

THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO COULD FLY

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"Talkings in the Twilight"

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*"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication,
with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.
And the peace of God that passeth all understanding,
shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
(Phil. iv, 6, 7.)*

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Now this is the story that I like, and I think you will own when you have read it, that it is a very wonderful one.

I am not going to tell you about a great Prince, or a King, or a very learned man; I am not going to take you into splendid palaces, or the mansions of the rich or the studies of philosophers; the Bible shows me that very few of these can “fly.” “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.” (1 Cor. i. 27.)

The man whose history I am going to tell you, was very poor; he lived in a cottage, and worked for his daily bread. “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? (James ii. 5.) Does this mean that only poor people can be saved? Oh, no! It means that the moment a person is born again, all that he, or she, has, belongs to God; and if a rich person is converted, he becomes at once only a steward of all he has; so he is poor at once, you see, because he only holds his money for another. He holds it all for his Heavenly Father, and he may not even give his money away without looking to see that it is according to the will of His Master in heaven.

It is a very solemn thing to hold money for Christ; and the poor man’s money belongs to God, as much as the rich man’s. So you see there is neither rich nor poor in God’s sight among Christians, only He sees fit to entrust some people with far greater responsibilities than others; but He will ask each of His children by-and-by, how he has spent his money. Those to whom He has given but little money here, will only have to give account of a little, and they generally are the ones who are rich in faith. Why is this? Because they often have to look to Christ for daily bread, and all they need for their bodies. Thus they prove again and again, what a loving, tender Shepherd Jesus is! They prove His

heart, and so they learn to trust Him. It is only as we know more of Christ, and of His tenderness, that our faith increases. The more we prove His love, the more we trust Him. It is indeed a shame to us all that we trust Him so little.

Now I do not know whether your parents are rich or poor in this world; but I am sure that if they are poor, and you are having the “Talkings in the Twilight” beside a cottage fire, that you will very much enjoy “the story of the man who could fly.” You will know what it is to have the cupboard empty sometimes, and you will know what it is to hear of friends and neighbours going to the workhouse; perhaps sometimes the fear crosses your own mind that you will have to go there too.

Now I am going to tell you the story of a man who flew up the shining path, and in at the pearly gate, right over the workhouse roof, and if that is not wonderful, I don't know what is! The only thing that I am not quite sure of in this account is the man's Christian name, but I believe it was Richard, and so I will call him Richard Bond. He was brought up to be a gardener, but I do not know where he was born, or how early in his life he trusted his soul to Christ; I only know that his early days were often rough days, and full of trial. My story opens in troublous times, when work was scarce, and Richard Bond had to learn many a hard lesson of faith and patience. If we can only trust in our God, when things are going well with us, our confidence is founded on our circumstances, and not at all on a living Person above; then when the circumstances change, our foundation is gone, and we cry out in terror that we shall sink. Jesus caught the sinking Peter by the hand, to teach him to trust in a Person, and not on what was under his feet. But, I fear, we all have to learn this lesson over and over again.

When trouble came, Richard Bond began to learn both the power and the love of the One to whom he had trusted his soul. He had a wife, and a large family

to support, and as he loved them very dearly, it was harder for him to trust them to the care of the Lord, than himself. We first learn to trust the Lord with ourselves, and then with those whom we love. It is easier to believe that "He is doing all things well" when He afflicts us, than when we see Him dealing with our loved ones. Why is this? Because we have not thorough confidence in His heart.

Often and often Richard Bond would divide his share of the scanty meal between his wife and children, and say, "I will take my Bible for my dinner." He fed there on promises that have never been broken, and learned to take all his cares, and cast them on One who cared for him. Thus it was that little by little he learned to "fly," while God was ever ready, like the great eagle watching its young one, to catch him when his wings grew weak, and bear him up to his nest in the Rock. Thus he learned to "fly" over the difficulties around him. And so, through all those hours of trial and poverty, he went on proving day to day, the heart of his Lord. Those who knew him, saw that he had something outside this world on which to depend.

But a change came in his lot. He went to London, and a gentleman who owned a warehouse took him into his service as night-watchman. The name of the building was the Pantechnicon, and it must have been when it was first used as a warehouse that Richard Bond was engaged to watch over its valuable contents at night.

Would you like to know what was kept there? I will tell you. When rich people go away from their houses, to travel, or when they are changing houses and are not sure where they would like to live, they send their furniture, and paintings, and china, and other valuable things to a warehouse, where they are all stored away; and as they are worth a great deal of money, the person who owns the warehouse has to take great care, that neither thieves nor fire shall get at them. For this

purpose, there were then two watchmen kept, one was inside the building and the other outside, so that they could help each other in case of need. It was a post of great trust, for while other people slept, they had to be wide awake, and on the watch. It was not very long after Richard Bond died that the Pantechnicon was burnt to the ground, and all in it was destroyed; I saw the lurid glare in the sky, and knew that there was a large fire in London, and the next day we heard what had happened.

Evening after evening, when other men were returning to their homes, Richard Bond went out to keep his lonely watch. Not lonely though, for there was One ever with him to whom "the night shineth as the day." When all the other men were gone, and the doors were all shut and locked, his watch began. He had a nice little room, with a fire and lamp, and there he used to sit and read. He might not go to sleep for a moment, lest he should not hear the noise of any thief breaking into the place. To have slept, would have been to have betrayed his trust, for his master said, "Watch" and in the Book which he read during those long, quiet hours, he found written a special message from God to servants. "Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (Col. iii. 22.) So, though no eye but God's could see him, that was enough to keep him wide awake, and watching. Our Master who is in heaven calls to us all to "watch" and has set His children in this world's dark night to "Watch, lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping".

Are you ever looking out for Him, or have you gone to sleep, and are you saying, "I will do as I like for a little while, for my Lord delayeth His coming"? If you are sleeping, you are snared, and His coming will come on you suddenly, and you will be ashamed before Him. How Richard Bond would have hung down his head, if his master had come in quietly one night, and found

him fast asleep! How sorry and ashamed he would have been; for he had a good and kind master, who treated him very well; it would have looked as if he did not care for his kind master's interests. Perhaps you will wonder that he was not afraid to sit there all night by himself; but oh! who can say what trysts he and his Lord held there; and he made the building ring with the glad songs of praise that burst from heart and lip, as he learnt more and more of his Lord and Master.

"Ah!" you will say, "it was easy for him to trust; he was in good work, with good wages, an industrious wife, and a happy home. What had he to fear? Yes, but had he rested for happiness on these things, it would have been building his house on the sand, and great would have been the fall of it; but as it was, when the floods descended, and the wind blew, the foundation stood fast; for his nest was in the high Rock, which could not be moved.

