending life to come—you have to wait out, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I—I am not saved.”

Dear Girls, I feel as if I had a specially solemn message for you this New Year. Everything around us calls us to be solemn. The *times* are solemn, very solemn. It seems as if we stood at the threshold of great and momentous changes, perhaps of days of fiery trial—the latter days, “When the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise—the elements shall melt with fervent heat—the earth, also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.” It is no time for the trumpet to give an uncertain sound. “Behold, the Judge standeth before the door; watch, therefore, and pray.” The season itself is solemn, very solemn. Oh, how accustomed we get to new years, and summers, and winters, and seasons! and yet, there is written on each such milestone on life's journey, solemn words. Look up, and read—“Behold, I come quickly;” “Time shall be no more;” “In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.”

Ah, dear Girls! Satan likes to plant beautiful flowers, and gay leaves over those milestones, and hide these alarming inscriptions, so that the soul may not read, and tremble, and perchance cry

out, "What must I do to be saved?" He invents special amusements to usher in a new year, or to commemorate a birth-day. Ah! but there is one day which baffles even his skill to invent an amusement for—a day when the soul *cannot* shirk the awful sight—the day of death—of a coffin, a shroud, a cold grave. And, oh, *life* is solemn! I've often tried to shew you how solemn a thing it is to *live*. Many people think and say, "Oh, yes, it is a solemn, a very solemn and awful thing to die; but they forget it is as solemn a thing to live. How? Did you ever watch the farmer going over his field in early spring, dropping into the earth, here and there, a tiny grain of seed? Long days and weeks passed away, and perhaps you had quite forgotten what you then saw—but in autumn, passing that same field, you see it waving with yellow grain. How came it there? It's the result of the farmer's spring work: as he sowed *then*, he is reaping *now* in harvest time. So, dear girls, life is your sowing time—oh, how solemn! Just think of it,—you are every day dropping in a seed which is never to die; but to bear fruit, *after its kind*, through all eternity! You forget all about it, but there it lies—that untruth you told—that secret sin you indulged—that passionate outburst—the seed is sown. And how you will wonder, how you will tremble in amazement and horror when you come to reap your harvest—a rich harvest of full-grown sins, fully-developed evil propensities; remember you are now forming the germ of a character which you will bear through all eternity. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Eternity only stamps with immortality what you transact here. "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is holy, let him be holy still." Is it not then a solemn thing to live?

Dear Girls, are any of you seeking to be like Jesus, to be like Him every day? then you will be perfectly like Him for ever. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." But is any one of you living in the indulgence of some cherished sin, or evil passion? then, if you continue so, you will be the victim of that sin, that passion fully developed, and reigning in you for ever. Now, look at the verse, and see whether or not this cry must be yours. Many a wail and note of anguish has this earth of ours heard! The cry from a widowed heart, or orphaned home; the cry from the sailor left amidst the billows to perish; but no wail so sad, and no note of anguish so plaintive as this—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Dear Girls, are there not some of you this verse represents?

Let us look at it, and see. There is a great analogy between the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace. You know that in nature there are four seasons,—Winter, when all speaks of death, darkness, silence; when the flowers and fields, the orchards and trees, all are dead; how gloomy is everything, and how difficult to believe in an annual resurrection!

But Spring comes—glad, joyous spring. The bird learns its song once more, and the snow-drop shows its white head. But there are still the cold winds of March, and the husbandman is yet anxious. He knows that many a fair bud may be cruelly nipped, he knows about the blighting frosts and chilly blasts, so he longs for the warm Summer, and it, too, comes with the bright sunshine, and the fruits and grain are ripened fast, and ready for the mellow Autumn.

Now comes the *gathering in*, and the husbandman says—“Spring is past, Summer is over, harvest is ended; my last sheaf is gathered in.” Yet not the same said of *all*. Oh! mark this; some fields are parched and barren, and still lie in Winter’s cold dreariness and death; the very life around them makes their death look sadder. See yon fruit tree, or that field; the very summer’s sun which ripened the others has only brought death to it, causing it more and more to decay. And so the farmer looks, and as he looks he says—“The Spring is past, the Summer is ended, and that tree—that field—is not fit to be gathered into my barn; bind the withered stalks together, let them be for fuel.”

Oh! my dear Girls, what a picture of a soul’s state! *Your* state, oh! young woman, if still Christless; *you* out in the field of privileges—*you* “to whom much has been given.” Now, I solemnly press upon you this question, in which of those stages is your soul? Are you still in Winter’s dark, dreary sleep? Oh! you’ve *seen* a spring-time of revival—you’ve seen others begin to show symptoms of life—begin to put forth buds of promise. The girl that sat next you in the Sabbath School, or at the Communion Table, you know there is a change on her; she will not jest with you as she used; she will not go now with the foolish companions you and she went together with. She loves what she once hated, and perhaps her company has grown distasteful to you. You have watched the passing from death to life—the Sun of Righteousness arising on her soul, with healing under His wings; but you are left, left just as you were when you were born—“Dead in trespasses and sins.” All in you, all about you is *dead, dead!* God, the Divine husbandman, looks at *you*, at *you*, oh! soul, and as He looks He says—“What more could have been done that I have not done in

it;" "therefore, every branch that beareth not fruit He taketh away."

Dear Girl, how long is this to last? Are you content to be left behind?—to see your friends, or companions, ripening for glory, and you ripening for destruction; to see them laying up treasure in Heaven, and you "treasuring up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath?" Did you ever try to realize what it must be to be *left behind*? To see one after another of the Lord's dear children caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and go away with Him to their eternal home; to see all that is good and holy, taken away, and you left; oh! so poor, so wretched, your soul left with you *desolate*! What a wail! Shall it be yours? "*My summer's sun is for ever set; nothing now for me but the dark winter of everlasting death; no more Sabbath school; no more prayer meeting; my companion is gone to glory—my teacher, my minister, are there. I am not saved; I never can be saved.*"

To those of you who have some hope that life is yours, because Christ is yours—who cannot deny that there are about you some symptoms of life, though feeble and flickering—I would say one word of warning, and one word of encouragement. First—of warning. Remember that Spring blossoms do not always end in Summer fruit. Oh! remember that solemn word spoken by the Lord Himself—"He *that endureth to the end*, the same shall be saved." Therefore, "Watch and pray," always watch, always pray.

A young friend was one day calling upon an old Christian woman, nearly eighty years of age, just waiting for the summons, and who has since got it and is now entered into her rest. Said this young friend, "Oh! Granny, I wish I was as sure of Heaven, and as near it as you are." With a look of unspeakable emotion, and the tear starting in her eye, the old woman answered:—"And do you really think the devil canna' find his way up an old woman's garret-stair; oh! if *He* hadn't said, 'None shall pluck them out of My hand,' I would have been away long ago." So, dear Girls, here lies your safety. *Always* remember, the beginning of your hope must be Jesus, His blood and righteousness; the centre of your hope, Jesus, His blood and righteousness; the end of your hope, Jesus, His blood and righteousness. Then shall you sing—

" Even treading the valley and shadow of death,
This watchword shall rally my faltering breath;
For when, from life's fever, my God sets me free,
Jehovah Tsidkenu my death-song shall be."

And now for your comfort and encouragement.. Remember

that, though ever *aiming* at perfection, yet perfection is not attained here. Earth's soil bears no perfect plant; the buds of faith and hope are very tender; the bitter blasts of temptation and trial often rudely shake them; but, do not be downcast, "He that hath begun a good work will perfect it." David encouraged himself thus: "The Lord *will perfect* that which concerneth me." You know some plants in a soil exposed much to the sun's rays flourish and grow best, and soonest. So, if you want to grow in grace, draw nearer to the Sun of Righteousness, take more shelter under His warm and healing beams, and soon the tiny bud of faith shall burst into the full flower of sight, and the blossoms of love, here so puny and feeble at best, spread into full perfection.

There is one class I wish to say a word to—a class who are denominated as those "easily led"—that is to say, easily led into some good path, or as easily led into evil—one night at a prayer-meeting, the next spending it in foolish talking and jesting, if not worse. Now, I do not know any soul at whom I can fancy Satan sneering so much; if you feel you are here described, then I tell you, you are just his *plaything*—he tosses you (so to speak) from hand to hand at his pleasure. One night he is not alarmed to see you at a prayer-meeting, for he knows he has only to set the temptation in your way, and the next you will spend in his service! Oh! how he sneers at such a soul! Dear girl, guard against this vacillating disposition; seek to have the moral courage to say *no* to those who would tempt you to take part in any course unbecoming a child of God.

Seek to get this weak point in your character strengthened, not by mere force of will, for that's just taking a bit of nature to mend nature, but get your strength from Him who sent His angels to strengthen our blessed Saviour in His time of trial, and is willing to do the same to you. There is one in whose blessed hand you are safe—one who never lets go the feeblest hand put into His; you know His name—"The Good Shepherd;" He who never slumbers or sleeps. And you know His precious promise—"To give power to the faint, and to them that have no might, to increase strength."

And now, to draw all this to a close, I would put this question, and press it closely upon each of you still unsaved:—"Is there no balm in Gilead?—Is there no physician there?" Why, then, are you not *all* saved? Is there no cure? Is your disease too bad? Is there no balm which can be applied to this deadly trouble of

yours? Oh, yes; Gilead's hills run down with sweetest balm; Gilead's balms send forth sweetest fragrance; Gilead's physician is always ready—is ready *now*. Why, then, is the hurt of your soul not healed?

Oh! set yourself to answer this question—have you never before heard of a cure? Ah! you dare not shelter yourself in that excuse—it is torn from you. Just stop a moment, and do a little arithmetic. Try and count up the number of times you have heard about Jesus, and been invited and pressed to come to Him—can you remember *all* the times? I'm sure not. Then, at the bar of God's judgment seat, what will you answer? When He asks, Why is your soul unsaved, unhealed; oh! what will you say? Get your answer ready now, lest then you be found speechless. "Prepare to meet thy God," oh soul! Have you ever come and asked Him to heal your soul, and been rejected? That cannot be, for He, the God of truth, says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." What is the reason, then, that up to this hour your soul is in this sad state? Simply because the hurt's not felt; you have never felt what it was to have a diseased soul, therefore you have never gone to the Physician for healing, and so are yet unsaved. No sacrament, no prayer in itself can heal you; this can, "The blood of Jesus Christ"—the blood of the Physician Himself.

Oh! mark that! What a cure! And so the sin-sick soul looks at this wondrous remedy, and, as it looks, believes, and believing, sings:—

"Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the Heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away—
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While, like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin."

Dear Girl, does the road seem rough, long, and weary? Are you sadly afraid of falling by the way? Here's a drop of Gilead's balm. "Fear not for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God." Doubting soul! do you fear you will never reach the good land; others may, but you fear you won't. Listen! "I

give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." Awakened soul! afraid now, and trembling lest your Summer be already over, your harvest past, you left behind—here's a word—"Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will answer *thee*." "Turn, therefore, to the stronghold, prisoner of hope." Does the heart of some one fail because of the jeers and scoffs of ungodly friends or companions? Oh, listen! "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass." "My grace is sufficient for thee." And is any one fearing death? "Is thine earthly house distressed, willing to retain its guest?" Here's a sweet balm—"I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee." Therefore, "Bless the Lord, oh! my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."

A young man came to die; he had been for some years a decided Christian. His last words were: "I tread the dark valley, having peace through the blood of the Lamb." After his death, on the first leaf of his pocket-Bible, was found his passport to glory. Oh that it was what every one of you could truly say! Here it is:—

"Free grace has saved me;
An unspotted righteousness covers me;
Eternal glory awaits me;
Who then shall condemn?
There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Now, dear Girls, I must be done. Oh! let me solemnly warn all unconverted ones. Sleep on now and take your rest if you may, for, if you continue as you are, there is no rest for you in eternity! Your unconcern is the worst symptom about you. When a patient is insensible, does the physician tell him that because he *feels* nothing, therefore, all is well? Oh! no; and shall we tell you that because you are quite at your ease, contented, and able to forget God, all is well? No; your state is *very* dangerous and *very* critical: remember, the longer you continue thus, the more deeply insensible will you become. Don't you see the urgency of the case? Oh! if the great day of the Lamb's wrath come and find you thus, how will you be able to stand? Let us all be stirred up. Time is passing on so swiftly, how is it we are so little affected by it? We get accustomed to it. You know the earth rolls round on its axis with tremendous velocity; as I write, and you read, it is whirling round, carrying us with it: and why don't we feel it? Just because of its very rapidity. So days, and months, and years are flying past, and we shall soon be done with time. Oh! what

are you doing with your time? Dear Girls, how do you spend your day?—how do you dispose of your life, your talents, your tongue, your hands, your feet? What is your God? How often do you remember Jesus in a day, in comparison with the world or self? “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” We know not what may await us in this coming year, therefore hasten, without a moment’s delay, to take refuge in that blessed ark of safety; you will find such rest, pure and warm shelter there—a shelter from the storm of God’s just wrath, a covering from that fiery deluge. Oh! dear Girls, only remain in it, and it will bear you above all the storm, and tempest, and billows, and land you on those hills whereon stands the City of our God.

How the sailor makes for the nearest port when the weather is angry and lowering. The shepherd gathers home his flock to the hill side when the storm gathers. But the poor soul is left naked, neglected, uncared for, to take its chance for Heaven or hell! Dear Girls, be wise in time, be wise now, consider your latter end. Who can tell the value of the time given you now—your short day of grace! Make haste, let this, indeed, be a new year of grace to your souls, a new year, indeed, of blessing. And oh! you who are without shelter, or rest, or peace, beware lest this note of wailing be but the beginning of an eternal lament:—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.”

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever; and unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever—AMEN.”

Your affectionate Teacher.

SHIP, "FAMENOLTE,"
OFF CAPE DE VERDE, *31st July, 1876.*

MY BELOVED CLASS,

I take this opportunity of letting you know how I am coming on, and also of letting you know how constantly you have been on my mind and in my prayers since I left the shores of dear Scotland. We left the Tail of the Bank about six o'clock p.m. All was confusion. The tug left us about nine o'clock, and soon after I went to bed, but not to sleep. My thoughts were too sad, and my heart too wakeful. It seemed as a weary sort of dream that I was, for so long a time, to see your faces, and the faces of those so dear to me, no more. I wondered if I had done aright in leaving you all, and a voice seemed to say, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" I can truly say that I was, and have been more deeply tried about you all, than any personal ties to my dear country. My heart has sorrowed and yearned after you all, and most earnestly and eagerly have I longed again to be among you, trying to comfort you all with "that comfort wherewith *He* comforteth them that are cast down." My only comfort is in ever and again commending you, my dear class, to Him who is able to keep you from falling.

And now a little about the ship and the voyage. The first few days were very miserable. There had been much drink on board, and the effects were wretchedness, as they ever are. All the emigrants were sick; the weather was very bad, not stormy, but dead calm, with dense fog. We could not see five yards ahead for three days, and lay like a log in the water. We were in great danger, both from collision and running on a lee shore. One night I cannot forget. The fog horn, a most eerie, doleful sound, went day and night. Steamers unseen were whistling all around us. I felt, as I lay down, that only He who keeps Israel could keep us, and I fell asleep with the sweet assurance that much prayer was made for us all by you and many more—prayers that would be heard and answered by the Lord God of Sabaoth. We had a heavy sea down to the Bay of Biscay, where, strange to say, it fell dead calm, and remained so for two days, Saturday and Sunday. I sat alone, watching the sunset. It was very beautiful, and I gazed at it until I saw it sink behind a mass of golden tipped clouds. Then, soon after, the moon rose. I had often heard of moonlight in the Bay, and it was very magnificent. The great Atlantic billows came rolling in so calmly and softly, as if they never knew what it was to lash themselves into fury, and had never robbed many a hearth

and home of loved ones. We got a good breeze up to Madeira, where again we were becalmed for two days off that lovely island of the ocean. The evenings were exquisite and the setting sun glorious: it bathed the rugged peaks of the mountains in purple and violet hues. Now we have very light winds, and are running down to the line. As yet our passage has been exceedingly slow.

Now, as to our passengers. The saloon passengers are exceedingly agreeable, and we are very happy together. But you can think how eagerly I longed to find someone who cared for those things which belong to our eternal peace. At length I found one. The captain's wife is a sweet, gentle, true follower of Jesus, and amidst the bustle and noise, the uproar and turmoil, which must attend such a ship, with nearly four hundred souls on board, she and I often find a quiet corner, and, in low, whispered accents, speak of *Him*, our dear Lord and His dying love. Morning and evening we meet in her cabin, and have reading and prayer, and I can assure you it is, indeed, an oasis in the desert, a little water of cool refreshing to a weary soul. There is not much rest here—a good deal of uproar, drink, and confusion; much danger—indeed, I little knew the dangers attending an emigrant ship, both from without and within. Measles has broken out, and there is constant danger. We have service at eleven o'clock on Sabbath, and a strange scene it is, to see the emigrants—bronzed powerful men, tender children, and helpless women—gathered round the capstan, which is covered with the Union Jack, and to hear a mighty voice of singing sending up the one hundredth psalm, (Old Hundred), and lots of Sankey's hymns. There are concerts, dancing, and reciting every Saturday night and during the week, but on these occasions you might see a solitary figure sitting swinging on the wheel-house at the stern, looking away into the deep blue waters, and up to the lovely bright stars overhead, and sending up many a prayer for the dear class left so far behind, and for "friends astern." You remember that story.

And now let me tell you a little incident which made a deep impression on me, and which I wish to tell you for your good also. Two days ago, I was looking all around at the sea, when I spied a large mass of something coming tumbling towards us. I pointed it out to the captain, who, on looking at it with his glass, ordered the main sail to be backed and the life-boat to be instantly lowered. It was either a wreck or a raft, and there might be human beings there. We watched the tiny boat—a small speck on the vast ocean—as it rose to the huge billow, or sunk into a deep valley. At length, after a pull of one mile, we saw them reach the mass and try to take it in tow, but soon they abandoned this, and returned

to the ship. The second mate reported that it was the upper deck of a large ship, and there were three sharks in it. It made us shudder, as this showed there had been human beings there recently. They had tried to tug the wreck, but it was too full of water and the sea too heavy, and so the poor waif of the ocean, with its sad story of death and agony, was left to drift at the mercy of every wind and wave. What a lesson I learnt—for myself, for you, for many. Do you remember the sweet note of one who could say, “*He* sent for me from above. *He* took me. *He* drew me out of many waters?” Ah! my dearly beloved class, may none of you be like that wreck—without pilot, or anchor, or compass—drifting fast to the rocks of eternal destruction. Our small boat had not strength to tug it to our large ship; but there is One infinitely able, and as willing as He is able, to draw the farthest off near, and to make the most hopeless to be full of joy and peace. I do trust you are *all* clinging to this One, mighty to save. Oh, let me, through the feeble pen, entreat you, with all the earnestness of my soul, and with all the love I bear to you, do not put away or reject the offered love of this Lord Jesus. Be comforted, be encouraged: the time is short. I can assure you I have found, since I came here, that *He* is able to keep that which is committed to Him, and in the midst of the most untoward and heart-crushing circumstances, can give the heart that trusts Him peace deep and calm as a river.

Now, as regards myself, one word in passing. I have never felt the slightest sickness, but other illness has seized me, and as yet I fear I am not getting the good I expected, but perhaps I'll pick up soon. The weather is hot: 101° in the shade. The water is bad and warm, and there is much to chafe and weary one. But I get many sweet verses, and can truly say I find “It is good for me at all times, under *all* circumstances, that I draw near to God,” and I find the sweetness of the parting verse which I left with you, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

I do trust we may be spared to meet again, when I trust to have much strength and freshness of spirit to spend amongst you all. Now, my dear class, I commend you to Him who is able to keep you close to Himself, and to present you faultless before His presence. Keep together, help one another, and, oh, never forget or neglect secret prayer, or the reading of His own precious Word. Do seek to get nearer and nearer to Him, that so each day may find you growing in grace, and in preparation for the solemn and awful scenes of death, judgment, and eternity!

