

"Yes, and I understood them too, most all. I liked them."

"Then I will read you one now that will help to tell you where to go and what to do. And as I read, if there is any thing you do not understand, I want you to speak out, and I will explain it to you."

I then read as follows: "I was a wanderer."

He interrupted me. "So am I; I wander all the time; I have no place of rest."

I resumed. "I was a wanderer, and before me was a vast tract of land with a broken and uneven surface, in which were many deep chasms, that is, deep holes and dark places."

He again spoke: "There are plenty of them where I am."

I again resumed: "In my wanderings, I was in constant fear of falling."

"I did fall," he cried; "many and many a time I've fallen."

I resumed my reading: "and I was often on the very brink of destruction. Still I was upheld and conducted in safety, though dangers beset me on every side; I thought to myself, Is there no end to these dangers—no rest? Is my whole life to be spent in this incessant toil and watchfulness? A high wall was before me. I followed a path by its side, hoping to find an entrance within the inclosure. After much toil I came to a gate; it was of great beauty, sparkling with gems and precious stones."

Here he interrupted me by saying, "Oh! I can't go in there!"

I replied: "Wait a moment, my friend, perhaps we can find an entrance."

I read on: "The pillars which sustained this gate were imbedded deep into the earth, and towered high in the heavens."

"Towered? What does that mean?"

"Running up high, like a liberty pole."

"They were beautifully white and semi-transparent—that is, you could partly see through them. An arch was overhead."

"An arch? What is that?"

"The circular top of a door or gateway." "An arch was overhead, from which flashed the words, in brilliant light—HOLINESS TO THE LORD."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "I can't enter there—I can't enter there."

"The gate was open a little distance, as if to admit any one who was inclined to enter. Here, thinks I, is my rest from all my toil

and wandering. Here I will enter and be at peace. As I was entering, the gate came gently to, and forced me from the entrance. My unfitness to enter the gate of holiness did not occur to me. I thought, if I can obtain an entrance, I will, for within it was beautiful and inviting. So I walked in front of the gate, as if unconcerned at the opposition I had met with, and watching for an opportunity to dart through suddenly. Soon all was in readiness, and, as I was near the gate, I started with all the speed I could command, but before I could gain an inch within the inclosure the gate was closed, and I lay on the ground bruised and in pain. I thought, if I ever enter it must be by some other gate, where one can enter who is not so holy. I asked myself, Did any one ever enter this gate? A voice at my side answered, 'Yes, one, and only one: He who died, the just for the unjust, that he might open the gate of Repentance.' The gate of Repentance, thinks I, where will I find it? The voice answered, 'Pass on.' So I again followed the path by the side of the wall till I was weary, and lay me down to rest. Again a voice at my side said, 'Up, sluggard! and flee for thy life.'

He had been quite still and attentive for some time, but here he broke in with the inquiry, "Sluggard? What's that?"

"Lazy, idle, sleepy fellow."

"I arose, and a gate was before me, but, oh! how different from the beautiful one I had passed! Two massive columns of coarse granite supported a frame on which were perpendicular sliding bars. The whole appeared to be made more for strength than beauty. Thinks I, Is this one of the gates of heaven? The voice answered,

"Many will seek to enter in, but will not be able."

"In examining the gate more attentively, I saw an inscription over it in letters of black: 'REPENTANCE.' I also saw that there was space enough between the bars to admit those who wished to enter. 'Here,' I exclaimed, 'is no barrier!'"

"Barrier!" he said, "what's that?"

"Something to stop you from going in."

"Here is no barrier, and all can enter.' The voice repeated, 'All can enter; but enter ere it be too late.'"

Here he inquired with a look and tone of great earnestness, "Am I not too late?"

"Listen, and judge for yourself."

"So I thought to myself, I will enter; and I approached the gate to pass between the bars; they came sliding together, and completely checked my progress. As I passed along to the opening caused by the sliding of the bars, the bars passed with me, and I soon became convinced that something must be done before I could enter even so lowly a gate as this. To return was destruction—to advance seemed impossible. 'How shall I be saved?' escaped from my lips. A hand was beside me, bleeding from the palm, with a finger pointing to the inscription. I asked, 'Of what shall I repent?' The answer was, 'You have not obeyed the commands of your Maker.' 'What does he require of me?' 'Obedience to the law of kindness and love. Instruct the ignorant, relieve the needy, soothe the afflicted, and bind up the broken-hearted.'"