Day by day as he went to, and returned from his work, he passed by the high wall that enclosed the workhouse. The world has set up the workhouse as a refuge for the destitute, and many and many a hard-working, respectable person has to find shelter under its gloomy roof; but there are so often wicked and bad people there, that I do not wonder at the horror which some feel at the thought of going there. To a Christian especially, the trial would be intense, for he would have to live with people whose conversation would shock him, and whose ways would daily grieve him; therefore to come to the workhouse, was at one time the great fear in Richard Bond's heart. But when he had learnt how loving and how powerful the Lord Jesus is, he was able to cast this "care" upon Him, and at the time of his history which I am now giving you, he would walk past that gloomy wall, saying, "Ah! I trust in the Lord that I shall never come to that." That was depending on something outside this world, was it not? It was not in health, or strength, or laying by, or his good master,

that he trusted, but in his living Lord. And you will see, that when all these failed him, the Lord did not fail him. "When my flesh and my heart faileth, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever". (Ps. lxxii. 26,)

I have told you that depending on God alone, and not on things here, is like flying, so you see Richard Bond was "flying" and now we shall see how it all ended, and whether, when he was old and grey-headed, God let him drop into the place he dreaded. But first I have several other glimpses at his life to give you.

Good wages cannot keep away sickness, nor can money buy life, even for a day; and sickness now came to his house. He and his wife had several children, but there was one of the little ones, whom perhaps they loved more tenderly than all the rest; she was a little clinging, loving thing, and her winning ways had twined their affections closely round her. But this little one was taken ill, and the doctor said the child would die. Oh, how was the sorrow to be borne?

Have you ever had a brother or a sister very, very ill? It is sad to see such a baby suffer, is it not? But no one feels the sadness so much as the mother and the father of the little one – its helplessness is so great; and when they see it look up to them and they hear it moan and cry, and know they cannot help it, their hearts are ready to break.

When Mrs. Bond was told that her child would not recover, she forgot everything but her misery, and walked the room wringing her hands, and weeping bitterly. She was a Christian woman, but she had not learned to trust God as her husband had, and she was afraid for Him to take her little darling. Shall I tell you why? Some people who knew very little about the word of God, and therefore very little about the love of God, had told her that some of the youngest babies would go to hell. This filled her with fear, for she thought her poor little girl might be going into eternal torment,

because of the evil nature she had taken from her parents.

I do not wonder that she cried, and grew almost wild with grief. It was a terrible thought. She had been listening to what men say about our God, instead of looking in the Bible for herself to see what He says about Himself. She would have seen there, that Jesus took the little ones up in His arms, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and that He came out in Christ to die for Adam's sin, that none of Adam's children need perish because their father had sinned. Each one who goes to hell will go for his own sins; not because he was born wicked, but because he went on sinning when Jesus offered him a full pardon, and power to resist the devil. Now, little baby children are too young to know this; and so, as Jesus died for the sin of Adam, which is in them, they go to heaven through His death, though they know nothing about Him.

I do not think I can make this very plain to you, for even very few Christians really understand the difference between sin and sins; but God will show you, if you ask Him. The baby was born with sin in it, but it was too young to have been naughty on purpose, so, Jesus having borne the punishment for sin, the baby must go to heaven; but if it had been old enough to have been naughty on purpose, it would have had to have gone to God himself for a pardon.

Richard Bond tried to comfort his poor wife, but she would hardly listen to him, the picture of her baby just sinking into hell was in her mind, and she would not be comforted. It was a dreadful scene, and the neighbours came to look on, and help if they could. But no one on earth could give any aid.

The dying child lay in a strong convulsion, its arms and legs were stiff, its lips rigid, its eyes rolled up and fixed. Nothing could be done. The poor father, amidst all the confusion and bustle around him, was calm and quiet; he was sad enough, but still he could trust his

child with his Lord. It was his wife's wild grief that distressed him most; he feared that she would lose her reason. He said he hoped the child would give some sign of joy as it died, that the mother might be comforted, but the doctor, and everybody else, said this was quite impossible, the convulsion had fixed for ever lip and eye and limb.

"Impossible!" that is a word that belongs to man alone, "with God all things are possible." The poor father knew this, and he turned away from every earthly help, and asked his God to let him have this joy. He remembered a text which says, "The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv.) He made known his request unto God, and then told his wife that he "was quite sure" they should see some sign of a joyful departure.

Once more, you see, Richard Bond was "flying." And now, quietly and calmly, he sat down to watch the expiring child. His heart was wrung with sorrow but he knew that his heavenly Father did all things well, and he had grace to say, "Thy will be done." And so he sat and watched; and while man whispered around him, "Impossible" he could say, "Quite sure," and the "peace of God which passeth all understanding kept his heart and mind."

Now, dear little people, what are you thinking of all this? Are you saying, "What wonderful faith that man had?" People are very fond of calling faith "wonderful," but I do not think there is any wonderful faith to be found, – there is a wonderful lack of faith, if you like! For when you come to think that a Person so mighty as the Lord Jesus loves you, and engages that "all things" shall work together for your good; is it not

extraordinary that because you cannot always understand His ways, you are ready to doubt Him?

But so it is with us all. And when anyone does trust Him, and gets his prayer answered, we all cry out, "How wonderful!" Strange indeed must such words sound in the ears of Him, whose heart is craving for our confidence.

It is a solemn thing to sit by the bed of death. Our life may sometimes seem like a troubled dream, but death is real. The tenderest love cannot hinder death, the strongest man is powerless as a baby in the presence of death. There was One only who came down, and grappled with the tyrant, and "death by dying slew." It cost that One His life to draw death's sting, for the "sting of Death is sin." That means Adam's which we all inherit; so there was no sting of death for the baby child.

The time passed on, and still the father sat waiting to see the spirit pass to its Saviour's presence. The stern grasp of the convulsion never relaxed for one moment, but he heard the breathing change, and he knew the end was at hand. Was she gone? No, for as the last breath sighed itself away, the pretty lips relaxed into a beaming smile, the little arms were thrown up in loving welcome to some waiting Friend, and the half-closed eyes opened, and were fixed on some Person near, whom the father's straining eyes saw not. It was not for him she smiled that last glad smile; it was not to him she stretched those baby arms, to be taken up; it was not his presence that flooded her sweet face with joy unspeakable; it was none of it to him; it was never more to be to him, and yet it was all for him.

His loving Lord let him see his baby folded home, and what more could he wish or ask? He let him see her joy as she bounded to the arms of Him who had said, "Let the little ones come unto Me." Surely there was "joy unspeakable" in that father's heart in the midst of his sorrow, for the parting and the meeting

had been one. His child was with the One whom his heart loved best. Surely he went from that scene on stronger wing than ever. "With God all things are possible" and the God of power loved him.