You must excuse this letter, written amidst most adverse circumstances. I hope to get it, along with others, put on board a ship homeward bound, at the line. Be assured you are never forgotten

by me ; but all I see is for you, and I trust to return, if God will, with many a solemn and useful lesson. Pray for us all. And now, may the Lord keep you all, and bless you, and draw every one of you nearer and nearer to Himself. I send you two verses which have been most helpful to me in this time of sore need. "It is good for me to draw near to God." "When my heart is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock which is higher than I."

I conclude with my most affectionate love, in our dear Lord Jesus.

Yours affectionately, my dear class,

E. FLETCHER.

JERUSALEM, (ZION HILL), *9th July, 1873.*

MY VERY DEAR CLASS,

I have much pleasure in sending you a few lines from Jerusalem. It seems more like a dream than a reality that my eyes are looking upon many of the scenes so associated with our dear Lord Jesus.

I arrived at Jaffa at daybreak, and gazed upon the Holy Land with feelings of unspeakable pleasure. The landing was a very curious affair—the Arab boatmen yelling, and screaming, and shouting, as if going to murder every one. Jaffa lies in the bosom of olive, orange, lemon, and palm trees, and the hills of Benjamin and Mount Hermon, with its snowy top, make a very lovely view. My dear friend, Miss Arnott, has a very beautiful house, with sixty-five children. I can assure you I have longed over and over again to transport all of you to the large hall where these dear children are assembled and sing "Safe in the arms of Jesus," and other hymns. Miss Arnott feeds and clothes them, and teaches them about Him who said, "Suffer the children to come." I have adopted a dear little one; her name is "Fareedy;" she comes running to me, and says, "Good morning, ma'am"—all the English she knows. I hope you will adopt this little one as *yours*, my dear class, and pray very earnestly that this sheaf may be laid *by you* at the Master's feet, at the great ingathering. You cannot come out to Jaffa and tell these little ones of Jesus, but you can help to feed and clothe one, and pray that she may indeed be "Safe in *His* arms." I knew you would heartily respond to this. You shall hear all about the work of my dear friend, if I am spared to return. I left Jaffa at five o'clock at night, riding all night, a distance of

thirty-nine miles, to Jerusalem. I was advised to go at night, on account of the great heat, and having had an attack of fever it seemed best to do so. I had an escort, and wish you could have seen me setting off. We reached Arimathea by moonlight, where Joseph lived, a beautiful place. We also passed the valley Ajalon, where Joshua caused the sun and moon to stand still. And at day dawn we crossed the brook where David got the stones to kill Goliath, and saw the scene of Goliath's slaughter. About seven o'clock we saw Jerusalem, and my heart got very full as I rode through the Jaffa gate, past David's tower, and up through Mount Zion. You can never understand how one's heart feels. Now I can do little more than name the places I have visited. Olivet and Bethany, Gethsemane and Kedron, Pilate's house, Caiaphas' house, the judgment hall, the tombs of the prophets and Jeremiah's prison, the place where the temple stood and the remains of its gates, Solomon's stables and pools, the Pool of Siloam and Bethsaida, Stephen's gate, where he was stoned, and David's tomb, the upper room where our Lord instituted the supper, Bethlehem, and the plain where the angels appeared to the shepherds. In short, I cannot go on. No place so filled my heart as Olivet and Bethany and Lazarus' grave: there His blessed feet often walked in the cool evening. Oh, how one longed for Mary's seat, and as I stood by Lazarus' grave, my earnest prayer was that He would speak with power to every dead soul, "Come forth." My dear class, I have never, I think, bowed my knees in prayer, without earnestly commending you all to Jesus. My heart does long after you all. Oh, *do believe it*, there's none like Jesus. Be very, very earnest seeking Him, and never rest satisfied until you know you are safe in Him. Think of coming short and missing eternal life and love! If I was amongst you I would say, "*Agonize* after Jesus. Seek Him continually. Cast yourselves again and again upon His free, full mercy to sinners the chief. Hide away right under Him." I long once more to be amongst you all, helping you and cheering you all on. May the dear Lord gather us all together at the last, not *one* wanting. Here is a short verse for you—a verse I love dearly and cling to lovingly—"Having made peace through the blood of His cross." Yes, my beloved class, *that* blood speaks peace indeed. As my dear friend said the other day, "When God's eye rests on the blood, and our eye rests on the blood, what have we to fear?" To Him I commend you all, praying that He will fill you with firm unwavering faith; enabling you to overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

I leave this to-morrow, going to Carmel, Nazareth, the Lake of Galilee, Lebanon, Damascus, and back to Jaffa. I am afraid I

won't be back until the second week of September, but you may be *very* sure I shall lose no time in beginning our dear class, and may the Lord give us His blessing and presence, even more abundantly than before. I send my affectionate remembrances to every one of you as separately as if I named you.

I remain, my dear class, your affectionate teacher,

ELIZA FLETCHER.

JAFFA, *July, 1879.*

MY DEAR CLASS,

I have been much longer of writing to you than I intended. The reason of this is I have been going a good deal about, and, remaining only a short time at each place, was either too tired or too hurried for writing such a letter as I would wish you to have. I cannot, in the limits of a few pages, do more almost than just hint at, or name, the different scenes of deep interest which my eyes have been permitted to look upon.

We had very stormy weather at sea—indeed, one heavy gale after another—and I was glad when we got into calm seas and warm weather. But I may tell you here that since the 6th of June I have not seen a drop of rain, and hardly one cloud. The heat and sun is so great as almost to make it impossible to travel except at night.

Egypt greatly interested me, and I visited the city where Joseph lived, and saw the Nile, near the place where Moses was hid. I found Miss Arnott's children all well, and got an overpowering welcome—my room, bed, and table being decorated with flowers and fruit. Farcedy is well; La Feefy quite ready with her box packed to return with me. I rode up by night to Jerusalem, thence down to Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan—a very dangerous journey. I was at the very spot where Jesus was baptized, where the children of Israel crossed with the ark, and where Elijah ascended in the chariot. The Dead Sea filled me with the deepest awe and interest. I again rode through the lonely village of Bethany, crossed the Jordan and saw Gethsemane. Last week I went through the mountains of Samaria to Shechem, and had the unspeakable delight of sitting at Jacob's well—the very spot where His weary feet rested, and where He uttered words of deepest, tenderest love to the poor woman of Samaria. I also visited Joseph's tomb, the grave of Eleazar, Phinehas, and Abiezer—all of them sleeping amongst the calm of this deserted land. I rode up to the top of

Mount Gerizzim, and passed the great plain of Moreh, where the Lord appeared to Abraham (as written in Genesis xii. 6), and where Jacob also came with his sons. It is a part of the land full of deep interest, and I hope one day to tell you all about it, which will be much nicer than writing. Now, in a few weeks, I am going up to the mountains of Lebanon to visit the various mission stations there, and after that I trust to have my face towards dear Scotland.

You know how constantly you are in my heart, and how often I commend you all to Him who is able to keep you from falling. Are you all keeping close to Jesus? are you seeking to lead a holy and useful life? are you all seeking earnestly to shine as lights in this dark world? Do read the 13th chapter of Mark from the 34th verse. Are you all ready for the sudden coming of Jesus, either by death or when He cometh in the clouds? would you be glad if He sent for you this very moment? Remember the 35th and 36th verses. Will He find some of my dear class sleeping? Surely not. What, then, is our security? It is simply this, *watch and pray*.

There is a beautiful verse in 1 John ii. 28, which says—“Abide in Him, that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” Oh, what an awful thing if any of my dear class had to hang their heads and blush before Jesus at His appearance. You know when a child has done anything wrong how it hangs its head; so will every one at the last day who has not accepted the free full offer of washing in His blood, and the precious covering of His spotless robe of righteousness. So, my dear class, seek to keep very close to Jesus now, to speak so much to Him that you would not mind though you had no one else to speak to; run at once to Him with every joy and every sorrow, every sin and every doubt; never rest till you can say, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” Remember one of the last verses I gave you—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Oh, let us work while it is day—work out our own salvation by simply trusting all our salvation to Jesus’ work, drawing many others to Him—that when the evening comes, and we are called in home from the field, we may not return empty-handed, but bringing many precious sheaves with us. Let this be your watchword—Occupy till I come; and this your confidence—“On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”

Now, unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, I commend you all.

Your true and loving friend,

E. FLETCHER.

LONDON, 29th July. 1881.

MY DEAR CLASS,

I have been longer of writing than I intended, circumstances having hindered, and now I am in the great city of London, and have never before so deeply realised its godless and scoffing character, and the fearful forgetfulness of God amongst the vast multitudes all hurrying on to eternity. It makes one feel lonely and sad; but how unspeakably blessed it is to be amongst the number of those who are drawn by the Father to the Son, and enabled, being taught by the Holy Spirit, to say, "We love Him, because He first loved us."

Many thoughts I have had about you all, my dear class, in my wanderings hither and thither, and many prayers I have offered for you. Sometimes my thoughts are sad, and I feel downcast, for I wonder if ALL of you are able truthfully to say, "Living or dying, I am the Lord's." I often wonder, too, how we can all be so easy and calm about these great matters. When we consider the awful importance of life, the tremendous results which are involved in these few appointed years down here, oh! how can we be so listless and take things so lightly? My dear class, let me implore you, as I would also seek to urge myself, *take nothing too easily for granted*; go to the foundation, dig deep, very deep down; see what is the ground of your hope, the hope of every separate soul among you. Get by faith to the feet of Jesus, ask Him by His Spirit to help you; and, oh! do not take sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you know assuredly whether or not Christ is in your hearts the hope of glory. The solemn moment will come to every one of us, when we shall either be found self-deceived—and then, if so, how awful!—or, as I pray God may be the case, we shall be found hidden in Christ Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, and ready to join the glorious company of the redeemed above. Are any of you cast down, feeling, as I often do, how little progress we are making? Do not be so! think of the *fulness* of grace that is yours in Christ, of the mighty power on your side, the faithful word of the faithful promiser, and of the most sweet and comforting truth that not the very weakest or feeblest of His flock will be, or *can* be, left behind, or shut out.

Are any of you loitering on the way? It ought not so to be. How can we wish for, or care about, the world that was no friend to *our* best friend? Try and shine for Jesus! try and witness for Jesus! try and follow Him *fully*.

Again, I would entreat of you all, with all the earnestness in my power, to leave all and follow Jesus. Do not let any cloud come

between you and Him. Shadows and sorrows may arise from circumstances which cloud and distress the soul; these come under the "all things" which shall "work together for good to them that love Him." But what I mean is, Do not indulge in anything which you feel in your heart keeps Jesus at a distance from you, or you at a distance from Jesus. May the Lord indeed bless every one of you with the shining of His blessed countenance, and make you his true and faithful servants down here; then shall you indeed dwell in His house above for ever.

I wish you all very much to pray for our coming meetings in winter, if spared till then. Time speeds on so rapidly that we can little tell how near we may be to our last meeting. Be *very* earnest praying *now*, that the winter may be one of such blessing as we have never before had. If one or two of you even would meet together to plead with the Lord for this special matter, who can tell what the results may be—to yourselves and to others? I ask you *all* very earnestly to do this.

I expect to return to Glasgow about the first week in September. Meanwhile you know how dear you all are to my heart, and how often I seek for you all, "grace, mercy, and peace."

And now may the God of all grace and peace be with you all; keep close to the side of the Lamb, seek to see very much of Jesus so shall you be like Jesus, and ready soon to be with Him.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MARSEILLES (South of France),

August, 1881.

MY DEAR CLASS,

I have been very undecided in my movements this summer, and that for reasons which were quite out of my power to remove. At first I had hoped to see America, but the way there was so clearly blocked that I willingly gave it up. Then I was much pressed to go to Dollar, and address the women there. I did not like to refuse, and felt it *might* be there was some soul there to get a blessing. We had deeply interesting meetings, and had I been able to continue I would have been glad, but I felt it absolutely necessary to have a change; so we were in Wales for a fortnight—the way being made plain *not* to go to America. I decided to come here, hoping to have time yet to visit Miss Walker Arnott, who has been very poorly, and is at the Lebanon

mountains. Whether I shall yet manage it or not, I am not sure, but I am thus far on my way. The weather is *very hot*, far hotter, I am sure, than you ever felt it. France is a lovely, sunny land, but so full of popery; every now and then you see a large cross on the roadside, with a revolting image of our Lord, and another of Mary below, whilst monks and nuns swarm in every direction.

My thoughts often turn to you all, and I long to know that all is well with you, both in temporal also in spiritual concerns. I never feel so near you as in the midst of a crowd, such as in London or this large city. Sitting on deck in the bright moonlight, crossing from England to France, I found a dear young lady full of love to Jesus, and it was sweet to talk of Him. It makes one's heart leap to find one who, amidst a busy crowd, is living for eternity.

How quickly the season is passing—the summer will soon be over and gone, the harvest gathered in, and the bleak cold winds of autumn and winter be here. My dear class, let each ask the question, “Am I saved?” and if the conscience of one returns the answer—“No!” then do go home, sit down quietly, and face this most solemn question fully—“When shall I be saved?” for every day makes it *more* unlikely that you ever will. There is a verse which I would like to commend to you all—my thoughts were dwelling much on it lately—John xiv. 23. Oh! if we would resolve—and what a holy, happy resolve—to understand at least in some measure in our own experience, the meaning of this, “We (that is, the Father, Son, and Spirit) will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him.” How He longs to come and dwell with each of you! for hear His gentle, tender word—“If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in.” Oh! bid Him enter, for who can tell the joy and rest of the heart where *He* resides.

Then, don't you see, if you have Jesus dwelling in your heart always, then, when any trouble comes you have not far to go with it, for He is in your heart, close to you, abiding with and in you; so here, indeed, is a refuge for all troubled ones. “Thou art my refuge, my hiding place.” Now, the trouble may return, but the refuge cannot fail—Christ in you always, ever. I think we are far too content just *to be saved*. I mean this. There are many who are really saved, and yet they know very little indeed of what it is to walk with Jesus, and talk with Jesus. Oh! my dear class, if you would be *happy* and *useful*, live near Jesus; try and never let a day pass without having had a *talk* with Him. Think how honoured you would be if you were invited to talk with the Queen—you would not miss the opportunity; yet here we can, and

are begged to come *continually* to the throne of grace, and there make known our wants and, moreover, are *sure* of help and comfort. And yet, oh, how slow, how often unwilling we are there to pour out our hearts.

This is my special message to you that love Jesus, or wish even to love Him,—Keep very close to Him in daily, hourly, constant communion, so that you may be able to say as one did, “I know Jesus better than my most intimate friend.” Oh! keep in mind, all of you, my dear class, that we are hurrying quickly and quietly on to the judgment bar; yet a little while and this sin-steeped, weary earth will be startled by the shrill trumpet-call, “Come to judgment, come away!” Where shall each one of you stand then? Oh! don’t keep a single sin or sorrow or trouble to yourself when Jesus bids you lay all your sin upon Him, when He tells you He has borne your griefs, and carried your sorrows, if you only trust Him. I cannot but believe that many of you are indeed safely hid in Him, so that, let that awful hour come when it may, you will be “found in Him.” Oh! try and win many souls to Jesus! do not be content with bringing one, try to bring *many*—and the more you bring the brighter your reward. May the Lord stir up *all* our hearts, and cause them to burn within us with love to Himself and to all around us.

And now, in concluding, I cannot do so without telling you how *deeply* anxious I feel about our next winter’s work; how very, very anxious I am that it should be a winter of *most special* blessing. And how can it be this? only in answer to much earnest and believing prayer. Pray, my dear class, oh, do pray much! that the Lord would give us such a real, true sense of His presence, as we in this class have never experienced before. Every member of the class is dear to my heart, dearer far than you think. May the Lord Jesus dwell in every heart, a welcome and beloved guest.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

LANSING, IOWA, *June, 1882.*

MY DEAR CLASS,

I did not intend writing quite so soon, but as we are for a short time enjoying a quiet rest here, and as after leaving this we are likely to be almost always travelling, I think it better to take this opportunity of sending you a few lines to let you know that you are all constantly remembered by me.

With the exception of the first two days which were pretty rough,

we had splendid weather crossing the Atlantic. We had eleven hundred emigrants on board, besides intermediate and saloon passengers. Amongst the latter, there were many delightful people, and in this respect we were singularly fortunate. There were several American missionaries returning home to recruit after long years of service in the foreign field under the Best of masters, and it warmed one's heart to hear of the victories won in heathen hearts by the Story of the Cross. My heart was greatly drawn to these dear people, and we had together a most pleasant time. The last day we were together, two of those Missionary Ladies spoke to the emigrants, and they did so most sweetly and affectionately. I also had the privilege of twice addressing them. Of course there were many, who, belonging to other denominations, would not come. We went forward to the bow of the vessel, and with the great calm ocean all around, spoke of "the Land over there," and the blessedness of having a Home secured beyond earth's changes and trials. We also had prayers every evening in the Music Saloon, and any number of hymns. When nearing the American coast, we fell in with seven icebergs. It was my first sight of icebergs; they are grand, but strangely cold and dreary looking. We next ran into dense fog, and had to creep our way along very slowly—the fog horn blowing all night. But out of all danger we were safely brought, and landed at New York after a passage of eleven days. We did not remain any time at New York, being anxious to press on here, and rest for a little. We had some splendid scenery crossing Lake Erie and arriving at Chicago, where we stayed for one day. It is perhaps the most extraordinary city in the world, and the most wicked. The rush and excitement are dreadful; one idea alone the people seem to have, and that is, how to make money quickly enough; and after it is made, in many instances, it is a curse instead of a blessing.

We were very glad to reach this lovely place—a large farm overlooking the great Mississippi River. Here there are hills and valleys, and trees covered with the richest foliage; only the number of snakes, including the rattlesnake, is rather a drawback. We expect to leave in the beginning of the week, going west, probably as far as San Francisco. We also purpose visiting Utah, the city of the Mormons, and are likely to have almost constant travelling for some time. But as far as we have gone, we can truly say, "Goodness and mercy have followed us." It is a great comfort to us to know that so many warm and true hearts are remembering us, and by faith placing us under the protecting care of our Heavenly Father.

And now, my dear class, what shall I say to you all to encourage

and cheer you in running the heavenly race? I think of Paul's three wishes—First, "That I may win Christ and be found in Him." Second, "That I may magnify Christ." Third, "That I may be with Christ." And see if you can *all* of you make those wishes—yours. I know how often I have tried to urge on you the first of them. Then think of the second—"To magnify Christ." Now, in order to do that, we must sink self, for the more we think of Christ, the less we will think of self, and that is the sure way to magnify and exalt Christ. You remember how beautifully John the Baptist put it, "He must increase: but I must decrease." If, as a class, you were magnifying Christ, then you would be working for Him, living for Him, and shining for Him. Then the last wish *must* follow, "To be with Christ." Do you find your hearts often turning to Him—to His Father's Home on high? Are you able, at least in some measure, to say, "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?" Then remember, *He* says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And again, "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." If you only saw the orchards here, how loaded they are with fruit, and how quickly they ripen. Ah! if we were only true to our Master, and sought to bear not a little stunted fruit here and there, but *much fruit!* We were visiting a family some miles from this, and the mother took us down to the foot of the orchard, and there were three little graves enclosed. On one stone was a hand cut out, with the forefinger pointing upwards. Let us ever be looking up now; so that when death comes, we may be ready to *go* up, and so be "for ever with the Lord."

Ere I close, I want to leave this text with you. Rev. iii. 11— "Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Observe, it says, "Hold fast that which thou hast," If it's a *little* faith, or a *little* hope, or a *little* love, not full assurance, or much love, and much faith, still He notices the *little*, and be thankful for that, and hold it fast. I must conclude, simply urging on you all, the same old, old Story. Keep close to the Cross, hang about it, linger around it, even as those loving women did; and let your constant prayer be, "Oh, Lamb of God, still keep me close to Thy bleeding side."