Here he said, as if to himself, "I never did any of that."

"Then, I thought, to what purpose have I lived? And there was none to bless me, no, not one."

"Then I said, 'O Lord! I abhor myself, and there is no good thing in me.' I looked at the gates, and the bars were again in their place, and there were many openings through which I could pass. I took courage and advanced, though with fear and trembling. As I passed the upper part of my body through an opening, I was caught by the bars, and held firmly in that position. The bars came together above and below me, and fitted tightly to my body, so that I could neither pass out nor in. I put up a cry for help. Soon a shining one came near. He was the picture of benevolence and love. He pointed to the inscription and said, 'Repent and cry for mercy.' I told him I had repented and cried."

Here this poor spirit interrupted my reading and said, "I hav'n't cried often."

I resumed—"He smiled and said, 'Surely you are not in earnest with so feeble a cry?' I was every moment becoming more and more uncomfortable and alarmed, as I could neither advance nor retreat."

Here he again interrupted me, "Retreat, go back! Go again away down there where all is so dark and gloomy—oh! no! no! no. Have pity on me—show me how I may go on."

I again resumed, deeming the vision the best answer to what he said.

"And the chasms in my rear seemed to have advanced to my feet. I was now really convinced that my present and future happiness,

and, in fact, my life, depended upon my passage through this gate. So I set up a more earnest cry, 'O Lord! save me, or I perish.' It seemed now that the bars held me tighter than before. At this I became so alarmed, that I struggled with all my might. I exerted my whole strength, as for my life, and to my surprise the barrier disappeared, and I seemed to have struggled only with myself, against my own unwillingness to enter. To me the gate had disappeared, and in the place of the humble structure—"

"Structure! That means building, don't it?"

"Yes."

"And in place of the humble structure, I now beheld a triumphant and glorious arch, more beautiful than the gates of holiness. I thought much of the change, and I now perceived that it was owing to the different position in which I was placed. Over the arch was this beautiful inscription:

"PRAISE TO THE REDEEMER."

"On turning my eyes within the wall, what raptures did I behold! A country, as far as the eye could reach, more beautiful than imagination could paint, inhabited by thousands and thousands of spirits, whose employment was to increase the happiness of each other, studying the mysteries of redeeming love, and progressing to the New Jerusalem, which can be entered only by spirits made perfect."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, in an under-tone, "I can never be perfect."

As I continued reading the foregoing, he gradually became more humble and respectful, his tones were softer, his manner more gentle, and when I closed, he paused long, and then in a voice of deep contrition said:

"I am a poor, ignorant, undeveloped spirit. But it is not my fault. I do need help very much. God help me—God help me! Oh, do, good friends, pray for me. I was no boatman. I told you a lie. I will never lie again. I try, and try, and try, but they keep pulling me back, and lie to me. God bless my mother. She loved her son. I want to go to her; but do you think that such a poor, God-forsaken spirit could talk to my mother?"

These sentences were spoken in broken fragments, and amid intense agony, and when he was answered, that his mother, if a bright spirit in heaven, yet loved him dearly, and would rejoice to meet him

again, he exclaimed, with hands clasped, eyes uplifted, and voice tremulous and soft from the depth of his emotion, "Mother! mother! mother! God bless you, wherever you are. Will you look down? Oh, no, that is out of the question—I am away down—down there where she can not come."

We endeavored to reassure him by telling him the mercy of God was infinite, that His forgiveness was ever for those who earnestly sought it, that his mother could approach him if he earnestly desired, and that he and we were surrounded by good spirits who were ready to take him by the hand and help him, and that they were kept from him only by himself.

He answered, "My mother is interested in me wherever she is. I know she is. Just see how many such shining people you draw about you—they are looking at me—they are looking at me!"