Years and years afterwards, when he had gone to be with His Lord, his widow spoke with tearful eyes of that sad, yet happy, parting scene. If either of you were to be called to die tonight, would you see the Lord Jesus coming for you, like this little girl, do you think? You have all been naughty, and you must get your sins pardoned; but only one Person can pardon you; have you been for the pardon? No one who goes to Him comes away without it. So if you have really been to Him and owned your sins, I know you have it.

It was God who laid your sins on the head of Jesus on Calvary; so you see He has pardoned you freely, because the punishment is over. If God says He is quite satisfied about it, you need not do anything; you have only to say "Thank you, Lord Jesus," and rest in peace.

How calmly, how quietly, how peacefully you, who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, can lay your head on your little pillow tonight. Not a fear, not a cloud; God says he has nothing against you; you are white as the driven snow; no, He says "Whiter than snow." Happy little boy! Happy little girl! There are many great princes and many wealthy ladies groaning under the burden of their sins, because they will not believe that God is satisfied by what Christ has done, and so rest in God's satisfaction. Surely if the Creditor is satisfied, the debtor need not complain.

But I must go on with my story; and I want you to see by all this, how very very loving the Lord Jesus is. He will take just as much care of you and of me, as He took of Richard Bond. Years passed away, and Richard Bond grew old; his step was not so brisk and firm as it used to be, and his hair was thin and grey. Still he worked for the same master, and night after night watched over the treasures stored in the Pantechnicon.

Evening and morning he passed along by the high workhouse wall, and looked up to his living Lord to feed him and clothe him till his journey's end. He was still winging his way along the shining path, and it was "shining more and more unto the perfect day."

But you will say, "Had he saved any money against the time of old age?" No, not a penny! With a family as large as his, and sickness and death for frequent visitors, he had only just been able to pay his way; he had put by nothing, and yet he could confidently say as he passed the workhouse door, "I shall never come to that."

Many a sick and suffering child of God had shared his scanty store. He was like the birds that "sing among the branches," he had not gathered into storehouse or barn, yet he had ever opened his heart and his hand to the needy and the poor, and answered his wife's fears for the future, with the trustful words, "Wife, we shall never miss it." Was he wrong, do you think, to give, instead of saving? I think not. It would have been very wrong to have spent his money in self-indulgence and vanity, but by helping the needy, he was "lending to the Lord" and laying up treasure "where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal."

And many and many an one who stored his costly treasures under that faithful watchman's eye knew far more of fear and care, and deep anxiety, than he did. Nor moth, nor thief, nor fire, could touch his princely treasure house, and having food and raiment for his journey to his palace home, he was well content to store no treasure in the wilderness.

It is well for worldly people to save, because their master makes no promises for old age, and if he did, would not keep them. He often bribes into the snare with gold, that their hearts may be filled with earthly pleasure, and the net be finally drawn over them; but he delights in anguish of mind and body, and the only wages he has ever paid is DEATH. (Rom. vi.)

Richard Bond is now enjoying his treasure: and will enjoy it for ever; the Pantechnicon and its treasures have long since perished in flames. So will the world perish, and all works that are therein.

But though he had no money laid by, and strength was failing, the night watchman was a happy man. "There is old Bond, at it again," said those who knew him, as they heard his glad songs of praise echo through the building, and rise up to God through the darkness of the night.

"At it again!" Yes, he was always at it; how could he help praising such a loving Saviour as the Lord who had died for him, and now lived for him? The time was drawing near when he would pass the pearly gate and see Him face to face, and of course he was full of joy; he could say, "The Lord will command His loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." (Psalm xlii. 8.)

His two elder sons had now grown up into fine, tall young men; and their mother, who loved them dearly, had earned money enough by nursing the sick, to apprentice them to trades; they were steady, industrious, clever men; and the fond mother, as she looked at their manly forms, and marked their deep attachment to herself, began to build her hopes upon them.

"Now," thought she, "when their father fails, as he soon must, our noble boys will come forward and repay us all the care and love we have lavished on them."

Ah! poor mothers, lean not on the reeds of earth. "The voice said, Cry, and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Is. xl. 6-8.)

Both these young men had listened to the warning voice of the Lord, and both of them had started up the

shining way with their faces Christward. Oh! what joy it must have been to the father and mother to have seen their two boys turn the follies here to follow Christ! Have you given this joy yet, to your dear father and mother?

Yet it was not safe to count upon them for the future, as my sad story will show you. When the second one whose name was Harry, was out of his apprenticeship, trade was so bad that he could not get employment; and rather than be a drag upon his old parents, who had still several children to support, he applied for a vacant post as warden in the jail near them. It was not very pleasant work, but he could not bear to be idle. The post was given to him at once, as his character was good, but when he found that he could only have one Sunday in three off duty, he was sorry he should only see his mother once in three weeks. When he told her of it, she began to count up the dates on her fingers to see if her dear boy would be at home on a particular day. It was then November, and the particular day that year fell on a Sunday. What was her joy to find that that Sunday would be his turn off duty; and she began to rejoice at the thought.

“Ah! Mother,” said the young man smiling, “you can see farther on than I can.” It was his gentle way of reminding her that “we know not what a day may bring forth.”

So he went to his post, poor fellow, well strong; but only a few weeks passed before he caught a dreadful complaint from one of the prisoners. It was erysipelas in the head. As he grew rapidly worse, he was removed to his home. and his kind mother nursed him night and day and hoped against hope that her boy would be spared to her. Still, hour by hour he grew worse, and worse. The poor old people did all they could, and many a tear rolled down their cheek, and many a prayer went up to God, that if it were His will, He would spare this, their best, their noblest child. But it

was not His will. "To die is gain," and He wanted their boy with Him in the glory; it was best for him to die; and so God could not answer their prayers; He was taking him away from "the evil to come."

When we can really trust Jesus, the bitterness of sorrow is gone, because we know He is doing the best thing both for us, and for the one we love. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good," is enough for the trusting soul. But the poor mother was in dreadful trouble, for she lost sight of this, and it seemed as if the Lord was hard in taking her boy.

Do you not think that if you were to die your mother would cry very much? I am sure she would. There is no love on earth so tender as a mother's and yet the Lord says His love is much more so. Do you remember how tender He was when He met the funeral coming out of Nain? He did not blame the poor mother's sorrow did he? What a joy it must have been to His kind heart to have known that He could give her her dear boy again! I should like to have seen His look when He saw them clasped in each other's arms; should not you? He had not many joys down here, this tender loving Lord of ours. His was a hard path, and deep were His sorrows, but He loved to wipe away tears; though there was no hand to cool His bleeding brow, no one to stand by Him in His hour of agony and shame. And this is the One who follows the stray ones now, and says, "Young man, arise!" to dead souls still.