I cannot, however, conclude without telling you how much aback I was taken, when I went home after our last meeting, and almost accidentally opened the beautiful bag you gave me. Now, my dear class, I do thank you with all my heart for your kindness and marvellous generosity, and I accept it in the same loving and affectionate spirit which prompted the gift, but—to use a military phrase, which just suits beautifully—you *MUST* call a *halt!* I have

now so many useful and also beautiful things to remind me of you all, if that was needful—which you know it is *not*.

Now, farewell! may you all have Jesus beside you—a felt, *personal*, and much-loved Saviour and Friend. This is the constant prayer of your affectionate teacher,

ELIZA FLETCHER.

— — —
[THE LAST.]

JAFFA, 28th June, 1883.

MY DEAR CLASS,

You will be happy to know I have arrived here safely. We had, as far as weather was concerned, a very pleasant voyage out—touching at Oran and Algiers, two seaports in North Africa, then at Malta, and lastly at Alexandria, where I saw traces of the late war. I was very anxious not to be detained there, and, on arriving, eagerly enquired when I would get a steamer up to Jaffa. I was told in four or five days. In this country you must never believe much of what you are told about these things, and so I went on asking, when I found I would get a Russian steamer in two hours. I soon packed up and went on board. At Port Said the terrible news reached us that the cholera had broken out in Egypt, and that I might not be allowed to land at Jaffa, but go on to Beyrout, and there go into quarantine for ten days. I felt sadly troubled, but you know who has said, “Call on Me in the day of trouble,” and I did, and experienced it was no vain thing. I was allowed to land, but all the rest of the passengers were put into quarantine on arriving at Beyrout. Dear Miss Arnott had not left, and I got a warm welcome from the children. Labebie is much grown and is a very pretty child, but I shall hope to tell you about them all. I am sorry to say the whole of this country is very unhealthy just now, and a great deal of small-pox, measles, and typhus fever is raging. Jaffa does not escape,—yesterday three funerals passed here, and there is a terrible alarm lest cholera comes. I do not know what I am to do, as I fear I shall have much difficulty in getting away, and must go into quarantine somewhere. I purpose going up to Jerusalem and Hebron on Monday night, but will probably try to get out of the country sooner than I intended. It makes one feel how uncertain all here is, and what a blessed and comforting thing it is to know we are not in the hands of blind chance. I have been greatly comforted lately by seeing what a firm foundation the finished

work of Jesus is. If you only grasp the precious promises of God, made in and through His dear Son and for His sake, how is it possible that they can be broken? Are any of you cast down? Try and be more taken up thinking of Jesus and forgetting yourselves. There is a verse I have been thinking about I would like to give you all; it is in Luke ix. 26, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of Him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." The part of the verse I think so solemn is the threefold glory here; only think of the glory of the Father—who can tell it or imagine it? Then observe it says of Jesus, His own glory; He came a poor babe to Bethlehem's manger—no glory then; but, ah! He will come the second time in His own glory, and what must that be? Are you all, my dear class, are you all preparing so that you may not be ashamed before Him at His coming? Oh, what a dreadful thing it would be to miss that glory, or only to gaze upon it from afar, crying, in anguish, like poor wretched Balaam, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh!" Whenever you feel tempted to weary or faint by the way, remember His glory and what it will be to pass in within the gate and behold the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and that will help you; or when you are tempted to think you may rest a bit, that there is no need to be so earnest, oh! remember Paul's way of it—"I press toward the mark." Try and know communion with Jesus every day; never be content unless you realise, each one of you, He is my own very Saviour and my own precious Friend, to whom I can carry all my sins and leave them there—all my sorrows and know He sympathizes—all my cares and know, too, He will help me to bear them. Oh, my dear class, how often have I begged of you all to make sure that Jesus was yours? I entreat of you all, once more, so to do. I feel I am here and in solemn circumstances—not knowing what a day may bring forth of sickness or death. It is not for nothing God has allowed me to come here at such a time, and I must solemnly warn every one of you that, if you neglect this Jesus or trifle away your short day of grace down here, then you shall behold Him coming in His own glory; but, ah! it will be to wail in useless and bitter anguish. It must not be so. Simply trust Him—simply believe on Him, and be content to let Him do all in you, and for you, and with you. It is true that having loved His own which were in the world He loved them to the end; and none of us will ever look back with regret on the hour when first we trusted all to Him.

May the Lord speak a word by His blessed Spirit to every one

of you as you need—comforting the weary; cheering, by His blessed presence, the lonely; strengthening the weak; giving grace to the needy; and a broken, lowly, and loving heart to all.

If I am spared to return I will have much to tell you; meantime you know how near and dear you all are to my heart, and I pray that in that great and terrible day not one may be found missing. Oh, let us be earnest and prayerful! Eternity seems near—how near. Awake, my dear class—awake. Let none of us tarry on the enchanted ground and get sleepy. Stir up one another. Ask, seek, knock. Do not be content just to get into heaven, but strive after the abundant entrance. So may you and I and all near and dear to us be for ever with the Lord.

Your ever affectionate teacher,

E. FLETCHER.

“ There’s nought on earth to rest upon,
All things are changing here—
The smiles of joy we gaze upon,
The friends we count most dear.
One Friend alone is changeless—
The One too oft forgot,
Whose love has stood for ages past;
Our Jesus changes not.”

Letters to Members of the Class.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You ask me what it is to pray from the heart. I think if you will watch for a moment a child who is hungry, asking its mother for a "piece," you will see real, genuine prayer. We feel our souls are hungry, we want to be fed with the Bread of Life, and in proportion as we feel this hungering after Jesus, we will earnestly pray and seek. Now, I think your fault lies in this: you are looking too much into your own heart as you pray; you are more taken up thinking and trying to find out *how* you pray, than in having your mind fixed on Jesus, who hears. Just as when a sinner seeks to come to Jesus, he is almost sure to think more "how am I to come?" than of the One to whom he seeks to go. Jesus says, "Come unto ME"—get past the *come*, and rest on ME, who invite you to come. And you will find if in prayer you get your thoughts *full* of Jesus, you come, you trust, ere you are aware. So in prayer, don't think at all "How am I praying?"—but let your heart *rest* on the prayer hearing God in Christ. Another thing, do you ask the Holy Spirit *to teach* you to pray? If you don't, do begin now. Look at Romans viii. 26. Ask the Spirit to help you, to teach you and lead you; then you will know the sweetness of "drawing near to God." Don't expect perfection; watch hard against wandering thoughts in prayer, but don't be too much cast down when you fail. Again, try and realize that *He is*. He is near me, He hears ME *now*. So will you find rest.

I am truly thankful to hear that you get any comfort on your heavenward path, on Wednesday nights. My dear —, cheer up. "The way may be rough, but it cannot be long." Oh! think of the *end*. Life, eternal life, up where He is. Like Him, with Him, near Him, and all through Eternity!

Ever your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAREST —,

I have been rather down lately. Not down, in the sense of being dull or unhappy, but down with an overpowering sense of the nearness of eternity, and also of the reality of a personal Saviour. Dear —, He *does* come near; and, lately, I have really felt as if my very heart would break because I could not get near Him, just to live under the felt shadow of His love and care!

There are some things I have been thinking about so much—helpful, very—and I'll tell them to you. Am I hid *in* Christ? Then God sees Jesus at all times. Did He die in my stead? Then *I* cannot die, for death has already passed on me. I die *in* Him. I live *in* Him. Is *He* beloved of the Father? Yes! Then so am I! ALL either stand in Jesus, so hidden, or in self, and that is the place of death! Don't you see, NOTHING can change our standing! We grow in grace, but that never alters our standing. Once in Christ, always in Christ. Feelings come and go, like the tide, but Christ, the object of my faith, abideth EVER. I look up, I see Jesus at the Father's right hand, in a still, glorious calm, I see myself in Him *there!* *In His rest; in His life!* "Accepted *IN* the Beloved." Oh! I think if ever I had a grave stone over me, I'd like that to be over my bones, "Accepted *IN* the Beloved." However *I* may feel—change—sin—wander—it is my Surety, my Redeemer, that meets God's eye! You remember th' breastplate of the High Priest, in Exodus. Twelve stones glittered and sparkled there, with the names of Israel's tribes thereon graven. Now, whatever *they* felt, wherever they went, amidst all their murmurings and unbelief, their names were shining in beauty undimmed, and *kept* on the High Priest's breast and shoulder.

Cheer up, my dearest —. It's not what we are, but what He is! Can God ever forget a soul hid in His dear Son? *Never!* Can God ever cast away a soul hid in His dear Son? *Never!* And then, safety and holiness go together! I have been trying lately to pray much for holiness, because, if I am made holy, I shall see God! Let us look up ever unto His face. There's growth there—power, strength, all there! Faith does two things. It first takes hold of Jesus once for all, that's our *standing*. Next, it takes Jesus moment by moment, that's *growth*. Dearest —, a dead world may satisfy a dead heart, but He has stolen our hearts, and made them hunger after Himself. Oh! I do think it's the most blessed hunger—the hunger after Jesus and His love!

Don't wonder if you meet with trials, if there are more thorns than flowers. This is not our Home! We may be up and away by some bright morning hour! All earthly streams fail. Oh! if poor

hearts would but tell the truth, they would confess that nothing can or does satisfy! Dearest —, be sure and let us meet in heaven! Cheer up by the thought of its glory, its company, its sinless joy. To be *with* Jesus, *like* Jesus, *in* Jesus! What a noble and sublime aim! Don't let us live by jerks or spurts—one day all full of joy, the next down. I do that sadly. The cure—"I am nothing—Christ is everything." I am all sin, and always sin—He is my Righteousness. I trust not in my frames or feelings, graces or non-graces. I rely on JESUS ONLY. Then we will get on. Forward—ever forward. *Study Jesus*, dear —. Just walk with Him; put your feet into His footsteps; sit with Him at Jacob's well, and *listen*; take Mary's seat and *listen*! Go often with Him to Gethsemane, and, oh, LIVE at Calvary! Think how miserable we often feel, for we find that the devil is not dead, and our sins are not dead; and perhaps you feel that. You thought people would look kindly on you when you gave yourself up a leal-hearted soldier to His service. In place of that, you feel alone, and often cast down! Don't be *that*! If God be for us, who can be against us! and, oh, think of the first five minutes with Jesus!

Lovingly yours,

E. FLETCHER.

DEAREST —,

It's very late; rather, it's very early, but, somehow, you've been so on my mind to-night, I *must* send you just a line. I was very sorry that circumstances hindered you getting over on Sunday night, as I *did* want to have a chat with you, and to know how you were coming on. I trust you are finding that God is *ever* as good as His word. I was so delighted the other night to find one of His most bitter enemies giving such a testimony to His truth. I refer to Numbers xxiii. 19. Oh! what a firm Rock is this for such poor weak creatures as we are! "HE is not a man that He should lie." Has He said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out," and have we gone and cast ourselves upon Him? Then He *must* keep His word!

Seek *to grow*. I do feel this myself so much. I *long* to be like Him, but, oh, it does seem as if I got more unlike Him every day! What will help us to grow? How can we grow? I think one word will answer it. *Faith*. Simple trust in Him; telling Him all our failures and all our longings, all our fears and

all our hopes. Giving up our own strength which is utter weakness, and ever looking to Him. As we fail, let us not be cast down but tell Him. I do love these words, "Without Me ye can do *nothing*," because when *He* says that, it is not to tantalize us or cast us down, but to show us where our real strength lies, even in Him. Do trust Jesus, lean on Jesus, realize *how* near He is, how close to us, how He is ever looking at us and seeing our most feeble efforts to please Him, and let us remember how short the time of conflict and battle will be, and, oh! don't you think *one* moment of glory, one glimpse of that dear Saviour will make all our sorrows and trials here utterly sink into nothing!

Keep your eye on the prize and run fast! Let nothing tempt you to loiter by the way; what are all the sweetest of earth's flowers to us! Have we not chosen Sharon's Rose and the Lily of the Valley, even Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! Yield up yourself to Him. Ask Him to guide your life work; to give you from His own dear hand the very work He would have you to do, and, oh, in doing that work, He will give us His love and blessing!

I must stop. Though I don't often get a chance to *speak* to you, you must never think I forget you, for how often when you are fast asleep, I commend you to Him who is able, and as willing as He is able, to keep you from falling! May He bless you more and more, and make you very happy, not in your love to Him, but in His unchanging, wondrous love *to you!*

Ever yours most lovingly,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAREST —,

At last a free night! No letters to write but this one! On my return from Edinburgh here, I found your parcel and letter. Many, many warm thanks. "Our own make" enhances them immensely. You little know what a comfort they are!

I have been thinking a good deal about the remark you made regarding "always going back." There are two passages in the "Pilgrim," that seem to me to throw a little light on this. The first is when Christian, in the Palace "Beautiful," tells how he got along. He is asked, "Can you remember how your annoyances are vanquished?" He answers, "When I think what I saw at the cross, that will do it, and when I look upon my brodered coat, that will do it," &c. Now you see, here is a looking back and yet

a going forward. Again, when he and Hopeful are talking, when the latter gives an account of his conversion, you will find something of the same, and I think it's one of the finest bits of the "Pilgrim." You will find a verse in Psalm cxix., which seems to show what I mean. Verse 49. Here David *goes back* to the very first ground of his hope, and reminds God that he got that hope, that word, from Himself. When we begin to doubt we are His, when waves of unbelief surge over and around us, I think it is a most comforting and most helpful thing to go back to what first helped us, the text or the word that revealed Jesus, and seeing that *it* is the same because *He* is the same, we get fresh courage and fresh hope, out of ourselves. It's not going back to try and prove to ourselves we are His. I think unbelief and Satan are often too strong for us, but going back to what *He is*, what *He says*, who cannot lie, we are led out of self and on to the Rock!

You remember that text in Revelation, "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb." Well, that means, they, when tempted and tried, looked again and again to the blood which was their *first* hope. This does not interfere with our seeking and striving to *grow in grace*. Now, how can we grow? Surely in two ways. By seeking to avoid what hinders growth; and by seeking to follow what promotes growth. What hinders? Being half-and-half. Ah, there's nothing so honouring to Jesus as to show our colours. Look how proud J. is of *his* colours; should we not be far more so? The more *fully* we give ourselves up to Him, the happier, the more useful we will be. Then I think one of the *very* best ways to grow is having our roots firmly struck down into, and *rooted* in the love of Christ. Look at Ephesians iii. 17-19. Ah! the more simply we trust Jesus, the more we dwell upon His love to us, the more progress we will make. *Nothing* hinders us like unbelief! Oh, for a simple, child-like spirit, that sees His will, His love, His leading in everything! I believe there is *nothing* God so honours as simple, unquestioning faith! If we would, just like little children, walk through our journey, holding His hand, looking up into His face, even when all is dark and we don't see Him, remembering *He sees us!* Ah! then, how could we avoid getting on!

Just as we cast ourselves on a sofa to rest, letting our *whole* weight rest upon it, so let us *trust wholly* to Him. Oh! surely it is *very* wicked to doubt Jesus! How it must grieve Him, after all He has done! We say, "I don't feel enough," or "I've not the joy I ought to have," or "*I* —" something or other. Why can't we *always* remember the *ground* of our hope? Not *I* feel, or I don't feel, but "Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, for ever." His

perfect sacrifice on Calvary! Remember, we may shake on the Rock, but the Rock can never, never shake under us! And think of this also. The more we get on, the less will it seem as if we were getting on! Don't be cast down because you find the way hard, or because you feel yourself seemingly never out of the bit. Often, often does that distress me! I never seem further on! How shall we do then? Sit down with hands hanging, feeble knees, and fainting heart? Not a bit! Let us *take this to Him*. It's very comforting to know that Jesus wishes us to get on. This is *His* will, and oh! when He wishes it, and we wish it, and we go to Him for strength and grace, who can hinder! I was just hearing yesterday of a dear young fellow, once thoughtless enough, who is now an earnest Christian, so earnest that he seems to have great influence over others; his whole heart seems given up to Jesus.

Dearest —, cheer up! We shall forget all in the first few moments *with Him!* Ah, think of seeing Jesus! Think of when you meet His eye! When *He* gives you the crown of glory, and says, "Well done. Come, blessed of My Father!" It's no sign of death to be wide awake—struggling, wrestling, praying. Keep *very* close to Jesus, dear —, *that's* my prayer for you; that you may walk all through your journey down here, at the very side of Jesus! Oh, how safe, how happy! how your feet will be kept from falls, and your eyes from tears! Ever realize how near, how real, how true He is; how He can be touched by a feeling of our infirmities! Not a pain, not an ache, not a trouble of soul or body, but He knows all about it! Try Him, test Him, tell Him your whole heart, and then your voice and your song will be added to the thousands around the throne, "Unto Him that loved *me*, and washed *me* from my sins."

It's a grand, a noble thing to belong to Jesus, dearest —, to be loved by Him, cared for by Him, led and guarded and prepared for the glorious inheritance above. What's like it? Just compare that with the poor flitting empty pleasures of the world! Suppose we got *all* we could get, and had all we could have—ah, let death break in with his icy hand—and then! But being His, death will only open the door and usher us into life. May this New-Year be a blessed one to you; may you grow in grace and in the knowledge of the dear Lord; daily being more devoted to His service, and happy in the sense of His love to you. Accepted in the beloved, you will be safe, come life or come death. You know how I pray for you, and *how* dear you are to my heart!

Ever yours very lovingly,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I would like to send you a few lines just to tell you to look out from yourself right away to Jesus. I do hope that now you have given all up to Him, and that you are trusting the dear Lord Jesus. Do not think about yourself at all, except that you are a poor sinner, and cannot do without a Saviour. Then give Him your soul to wash in His precious blood, and clothe in His spotless righteousness, and trust Him to do as He has promised,—“Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” The devil will do all he can to make you distrust Jesus and look for some sort of feeling; but never mind him. Look *always*, look constantly to Jesus; trust Him to keep you from falling; and, dear —, let *nothing* come between you and your Saviour, give up *all* and follow Him. Closely set your trust upon the Lord, and be then doing good. I most earnestly hope and pray that you have got out of the City of Destruction, that you have fled beyond the plains, and never rested until you have got your feet upon the Rock of Ages. Oh, there is no rest, no peace, no safety anywhere else. Tell Jesus *all* that is in your heart. If you feel as if you could not trust Him always, tell Him *that*—if you want to hate sin tell Him that. Make Him your dearest and best friend. Ask Him to keep you like Mary, sitting at His feet. Dear —, the time is very short, the night of death and the day of judgment draws on rapidly. Oh, be very, very earnest; live for eternity by keeping close to Jesus; and may He bless you and give you His own peace.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I never get an opportunity now to have a talk with you, and so I must try to send you a few lines. I trust you are finding Jesus a very dear Friend and your *own* precious Saviour. There is a very beautiful little verse of four words that I like very much, and often think about. It is in Ephesians, 1st chapter, 6th verse, “Accepted in the Beloved.” Only think, dear —, when I go to Jesus and hide in Him, when I cover myself all over with His precious spotless righteousness, then God sees only His dear Son. He does not see poor sinful me at all, He only hears my voice speaking from under the shelter of that robe; and as I plead, “Lord, accept

me, save me for Jesus Thy dear Son's sake," He does not see me at all, He sees His dear Son, and so I am "accepted in the Beloved." Oh, let Jesus get a great, tight grip of you, you can do so by letting go your hold of *everything* else, and letting Him do all. How suddenly may He send for us! How near we may be to the end of life's journey. Dear —, be *very, very* earnest, ever crying, "Lord quicken me, Lord draw me very near Thyself." Tell your mother I am sorry to hear she is not so strong as she once was. I hope and trust she is looking beyond all the poor passing things down here, and has her heart set upon winning Christ, and a crown of glory and a blessed eternity with Jesus. Oh, how will *everything* fail us when we come to the valley of death, save *His precious blood!* Cling to the Saviour, dear —; and bid your sisters, and your mother and father and all to cling to Jesus. How *can* we do without Him! What an awful thing to be cast away *for ever*, and to be crushed with a woe unutterable for ever and ever if we reject Him. Cling, pray, watch, hope, look up and look forward. The time is short. *He will come!*

Ever your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR GIRL,

I cannot tell you how grieved I am at being hindered coming to see you. I would certainly have been to-day, as I promised your sister last night, but a headache and sickness quite prevent me. I am not without hope I may yet have that pleasure. If I were sitting at your bedside, what could I say to you but this, "Trust Jesus?" Trust Him *fully, simply*. Do as a child would do: put your hand into His, and ask Him to care for you. I heard of a dear lady who was dying, and she was so weak, so ill, she could not pray or think. She said, "I cannot pray; I cannot think; but *I rest on His arm.*" Now, my dear child, just do that. Jesus asks you only to *trust* Him. He knows how weak, how feeble you feel. He knows how much you need Him, and be sure He will care for you. No one ever trusted Him, and was deceived by Him. He bids you "look;" that's *so* simple and easy. Just on your bed, "*look.*" He bids you "*lean.*" That's *so* easy too! Put your whole weight on His finished work, on His precious blood, and "all will be well."