Harry Bond was at last so very bad that the doctor said he could do no more for him, that he would die. Then his mother said she would get another doctor, a physician, to come and see her son, for she hoped he might be able to check the complaint. Nearly all her money was gone and she knew that the physician must have whole guinea on the spot. When she had scraped together every penny they could all find, she had just enough to pay his fee; so she sent for him. He came in his carriage and went up stairs with the doctor, and

after looking at the young man came down again, and told the poor mother that her son would get well. He did not like to speak the truth because of her sorrow, but it was no real kindness to raise hopes which had no foundation. The next morning the spirit of the young man passed away from earth, to its home above.

That was sorrow for the poor father, was it not, when he came home from his nightly watch, to find that his son was no longer on earth. The one whom he might have regarded as the stay and the comfort of his old age, had gone before him into the Saviour's presence. And yet he could rejoice while he wept, for he knew that for his son, "to die was gain."

And now there was a new trouble; a trouble that had not been thought of, while the bustle of nursing the sick boy had lasted; there was no money; no one had any money; and there was no bread, and the children would soon be coming in hungry and ready for their dinner, to find that there was nothing for them. Do you think this was a light trial for the poor mother to bear? No, it was a very heavy one, especially when she remembered how uselessly that last precious guinea had been spent. She was worn out with changing hopes and fears, and tired with the nursing, and almost broken-hearted at losing her favourite son, and now this fresh trouble seemed too much to be borne.

"I've no bread," she cried to her husband, "and no money to buy it either!"

"Well, well" said the old man, sadly, "we must trust."

"It's easy for you," she cried, angry as well as sad; "It's easy for you to talk of trusting, you hav'n't got to find bread for the children!"

"The Lord never has forsaken us, wife," said her husband gently, "and He won't now!"

"But what am I to do for bread for the children? "

"Trust, wife, trust," he replied.

You see, Richard Bond was above the difficulty, he was "flying" over it, as he had so often done before. He

remembered that his Lord had said "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Ps. 1. 15)

"It's no use to talk of trusting," persisted his weeping wife, "nobody ever calls to visit us here; where is it to come from?"

But her husband was on the wing, and the wavering of her own flight, and all her terrified glances round at the want of earthly resources could not pull him down. He had proved his Lord often before, and he was not going to doubt His tender heart in this hour of anguish. He only repeated firmly, "Trust, wife, trust."

Now do you think the Lord was going to leave them hungry and penniless? No, He was not. But how was He going to help them? He had many people in this country, and there were numbers of them in London then; some of them were very rich, and could soon have helped these tried ones but they did not know of them, and too many of them were so busy either with cares or pleasures of this life, that He could never make them hear when He wanted to send them on an errand for Him.

I have told you that His voice is soft and low, like the whispering of a gentle wind; He does not make Himself heard when people are in a bustle; He only speaks like this to listening ones and He always keeps them busy for Him, one way or another. Some Christians say they cannot think what to do for Christ. Others rush about, and do a great deal that He has never set them to do and does not want done; and all this idleness and confusion is for want of listening. "Wait on the Lord." He will Himself set you to work, and give you work for which you are fitted, for which indeed He has fitted you. He did not go to rich people, or grand houses, for a messenger to the Bonds, in this hour of need. He wanted a servant who would go at once, for it was getting near dinner-time.

Now I must take you to the place where the messenger from the high Court of Heaven lived. Do not think it was a grand palace, with footmen and carriages and horses? No, it was a cellar. He lived in a cellar with his wife and children, and he was very, very poor, as poor as poor could be. He was only a poor old cobbler, and his work was so badly paid that he had to sit stitching all day long, from early dawn till late at night, to do enough to keep his family from want. He never knew what it was to walk out by daylight, except on Sundays, when he put his work away, and went to hear about the Saviour whom he loved. He could not afford to lose the daylight on week-days; he fetched his work and took it back after dark.

“What was the use of him then,” you will say, “if he never went out in the day?” Why, he was the very man! As he sat stooping over his work, on that day, close under the high window of his cellar home, his little boy ran in from school, and cried, “Father, Harry Bond is dead!”

He could not stop his labour, even for such news as that, but his heart was sad, for he knew and loved the family, and while his busy fingers plied his tools, his cry went up to God that they might be sustained and comforted in this hour of their sorrow.

Busily, busily, he went on with his work, while his prayer went up out of his humble cellar home, into the presence of the God whose aid he sought. Why was it that suddenly he threw aside his work, straightened his stiff limbs, and rose to take his coat and hat from the peg on which they hung? He had received a message from his Lord to go himself, and comfort his sorrowing friends.

“Why, where are you going?” cried his wife, as he put on his coat and hat.

“Harry Bond has gone home,” said he; “and I am going to speak a word of comfort to the old folks.”

“Why not get on with your work while the light holds” said the woman, “and go in the evening?”

“No, I am to go at once” replied the husband, and up the narrow steps he trudged, and out the street door, into the fresh air and daylight.

“But what was the use of his going,” you will say, “he had not a penny to give them.” Quite true. He had not a penny to spare, but he was sent, and that was enough for him. He was a messenger from the high Court of Heaven going at his Lord’s command to visit the house of mourning. None knew, as they passed that old man by, in his worn clothes, and with his crooked legs that he was the King’s messenger. Had a horseman dashed down the narrow street, in grand uniform, with jingling spurs and loosened rein, everybody would have stopped to stare and wonder, but this King’s messenger passed on unknown and unheeded. But the Lord had His eye upon His willing servant, and as he went obediently along, the Lord knew that there was a gentleman, full of the worry and bustle of this world’s business, hurrying down a cross road to meet him. This gentleman knew both the cobbler and the Bonds, and just at the point where the two streets crossed each other, the two men met. Surprised to see the cobbler out by daylight, the man of business paused for a moment, to express his wonder.

“Hullo!” he cried, “wherever are you off at this time of day?”

“Old Bond has lost his son, sir;” replied the man, “and I am going to speak a word of comfort to him.”

“Lost his son, has he? I’m sorry” said the gentleman, “The poor souls, they will be wanting help. Here, take them this,” and as he hurried on, he slipped five shillings into the old man’s hand.

In the meantime poor Mrs. Bond had gone on fretting over their sad condition. “No money, no bread and nowhere for the money to come from, till the wages come due again.” Very sad and heavy hearted

was she. The waves of sorrow were very deep, and she failed to see that the Lord was with her in the storm. Scarcely had she uttered her last despairing sentence to her husband, "It is easy for you to talk of trusting, but where is the money to come from?" when two loud raps on the street door startled them both; and in no very amiable mood she went to open saying, as she did so, "Who can that be, I wonder, coming here just at this time?"

Who indeed? It was none other than the King's messenger, but when we have been looking help from God, we often fail at once to detect His messenger in the answer He sends. What could that poor cobbler do for her just then? He stepped into the little passage, grasped her toilworn hand, and as he looked at her tear-stained face, he said, "So the Lord has taken another of His own jewels to be with Himself." Before she could answer him, he was gone, and in her hand there lay five shillings. Had the money fallen from the clouds at her feet, she could have been more surprised. Again and again she looked at the coins to assure herself that it was not a dream, and that help had really come, so suddenly and so unexpectedly.

"I told you so, wife," said her husband, as she held out her hand towards him, with the money, "Trust Him, trust Him."

"But I cannot touch it," she cried, suddenly regaining her speech; "they cannot afford this!"

"Never fear, wife!" said Richard Bond; "he will not miss it."

"Not miss it!" she cried; "it is impossible he can spare it. His wife will be wanting it; I must take it back?"

"The Lord has sent it for you;" urged her husband; "the man will never miss it, and his wife will never want it. Use it, it has been sent to you; be sure they will never want it."

And so she used it, and there was food for the hungry children in that house of sorrow; but not till

months afterwards did she know how that timely aid had reached her in her hour of need, and that the cobbler and his wife had never parted with the money. Dependence sees no difficulties; all is smooth and even to the eye of faith. Neither the want of the money, nor the possession of the money, troubled the "man who could fly". He depended on his Lord, not on the circumstances, and he was not mistaken.

And on that particular day when the mother had hoped to have had her boy at home with her, the white snow was falling softly on his new-made grave. Sorrowfully she thought over the past, and his parting words to her on that morning in November rang in her ears, "Ah! mother, you can see farther on than I can."

Little people there is nothing to lean on here; there is nothing sure and steadfast here. Where are your hopes built, on things that you hope will happen here, or on Christ? Think of that empty chair on that particular day, and count on nothing here, for we cannot tell what a day may bring forth. Ah! that happy young man had not left it till his dying hour to trust in Christ, he was ready when the call came, and went in to see the King.

And do you love Jesus? and are you His child? and would you like to serve Him while you are in the world, that is ever serving the Usurper? Then remember the poor old cobbler, and how he, who had no money of his own, carried five shillings to his friends in trouble. It was all, you see, by waiting on the Lord, and being quite content to do so small a thing as speak a word of comfort from the Lord. He did not stop to reason as to what the good would be of his going. He did not say, "I cannot leave my work, I will get on with that" and then perhaps at the end of the week I may be able to spare a sixpence? No, he went at once, and was willing to do a very little thing for the Lord he loved, and so God could use him, and did use him; and the story of the old cobbler's service taught me a great lesson, and I hope it will teach you one also. Nature cannot serve

God; I mean our old Adam nature, which likes to arrange and plan, and be very active. If the Spirit of God could use my powers as the steam uses the steam engine, then all would be well.

When my own will comes in, it hinders God from using me. Depend! depend! depend! You cannot depend too much. God loves to have your confidence.

But I must go on with my story, and very sad and terrible it grows at this part. I told you that Richard Bond had two sons, who had grown up to be young men, and that both of them had listened to the voice of Christ. The history of the second one, the most promising of the two, I have already given you, and now I must give you short and sad story of the eldest. Poor he did not keep his eye fixed on Christ, but he looked down at all the snares and wares spread out below him; then he began to sink out of the narrow pathway of light. The heart soon follows the eyes; and when he was down in the darkness, the arrows of the archers hit him and wounded him sore. His poor father saw him sinking lower and lower, and called to him often, and warned him earnestly, but all to no avail. He went down to live among the glittering things of the world, his feet were soon fast in the mire, and his wings were useless. Then he began to love those who cared nothing for his Lord, and soon afterwards he married a worldly young woman, who led him farther and farther into the mire.

“Well,” you will say, “and what was the end of it?”

Listen. There are some people who think that they will set everything that is wrong about them right on their death-beds. But did you ever think that there are a great many people who never have a death-bed at all? Perhaps you never will. This young man never had one. He was employed at the gas-works, and suddenly, without a moment’s warning, he was standing in the presence of God. I suppose his eyes saw not the flash, and his ears heard not the thunder of the explosion

that startled the neighbourhood, and hurried himself and five of his companions into eternity. It was all the work of a moment; one instant alive and well, the next a mangled corpse. So mangled that the comrades who dragged him from the ruins sent a messenger in haste to find the poor father, that he might say which blackened body had once been his son's.

Poor old man! As he turned his eyes on the mangled form, and thought of the dark uncertainty which hung over the fate of his son's soul, a wave of sorrow, so deep and so dark, burst over his aged head, that he fell to the earth as helpless and apparently as lifeless as his boy.

"But was the young man's soul lost?" you will ask.

I cannot say. No one can say. The Day alone will declare it. The Lord will never let the weakest of His own perish, but we cannot always tell the difference between mere sham floaters and those real ones who allow themselves to float with the stream of things around them. If he had never really had to do with Christ, and only pretended to be among Christians, he would be utterly lost. But we do not know. God knows, and, "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Only let his terrible fate be a warning to you and me. Do not love earthly things. The music, the painting, the sculpture, the taste and style, the poetry, and the wisdom that ornament this world, all grow out of the nature that crucified Christ. They are like the bright coloured fungi that grow out of a rotten tree. They may cover its ugliness, but they prove it rotten.

Do not be startled. Listen to God. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof." (1 John ii. 16.) "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (1 Cor. iii. 19). Oh, redeemed one! waste not your time over the fairest flower that grows out of a Christ rejecting world! Turn your eyes to the person of Christ where He sits at God's right hand

in glory, and you will soon drop earth's fading treasures, and be able to exclaim – "Marvel not that Christ in glory, All mine inmost heart hath won."

Poor Richard Bond! The storm had indeed burst upon him, with a fury that threatened to sweep everything before it. The blow which took from him his eldest and only surviving son, the stay of his declining years, took from him also the power to work. He never recovered the shock of thus suddenly viewing his son's mangled form. A paralytic stroke was the consequence, and the whole of one side of his body was rendered useless, and his speech was much affected. The strong, hale, old man was thus in a moment reduced to the helplessness of a child. And what now lay before him but a weary sojourn under the workhouse room, separated from the faithful wife who alone survived of all his helpers? Was this fate indeed for him? Had the Lord forgotten His deeply tried and afflicted servant and was the cold, heartless world to sweep him into the place he had so much dreaded? No, He touched the heart of his earthly master, who was an old man also and he did not forget his faithful servant. For years and years the sorely stricken man had guarded his property, and now he came forward to shield his old age from want. He settled a pension of ten shillings a week upon him for his life.

Thus the old people were fairly provided. The wife being still well able to nurse the sick, could thus add all that was needed to their income; "and now," you will say, "all danger of the workhouse must have vanished for ever." Wait a bit.