May the Lord deal gently and kindly with you; and may He be with you all the valley through! You may be very sure my heart is with you, and I shall not forget to ask for you quiet rest

and trust in His love and promises. Tell your sister to read to you the first few verses of John xiv., just what I would have done had I got to see you. Do not for one moment suppose I have ever forgotten you; but I have specially lately had an overwhelming amount of work to do. Remember, my dear girl, Jesus is ever beside you! Keep a *firm grip* of His hand of love, and He will give you all you need of patience, and hope, and trust. And now I commend you to His keeping, and may His love and His presence cheer and comfort you, until you see Him face to face, and are with Him where He is.

Your true and sympathizing friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR ———,

I am sure you would enjoy Miss ———. It's so wonderful all the work she has done; and yet there is a little word of Jesus which is a great comfort to us all who *cannot* do as much, "She hath done what she could." Oh, what a blessed thing to have *Jesus* say that. Blessed soul, indeed, over whom *He* pronounces such words.

The photograph you so kindly gave me, of the martyrs, is very fine. How many in Scotland even have won that crown! In a short time we, too, shall be called away, not through the fires of martyrdom certainly, but through the dark valley, and oh, what will give us comfort or courage in that solemn and trying hour but Jesus and His precious blood! "*Thou art my hiding place.*" May He, indeed, be yours and mine, that without the shadow of a doubt we may put all our trust and confidence in His work, His character, His person.

As you say, the time passes very quickly, and I feel how little I do in the rapidly going hours. Summer will soon be here, and our meetings once more come to an end. As a minister once said to me at the railway station, when I was going away, "There will be no good-bye in heaven." Even here, we have One always near: He who says, "Lo, I am with you alway."

There is a serious outbreak of typhoid fever around us here. The dear girl I referred to still lives, but is not yet out of danger. One young lady has died. I have not been well, but have nothing to speak of but goodness and mercy. "Be thou faithful unto death—I will give thee a crown of life." "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain." What a blessed and happy condition.

I trust you are indeed making *rapid strides* in the Zionward pilgrimage. The time is short, "Behold I come quickly."

I am yours, with much Christian affection,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR ——,

It has been in my heart to write you a few lines to cheer and comfort you on your road to the celestial city, but my time has been sorely limited and filled up. I trust you are keeping your eye EVER upon Jesus, the *author* and the *finisher* of our faith. Oh! think of His love to you and to me, until your heart begins to thaw, and your eyes run down with tears of sorrow and love. Remember, my dear ——, all your comfort, as well as all your hope, must come from Jesus—not from anything in yourself. Do not be cast down at anything you find in yourself—evil thoughts, or cold feelings, or dark sad fears. He knows all about you, and yet He loves you. Oh! cling to Him, cling at ALL times, under all circumstances; make Jesus your best, your dearest friend; tell Him what you could tell no one else, and, oh! let the thought of seeing Him fill your heart with intense and earnest longing and seeking to be like Him here, in some measure; so will you be ready joyfully to go to Him when He sends for you.

I often pray for you, that Jesus would draw you closer and closer to Himself. Let this be your constant prayer, "Draw me that I may run after Thee; Lord! help me, quicken me."

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR ——,

Only a few lines; it's nearly three in the morning, but I want to tell you how sorry I am to see you looking so ill. I am sure you would need to take great care. I wish I could help you in anyway. If I can, you must let me know. Could you not go to Edinburgh for a day or two? don't you think the change might do you good? I thank you for your last letters. I am interested in all you tell me, and I trust you *are* finding that when your heart is overwhelmed within you, He is a Rock higher than you. Creep close in then, dear ——; and then, come what will, *you are safe*. Cast all your care upon Jesus—He cares for you. I hope I will see you looking better upon Wednesday night. Send me a few lines any time you like, and let me know how you are, and if I can help you in any way. May Jesus be close to you at all times, and enable you to cling. Oh! we cannot cling enough; He will *never, never* shake us off!

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I cannot let you away without a little word of kindly farewell. You are going to a distant land, and we shall never meet again in this world ; but there *is* a place where we shall meet, and that will be a *very, very* solemn and awful meeting-place! Let me entreat of you, my dear girl, to make *quite* sure that you are safe in Christ. You may prosper in the things of the world, and I trust you may, but oh, remember that though you should gain the *whole* world, what about that if you miss heaven and Jesus, and a bright home for eternity? Here is a text I want you to remember very often—“That I may win Christ, and be found in Him.” And in all times of trouble, oh, flee to Jesus, make Him your friend, and seek to get a strong grip of His hand, for that is the only safe way along life’s path. I shall be delighted to hear from you if you care to write. I send you a nice little book. May the Lord bless you, and keep you, and teach you to keep *very* close to Him.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I am glad, indeed, to hear all you tell me about yourself and God’s dealings with you ; and I do trust that you are enabled to see Jesus as *your* Saviour, *your* Redeemer, and to put simple child-like faith in Him, both for body and soul. I am sorry indeed to hear you have been so poorly—and you seem to have been brought very near to death—but, “trusting in Jesus,” and remembering that He keeps the keys of death, you are safe in His hands whatever happens.

I would like to have got away by the 1st, but this is impossible, and I shall sail from Liverpool, I expect, on Saturday, the 8th. It will take me three weeks to get to Jaffa. I have felt very deeply interested in your account of your friend’s death, and I do not wonder that you have felt as you do. Death is indeed a solemn, awful thing, even to God’s own children. I send you a sermon of Spurgeon’s which has greatly delighted me, and as it expresses much of that shrinking and dread you speak of, I am sure you will like it. Let us be diligent just now, dear —, how we live, *earnestly* seeking to be found at that hour, and at every hour, “in Christ ;” then how safe, how secure !

I miss my dear class terribly. Glasgow would not keep me long if I had not my dear class. How I long to know *all* are safely

hidden in the Rock of Ages! I long to be amongst you all again. Who can tell what changes may take place—who may be taken, who left! I can truly say my class is very, very dear to me, and I value most highly their prayers and kindly remembrance of me. The time will soon pass, and if God sees it best, we shall all meet once more in the old place; if not, "*All is well!*" It's a blessed and comforting thing to know "He cares for us." Cast *all* your care and *all* your burdens upon Him, just as each care or trouble arises. Do not try to bear them yourself, but take them *right off* to Him. I do trust and pray that He will guide you *continually*, and enable you and *all* of our dear class to regard each day in the light of eternity. "The night cometh, let us watch and be sober." Dear —, may the Lord bless you and keep you, and enable you to realise that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

Thanks for the *sermons*. Some of them are *very* beautiful and most precious. I am glad to hear things are going on better with you. There is nothing like telling *ail* to Jesus. Not waiting till you get home, or are alone, but at *all times* making your requests known. The great want is *a heart* to turn to Him at all times; if we had the heart we would soon find the way. Willingly would I have gone to see your mother, but I have found it, in the *meantime* at any rate, quite impossible. My time is so terribly short for all I have got to do.

I am greatly interested in all you tell me about your friend, and surely it is well worth passing through *any* amount of stormy weather to have so much of the company of Jesus with us in the ship. There is a verse of a hymn which has been much on my mind lately. "Anywhere with Jesus," is the beginning of it, "so we do not part." Dear —, *trust all to Jesus*. Pray *very* earnestly for precious faith in a precious Saviour. Time flies, the end of all things is at hand; oh, let us give *all diligence*, that we may win Christ and be found in Him. Be much in prayer; keep close, *very* close to Jesus, then all will be well. May He bless you and your mother, by enabling you both to "Behold the Lamb of God;" to "look off unto Jesus." This is the sincere prayer of

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR ——,

I was very sorry you did not come to see me to-night, as I was wishing so much to see you; and I would have written you sooner had I not thought I would see you. I got your last letter, and you may be sure it made my heart very glad and very thankful. Oh, trust Jesus, trust Him at *all* times. You remember that beautiful verse in the sixty-second Psalm that says, "Trust in Him at all times, ye people; pour out your hearts before Him; God is a refuge for us." Remember too, for your comfort, that it's not *your feelings* or frames that are to save you. You may *feel* so full of love to the dear Lord at night, and in the morning feel so cold and dead; but all you feel never, never changes our footing, the rock remains as firm as ever. Your feeling happy or full of joy does not make your position in God's eye one bit different, neither does your coldness or want of love. It will keep you in such peace—true peace—if you will turn right away from yourself, and keep looking to Jesus. Oh, pray at all times, "Lord teach me, Lord guide me, Lord make me holy, Lord help me." And do not forget, dear friend, to thank Him for opening your eyes, first showing you yourself, and then Himself. Oh, remember how short the time is! Teach your dear children to love Jesus; tell them all about Him, and never rest till He draws their hearts early to Himself. You may be sure I do not and will not cease to pray for you; and be sure that if at *any* time I can help you, you at once let me know.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I feel quite vexed at myself for being so long of writing to you. I can truly assure you that all last week you were much on my heart, and I longed either to see you or write to you, but I could hardly find time even to sleep, I was so busy. You must never, never think I can ever forget you. I wished so much to have shaken hands with you the last of our Tuesday night meetings, but some one came and hindered me. This also was the cause upon Friday night. But I cannot go away without seeing you; and so if you will come and see me upon Sabbath evening, *any time* that suits you, I will be so glad. I will then be quite alone, and have no interruption. I am so thankful for all you tell me. Do you know, I had such a nice letter from a member of our class, telling me how the very thing which so comforted and cheered *you*, had cheered her. So you see you are not a solitary pilgrim towards Zion.

Others are travelling the very same road, and finding just such ups and downs as you and I. But, my dear friend, let us never, never forget *He* is the same *yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. There is a word in John which I love very much; and when I feel like you, cast down or dull, or as if Jesus would weary of me—as well He may—I read it. It's in the thirteenth chapter of John, and the first verse: "*He loved them to the end.*" So you see He will never cast off the soul that trusts Him and clings to Him. Oh, look steadily and look often to *the end* of the journey. Think, dear friend, only think what you are seeking—to see Jesus face to face, and *to be like Him*, to see all the holy angels and the great company of the redeemed, to have a crown and a palm, and a holy, happy, blessed eternity for ever with the Lord. Ask Him to keep you very close to His dear side. That's the place of safety; the devil can't harm us when we are *there*. Yes, I trust we shall meet up yonder; and oh, what a meeting, when sowers and reapers shall all *come home!* Oh, try and learn to distrust self in every shape, all your feelings, good or bad; and lean on, rejoice in, never take your eye off Jesus, His wonderful love to you, and His unchanging grace and mercy. God may have much for you to do for Him in this world. Oh, ask Him to make you ready and willing to bear all for His dear sake. Let the deep breathing of your soul be, "Anywhere with Jesus—so we do not part!"

Your very sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

I wish I could rather have a long talk with you than write, as I could say far more, and my time is so short to-night. I feel so very, very anxious that you should be encouraged. I do ask you, my dear friend, to look less to the troubles and trials of the roads, and more to the dear and tender Guide who has promised that He will never leave you. You seem to feel your own utter weakness and inability to keep near Jesus; but surely that is a blessed lesson to learn. When you find that you are weak, oh, hide in Him, make Him your strength. Like a little child, do not try to stand alone, always lean on Jesus; and whenever a hard word is spoken, and you feel inclined to speak, do not speak to any one until you have first spoken to Him. Never keep a sorrow to yourself. He is your precious Friend as well as Saviour, and treat Him as a Friend. Do not wonder if you are misunderstood, or if sometimes you meet with opposition and coldness. In all such times get closer to Jesus and His love. It would be a bad sign if all went too smoothly

with us. Dear friend, remember, the way that leads to glory, honour, and eternal life is a narrow way, a lonely way, a tough way, but then, oh, just think of the end! Being out and out for Jesus will not plant a thorn in our dying pillow. Oh, let me entreat of you most earnestly to cling close to Jesus; to run with patience the race; to make up your mind firmly that whatever others do, *you* will run with your face towards "*Zion*." Pray much, dear friend. Ah, *that's* our safety, our comfort. Be in communion with God, talking to Him as you go by the way, as you sit in the house; so shall your walk be close with Him, and you will exercise an influence for good all around. I think you are perhaps vexed that you cannot *talk* more for Jesus. Ah, I think it's often a far more telling and powerful thing *to shine* for Him—*quietly* to shine. *I wish* I could comfort and encourage and cheer you on. Oh, think of *the end*, and that will keep your heart warm; think of seeing Him and all the glorious company around the throne; think of being safe and holy and like Him for ever, and these thoughts will make you feel that though the road may be rough, *the end* will make amends for all! May the Lord enable you to cast *all* your care on Him, and keep you under the shadow of His wing.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

JAFFA, PALESTINE, *July 10, 1879.*

MY DEAR —,

I have often thought about you, and wondered how you are coming on. I arrived here upon Monday, and as I am going up to Jerusalem to-morrow, I am anxious to send you a few lines before I go.

I do trust you are finding Jesus a *very present* help in every time of need. I have been thinking of that beautiful verse in the fifth chapter of Romans, and the first verse, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." How clear it all is, this beautiful plan of redemption. Jesus came, He stood in the place where the guilty sinner should stand. *I*, believing on Him, stand *in Him* before God, and God looking, sees only His dear Son. I hid in Him; so He is well pleased. By faith I grasp this, therefore I have peace in resting not on self but on Jesus! God looked on Jesus as though He had sin, though the sin was not His own. Now He looks upon me as though I were righteous, though I have no righteousness of my own. Oh! what rest it gives, just simply to trust Jesus. But remember, dear friend, as soon as we have peace with God through Jesus, we have no peace

with sin, or self, or the devil. On the contrary *then* begins the conflict with all these three. If the devil did not tempt, and annoy, and trouble us, it would show we were his, and he was sure of getting us. Do you feel sin strong *within* you—sins you thought you had overcome springing again to life? Ah! remember, as you feel this, you will *never* have peace with sin. The battle began when you took Jesus as your dear Redeemer and Friend, and it will never cease till you reach glory. Do not, then, be discouraged, but feel glad you are *not* at peace with the devil or sin. Are you still vexed and grieved because those you love misrepresent you, or laugh at you? Ah, just think how Jesus had to bear that too; and shall you have a better world to dwell in than *He* had! He wore a crown of thorns; and do you expect to wear one of roses? Think of what He tells you in John xvi. 33: “*In Me* ye might have peace. *In the world* ye shall have tribulation: BUT be of good cheer; *I* have overcome the world.” And if you keep close to Him you will overcome also!

Just one other thing. Are you vexed because you seem to make so little progress. You wish to be liker Christ, and to grow in grace, and you do not *seem* to advance on as you wish and as you hoped. Remember you will never be satisfied with your own progress, and the longer you live, the more you will feel your own miserable slowness. The closer you keep to Jesus, the more you will see how vile you are. Still let your *earnest* prayer ever be, “Oh, for a closer walk with God. Draw me that I may run after Thee.” Speak to the Lord constantly. Tell Him all—He never wearies, He never changes. *We* change, *we* grow weary, *we* are cast down, but He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. I do trust you are finding that He is your strength, your hope, your dear and precious Master. The time is indeed short. I sometimes think of the hymn that says, “Till Jesus come.” How soon He may come we cannot tell. He may come at any moment, either by death or with the sound of a trumpet, in the cloud, with His holy angels. Oh, how it would help us to be very earnest, and very watchful, if we could ever bear this in mind. I am sure you will very well understand the sort of feeling I mean. You are expecting your husband, and you will be waiting, and watching, and listening to hear the very sounds of his footstep. Now that’s how we should be waiting and watching for Jesus; and then, let Him come early or late, in the night season or the dawn, He will find us waiting and ready to go away with Him. May God bless and keep you and yours. I never forget you.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I feel I would like to send you a line to tell you that — has got to her heavenly home. She died on Wednesday night, and her last word was that she put her whole trust in Jesus. She has made a blessed exchange from the cold, lonely, dark room in Saracen Lane, to the company of the redeemed in glory, and above all, *to Jesus*. You will have much satisfaction, I am sure, in knowing and thinking that your money kept her in many little comforts all Summer during my absence, and the cup of cold water will not be forgotten.

I trust you are finding much rest and peace at the blessed trysting place for poor sinners. Oh! let us be very, very earnest that if this call be hidden, or not so hidden, we may be ready! And how can we be ready? Only by hiding away *in Him*! Pray much, dear friend, that He would draw you nearer and nearer, and prepare you for seeing His face, with joy.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have only a few moments to write to you to-night, but I do not wish another week to pass without a little word to cheer and help you. I trust you are finding Jesus more and more precious, and getting very close to Him! You can never be *too* close, *too* near; and it is delightful to think *He* will never say to us that we are too near, or too troublesome to Him. His cry is ever "Come! come!" Oh! dear friend, *never* keep a sorrow to yourself; run with it right off to Jesus. Make Him your very dearest friend, and whenever you feel you want anything, or fear, or tremble, or are cast down, go without a moment's delay to Jesus. Ah! that's the way to keep the Devil far off. He cannot come near the soul that is always keeping close to Jesus; and oh! remember He will keep you, only trust Him! He will sustain you, and carry you along the way. Only lean *all* your weight upon Him. Think of the end and what it will be to see Him, and be like Him, and have a home in that beautiful, holy place for ever and ever! Cheer up, dear friend—"Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. v. 23, 24).

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am so *very* sorry to hear that your little girl is so poorly, and I do hope she is better. God is, indeed, trying you; but do not be cast down. He is teaching you already in the school of sorrow; rejoice that you have *that* mark of being His. I do trust and pray that the Lord will spare her to you, and that trouble may only teach you more of the preciousness of Jesus and His love. Let every wave of trouble only drive you closer to and further on the Rock of Ages! Pour out *all* your heart to Jesus; lean your whole weight on Him; look up to Him, and tell Him how poor, and weak, and needy you are. Oh, remember it's *just* for such He has *great* stores of grace and strength. I am sorry I cannot write more to-night, but I wished you to know how much you and your little one are on my heart.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

I cannot tell you how truly glad I was this morning, to get your letter. It has made me quite happy ever since. I was longing so much to know how both you and your sister were. And now I *so* rejoice to hear of your welfare and hers, both in soul and body!