A few years passed on, and the old master went to the grave, leaving, however, the same provision for his servant in his will. Then the aged couple moved from London to one of the suburbs, and rented two small rooms in a house in a quiet street; but Mrs. Bond's health began to fail, and several succeeding seizures leaving her husband more helpless than ever, she had to

give up her nursing, and poverty stared them in the face. The two rooms were quickly changed for one on the second floor, for which they paid three shillings a week, and the remaining seven were all they had between them, for clothing, firing, and food.

November, with its bitter winds and driving sleet, set in, and the poor woman was seized with bronchitis, and brought down to death's door. She had no money to pay for assistance to get her crippled husband lifted from his chair to his bed; no money for the washing; and what she had for the food was soon all gone. The doctor, too, who was summoned to attend her, gave his decided opinion that the old man should be removed to the workhouse infirmary, as her strength, he said, was not sufficient to move him about.

Well! what do you think of the case now? Was the Lord going to let the man who depended on Him, claim the world's cold charity? Was Richard Bond going to the workhouse after all?

Ah, my dear little friends, follow this story carefully; for the days may come, when old, and weary, and sore-stricken, you may be in like circumstances of sorrow and need. Truly "God is faithful." Oh! that you may learn to confide in Him, while all looks bright and sunny! Earth's sunshine cannot last, the shadows must grow longer, its sun must set at last, and cold, grey, and cheerless indeed will be the closing day if you have nothing beyond this scene to count upon, no hope beyond the grave; but remember, your God has come down in Christ, and has set an open door into heaven, before you; and the glory from the scene beyond the grave, pours from that open door, and lights up with unearthly radiance the darkest days of sorrow here.

Follow my story now, as I show you how the Lord bare up His child upon "eagle's wings," and carried him in safety to his journey's end.

A few months before this November, of which I have told you, there had come to live in the same

neighbourhood as the Bonds, a young lady; she was one whom the Lord had long been trying to teach to "fly." Again and again He had rescued her, with untiring patience, from snare after snare, but again and again she had turned aside to seek pleasure and support from the scene around her. She loved Him, however, because He had first loved her, and now that she was far from the country cottages, in which it had been her joy to speak of Him, she cast her eyes round her on street after street, and asked herself where she should go to carry His message of pardon and peace. Like too many of His dear ones, she preferred working, to waiting; and often wearied herself with labour which He had not given her to do. Yet now she hesitated, for she shrank from encountering strangers, and the occupants of the London houses would scarcely care to be called upon with tracts by one utterly unknown to them. While she delayed, a clergyman called on her parents; he was a man who knew the Lord, and who loved to speak of Him; and He offered to make her one of his district visitors. That is, she was to go to a specified row of houses as sent by him, and with funds from his church to help all who were in need.

Now it was an easy path, and sheltered by his well-known, and justly honoured name, she went to the work. Yes, she who for years past had gone from house to house with only the Lord to support and cheer her, now stooped to lean on the arm of flesh. But there was no joy in the work; the lips that had been wont to speak of the love of Christ were sealed, or uttered cant phrases powerless to reach the heart of the listener; the hand that dealt the cold charity of others was never grasped with the sudden grip of hearty thankfulness, that it had been wont to feel. It was joyless work, and her spirits and her health failed, and cold duty alone carried her stolidly through the man-appointed task.

That was not the Lord's work for her. He wanted someone like the old cobbler to go at His slightest call.

He has said, "I will guide thee by Mine eye." His servants must depend entirely on Himself for guidance, for strength, for help of all kinds.

She soon became aware that His eye pointed her to a different place altogether, but she looked at the houses, and said, "I dare not go." It was weeks before she was able to trust her Lord as before to set her to work Himself, and to support her in it; but one cold, grey afternoon in November, when a bitter north-east wind was driving a fine sleet before it, she set out tremblingly to do His will. I daresay you will laugh when I tell you that she went through the whole street, and back to her home twice over without having courage to knock at a single door. But she could not rest, and the third time she went in a strength not her own, depending only on her living Lord, and she called at each house till she reached No. 6. By this time it was nearly dark, the gas lamps were flaring in the streets, and the shadows flickered about on the pavement as the cold wind struggled with the flames. It was a desolate evening, but her heart was singing with joy, she was rejoicing in her "Rock."

At No. 6, an old woman, with aquiline features, neat dress, and of most respectable appearance opened the door, and invited her in. Gladly enough she entered, and found herself in a room as neat and tidy in its furniture as the owner was in her person; and there, sitting in a chair by a small fire was a fine looking old man. An expression of calm, peaceful repose sat on the handsome features; the noble, open brow was surrounded by hair as white as snow, and the clear blue eyes rested on her with a quiet, vacant look. In one hand he held a white pocket handkerchief, and on his head he wore his hat. In a few words, uttered in a low tone, the woman explained to her that her husband had become quite childish, through repeated paralytic stroke and that he very rarely spoke, or noticed what passed around him. Touched with the deep calm of his

expression, she bent over him, and spoke a few simple words about the "Rock" on which her own soul rested. In a moment a look of intelligence gathered on the placid face, a new light beamed in the quiet eye, and the stammering tongue lisped out three words, that thrilled the listener's heart with surprise and joy. "The Altogether Lovely!" That was all he said, and surely that was enough. The poor body, crushed as it was with sorrow and sickness, gave utterance to the soul's deep peace, the peace that passeth all understanding. And though the lady knew it not, she was standing by the side of the "man who could fly," and he, in his old age and weakness, was to be the means in God's hand of teaching her to venture on her living Lord, to give up dependence on earthly props, and thus herself to "fly."

She went to no more houses that day, and returned home thanking Him who had deigned to give her work to do, for Himself. It was but a few days after this, that Mrs. Bond was seized with bronchitis, and the doctor who came to see her, urged the removal of her afflicted husband to the workhouse infirmary. What was to be done? The poor old woman lay and wept as she thought of her own helplessness, her empty purse, her apparent friendlessness. A kind neighbor came in to tidy her room, and to get the poor old man from the bed, to his seat by the fire; and then she was alone with God, and face to face with her sorrows. She had never learned to trust her Lord as her husband had done, and that husband's counsel was lost for ever. As she lay and watched him sitting in helpless silence by the flickering fire, she thought of the words of comfort and cheer which it had ever been his wont to speak in former days, when the waves of sorrow had run high. He seemed unconscious of it all now, yet ever and anon turned his calm blue eyes with a wondering look upon her tear stained face. And must the dreaded doom be his? And must she speak the word that should pass him to stranger hands to nurse? Must a workhouse woman

watch his last breath, and close his eyes, and wrap him in his grave clothes? After their long years of happy wedded life, and patient toil, must they part thus? Do you wonder that she wept? And do you think she wept unwatched, unknown, uncared for? No, there was One whom she could not trust – poor, weary soul that she was! – watching by her on that gloomy day, and suddenly He whispered in her ear, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

You see the Lord’s care for His children does not depend upon their faith, it depends upon His own heart. What a blessing this is for us, is it not? He was caring for His poor doubting child, all the time, for while she wept and wondered, He was sending His own messenger down to help her. His messenger was not the poor cobbler, this time, but the young lady whom He was teaching to depend upon Himself.

And so it came to pass that the “cruse of oil did not fail, nor the barrel of meal waste,” till the poor woman was able to leave her bed, and move about again. But her illness had been so severe that her strength was gone, and the doctor said she must never try to move her husband again; nor ought she, he said, to wash the clothes any more; and again, he repeated his wish that the old man should go to the infirmary. He was only doing his duty in speaking so, but when he left the house that day, he left a cloud of sorrow behind him deep and black indeed.

The hours passed on; and as the evening fell, the gloom without was slight, compared with the darkness that settled down on the poor woman’s soul within. As she stood leaning against the bed in hopeless sorrow, there was a knock on the door of her room, which stood ajar, and, pushing it open, the young lady who had been sent to her before entered.

What a scene it was! By the small flickering fire sat the old man, with his hands on his knees, his placid face unruffled and calm as ever; against the bed leaned the

thin form of his aged wife, trembling with emotion, while the tears streamed down her furrowed cheeks; the room was lighted by the wavering glare of the gas-lamp in the street, which was nearly on a level with the uncurtained windows, and outside, the snow was drifting silently and rapidly to the earth. Between her sobs, the heart-broken woman told her tale of sorrow.

“It must be,” she said; “there is no help for it now! – After all these years we must part; it will break his heart, but if they only wouldn’t put the dress on him, perhaps he wouldn’t notice – oh dear, oh dear; it is hard to bear.”

“Have you no friends?” said her visitor, “no one to help you? No one to add a weekly sum to your pension, for the washing, and for help to move your husband? ,

“They all say the same,” wailed the poor woman; “he must go to the workhouse.”

Then she dropped her voice and glanced anxiously towards the fireplace; the lady’s eyes followed hers, and she saw a sight not easily to be forgotten. The old man’s feeble mind had caught the meaning of those last bitter words, his face was turned fully towards them, the placid look was gone, and large bright tears were chasing each other down his cheeks. His helpless frame shook with sobs.

“He understands us,” cried the woman, hurrying to him; “oh! do not cry,” she added, striving to comfort him, “they will be very kind, and I shall come and” – then her voice failed, and they wept together.

And it was then that He who knew all the past: and was “afflicted in all their afflictions” laid suddenly on the lady’s heart that it was a sin and a shame for an aged Christian to have to take shelter under the workhouse roof. It was the first time that the thought had ever crossed her mind; she had no time to reason why it should, or should not be, she only felt that it would be a crying disgrace to herself and every Christian in the neighbourhood, if that man was

allowed to go there. It was the Lord who was thus stirring her heart within her, for He knew the past history of which she was ignorant. He had been trusted with His child's care in days gone by, and now He was about to use her to carry out His own purposes. It was not a scene that the hardest heart could look on unmoved; she hastily beckoned to the wife to follow her, and left the room.

"It cannot be! it must not be!" said she, as she stood on the little landing outside the door; "it shall not be if I can help it! I will see what I can do for you. Say no more about it. I will see you again tomorrow."

Then she wrung the old woman's hand, and hurried away through the frost and snow. And to whom do you think she went for help? For she had not the means to do much for the poor souls herself.

"Oh!" you will say, "to the Lord, of course, as He had sent her there." No, indeed she did not; she did not understand "flying", so she went to all her earthly friends with the tale of sorrow; some were Christians, and some were not, and she rested on the kindness of their hearts, instead of on her living God. It was such a sad tale, that she soon had enough money promised to allow the Bonds several shillings a week; and the next day she went down with the good news. The poor old man sat with his eyes fixed on her, as she told his wife of the help provided. It was no vacant stare now, but an anxious, eager gaze as the shattered brain strove to catch and appropriate the meaning of her words. She heard that after she had left on the previous day, he had seemed to become suddenly aware that it was his bodily weakness which was bringing him to his dreaded doom; and stammering out "that there was no knowing what the Lord might do yet" he had risen from his chair; and to his wife's surprise and terror, had swung himself half across the room. Then his strength had failed him, and he had stood clinging to the bedstead, trembling, and crying like a child. It was not the Lord's will to save him

like this, but He meant to save him nevertheless; his “strength was to sit still,” and let the Lord undertake for him; yea, He would “bear him up on eagles’ wings.”

“Can you not thank the lady,” cried his wife; “she has saved you from the workhouse. You need not go!” But the feeble tongue could frame no words, he bowed his hoary head and wept.

And so the months rolled on, and as they went the one whom the Lord had used to carry out His plans, was learning a new and strange lesson, she was learning to “fly.” First one, and then another of her friends withdrew their subscriptions, and as each prop gave way, the Lord drew her on gently and tenderly to lean upon Himself alone. One only, of all her helpers, esteemed it a privilege to aid to the last, and she sent her money unasked. Thus, like the young eagle, the helper learned to “fly.”

So several months passed on, till the Autumn had come round again. It was then that one morning, as the lady gave Mrs. Bond her money for the month, she said, “I am going from home, and I cannot tell you where the next supply will come from, but the Lord can send it.”

But He never did send it, for it was never needed. A few days later on, the old man was taken suddenly worse and was confined to his bed; and now, as though the prince of this world would make a last effort to triumph over the faith of the child of God, and to prove even in this last hour the promise of the Promiser null and void, the worn-out wife yielded to the remonstrances of those about her, and agreed to her husband’s removal to the workhouse infirmary. Helpless as an infant, and almost unconscious of what was passing around him, he would perhaps have known little of the change, but the prayer of bygone days had been registered in heaven, and his Father was watching over His helpless child. All was settled on earth, and the order went forth for the workhouse conveyance to come

for the poor shattered body on the following day. Slowly and quietly that night closed in, and men went to their rest as usual while the weary wife sat down to watch and weep for the last time, by her husband's side. But there was One watching also, to whom the night shineth as the day; one Eye that never slumbers and never sleeps; and ere the first gleam of the cold morning light had broken over the quiet town, a messenger had come forth from the courts above, and had whispered his message to the fettered spirit; he hushed the feeble breathing, and glazed the failing eyes, and as he did so, the glory in all its splendour burst upon the ransomed soul. Ah, redeemed ones! "all things are yours," yea, Death himself is yours! Out of that feeble, stricken, shattered body in the darkened room the spirit passed into the glory of its Lord. Far, far below him lay the workhouse roof, as he was borne in at the pearly gate to the presence chamber of his Lord.