Dear —, remember, for your comfort, that *every* step of our way through the wilderness is *mapped* out by His infinite love and mercy. He knows the very best way to lead you and me, and the bits of the road we think dreary, or rough, or lonely, are the best bits to meet Him in; for He says, "Call upon Me in the *day of trouble*, and I will answer thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." You must cheer up; and that by remembering one or two things. Look back and see how good God has been to you, and *that* will cheer you and encourage you to trust Him. Then remember the way is not long. If the cross is heavy to bear, the road is not long, and a few short years at most and we shall fold all our work aside, and pass away into that world unseen and eternal! Then remember, too, the exceeding great and glorious reward awaiting all those who are faithful unto death. Just warm your heart by thoughts of the glory of that land, where we shall sin no more, suffer no more from

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weary doubts and fears, where we shall see Him face to face whom here we see, oh, so dimly! Oh, just think of winning Christ and being found in Him, when all that's in this poor perishing world will have passed away. Think of the joy unutterable of hearing Him say to *you* and to *me*, "Enter *thou* into the joy of thy Lord." Cheer up, then, dear friend, He says to *you*, "Fear not: I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." Cling to Him by simple faith even as a helpless child clings to its parent. Walk close to the very side of Jesus. Tell Him *all*.

I send you for your comfort and help that beautiful verse in Jude—24th verse. Write *whenever* you can, and speak to me upon Tuesday night.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

I cannot tell you how thankful I am for all you tell me in your letter just received; and though it is very late I *must* send you a few lines to say, "Cheer up!" It is a good fight, and if our dear loved ones, who are now with Jesus, could speak to us, bending down from those skies, they would say—"Fight the good fight of faith, for He is faithful who hath promised."

Will you tell your sister that I ask the Lord to draw very near to her; tell her Jesus is *very* precious. He *has never put away one* that ever trusted Him, and, oh! He cannot. If we only knew how full of tender love He is, how He loves to see us leaning our whole weight on Him, we would never have a hard thought about Him again. Tell your sister to lay her *whole* weight on Jesus—the weary body, the longing soul, to lie like a little child in His dear, strong arms, and let Him carry her.

Here is a sweet promise for you, "Delight thyself in God and He will give thee the desire of thine heart." Now, you desire that your dear husband should be brought to see the love of Jesus too. Go on then, seek on, pray on, and in His own good time God will give you the desire of your heart!

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

You have been much on my mind, and I have wished greatly to see you. I would have written sooner, but my hands have been so full, and every moment almost occupied. I was *so* glad to see you at our meetings. I long to know how things go with you, how far you are on the way to the celestial city, and what trials and difficulties you may have met. Do write and tell me all! Tell me if Jesus is as precious to you as He once was, tell me if you have had any fault to find with Him during those past months, or if you have had cause to say, "The good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." If so, remember *conflict* is a sign of life, silence and calm is not a good sign! Oh, let us remember that awfully solemn word, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and *looking back*, is fit for the kingdom of God." May I not believe rather that you, dear friend, can say, "We are not of those that draw back unto perdition?" Do write to me and tell me all about yourself and your boy and all your family.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

I feel quite grieved that I have been so long of writing to you; night by night I intended doing so, but I have been overwhelmed lately with many letters to write. One thing comforted me, I could, and did pray for you. Your first letter showed me you had not found it all rest and ease; and it is a bitter thing when our hearts depart from Jesus, and we grow cold and dead. I know there is nothing I so much dread as deadness and coldness; I would feel anything rather than that. Oh, let us remember how full of love and tender pity He is. See how *you* care for your children; and if one of them did something wrong, you would not say, "I cast my child away, it is no longer mine." Oh, no; full of pity and love, you would win the erring one back, and by love cause it *to hate* the sin. So with Jesus, when we sin He is deeply grieved, but still He never, never changes; His love is the same, and He does not, and will not cast us away. Oh, let us look to Him! Make good use of the mercy seat! He says, "*There* will I *commune* with you." Oh, my dear friend, let us remember the rapidity with which "*the day*" is passing, and how soon we must

pass away into eternity. *Can* we be too earnest, too watchful? My heart weeps after you that Jesus may be more and more precious to you. Oh, cling to Him, try to be ever seeking that He would hold you.

Regarding the earnest desire about helping any of His poor people, it is not for me to say "No;" for I remember He says He will not forget the cup of cold water given *for His sake*. And why should you be deprived of this reward? I think _____ is still needy; and I am sure she is one of His. I do wish you could see your way to take her any little trifle yourself; think over this and let me know. I deeply regret not being at my dear class upon Tuesday; but as I have arranged to go to a meeting in Maryhill that night, I trust there will be a blessing. We shall meet the following Tuesday I trust. I expect to be at Partick, in the Abingdon Hall, where we met last year, in the course of a fortnight. Now, my dear friend, *always* remember I am *delighted* to hear from you whenever you like; and I never cease to ask the Lord ever to keep you near Himself. I rejoice to hear about your sister. Pray on, and do not faint!

Your sincere friend,

F FLETCHER.

MY DEAR BOY,

I promised to write you a letter from the Holy Land, and I have not forgotten that. I have been away at Jerusalem. I had to ride all night, for the heat is so great during the day. I went down to Jericho, a long, long, hot ride, and then went from that to the Dead Sea, where you know Sodom once stood. It is a strange still lake, and the water is very bitter. I then went to the River Jordan, and stood at the very place where John baptized Jesus, and the dove descended upon Him, and a voice said, "This is My beloved Son." I also saw where the children of Israel crossed with the ark, and where Elijah went up to heaven. I saw a deep, dark gorge, through which the River Cherith runs, and a number of people think it was that very place where Elijah hid, and where the ravens came and fed him. When I saw Jericho, I thought about blind Bartimaeus and also Zaccheus. You remember about them, don't you? And I thought *how* glad the poor blind man must have been to see the lovely sun and sky, but how he must have looked *first* and *longest* at Jesus. I hope, my dear boy, *you* have seen Jesus, not with your eyes, but with your heart; that Jesus has come into your heart, and

made it a new heart that loves Him; and that you are going to be a brave soldier of the dear Lord Jesus!

Next week, I am going with a dear friend to see Jacob's well, the very spot where Jesus met and spoke to the poor woman. I hope, also, to see Joseph's tomb. So you see what a very interesting land this is. I am sorry I cannot write you a longer letter. I have so very many letters to write; but you will see by this that I have not forgotten you. The doll, "Miss Minnie," arrived all safe, and she is thought to be such a beauty that Miss Arnott has taken her, and put her away for a prize. The best girl is to get her.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If you heard what God's dearest children say about themselves! How they lament their want of progress, and feel just as you—that they are "never out of the bit." This is just what I feel and grieve over so bitterly too. But you must try and remember that *growing* is often a slow progress. Your little baby did not grow a big child in a few days. Would you grow? Then strike your roots firm into Christ's love to you (Ephesians iii. 17). Look off from self and live on the matchless love of Jesus. Do just as you say you do. Just go back to Jesus, cast yourself constantly on Him. And oh, it's sweet to think *He* loves us, though we so often fall and come short. Do not think that Jesus is always looking out for your falls, and thinking hardly of you. Oh, no; He is very tender, and full of mercy and forgiveness. Whenever you come short and fall, or do what you regret, or speak hastily, run off to Him and tell Him, and ask Him to keep and strengthen you.

I am much touched at the sight of the little shoes and stockings. My dear friend, Jesus and His love can and will make up to you for all your loss here. Oh, just let Him fill your heart with His own sweet love. I think I will take the things with me to the Holy Land, and give them to some young mother who has there learned to know Jesus and His love. The rest of the money has gone into the fund for ———, but, my dear friend, do not send more, rather go and give it yourself. I missed you on Tuesday night, and looked all over the hall for you; I quite missed you. And now I must stop; I will write soon again, as I have more to say, but time fails me. Trust Jesus, look to Jesus, lean upon Jesus, then one day you will be with Jesus.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Be quite sure Jesus loves *you*. Think what He has done for you. He is drawing you to Himself, and all He wants you to do is to trust Him and never have hard or suspicious thoughts of Him. Do not expect you are not to feel the power of sin in you; it would be a sign of death if sin did not try to get the upper hand. When there is no enemy there is no battle, but peace. You were in false peace, and the devil let you alone; and sin had nothing in your heart to oppose it, and so you were not troubled. *Now*, the new nature must fight against the old nature, and that is why you feel sin in you now. Oh, cheer up! you have begun a grand, a glorious life, a life that the angels might envy you, a life which ends in life eternal *with* Jesus. Do not be cast down! You have deep cause to praise the Lord. I know it's hard to have dear friends grow cold and say unkind things, but just let that drive you closer to Jesus. And do you not think He is well worth bearing all that for, and far more? You know how many have died for Him, and left father and mother and children for His sake, and do you think they regret it now? What will these friends do for you in a dying hour or at a judgment-seat? Oh, my dear friend, be strong and bold for Jesus. Let your fear of going back make you cling the tighter to Jesus, and cry "Hold up my goings." Tell Him you know you cannot stand one moment unless He keeps you. Have you not seen your own child when it was afraid of falling? What did it do? Fall? No; it clung all the tighter *to you*. So, cling to Jesus.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR ———,

I hope you are now resting on Jesus without a doubt. If you feel you want to be saved, it is because Jesus wants to save you. If you only give Him your soul to keep, then you can never be lost. No doubt even *after* we are saved, we sin. We are like poor sheep, ever wandering from the fold; but Jesus will keep us from falling. Do not trouble yourself about the keeping, and fear you will be finally lost. What you have got to do, is *now* to give your soul into the keeping of Jesus; tell Him you cannot do without Him; beg Him to wash away all your sins for His own sake. Just *grip* Jesus, and then live by the day; He will keep you; He will put

His arms around you ; only trust Him. Put away all your fears and difficulties, and just trust Jesus.

I wish I could make things plainer to you, but none can teach you like Jesus. Oh, pray this little prayer often, "Lord teach *me* to do Thy will, and make me Thine, giving me strong faith to believe all that Thou hast said." Stop and speak a word to me on Tuesday, and may Jesus draw you very near to Himself.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I was very sorry to hear to-night that you are so poorly. I hope by the time you get this letter you will be better.

Dear —, I do hope and trust that Jesus is very, very dear to you, that you can say "I know, O Lord, I believe;" and that you are happy in knowing that your soul is indeed washed in that most precious blood, and that come what may, *you are hid in Christ*; one of His sheep, therefore having eternal life. Trust, dear —, trust, and don't be afraid. Put your *whole*, undivided trust and confidence in His work, and in His word who cannot lie. If you only take Him as a little child, give Him your heart, and cry "*Nearer to Thee*," you will lead a happy and useful life, even though you may have your own share of sorrow and suffering. Oh, remember what you seek to escape—eternal death! Think what you seek to win—eternal glory, and to behold His face in peace; and *that* will help you on and cheer you too; for, following in His footsteps, you will reach where He is. I often pray for you. May God bless and keep you.

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

Your letter has given me a great deal of comfort and thankfulness; I am glad you have written to me. Thank you very much indeed for the book you sent me so kindly; I shall value it very much as coming from one who is now, I trust, a pilgrim Zionwards. My dear —, I rejoice to know you have been led to see those two things. First, yourself; next, Jesus—your need of Him, and His free, full pardon for the very poorest. Oh, do pray *constantly* to be kept close to Himself. Read His own word, be much in

prayer, *that's* your strength and safety. Look at John, the 15th chapter, and see how Jesus says, "Without *me* ye can do *nothing*." Do not trust to feelings: however good and pleasant they may be, they can't save you. See to it, dear —, I earnestly and affectionately urge you, see to it that you are resting upon nothing save Jesus, His finished work, His perfect salvation, His precious blood! See to it that you have by faith laid all your sins upon Him. Look at Leviticus, the 16th chapter, and the 21st and 22nd verses: that is just a picture of Jesus, the Lamb of God who taketh away all sin laid on Him. By faith put your hand upon Him, plead His precious blood and perfect atonement, and hide right under Jesus Christ, then you will be safe. I shall go and see that poor girl early next week. Again I thank you very affectionately for your book and letter. I will and do pray that *He* will keep you who *can*.

Ever your affectionate friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I have thought very often about you and your friend, and I have often asked Jesus to show you both His love, and the fulness and freeness of His grace. I do trust you have both been enabled to rest your souls on Jesus, and His work and word! My dear —, have *you* put forth the finger of faith and touched Jesus? I mean by that, Have you now simply TRUSTED Him? Why should you not trust Him? Is His word not most worthy to be trusted? Are you afraid He won't receive you? *Just go and try!* Cast yourself at His dear feet; tell Him all that's in your heart—your fears, your hopes. Tell Him all the past—all your sins. And then just plead with Him, for His own name's sake, to accept you, pardon you, bless you, put you amongst His own, and say to you, "Daughter, be of good cheer, go in peace." Look away from yourself, dear —. Oh, do look out of yourself! The children of Israel were bidden to look at the serpent of brass, if they wished to be made whole, not to look IN at the bite made, but *out*—right out. Now so do, and you will find rest to your weary soul. Look up to Jesus, and then you will live! Read John iii. and the 15th and following verses. Pray over them; *trust, rest, come!* Tell your friend that I write all this to her too. Come both together to the dear Lord! I pray for you both. Let me hear from you if you can.

Your true friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I was very glad to get your letter, telling me about yourself. *Why* are you without rest when He says, who cannot lie, "Come unto *Me*, and I will give you rest?" You say you have been a backslider. Well, think how many backsliders Jesus has forgiven and taken back to His love. Do you not remember *Peter*? You cannot be worse than He was, and yet look how Jesus sent a message specially to Peter (Mark xvi. 7). Just go back to Jesus as if you had never been to Him before. Go to Him because you are so vile, and poor, and needy, you cannot stay away. He is the Saviour for just such as you: and *I* need Him just as you do. Do not seek joy and peace so much as *Jesus*. Oh! cry after *Him*! Never rest until you have again and again cast your whole soul on Him! If your heart feels like to break, let it break at His dear feet. Lie there, and there confess all the past. Seek Him to cast all your sins behind His back, then *trust Him*. Do as He bids you, that is, Believe upon Him; rest the whole weight of your soul upon Him, and believe, whether you feel it or not, that He cannot and will not cast *you* away! May the Lord help you to see Him by faith—His love, His tender compassion for you—and *so* draw you to Himself. I shall pray that He may so do!

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I hear you are in sorrow—sorrow of spirit—and this is the heaviest burden to bear. But I want to tell you of One who is standing at your very side, ready to take away *all* your sins, and wash your soul in His own blood! Now, do you think that Jesus can tell a lie? Do you think He could mock any poor sinner? I am sure you will answer, "No." And yet by the way you *act*, you are telling God He is a liar! and oh! —, that is *very* awful! You do so in this way! Jesus has come, died for poor sinners, and the Father sent Him, a precious gift, to *whoever* will take Him. God *commands* us to take Jesus. He says by so doing we shall be obeying Him; by not doing so we are disobeying Him. Then He says that *every* soul so taking Him at His word shall live—*shall be saved*. Now, what are you doing? You are saying, "I am lost." Who said so? Who told you that? Did God tell you so? Is there a single word in the Bible to show you that? Oh! be done, my dear girl, be done for ever with such a thought! The devil is

whispering that into your ear. Bid him begone! Your own evil heart is telling you this. Do not listen another moment to that evil heart! You are deeply grieving Jesus every moment you indulge in such unbelief. You may be as happy as a lark *now*, if you will only let go all these weary, vain thoughts, and let Jesus take you. If you REFUSE to believe, He *cannot* save you. Then how can He? Oh! give it up. Trust Him, though you don't feel; trust Him in the teeth of all want of feeling. Though you cannot *pray*, trust Him. Lie at His feet and say, "Lord, help me," and that's prayer! Not long sentences, but a short cry from the heart! There is no need for your being miserable a single moment. Jesus is just wanting such as you are. Oh! He is watching to see *when* you will let go your own foolish, sinful way, and take His. And what is His way? "My blood cleanseth from all sin;" "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Oh! may you, even as you read this, calmly trust Jesus, once and for all! Wait behind on Tuesday, and let me hear you are not giving any more heed to the enemy who is keeping you away from Jesus!

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR —,

I would have written to you sooner, but have found it impossible. Thank you for your letter. I rejoice to know that you sorrow not as those who have no hope, but that you have every reason to believe your dear father had put all his hope and confidence in the finished work of Jesus. Dear —, see to it—that you and Jesus *have met*. I mean by that, see to it that by faith you have taken Jesus, accepted His work, and are hiding *in* Him, so that God does not see you, but the dear Lord. Look *right away* from yourself—at *all* times look away; except the look you take *in* at your heart, which has the effect of causing you anew and afresh to trust to, and lean on the Lord Jesus. Let this time of sorrow bring you closer to Jesus, and make you realize how short is *our* time, how soon we too must slip into the river. Oh, may we all be found ready! Tell your mother she has my sympathy and prayers. May the Lord be very precious to you all; and may He grant that when He sends for us, we may gladly arise and depart, "for this is not our rest."

Your sincere friend,

E. FLETCHER.

Letters from Whole Class.

March 13th, 1878.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

In name of the class, allow me to present you with a small token of our deep love and heartfelt gratitude to you for all your unwearied efforts and yearning zeal to win every soul to Jesus; and it is delightful to think that your fervent prayers have in a great measure been answered, for it can be said of this dearly beloved class that this one and that one was born there—who shall be to you for a crown of joy and rejoicing in the day that the Lord maketh up His jewels.

This winter has been a time of special blessing, quickening and refreshing. Jesus has been in the midst of us of a truth; the precious seed that is being sown has brought forth much fruit.

And it is our earnest prayer that you may be cheered and comforted by the assurance that your labour has not been in vain. May the Lord bless you abundantly for all you have done for us; and it is our earnest prayer wherever you are—by land or sea—“that underneath you may be the broad support of the everlasting arms.”

OUR DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

It gives me great delight, in name of the class, to ask your acceptance of a small gift, small in comparison with the deep debt of gratitude we owe you, but the outflow of warm true love. Indeed, words fail us to express all that our hearts would say; but of this be assured, that as long as life lasts we shall ever retain a loving remembrance of this beloved class; the tender associations connected with it; the great benefit we have received; and the many earnest loving appeals to win Christ, and be found in Him. Oh, may it be the earnest desire of each one of us to realize more and more the precious fulness of that

great salvation; may we be indeed cedars of the Lord's planting, and bring forth much fruit, to His praise and glory. We had many tokens for good this winter; much building up; much quickening and refreshing; and, while deeply grateful for the precious privileges we enjoy, we would bear in mind our great responsibility, remembering that to whom much is given, of them also much will be required.

May we, as a loving and united class, live for eternity, our motto ever being, "Onward, heavenward, homeward." May we nestle close to His dear feet, waiting upon Him in deep humility; and while we are parted the one from the other, may the dear Lord Himself be your sun, and shield, and guide and guard you from all danger. Many prayers will be wafted up for you while you are gone, that you will be strengthened and refreshed, and brought back to us in safety, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. In name of your deeply attached and ever grateful class

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I have great pleasure in presenting to you, in name of the class, a small token of the warm, true love that is welling up for you in every heart; and this deep debt of gratitude we owe you for all your unwearied labours amongst us. It is a well watered garden this beloved class. The precious seed which is being sown from week to week is bearing forth much fruit. Many have been led to listen to the still small voice pleading so earnestly and lovingly, "Daughter, give me thine heart." And not a few are counting all things but loss that they may "win Christ and be found in Him."

This season has been a time of much blessing; goodness and mercy have indeed been following us; and it is our earnest prayer that we may grow in grace, that we may shine as lights in the world, and that our whole life might be an Emmaus—I mean a walk with Jesus.

Please accept also our warmest thanks for the great encouragement we have met with. That you will return to us again, your poor sheep, whom you have guided so long and so faithfully, and who would never get on without you; that you may be brought back in safety, strengthened and refreshed; and that the dear Lord Himself may bless you abundantly for all you have done for us, is the earnest prayer of your deeply attached and ever grateful class.

April 10, 1880.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I have been asked in name of the girls that attend the class to send this parcel as a token of gratitude to the girls in Jaffa. As it is very small, we hope it will be of some use to them. We are sending a few needles and thimbles, as we think it will be hard to get them there. We have derived such a benefit from your lessons this winter, that we are trying to keep them in mind in whatever crosses we have in this world. We are sorry that the class is about to close, but we hope we shall all meet again when it re-opens. Hoping you will accept of this small parcel.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

Allow me, ere closing this our last meeting for the present, in the name of your Friday Class to give you the expression of our hearts.