The next morning, when the people in the street were looking out for the workhouse van, Richard Bond had gone where he would one day sit on the throne and have a crown, and praise his Saviour for evermore. And do you think that was all? Do you think that he was buried in a pauper's grave? Many thought that it mattered little where the poor dust was laid, now that the spirit was rejoicing with the Lord, – but not so that tender Saviour – He sent the poor widow money enough to lay her husband in a cemetery near, and there the body lies, awaiting the Voice that shall one day call it from the grave, incorruptible, a spiritual body, fit for the glory.

Nor was that all. The widow herself was then the Saviour's care; the pension was over, it is true, but the Lord was living to watch over her, and to supply all her need. He touched the hearts of those whom she had nursed in sickness, and they provided her with all she required. Very soon after this she fell ill of a deadly disease called cancer, and the doctor said she would die.

It is a solemn thing to be told that you will die, that there is no doctor in all the world who can heal you, no medicine known that can stop the complaint. When Mrs. Bond heard that she had not long to live, she felt frightened at first, and Satan tempted her to look at her own life and ways to see if she belonged to Jesus. Then she grew terrified, and the thought of death became dreadful to her, for the more she looked at herself, the worse she saw herself to be, and she doubted whether all her happy feelings in the past had been real and feared that she had deceived herself, and that she was going to hell after all. I do not wonder at her fears, she was doubting the love of Jesus, and disbelieving His word. He hath said, "Whosoever cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." Instead of just trusting God's word, she said she wanted to see by some signs in herself whether she was one of "the elect."

What would you think of a man, who, when his friend had paid his debt, said he would not believe it till he saw the receipt? You would say that man has no confidence in his friend, he does not believe his word. This was how she was treating the Lord Jesus. Many people treat Him like this; they say they want to feel saved before they will believe Him; but till they take His word for it, they have neither peace nor joy. We have nothing to go upon but the Word of God. God asserts a fact, and expects us to believe what He says. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24)

God, in His love and faithfulness, took care to comfort this poor doubting child. He sent a messenger to her, who pointed out to her the value of the blood of

Christ, and reminded her that she was saved entirely by what He had done, and not by any change in herself. She was as fit for heaven as the thief on the cross, and no fitter. Then, as she looked at Jesus dying, the "Just for the unjust, to bring us to God," her fears vanished, and she saw that the blood of Christ alone was her title to heaven. She trusted the One who died for sinners, accepted God's word as true when He said He was satisfied by the death of her substitute, and "the peace of God that passeth all understanding" was her portion.

Never look inside for any signs of your salvation. The blood, and nothing but the blood of Christ can meet your case. The blood of Christ cries out "forgive them," and if you own your need of it, and believe God's word about it, you will get pardon and everlasting life.

I must tell you one thing more before I close my story, to show you how real a thing it is to have God to take care of you. One day, shortly before her death, poor Mrs. Bond was in such agony from her dreadful disease, that she hardly knew how to bear it. The only thing that could ease her was brandy, but she had none in the house, and no money to buy any. I do not know whether she cried to her heavenly Father, I daresay she did, for He sent one of His children to see her. This child of His was very poor, and had just then no money of her own, but when she heard of the poor widow's distressing need, she put her hand into her pocket, not expecting to find anything there, but to her surprise she found a shilling, and gave it at once to the sufferer. When, however, she had left the house, she remembered, with great sorrow, that that shilling was not her own; at least it had been given to her for a special purpose. She had many friends to whom she could have gone for such a sum, but she knew how to "fly"; that is, she depended on God alone; and so she told Him of her mistake, and left it with Him. Then at

once, that very afternoon, He put it into the heart of her sister, far away in the country to put twelve stamps in a letter, and send them off for old Mrs. Bond. So the next morning they fell out of the envelope, a proof the loving care of her living Lord.

And now my story is finished; and perhaps you are wondering why God let “the man who could fly” suffer such heavy trials in his life. Such thoughts have puzzled many, when they have looked at the paths of difficulty and danger along which He so often leads His children. I’m quite sure that if you could have asked Richard Bond if he would like to have been without any one his trials, he would have said, “No!” And why would he have answered thus, do you think? Because he had confidence in God; he knew that His Father was doing in him that which would glorify Christ most before men and angels; and all the desire of his heart was that the Saviour who died for Him – “the altogether lovely one” – should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. The deeper the trial that the depending one is carried through, the greater the testimony to the supporting power of Christ here, and the brighter will that one shine for Him through all eternity. “Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” (Ps. lxxviii. 13.)

It does not matter how wicked and careless you may have been up to this moment, or how often you have turned away from the warning Voice that follows you! If you will listen now to the cry which once more sounds in your ears “the fashion of this world passeth away” and accept the shelter of the blood of Christ, you will even now be saved, and learn what it is to “mount up with wings as eagles.”

Oh, little people, before we part, let me remind you once more, “Pretending” won’t do for God.

The Lord Jesus may call, any moment, to those who know His voice, “Come up hither.” False wings will not

serve you then; the name of being a Christian will not answer then. If you have not yielded to Christ, who seeks you tonight, before that, you will be left behind. There will be no feast in the banqueting hall among the clouds for you – no smile from the loving tender Saviour for you – no word of welcome, no song of praise, no seat upon the throne, no crown to cast before His feet; none of these things will be for you. Wailing and gnashing of teeth will be yours ever, as you look back, and remember how the Voice called to you again and again, and you heeded it not, or said, “Another time I will listen, and give heed.” Then He who followed you to save you, but whose long-suffering you despised, shall say to you, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer, they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.” (Prov. i. 24 28.) You will be left behind, without a shelter from the whirlwind of judgment, which will sweep across this Christ-rejecting world, and which will whirl you before it like chaff, into the lake of fire.

“Pretending” won’t do for God. Perhaps you say, “But I do trust Jesus, tonight, only I am afraid that tomorrow I shall forgot Him, and be just as I was before? Ah! but you have nothing to do with tomorrow; leave tomorrow to Jesus. He will not forget you; there is “joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” There is nothing to be done to save you, it was all done long ago, and if you have trusted Him, you are saved; saved for “always” and you must leave all your tomorrows with Jesus. The more you trust Him the better you will “fly” and the

seldomer you will look down to the world for props to keep you up. All such props are reeds on which if a man lean they shall pierce his hand – they are links to the scene you have left.

Oh, depend on the Lord more and more! Ask Him to make you a very, very simple, trusting one, and then trust Him to do it.

Now the Talkings in the Twilight about Wings are over, but please each one remember my solemn parting word – “PRETENDING” WON’T DO FOR GOD.

But, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah xl. 31.)