We are sorry the time has gone for you to be with us ; it has seemed short, because it has been so pleasant ; and now for some time to come we will be deprived of your ministrations. We would have wished you to remain longer. How many of us will miss the cheering word when cast down ; how many will miss the comforting thought when sad ; the stimulating injunction when inclined to be weary ; and above all, the warm grasp of the hand and kindly smile, that helped to make life more worth living for. We will all miss you ; but on the other hand we are glad for many reasons, namely, though the spirit is often willing, the flesh is sometimes weak, and we feel you must need a change after your long, tedious winter's work. Your rest is more than earned, and thereby you will be refreshed, strengthened, and renewed for any duty the Master may be pleased to call you to, and we sincerely hope to come once more among us to help us.

We thank you very heartily for all you are to us ; pen and paper are too weak instruments with which to give expression to our heartfelt gratitude. Accept our unspoken thoughts ; let silence be golden in our case, inasmuch as it speaks louder than any words we can command ; and, in conclusion, we wish you God speed in your journeys. We shall look forward eagerly to your return, but in the meantime commend you to Him whose you are and whom you serve. That He may bless you and keep you, is the earnest prayer of your Friday Class.

May, 1832.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

Another year has run its course, and we are again meeting together for the last time this season as a class. Looking back, we certainly have much cause for thankfulness and gratitude for the many happy and blessed meetings we have spent together here; and now we cannot part one from another for a little while, and from dear Miss Fletcher, without saying how deeply we feel indebted to her for all she has said and done, all the anxiety she has experienced on our account, that no one should wander from the path of righteousness, and that all should be brought to know and feel the tender love of the Saviour, and to know, further, that though great sinners, Jesus Christ is a greater Saviour.

Dear Miss Fletcher, we have been privileged to hear many tender and loving words fall from your lips from week to week. May they not be as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; but, being blest of God, may they be helpful in leading and guiding us in wisdom's ways, which are pleasantness and peace, and at last, when God's purposes with us here shall have ended, secure for us a happy entrance into the heavenly mansions, safe in the ark of God, of which we have been hearing lately, safe in the arms of Jesus.

It gives me much pleasure, my dear Miss Fletcher, in name of this class, to present you with a small token of our esteem and affection for you, and to express the hope, which, I am sure, is echoed by every one of us, that you may be watched over by our Heavenly Father in all your travels, and spared again to meet and speak with us.

May, 1832.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

At the close of another season of our meetings, I have very much pleasure in again thanking you, in name of the class, for all your kind words to us. We cannot part with you at this time, without expressing our gratitude for the many good and wise counsels spoken to us during the last winter. Much seed has been scattered: may it be as seed sown upon good ground, which shall, under the blessing of the Almighty, yield an abundant and rich harvest to His praise and glory; and may the many earnest lessons, so beautifully drawn from the life of the

patriarch Jacob, be helpful in building up and strengthening our faith in the God of Israel.

You will be separated from us now for a few months, but of this you may feel assured, that while you spend your holiday, and enjoy the summer months and well-earned repose in the new world, the hearts of many friends at home are beating in unison with yours, and the prayers of many are ascending to the Hearer of prayer and the Giver of all good, that you may be preserved in safety, and brought back again to us, to continue amongst us to break the bread of life and to win souls to Jesus.

As a token of love, this class present Miss Walker Arnott with an easy chair. All join in expressing their sympathy with her in her work, and earnestly hope that she may be long spared to work for the Master, in her own sphere, as successfully in the future as in the past.

“The Lord watch between us and thee, when we are absent one from another,” is the prayer of your loving and grateful class.

May 23, 1883.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

In name of our class I have again at the close of another season to thank you for all your goodness to us; for the many kind words and solemn lessons; and our earnest prayer is that it may not return void, but accomplish that whereunto it was sent.

You know what affectionate feelings we entertain towards you, our earthly teacher; we know, too, how it is your earnest cry and prayer every day that we may all cling closer to the Master, with a love and devotion such as the tender love of John and the untiring devotion of Peter. And now, my dear Miss Fletcher, we must part one from another. Once more you intend re-visiting Palestine. Wherever you may go, you will be followed by the prayers of every one of us, that you may enjoy to the full your well-earned rest, and that our Heavenly Father may guide and guard you safely in all your journeyings, and bring you back renewed in health and strength for all the work He has yet for you to do in His vineyard.

I now ask your acceptance of a small token of our love and affection.

Letters from Members of the Class.

May 12, 1876.

DEAR MADAM,

I am in a warehouse in town, and have charge of a good number of girls. Having attended your class before, when it commenced this winter I asked some of the girls to go with me, and as they got interested, one after another was added to our number, until there were fourteen attending. And from being interested, I can say that some of us, if not all, have got beyond interest only; and it is at the desire of the girls, as well as my own, that I write you this letter, to thank you for the, we hope, lasting good we have got at the class. God has been good to us. He has been pleased to bless His own words which you have spoken, and made us to know somewhat of the love of Jesus, in that He gave Himself for us. We thought it would cheer you to know your labour has not been in vain in the Lord. And now that you have left us, we have thought to meet for one hour, every Wednesday night, in the warehouse, after the girls are away, to talk with one another of His love, and all you have told us, so that our hearts may be kept warm. For, oh, we have so many things trying to make us forget all that you have said, we want *His* counsel while we live, to conduct and guide us—*we want it so much*. We are only a little band—fourteen girls out of one hundred and fifty in our place—but, on the Wednesday nights, I know you will mind us, and we will not forget you. Although we may never meet down here, we will all, I hope, meet up yonder; we will keep the trysting place in view, where we hope to spend the sweet afterwards, not only with you, dear lady, but with *Him* you have taught us to love, which is far better.

Praying that God may bless you, and make you more and more a blessing, for His own name's sake, I am, &c.

P.S.—If it will not be asking too much of you, we would so much like a line or two, all to ourselves, from you. I enclose my address.

GLASGOW, *May 20, 1876.*

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I take the pleasure of writing a few lines to you to express my thanks to you. I am glad to have the pleasure of writing to you to let you know that your class in Bedford Street Hall is a place long to be remembered by me. It was a blessed place to me, for every Wednesday I felt it to be good to be there, for I felt that my Saviour was there; it was a great help to me on my heavenward way. Many a night I went with a troubled mind, but God blessed the word that was spoken to my soul—I came out different than I went in. But the last night, I shall never forget; it was a sad night, but it was a joyful night too. I felt the parting very much, for I just felt as I never would see you on earth again; but if we should never meet on earth again, I hope to meet in heaven, where there will be no parting there. Dear Miss Fletcher, I hope that you will always remember me to my Father in heaven. There is some of the members of your class have made up their minds to meet together every Wednesday night to unite in prayer to God, to uphold us in whatever trouble we are in, and that He may be with you wherever you are—on sea or land; and we have that precious promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

June 13, 1876.

DEAR TEACHER,

It is with great delight that I accept the opportunity of telling you how by this dear meeting I was first impressed, then brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. And again, how often I have gone there, downcast because of sin and coldness of love, but it has ever proved to be the green spot in the wilderness, where I have met with Jesus and He with me; and I never left without feeling strengthened and encouraged to fight on, looking unto Jesus, in whom all strength, love, peace, and joy dwell. Dear teacher, my mother and I will never forget the happy nights we have spent there, and of the many precious lessons and loving words we have heard from your lips, and it is our earnest prayer that God's blessing and presence may be ever with you, and may God grant that, if we never meet on earth, that we may meet on the plains of glory.

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DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

It is with deep gratitude I write to thank you for your kindness in writing to me so soon; your kind letter has been a great blessing and a great help to me all week. You tell me when I feel sad or discouraged to remember the great and glorious reward, and I have been greatly encouraged and helped by looking forward to it; and it is so precious to think that He has promised—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be;" and He has also promised—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You tell me if I wish to be a good example to all those around, to keep close to Jesus. I long to get closer to Him, to know and love Him more, I know so very little of His unspeakable love; but it is so precious to know that through all changes He is ever the same tender, loving, compassionate Jesus, who loves to have us carry all our sorrows and trials to Him. It is such a relief to cast all our care on Him who careth for us. Dear Miss Fletcher, please pardon the liberty I have taken in writing to you, but I feel I can never thank you enough for all you have done for me.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I hope you will excuse the liberty we are taking in sending you this note; it is to beg of you if you would allow us to get your sanction to get a few copies of your *carte de visite*. We would so like to look at your face when far away; maybe it would help us to mind the sacred truths you are teaching us every Wednesday night. I would like to ask you to come up some day when you have time and see some of your girls at work; there are six or seven attend regular, and a great many more come sometimes. It would give us great pleasure to see you. I cannot close this note without thanking you, in the name of the girls, for the sound advice you always give us. You have been the means of removing a stone out of some of our ways; and always you gave us a cheery word for to remember till we saw you again. The last one is *cling, cling*. It will ring long in our ears. Our ambition is to be good sound tugs.

Good-bye, dear friend, may the Lord bless you and spare you long, long to your class.

(Signed by several members).

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I send you these few lines to thank you for all the kind and comforting words which you have spoken in the class this winter. Though many a time I have got my corns tramped on, I thank you for it; for I know it does me good when the truth is spoken in *love*. Indeed, Miss Fletcher, if you had known exactly how I was placed, you could not have spoken more to the *point* than you did. And thanks for the special way that you remember the orphans and lonely ones every night in your prayers: I always watched for that bit, as it suited lots of us. Dear Miss Fletcher, you have not only pointed the way to Jesus, but also shown how to keep in it. You have, indeed, spoken faithfully and in love, and can wash your hands clear of our blood. This seems to have been a great winter of blessing in the class—to myself, for one, and many others that I know—and you have given us much of your own experience, which has been very helpful to us. Dear Miss Fletcher, you have no idea how much we prize the Psalms you have had in the class. Even in Church, if one is given out which *you* have spoken on, it comes back with fresh power, and we enjoy it so much the more.

I again thank you for all the counsel and comfort you have spoken to me in the class this winter; and may you indeed be blessed of Him who alone can bless you and make you a blessing to others. "For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name" (Heb. vi. 10; Eph. i. 18).

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

My sister was at the meeting last night. I cannot tell you how glad I was to have her with me, and I trust in God that she may get a blessing there. I do thank God that He has made her willing to come. It would be a great joy to me if she would give her heart to Jesus. I am sorry there will be no meeting next week. I will miss it very much, but, thank God, I can meet with *Jesus* at home, and my heart is full of joy when I think of all that He has done for me, and with the help of God, I will do all I can for Jesus, who loved me and gave *Himself* for *me*.

DEAR FRIEND,

Thanks be to God, I can see it all now, what a complete Saviour I have in Jesus, and that it is only through the blood of Jesus that I can meet with God at the mercy-seat, and when God sees the blood He will pass over me. Thanks be to God that Jesus has paid the full price for me, and I am free; the debt is paid by Jesus, and God cannot ask it of me again. Jesus has taken my sins and has given me His righteousness to be mine for ever. Christ has taken my black sins on Himself, and He has given me His own white robe, so that God can see no sin in me when I am in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God for such a Saviour. It is a strange thought to me, when I think that I have the righteousness of Jesus imputed to me, and that I am accepted in Him. Jesus is my Rock of Ages, and I will hide myself in Him. Jesus is my only hope, and I will trust Him while I live, for He has redeemed me. Oh, I wish I could do something for Jesus for all His great love to me. Surely there is something that I can do to show my love to Him. I have been thinking that I could help some of His poor ones this winter—this is the only thing I see that I can do—I can make a few shillings a week in my spare time at home—this I can give to Jesus—and it will help me to work well when I know it is for Jesus I am doing it.

February 19, 1879.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

It is with a trembling hand I take my pen to write these few lines, and if I don't do it I feel as if my heart would burst. I had the pleasure of shaking hands with you last night, but my heart was too full to speak. But I think you understood my feelings. I cannot express in words the happiness I have experienced at these Tuesday night meetings. The first time I heard you was the second Tuesday after the New Year. Your Psalm that night is written on my heart with an iron pen :

“Remember me, Lord, with that love
Which Thou to Thine dost bear.”

I was almost in despair at that time. Your precious meetings have given me new life.

May 15, 1879.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in writing you, but when you gave us your address last night, I thought I could not let you go without telling you of the great benefit I have received from your instruction, and also bidding you God speed. I do trust that our God, who is a strong God, may be on your right hand and on your left, and that He may enable you to go from strength to strength until you appear before Him in Zion. I cannot tell you how sorry I am at your leaving Glasgow. The first time I heard you was after you came back from Jerusalem. I shall never forget that meeting while I live. You spoke on *Jerusalem's doom*. You will remember it, I have no doubt. Since then, I have been attending the Wednesday night class, and I can tell you, my dear Miss Fletcher, I have felt it to be a green spot in the wilderness; some nights I have felt it to be a little heaven below. I have often wished I knew you personally, for many a time I would have liked to have spoken to you, and to have had you for a friend. You will, perhaps, be thinking I have been too much taken up with the teacher, but I think I can say, like the black woman Dr. Moffat tells about, "I love Him whose servant you are." I am sure, when God the people writes, He'll count that many were born in Bedford Lane Hall.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I have long had such a desire to thank you for your Wednesday night class, it has been such a blessing to me. Your words always come home to me; it just seems as if you knew all about me. O how shall I thank God for leading me there; I always get such a help along the way each Wednesday night. You do not know how much you have comforted me since my dear mother fell asleep in Jesus. You speak so often about dear ones who have gone before, of the happy meeting it will be, when we have done with life's battle, with all those whom we love but have lost for a little while, that I'm always cheered very much.

Will you pray for me, that I may get closer to Jesus, and that I may be kept very humble, and witness for Jesus at home and in the warehouse. I do want to be a brave soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. My heart is so cold, my love to Him so little, but I long to know and love Him better.

May the Lord bless you for the many lessons you have taught me.

May 19, 1879.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

You sometimes wonder if your speaking in the Wednesday night class does any good. I could not let you away this time without letting you know that you have done me a great deal of good by your speaking. Dear Miss Fletcher, God, in His goodness opened my eyes, and showed me the state my soul was in. I found out that I was in great need of a Saviour. But my faith is very weak; I pray to Christ to strengthen it, and I have never known Him to fail. Dear Miss Fletcher, when I am done praying, and feeling near to God, it is then that the devil comes and tempts me. Sometimes I wonder if I am one of God's children at all, and I know that God will never leave me nor forsake me. He has said that if we ask we shall receive, and I know that God cannot lie. I just pray to Him, and I know that when God sees fit He will answer my prayer. Dear Miss Fletcher, I was at your last Wednesday night meeting that you had, and I was struck with what you said. I thought that you were picturing out me. It seemed to me as if you knew the state of my soul better than I did myself. I saw that I was one of those who expected too much from God; I just thought that He was not listening to my prayers. But I can see differently now, and I will just trust Him, and try and follow in His steps; He will watch over me and care for me. Dear Miss Fletcher, when I feel cast down, I have Him to go to and tell all my troubles to, and when He sees fit He will help me. He is perhaps trying my faith. I have resolved to stand up for Christ by God's help. We have only to believe in Him.

Good-bye, dear Miss Fletcher, and if we are both spared I hope to see you when you come back, and if not, I hope to meet you up in heaven, where we will be with Christ for ever and ever. I will abide in Christ, and He will abide in me.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I have been attending the Wednesday night class, and I *have been* getting so much comfort that I could not help telling you about the way you have helped me. God has been sending you with a message to me. I do pray that He may long spare you to minister the words of life to us. Will you pray for my dear mother and me, that we may be kept close to our Lord Jesus, who is the God of all comfort.

GLASGOW, *May 20, 1879.*

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I scarcely know how to write you, but I could not let you go away without thanking you for the many comforting, cheering, helping words which you have given me during the winter; indeed, I did need them, as Satan has sorely tried me with unbelief. Looking within for feelings one night, I was almost going to give up prayer—no use—thank God I did not.

Sunday, 19th January, your words were brought home to my heart, and I could say Jesus is mine; since, I have doubts and fears, wonder if I am the Lord's. Thanks for the helping words on Wednesday night.

GLASGOW, *Dec. 8, 1879.*

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

At your class last Wednesday night, while you were pleading with them to look by faith to the cross, I was like the Prodigal Son, I had come to an end of myself; and oh, such a look I got of Jesus bearing my sins. Thank God, I can now say with the hymn, "I have a Saviour, He is pleading in glory." Excuse me for writing to you; but I could not help telling you what God had done for me.

DEAR FRIEND,

I think I must have been reading my Bible with my eyes shut all these years of my life, for it seems a new book to me now. Some of it now seems like a letter from the dear Lord Himself to me. The very things that used to frighten me dreadful are sweet to me now. When I am in Christ and trust my soul in His keeping, God shall not let any one pluck me out of His hand. "Who shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord?"

With the help of God it shall be the one aim of my life to bring all my dear ones to Jesus. And oh, my dear friend, pray for me that I may have strength and courage to stand up for

Jesus in my home. My children are the only ones I can speak to yet. I do feel so very weak and so very helpless when I try. Dear friend, I do love to think you are minding me in your prayers; I am sure you live very, very near to Jesus. I would dearly love to get a letter from you at any time. My Bible now and your letters are the only books I read, but it was not always so. I would be ashamed to tell you of the wretched books I have read and spent my time on, but, thank God, He has opened my blind eyes before it was too late. Dear friend, I must stop, but I do feel as if I could go on all night. I do wish I could write better, but you see I am a very poor hand with the pen, but I know you will not look to that.

February, 1881.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I take the liberty of writing you. It pleased God to direct my steps to your Tuesday Class the first winter you began your work in Grant Street Hall. I cannot tell you what a blessing that Bible Class has been to my soul. Many a time has the Spirit of God spoken through you to me; you have time after time been sent with the very word I stood in need of. Yes, dear Miss Fletcher, I think I can truly say, knowing I am in the presence of God, that my soul has been quickened anew; that I seek more earnestly His face; and long to live more for Jesus, who lived and died for us. My soul thirsts after my dear Lord. *Eternity!* you often speak of eternity; I believe the best of God's children are but half awake. I got some years ago a look into eternity—and saw life a solemn reality. How differently we will review our lives when brought face to face with eternity at the last. The thought of opportunities lost, and past unfaithfulness, cuts me to the very quick, dear Miss Fletcher. *Earnest!* we cannot be too earnest; we cannot be too faithful. God has used you in stirring up my soul; I know your labour has not been in vain. Go on, dear Miss Fletcher, spending and being spent for Jesus; His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face.

I hope you will excuse me for writing you, but it has long been in my heart to do so. I love you for Christ's sake, and His love constrained me to write you.

December 13, 1881.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

I take the liberty of writing to you after hearing you last Wednesday night, when you said you were thinking of leaving us. I do hope you will not think of going away and leaving our dear Wednesday night class, for there are many, many blessed under your teaching. I, for one, have known your name since you had your class in Centre Street. I had two nieces that attended your class then. One of them has gone home fourteen years ago, and she was brought to trust in Jesus under your teaching; and the other one attended your class till, two years since, she left Glasgow for Australia. And now, dear Miss Fletcher, I know the winters I have attended your class, the blessings I have received, and the great help you have been to me in this wilderness journey. Last year was one of changes to me, for my husband was taken home in November last, and in nine months after that, I had a daughter that went home, and the good seed was sown in her heart in hearing you in Mr. Fullarton's church. Your Psalm that night was the 106th, 4th verse. When she was on her death-bed, she was able to say, "Remember me, Lord, with that love," and she died trusting in Jesus as her Saviour.

DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

Pardon the liberty I take in writing to you, being a stranger; but 'twas you who led me to seek the Saviour, the friend who sticketh closer than a brother, who will never deceive. Oh, I wish I could love Him more. How often I have prayed that prayer of David's in the 119th Psalm; the first time I heard you it was so nice, 'twas this—"Teach me Thy way, O Lord; to do Thy will do me instruct." That meeting has indeed been the greatest blessing I ever received—it is so delightful to be among the two or three to whom the blessing is promised; I have often felt like Peter on the Mount—that it was good to be there. But my object was not to tell you that, but to ask your prayers in my behalf for that preparation of heart which will make me a welcome guest at Christ's table. I want to feel His presence more than ever I felt before; and to be clothed in the wedding garment of my Saviour's righteousness; and specially, to feel more love to Jesus. You have done so much for me already. Every Tuesday night you have a direct word to me. I hope you will not be displeased, but will do this also. If I have said anything out of place, please forgive me; I had such a desire to speak to you, but I might never get an opportunity. The best I could think of was to write. I will ever remember you as the best friend I ever had on earth.

MY DEAR MISS FLETCHER,

It was with great pleasure we received your note on Saturday morning, and we are only hoping that this may reach you in time before you leave town.

You will receive a small parcel to-day from some half-dozen of your girls. We are very selfish, we want you to be thinking very often about us when you are "far away;" as I am sure you will be in our thoughts always—every Wednesday night anyway.

When you come back, we would like so well if you could let us know, because we would not like to miss the first Wednesday night; that is, if we are all spared to see one another. There will be a great rejoicing. We all wish you an affectionate good-bye, and wish you back safe and well. We will never forget your lesson to us, and all the precious promises. You have learned us to cling to Him who will never cast us off. Good-bye, good-bye.

LINES TO MISS FLETCHER,

On the eve of her departure to the Holy Land.

MY dear Miss Fletcher, fare thee well,
 From home and lov'd ones here you sever,
 And we who love you cannot tell
 But that we part with you for ever.

The loving hearts you lonely leave,
 Their tribute of a tear bestowing,
 At your departure sorely grieve,
 And wish with you they had been going.

But oh, your class will not forget,
 On meeting nights, when they will miss you,
 To heave a sigh of fond regret,
 And humbly pray that God may bless you.

Deep in their memory you shall live,
 Where all your loving words are branded;
 How they will long for time to give
 The happy news, you're safely landed!

To Him who rules the wind and wave,
 With prayerful hearts we now commend you,
 From every danger may He save,
 And in that Holy Land befriend you.

But oh! return to us again,
 When you have heard the children's story,
 To cheer our hearts in Bedford Lane,
 And guide us to a home of glory.

TO THE CHILDREN.

“He that Toucheth You Toucheth the Apple of His Eye.”*

Zechariah ii. 8.

“**H** WAS in the desert,” said my friend. “We had travelled many miles over hot sand, parched plains, and under a cloudless, scorching sun. Water was failing, and our prospects were somewhat gloomy. Towards evening a cloud of dust arose in the crimson horizon; it was the sheik of a neighbouring tribe with some of his followers, mounted on fiery arabs. Was he for war or for peace? After many salaams, according to the hospitality of his tribe, he urged me to visit him in his tent, adding, in order to allay any lingering suspicion, ‘Fear not to enter my tent, and stay with me. Come and visit my tribe. I will stand at the threshold; who touches *you* touches *me* first; no one can enter to *you* but through me.’”

The words of my friend fell sweetly on my ear; they were so suggestive of the words at the head of this little paper, spoken by Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Dear children, as old Samuel Rutherford says, “Be not ashamed to play the coward, and hide behind Jesus.” Hide in the clefts of the Rock of Ages; that Rock is Christ. There you will be safe from a broken law, for He has kept it; safe from a guilty conscience, for He will wash you in the great fountain opened up for poor vile sinners; safe in the storm, safe in the calm, safe in the conflict of life’s battle, and safe when you lay your head down to die.

Have you ever heard the sweet note of some little bird as you walked in the country? You have looked for it, but the bird was hid away far up in yonder ivy-covered rock; from its nest there it sang and only by its song could you tell its presence. So hide, dear children, *in* Christ, and then you will sing too; and when Satan seeks you, he will not be able to get near you, he will find you “hid in Christ.”

“Water, water, oh, ye thirsty,” cries the Arab water carrier in the streets of Alexandria or Damascus; “Water, water, come and drink!” So Jesus not only gives shelter and rest, but He quenches the weary longing of the heart.

* This and the next three short pieces appeared in the *Dayspring* (Messrs. J. & R. PARLANE, Paisley).

A little Arab girl in Jaffa lay dying ; her lips were seen to move. "Moy, moy," she whispered, which is the Arabic for water. Her dear teacher thought she wished a drink of cool water, and offered it to her ; but she put it aside, and shook her head. "Is it the water of life you wish?" asked her teacher. A glad smile stole over the pale face, and she bowed her head murmuring, "The water of life!" A few hours after, and she was with the Good Shepherd, who leads His flock by the still waters.

"The Gates of the City."

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."



JAFFA is the ancient Joppa, where Simon the tanner lived ; where Peter had his strange vision ; where Dorcas made the coats and garments for the poor ; and where Jonah got a ship when he was running away so foolishly from God. When I saw the native boats tossing wildly at anchor in the exposed roadstead, I often thought how miserable he must have felt!

If you were to stand on the roof of Miss Walker Arnott's beautiful Mission House there, early in the morning, you would see many curious things: strings of camels slowly treading the dusty road, their bells tinkling, led by a little Arab boy in a bright yellow kilt and pink jacket ; women, closely veiled in white, with fruit going to the market ; the wild Beduin from the desert in his long striped hair cloak ; Moslems in black, and Greeks in pink and scarlet. Once I saw a touching sight : three blind men walking , the first felt his way with a stick, the second had his hand on the shoulder of the first, and the third touched the shoulder of the second. What a vivid picture of our Lord's words, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch!"

There are poor and rich and needy ones in Jaffa now as when Dorcas lived and was so kind to them, and the Mission Home where I lived for a little was called the Tabitha Mission Home—there too the miserable and the starving were helped. One day there was a great crowd came to the gate seeking to get meal. They were all very hungry and wretched, but only to those who had got a ticket did the gate open: none were allowed to pass through unless they could show their ticket. These tickets I often wrote and signed. Whilst I was watching this sad, touching scene at the

gate, one of the Mission ladies brought me a ticket. "Did you write this?" she asked; "do you recognize it as your own writing?" I took the piece of paper and examined it *very* carefully, for I was most anxious to believe it was my writing. Why? because if not, then it was a forgery: but the strokes and turns were *not* mine, the letters had never been formed by my pen. Slowly I said—"No: I never wrote nor signed that paper: I know nothing of such a paper." So the false paper was returned to the owner, starving and miserable, *outside* the gate. The ticket did not give that one a right to enter in and get food. Very sad were my thoughts, for I pictured another gate, and another multitude, when the trumpet shall sound and the dead are raised and the books are opened; and He who sits on yonder throne shall say to each of the sons of men: "What is *your* right, that you may enter in through the gate into the city?" Dear children, what passport will do then? Only one signed and sealed by Himself. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin." *That* is a ticket which He will recognize, and the soul so washed, cleansed—made pure and holy—will have a right to the tree of life, and *will* enter in through the gate into the city. Pray ever, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Story of a Jerusalem Child.



ONLY a few months ago, there died, in Jerusalem, a dear little child called Nazlie Jane. Sitting beside her mother, a young Christian, who had learned to love Jesus in Miss Arnott's School at Jaffa, I heard the touching account of her death, which I now give you, almost in the mother's own words.

"Nazlie was only two years and a half old when she died; but she was such a strange child; she and her brother loved each other like two doves." Often she said, "I do not want to stay here, I want to go to my dear Jesus." At night she loved to look up at the soft evening sky, glowing with stars, and repeat, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." On Sunday she went to church, but did not seem well; for she said, "I want, please, to go home to my good bed." She came home, and lay in her little bed with eyes fixed, but they were looking at Jesus. Once or twice she said, "I want to lie in my cold bed," meaning the grave. A quarter of an hour after fits came on; and, said her mother in her broken English, "She lay in her bath, wrapped in a shawl, but did not

speak ; she was stiff ; I called her father, he came, she knew him and said, 'Father, dear father, sing to me.' But the father could not. Then she said, 'It is Jesus, father, my dear Jesus who has come to take me.' She looked up, she saw what we saw not, she smiled and laughed. 'There He is, at the foot of my bed ; He calls me to come.' So, beckoning with her little hand, 'Look up, father, here is a little boy, too, come to take me.' Dear Nazlie, she speak no more to me, no! she did not want ; would I see her I must look up, not down there. Then all was quite finished ; she herself shut her little mouth, closed her eyes, and folded her hands, and so she left us. I dressed her in a new white frock her father bought for her birthday. She was but six hours ill. My child ever loved the pictures best at school which showed the dear Jesus. One day I put some flowers in my hair. 'Mother,' she said, 'why do you put flowers on your head, and Jesus had thorns on His head?'"

Her little brother Anecese is almost broken hearted for the loss of his little sister. "Why does Jesus not let her come back?" he asks ; "if He loved my sister He would bring her back to me." No! I tell him, Anecese, we may not have Nazlie back, we must go to her. "Then, mother, I must go now to my sister, for I know she seeks me."

One day, said the mother, I took him to Nazlie's grave ; and we took flowers to put upon it. "Mother," he asked, "Is Nazlie here, or up with the dear Jesus?"—"She is not here, but with the dear Lord," I said. "Then why do you cry here at her grave?" "I cry, dear, because she leave me."—"But you may not cry, mother ; no ! you sing as in school—

"I want to be with Jesus."

Then he began himself to cry. "Put away the stone, dear mother ; I must bring her food below there ; perhaps she is hungry. I must eat, and my sister Nazlie not!" Then, added the mother, wiping her tears, "I know she is with Jesus, I shall not see her here ; she is not down but up, always singing ; she wears a white dress now, and sings ever with a beautiful tongue ; but the world is changed to us since Nazlie our child left us."

Dear children, little Nazlie sleeps quietly in her far off grave in Jerusalem—waiting until the resurrection morning, when the eternal day will break, and the shadows flee away! She was but six hours ill. Are you ready for death so sudden, so swift as that? Ask the dear Lord to teach you how to love Him, that you, too, may be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and be ready to go to the "Beautiful Home over there."

Whiter than Snow.



IN a letter from Jaffa just received, Miss Walker Arnott tells a little incident which may be amusing and interesting to the little children who know well what snow is, and what snowballs are. She says:—

“On Tuesday it snowed for two hours—a thing almost unknown in Jaffa. Such excitement there was! Some of the children asked if it was wool; others thought it cotton. Some boys took it for quinine. The ground was white, and there was a general rush to see the wonder. Miss Smith threw a snowball at one of them. It seemed all at once to dawn upon them what use might be made of snow, and for twenty minutes they pelted each other. I thought they had better have it out, as they might never have the chance again. It was a day never to be forgotten. The excitement did not quite subside till they were all in their beds. A Jewess came up to me with a very solemn face and asked if it was something very dreadful; and she looked quite relieved when told that snow was a very common thing, though not in Jaffa. Next morning, at the Bible class, some of the girls said they thought God had sent the snow to show them how white He wished their hearts to be.”

Do you know anything whiter than snow, dear children? A soul washed in the precious blood of Jesus, and dressed in His spotless robe of righteousness, is more beautiful. Jesus is gathering in little children into His fold just now, from Africa's burning plain, and from the sweet villages of His own beloved land. When I was in Cairo, in Egypt, I visited a mission school. When the children stood up to sing their hymns, I noticed a little woolly-headed child—eyes black as coal, bright as beads. Where had she come from? Central Africa. Her parents were sold as slaves, and this poor little one was thrown aside and found by the missionaries lying in a garden. Now she was singing sweetly of “the home over there.”

In a lovely village among the Lebanon mountains, I went to see a poor sick man. His wife had learnt to love Jesus, and had taught her two beautiful little girls about the Good Shepherd. The one child was named Saida, the other Musada. How I wish every boy and girl who reads this could have heard those two dear children repeating the 23rd Psalm and the 103rd Psalm without a mistake. The Druze priests in the village told the poor mother they would

kill her; and one day her brother, who is a Druze priest, came into her room with a gun in his hand and said, "I will shoot you; for it is better for you to die than to live; for you are a disgrace to us." When I left she expected her life would certainly be taken.

Dear children, the day is fast approaching when the Good Shepherd will gather in all His flock. Not one missing: "They shall come from the north and the south, the east and the west." And the Lamb shall feed them and lead them by the still, quiet waters of the River of Life. Will you be there?

The Infirmary.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Perhaps you would like to hear a little about what goes on in the Royal Infirmary, and what it is like? Well, the great gate in Castle Street stands half open, and as we know Andrew, the gatekeeper, very well, we shall enter. Here is a wide grassy square, and that large building looking down upon us to the left, is the Surgical House. If the day is bright and sunny, you will see lots of children on crutches, very pale, but basking joyfully in the warm sun. Men, too, with bandaged arms, and legs, and heads. The block of buildings to the right is the Medical House, and very sad it is to go through its wards, for many of the poor patients will never get better, though the kindness of doctors and nurses and the medicines given greatly soothed and relieved them.

It is just one o'clock. What are those little waggons which men are pushing up to the different doors? It is the dinner hour, and this is the patients' dinner being taken up to the different wards. Suppose you come up the steps with me, and enter a large accident ward. How busy they all are preparing for dinner, for to many this is the chief event of the day. Here is the kitchen attached to the ward, and the nurse is serving out the dinner. Beyond is the ward, with rows of clean white beds. In many of them you will see what is called a "cage," which keeps the clothes from pressing on a broken or fractured leg. All the patients who are able are sitting up, with a nice little wooden tray before them; boys or men with an arm bandaged are helping to carry round bowls of hot soup or beef tea, which is followed by a plate of beef or fowl. Sometimes it is very amusing to hear the directions given as to who gets beef or who gets none, who gets rice and milk or chicken soup. For

example, Nurse says, "Johnny, that rice and milk is for the man with the head,"—which means a bad head case; or, "Give the beef tea to the boy who came in with the leg."

The patients who are getting better help as much as they can in the ward, and wear dark blue loose suits, with "G. R. I." in white letters upon them. Whenever dinner is over, the windows are pulled down to air the ward, and one of the patients, who is soon to be dismissed as cured, sweeps it nicely out.

The patients get breakfast at eight, then they all "tidy up" for the visit of the doctor or "chief," as he is called. After the doctor's visit, which often lasts for a considerable time, wounds are dressed, arms and legs attended to, and this often goes on until dinner time. At six o'clock, supper arrives—delightful porridge and sweet milk, with coffee and bread and butter. Then there are visiting days, and the patients eagerly watch for the arrival of parent or friends. So one day passes on after another, in that great building—to some, days of much suffering, and to all, days of weary waiting—but let us be thankful for such a place, where doctors and nurses are alike kind and good to the poor patients.

There are some wonderful things done now in the Infirmary. Numbers of little children go in with terribly crooked legs, and come out with them quite straight, looking so happy! There is a dear little girl in just now, getting both her legs made straight. I asked her yesterday how she was, and she answered, "Fine."

If you had visited one of our wards some time ago, you would have seen such a pretty little boy lying in his bed. His name was Robert and he was a great favourite with the nurses and visitors. And no wonder, for Robert was always bright and cheery. He was only a ten year old acrobat, and broke his leg while performing at the Music Hall. There was nothing he liked better than to tell you exactly how it all happened; how he was balancing himself, just about to be tossed over a man's shoulder, when he slipped, fell, and was picked up with his leg broken. He sang very nicely, and had brought his fiddle with him, and many a weary hour was beguiled playing and singing to the other patients. "Nothing," he said, with the air of an old hand, "could induce him to give up the profession." In the bed next to him was a wild, rollicking boy, called Pat. Robert, who was well educated, was greatly shocked to find Pat did not know his letters. So he got hold of the "penny spell," and when he was getting better, began to teach Pat his letters.

On New Year's Day we had a Christmas tree, and Robert's heart was rejoiced by getting a handsome Tam o' Shanter cap. Poor little man, he knew very little, if anything, about

Jesus, and and left us cured in body, but I fear with his heart unchanged.

Come up with me to another ward. Dear young friends, there lies George Y., wasted to a shadow. Ask him, and he will tell you how he was converted at one of Messrs. Moody and Sankey's meetings. One day, when in great pain, he said to me, "What would I do here without Jesus?" And when he got anything to read that was good, he used to read and explain it to a boy beside him. George has not got home yet, but I think he often wearies for Jesus to send for him. Here, on the next bed, lies a poor wee mite of a boy. This is Jamie, who has no mother and a wretched, drunken father. Jamie's great terror is that the doctor will think him well enough to leave the Infirmary, and send him home; so he refuses to get up and try his crutches, and he will hardly speak to anyone except George.

I learned the lesson the other day that in every heart there is some spot that can be reached by kindly sympathy. Passing from one patient to another, I asked each one, "How are you?" Curled up under his sheet lay "big Pat." Somehow I passed him, for I fancied him rather a rough. About one o'clock, I was standing near Pat's bed, when, looking at me most reproachfully, said he, "Ye never axed for me to-day." And so I learnt my lesson, always to "ax," and so to shed a little bit of sunshine into the darkest hearts.

Let us pass into another ward. There sits right up in her bed, bright little Susie. Always a smile except when the terrible dressing of the knee begins, and then poor Susie's smiles all disappear, and bitter tears and sobs come. Just the other day, Susie told me, with great glee, she was going to have "colyfor," and afterwards "ham and eggs." Perhaps, at some future time, I may tell you a little more about Susie.

Lying peacefully in her bed, further down the ward, is a small morsel of a child—white, grave, and silent. She is "Wee Mary," brought in one day with a terrible cut under her eye, caused by a broken milk jug. Scarcely able to speak, she will repeat the whole of the twenty-third Psalm, in a language quite peculiar to herself, and intensely curious. "Wee Mary" knows about Jesus, who loves the children.

There is no place where we learn lessons of thankfulness to God like the wards of a large infirmary. Let us thank Him for health and strength, in trying to relieve those who are sick and ill; and one way in which you can do this, young friends, is by helping to keep up the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow.—E. F.

APPENDIX.

A Wreath upon the Grave.

EVERY day almost, during the past winter, as some of those labouring at the Necropolis report, numbers of women have been seen—some of them almost daily visitants—gathering to weep over Miss Fletcher's grave. Many wreaths were laid by loving hands upon her coffin and the place of sepulture, and a suitable headstone has now been raised to mark the spot where lies the dust of her who in life was so much loved, and in death is still so much lamented. In finishing the task undertaken in the production of this memorial volume, we would entwine some remaining testimonies of those who knew something of her worth, and lay them as yet another wreath upon her grave.

First we give extracts from what six other ministers of the Gospel, besides those already quoted from, have written of her :—

The Rev. D. R. Kilpatrick, of North Woodside Free Church, writes :—

“It is with peculiar interest that I add my testimony to the grace of God so wondrously seen in dear Miss Fletcher. My personal acquaintance with her was indeed slight, but the influence of her work for the Master has told upon my congregation in a remarkable way. Upon two classes of my people that influence was specially marked. To the wives and mothers of our working men, very specially to the poorer of them, she was greatly blessed. Often in visiting among these, I have heard her name mentioned with deep emotion. Again and again they have told me that when the burden of life seemed more than they could bear, and they were faint and weary at heart, they have gone to Miss Fletcher's meeting, and found help and heartening there.

She seemed fully to understand them, and so deeply to sympathise with them, that it was as if she had taken part of their load

upon herself, while she led them in faith to the Word, and to the throne of the Divine Healer. No wonder they wrought and planned, as they often had to do beforehand, to get time for the meeting, and although they were not likely to say much to herself on the subject, and it is probable she never knew the half of the good she did them, yet surely it was an honoured work to drop into the cup of these poor, careworn women, the sweet balm of a Saviour's love, and to shed across their often dim and darkened lives the heavenly light of a good hope.

"To the young women also of my congregation, Miss Fletcher proved a true friend. It so happened that my daughter had instituted a branch of the Glasgow Young Women's Christian Association among them, and it was difficult at times to get speakers to keep up the freshness and variety desirable at their weekly meetings. Miss Fletcher was therefore frequently applied to, and never without a most hearty and encouraging response. Even amid the urgent and wearying calls of the last two years of her life, she found time to address the young women of North Woodside. On these occasions the meeting had to be taken into the large hall, which was always well filled. Upon the careless and unconcerned, I have reason to believe, these addresses made a deep impression; but it seemed to me that the more spiritually-minded among the young women specially enjoyed them. There was a freshness of view, and a depth of spiritual discernment about them, which went home to their hearts. The struggles and temptations of a young woman's life she could depict with graphic power, but it was when speaking of Jesus and telling of His love and power to save, that her whole soul seemed to be on fire. How earnestly she pleaded with them, how wisely she advised them, how patiently and intelligently she taught them, only those who have heard her can fully understand.

"I had that privilege only once, but I shall never forget the address she then delivered. It was upon 'Mephibosheth,' and it was quite unique. How she rolled out her sentences about the finding of the poor youth at Lo-debar—the place of no pasture; how he could not walk, but had to be carried; and how David received him, and set him at his own table for his father Jonathan's sake; and in all this finding material for striking analogy, and heart-moving appeal.

"And now that voice has ceased, and she has gone home to her heavenly rest, but the tones of that voice, and the warm Christ-like love of that womanly heart, linger with us still; and her work for her Lord will, I trust, add jewels to His crown, and praises to His name for evermore."

The Rev. G. F. Daly, of Renwick Free Church, testifies :—

“Young and old among us attended her meetings, and were invariably the better for doing so. It was a pleasure for a minister to visit Miss Fletcher’s scholars, their interest in divine things was so real, and their love for their Saviour so warm. They were deeply attached to their teacher, looking up to her as their spiritual counsellor and guide, and even yet the mention of her name fills many an eye with tears. Notes of her lessons are shown me in one home, her likeness hangs over the mantelpiece of another, while I am asked to read lines to her memory in a third. Her earnest pleading voice is silent ; but the influence of her life will not soon die, for it was widely scattered, and deeply felt. ‘She being dead, yet speaketh.’”

The Rev. John M’Coll, of Newton Place U.P. Church, Partick, says :—

“She held her meetings for one whole Winter, and the greater part of another, in our mission-house in Kelvin St. These were largely attended, and her addresses appear to have been singularly attractive and interesting. I have no doubt that much real good was done by her. She is spoken by many here not only as an instructive teacher, but as a valuable friend.”

The Rev. David Pirret, of Burnbank U.P. Church, mentions :—

“Miss Fletcher conducted meetings for women in the hall of Burnbank U.P. Church. The great truths of the Gospel were presented with all the clearness, and earnestness, and unction, for which Miss Fletcher was so distinguished. In the course of my visitation of my congregation, I have met with not a few who speak with the deepest affection and gratitude of Miss Fletcher and these meetings.”

The Rev. Dr. A. Wallace,* of Campbell St. U.P. Church, who first came to know Miss Fletcher as a traveller, writes :—

“Well do I remember the rapt enthusiasm with which she spoke of the varied scenery of ‘Gamle Norge,’ its fiords and fields, its lakes and mountains, its famous passes and waterfalls, its numberless islands, its snowfields and glaciers from Christiania to Drontheim, and from this ancient capital on to Hammerfest. I fondly hope you have preserved her graphic description of the Luffoden Islands with the cod-fishery there. But nothing had so deeply impressed her as the several views she had got from different points of the midnight sun. This and the great North Sea laid hold of her, and

gave her views of immensity, and the splendour of creation she never had before. She revelled in the scenery of Norway ; it gave full scope to her imagination and her fine descriptive powers. Her visit to Norway was more than a new sensation, it was a new life, and called forth her special interest in the Lapps—‘the wee, wee folks,’ as she used to call them ; as her eye glistened and bore testimony to the earnest desire of her heart to do them good. But after all her graphic descriptions of this people and scenery, she would return again and again with renewed vigour and delight to the glories of the midnight sun, and the wondrous tints of the Arctic sky. She had a quenchless love of travel and adventure, of strange and romantic situations ; and Norway, of all places, is the country to gratify this. She had an ardent love of nature in all its moods and aspects.”

The Rev. John Watson, of Sefton Park Church, Liverpool, says of Miss Fletcher :—

“ Personally she impressed me as a woman of passionate nature consecrated to Christ—a fine type of the Christian enthusiast, dashed with real genius.”

Here is what some other active Christian workers in Glasgow write :—

“ She possessed a richly stored mind and great energy of character, all of which she brought to bear on her great aim in life—winning souls to Christ. In the large Bible classes she taught, she won her way to the hearts of her audiences by a method quite her own. I remember how often she spoke to me of her desire for the salvation of the young, that they might have a long time of service for the Master, and for this end she was, in season and out of season, an earnest worker.

“ In my last conversation with her she expressed her longing to revisit Palestine, going by the Desert of Sinai, as she thought such a journey might be turned to use in her meetings. From the risk of the Desert journey I tried to dissuade her, knowing well from experience the fatigue to be undergone ; and now, in the light of what took place after her summer’s journey, I feel glad the idea was abandoned.

“ Miss Fletcher was well-known at Miss Arnott’s Mission in Jaffa, where her visits brought the sunshine of her own happy Christian life to the girls there, among whom she was greatly beloved. When visiting that school, it gave me much pleasure to

hear one of the girls, bearing Miss Fletcher's honoured name, sing some of our well-known hymns. For this child's maintenance Miss Fletcher held herself responsible."

Baillie Dickson.

"My hope of seeing and hearing Miss Fletcher was first gratified when one Sabbath evening she, with great kindness, came to address our Congregational Sabbath School. When asked to speak, she sprang up with alacrity, and her power, her charm, at once appeared. These hundreds of children and she were instantly at one. They replied to her as she questioned them, as readily as they would have replied to their own mother. Every eye was fastened upon her. Among other themes, she spoke of the glory of heaven, and how 'a little *wee* child might be afraid to enter; but what if its mother took it in along with her! And Jesus would come like a mother, and the little one would be at home.' A fine intelligence, warm with the most tender affection, streaming forth in sweet and simple words, characterised the entire address.

"It is evident that Miss Fletcher occupied a peculiar place among the Christian workers of this city—a place which she powerfully filled; and that we are all the poorer for her removal."

George Hill Dick.

"In the kindest possible manner, Miss Fletcher came and addressed my Bible Class at Cranstonhill on two Sabbath evenings last year (1882), and once in the month of May this year. It was intimated previously that Miss Fletcher was to conduct the lesson, and on all three occasions there was a numerous attendance of the members of the Class. During the whole time she spoke, about an hour on each occasion, there was breathless attention, and she seemed to make a very deep impression. The power of illustration was very strong, and she put the soul-saving truths of the Gospel clearly and forcibly before her hearers.

"Her appeals to close with the offer of mercy through a crucified Saviour were very touching, and her two-fold aim was manifestly the conversion of sinners and edification of saints. While listening to her, one could not fail to be impressed with the conviction that she was speaking with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. On all her visits many were moved to tears, though at times her quaint and striking way of putting things provoked a smile."

William M. Lean.

"She was always in dead earnest to save souls, and spared no personal effort or fatigue in seeking this great end. In consequence

of this, and her love for those she sought to help, they were all devotedly attached to her, and prized her teaching greatly. She watched for souls, and God gave her what she sought for."

J. C. White.

"I shall never forget, while memory lasts, the deep impression made upon me when hearing Miss Fletcher address a women's meeting. I was enchained, as was all her audience, by the power of the Holy Spirit in her words. I had never heard her before, and I thought all who attended those meetings most highly privileged. I spoke to her afterwards, and soon became convinced, when knowing more of her, that she was one of the most remarkable women I had ever met with. She was full of genius—a person of masculine intellect, yet with all a woman's tenderness, and keen sensibility. We remember well her ready wit, her unselfish generosity, her courageous spirit, with a mind highly cultivated and experience enlarged by foreign travel, through which she was all the more influential for good.

"Miss Fletcher was truly a heroine in the strife of this world, and she bravely fought and won the victory in Christ. She had her failings, like the rest of us; but may we, like her, 'do battle' with ours, and conquer like her; and when 'life's fitful fever' is over, may we, too, rest in the bosom of our dear Lord. The world is all the poorer for the loss of such a character, with her marked individuality and force on the side of all that was good and true and kind. Her spiritual experience was a deeply interesting one, and she told me that when all alone in the 'midnight watches,' studying her Bible, none but God knew of the revelations then made known to her. She spoke of it with a kind of rapture.

"Miss Fletcher's best monument is in the hearts of those whom she helped on to glory, and they are a great multitude."

Mrs. Archibald Campbell.

"The first evening we had her, she gave out the forty-third psalm, and after reading some verses, she addressed the choir, told them they were not to sing the verses, if they could not do it from the heart. One young man did not sing; but her words took such hold on him, that he became deeply impressed, and he made up his mind he would not sleep until he *could* sing them from his heart. He became an earnest Christian, and is still one of our workers. On each occasion her popularity increased. Her second visit we had the hall so arranged that we could accommodate 730, and on subsequent visits to that hall, we had an extra room thrown open, but many had to leave, not being able to get inside of the door.

There were many deep impressions made, and many souls converted. . . . We went to a larger hall, which Miss Fletcher opened. The hall was filled to overflowing—over a thousand people being present. This occasion was the Sabbath evening before she left the last time for Palestine. She was most earnest, and brilliantly eloquent. She bade the people good-bye, and said she might never see them again. Many cried bitterly, during the meeting. She implored the people in the most earnest, affectionate manner to meet her in heaven. Miss Fletcher was peculiarly gifted in prayer, so comprehensive, and so beautifully simple, she forgot none. Her entreaties with God for fathers, mothers, widows, orphans, tried and tempted ones, were beautiful in the extreme, and endeared her to all hearts. Her loss is great to Govan. She could talk so nicely to the working men. One would have imagined she had herself wrought in a boatyard, and known all about their different occupations. She was admirably suited to endear herself to all classes, and specially to the poor.”

Mrs. Watt, Govan.

“It is now fully three years since our association was first formed, at which time we had the good fortune, or, I should rather say, favour from the Lord, of having Miss Fletcher for our President, an office in which she served us up till her death. Her great experience, her extensive knowledge, and her tender heartedness made us all feel as if we were children beside her. And from that night up till the last time we were privileged to hear her voice, that feeling never lessened, but rather increased.

“She addressed us on ‘Entire Consecration to God,’ one Saturday evening. I spoke to her a little after the meeting was over. She told me she had been all day in the Infirmary, and she had a great hurry in getting forward in time for our meeting that evening. She had been detained on account of several accidents that afternoon, having waited to assist the doctors in dressing the injured, and to speak words of comfort to the dying. How little did I think that she herself was so near her journey’s end! It was then only a few months before her death. After leaving her, I thought much of how she filled up every moment of time in the Lord’s service. It seemed as if no service was too laborious for her to undertake, nor any sacrifice too valuable to be offered to the God she loved and served. And I could not but think of the welcome that awaited her—‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ In her every-day life, each detail seemed to speak of how she herself was consecrated to God, and gave a fine example of what she had been teaching us.”

Mrs. Turnbull, Maryhill.

"I do not think that I ever got a refusal from Miss Fletcher when I had occasion to ask her to address any of the meetings. If she could not come on the evening wanted, she generally offered another evening, and this although her time was fully occupied with all her other work. That it was not wasted time was known to us in various ways. Let me mention one instance of blessing. Some weeks after, an address from Miss Fletcher, in the Y. W. C. A. Rooms, 95 Renfield Street, on the words, 'When I see the blood I will pass over you,'—a young woman, who is now a member of the Association, asked her if I could tell her the precise date of that meeting and address. I was able to do so, and she explained her request by saying, 'That was the night when I first trusted my Saviour.'

"I know there are many in Glasgow at this time who are recalling the impassioned utterances, and moving appeals they often heard from Miss Fletcher's lips, and it may be God is even now using the recollection as a means of blessing."

Mrs. Oatts.

The following are some sayings written on the leaves of Miss Fletcher's Bibles. Some of them are original, others quoted; but all of them are believed to have given help and comfort to herself:—

"Get a larger acquaintance with Christ—His person, work, and character. Every line of the Gospel unfolds a new feature in His character; every line of the Epistles discloses new depths of His work. Get more faith and you will get a firmer hold. Pray for deep-rooted faith. Pray to be established, strengthened, settled. Take a long intense look at Jesus, often, often. Look at Jesus deeply, intensely, till every feature is graven on your heart."

"The only cure for a cold heart is a look at the heart of Christ."

"I wonder now why I cavilled so long about God's way of salvation, it appears so glorious, so simple. I found that when I ceased to try to believe aright, then, and only then, did I believe at all."

"I will hope He is with the dying thief's Lord in glory till I go to see."

"Mercy *implies* guilt."

"The covenant of grace is just the covenant of works with a mediator."

“ Marks of a true Christian :—

1. Hatred of sin.
2. Love to Christ.
3. Delight in God's word.
4. Pleasure in prayer.
5. Love to God's people.
6. Religion the first object.
7. The world a broken idol.
8. Heaven the home we long for.”

“ Remember, the sacrifice of our idol *self* is the one great work to which the grace and love of the Gospel constantly leads, and for which it *gives power* by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us.”

“ That which first overcame man is the last thing he overcomes—*pride of heart*.”

“ Christianity is—Jesus for us, Jesus to us, Jesus in us, Jesus ours, and with Him all things now and for ever.”

“ There are no barriers now between a seeking soul and God, but such as unbelief sets up.”

“ I believe the shortest way to faith is to consider well the *object* of faith.”

“ How shall I meet His eyes?
Mine on His cross I cast,
And gladly own myself His prize—
Mercy from first to last.”

“ If I could feel something in me telling me Christ was mine, then I could believe it. Quite wrong! It is believing something outside you, trusting Him at God's right hand, and resting on His sure eternal word, that saves the soul.”

“ God often leads His people by a way they know not, but never by a way He does not know.”

“ The nearer the light of God, the darker is the shadow of sin.”

“ Wherever you go, take Jesus with you, keep your eye on Him, and your heart open to Him.”

“ It were better to go to heaven burned and branded every step of the road, than to slide gently down to hell, sleeping sweetly, while devils carry you along the road to perdition.”

“ Believing first, feeling next. God must be trusted.”

“ He loves me AS I AM.”

“ Let Jesus come between you and the past, but never let the past come between you and Jesus.”

“ And now I know not if I trust, or what ;
I know I thirsted, when I thirsted not.”

“ The Church would die of sheer imbecility were it not that great sinners come in with their great love.”

“ Keep ever looking into the face of Jesus. We cannot do that without reflecting somewhat of His image.”

“ Prepare us for temptation, suffering, work.”

“ I'd like that verse on my grave—‘ Kept by the power of God.’”

“ Some of God's birds sing best in cages, and fly best when their wings are broken.”

Here, lastly, are some strikingly significant verses—favourites with her—found in the pocket of the Bible which Miss Fletcher carried with her on her last journey to Palestine :—

“ Tired ! oh so tired, oh how I long for rest,
When shall I find it, FATHER ! Thy time I know is best ;
When wilt thou give me power to journey far away,
To that blest place prepared, where I shall rest for aye ?

“ Tired ! oh so tired, of the weary strife with sin,
Of trials from without and temptations from within,
When shall the fight be finished, and all the strife be done ?
When shall the race be over, and the crown of victory won ?

“ Tired ! oh so tired, and Satan whispers in my breast,
‘ Cease for awhile this struggle and take a little rest ;
‘ Thou canst not *ever* be on guard, nor *always* watch and pray ;’
OH GOD, MY GOD, HOLD THOU ME UP, or I shall fall TO-DAY.

“ Let me feel that underneath is Thine everlasting Arm,
Shield me in every conflict, protect me now from harm ;
Help me, with meek submission, on Thee alone to rest,
To bear the cross while waiting—believing it is best.

“ Soon, soon will come the glory of the long expected day,
When the gladsome morn shall break, and the shadows flee away ;
When the SAVIOUR in His glory, with all His saints shall come
To gather in His people to their everlasting home ” (Rev. v. 10.)

“ The Lord's my Herd, I canna want,
Tho' aft owercome wi' care ;
Whate'er befa's—fu' weel I ken,
He'll provender prepare.

“ He louts me lie 'mang howies green,
Whan fash'd outright wi' thocht ;
He airts me by the lowin pools,
Gies gentle peace unsocht.

“ When I gae wrang—a wandrin’ sheep,
 He waukens my puir saul
 Frae ilka fause, and devious way,
 And leads me by His call.

“ He gars me speed in Roddins Richt,
 E’en for His ain name’s sake ;
 When draight sair wi’ sin an’ shame,
 He dis a clean hairt make.

“ Na ! tho’ the deid mirk dale I pass,
 Nae skaithin sal I dreid,
 For HE’LL be there, wi’ stock an’ stay,
 To haud my drooping heid.

“ My Buid, in face o’ a’ my faes,
 He’s hansell’d rich an’ weel ;
 Wi’ oyle He’s droukit this auld heid,
 Whan sorrows garr’d it reel.

“ He’s gi’en me joy, when sairly press’d,
 The Lord’s dear face to find,
 My Bicker fill’d, and skailin’ ower
 Wi’ luv maist true an’ kind.

“ An’ sae guid gree, an’ guidin guid,
 Sal ilka day be mine,
 Till in the Lord’s ain Howff at last
 I bide for ever syne.”

D. S.

“ If I should die to-night,
 My friends would look upon my quiet face
 Before they laid it in its resting-place,
 And deem that death had left it almost fair ;
 And laying snow-white flowers against my hair,
 Would smooth it down with tearful tenderness,
 And fold my hand with lingering caress ;
 Poor hands, so empty and so cold to-night !

“ If I should die to-night,
 My friends would call to mind, with loving thought,
 Some kindly deed the icy hand had wrought ;
 Some gentle word the frozen lips had said ;
 Errands on which the willing feet had sped.
 The memory of my selfishness and pride,
 My hasty words, would all be put aside,
 And so I should be loved and mourned to-night.

“ If I should die to-night,
 Even hearts estranged would turn once more to me,
 Recalling other days remorsefully.
 The eyes that chill me with averted glance
 Would look upon me as of yore, perchance,
 And soften in the old familiar way.
 For who could war with dumb, unconscious clay?
 So I might rest forgiven of all, to-night.

“ Oh, friends, I pray to-night,
 Keep not your kisses for my dead, cold brow;
 The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
 Think gently of me; I am travel-worn;
 My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn.
 Forgive, oh, hearts estranged, forgive, I plead!
 When dreamless rest is mine I shall not need
 The tenderness for which I long to-night.”

• —————

“ *Where* shall I die? shall death's cold hand
 Arrest my breath, while dear ones stand
 In silent, watchful love to shed
 Their tears around my quiet bed—
 Or, shall I meet my final doom
 Far from my country and my home?
 Lord, to Thy will I bend the knee,
 Thou evermore hast cared for me!

“ *How* shall I die? shall death's stern yoke
 Subdue me by a single stroke?
 Or shall my fainting frame sustain
 The tedious languishing of pain,
 Sinking in weariness away,
 Slowly and sadly day by day?
 Lord, I repose my cares on Thee,
 Thou evermore hast cared for me!

“ *When* shall I die? shall death's stern call
 Soon come, my spirit to appal,
 Or, shall I live through circling years,
 A pilgrim in this vale of tears,
 Surveying those I loved the best,
 Who in the peaceful churchyard rest?
 Lord, I await Thy wise decree,
 Thou evermore hast cared for me.”

THE END.