He said this with his head elevated, and his eyes intently gazing on what seemed to us to be vacancy. He was then sitting in our circle by my side. Suddenly he drew back with his chair some distance from the circle, his head sunk upon his breast, and in tones of deep humility he said, "I am not fit to be there."

We said to him, "Nay, good friend, draw not back from among us. Take your place in our midst as our equal. We are erring as you are, and need forgiveness as you do. Come, then, and again be one of us."

"You err, too?" he cried. "Do you confess as much?"

"Alas! who among us can be perfect? We need the aid of good spirits as you do."

He cried, "I can't stand the thought. I can't get through that gate! To return, is to go away down there, where it is so dark, so dreadfully dark! But I don't want to go back. Oh, dear, if these shining ones would come near me!"

Then with a voice tremulous with emotion, as with hands and eyes uplifted, he cried, "Oh, for God's sake! come! come! come! For God's sake! save me! save me! Oh, yes, I am indeed a wretch! I am sorry for what I have said and done. I have been very wicked. Oh, forgive me, forgive me! Tell God, will you, some of you, that I am sorry? But no, no, they can't come near me. I am all black, as blackness itself. Oh, mother! mother! for God's sake, look on me! Oh, no, no, I am too bad."

Then pausing and looking intently upon vacancy, as if he saw

some one standing near, he suddenly cried out, "What did you say, that you would lead me to my mother? Oh, God forgive me! wretched, wretched, wretched sinner that I am! I know that he is all-powerful to save! I felt that away down in the darkness where I dwelt. I have heard that he was merciful, and will he be merciful to me a sinner? Oh, mother, you ask them to come near me. They say that mother is there. Hark! They offer to take me by the hand, and tell me I need not go back there to that dreadful darkness. Will you take me? I want to go with you."

Then putting his hand on his heart, as if in great distress, he said, "But, oh, that ugly feeling—it will come back, and how can I help it?"

Turning to us with an imploring look, shuddering, as if afraid to look behind him, and pointing over his shoulder, he said, "There are black spirits there who want to take me back. Won't you keep them away? Hark! Again a spirit has spoken—'Brother, reach us forth your hand.'"

He paused, and with a countenance becoming more cheerful, and a manner more gentle, he knelt in our midst, and reached forth his hand hesitatingly, tremblingly, as if afraid it would not be taken. Then bowing his head upon his breast, and sinking almost to the floor, he whispered in a voice scarcely audible, "God is merciful—God is merciful." Then raising his head, he started suddenly, and gazing intently cried, "Oh, that light! that light! that light! It is so bright, so cool, so pleasant! I don't want ever to go back! Do you think they will let me go back? God help me! I saw a star there! Oh, how beautiful it is! The light is coming all around me, and that shining one is coming nearer! Oh, I don't want to go back! God help me! I do repent; I'm sorry for all the wickedness I have ever done—I'm sorry. If repentance means sorry, don't let me go back. Oh, those bright ones are all around me! They say my mother is behind that beautiful star. But (shuddering and recoiling as from something behind him) there is an ugly black thing behind me drawing me back! Don't you see them? I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Tell God I'm sorry. Tell my mother to come. The black spirits are trying to draw me back, but the light comes all around me. Yet, oh, that ugly feeling at my breast! They say they will come and take me (alluding, as we understood, to the dark spirits). Oh, God be merciful to me a sinner! Now they are a

good deal farther off. Don't you see them? Don't let them come. Oh, God, be merciful, be merciful to me a sinner."

These things, as I have attempted to record them, were broken sentences, uttered at different times, and with ever-varying emotions. It is impossible to describe the fear and despair that sometimes possessed him, the deep humility of his confession of his sins, and the ecstatic joy with which he hailed the approach of the good spirits, the appearance of that star, and the shining of the bright light around him.

At length the violence of these contending emotions fairly overcame him, and he sank prostrate on the floor.

While thus prostrate, we sang the hymn—

"There is a happy land, far, far away."

At length he arose, and in a voice so gentle and humble he said, "Oh, I feel so much relieved! I entered here feeling the torments of the damned. I'll never use that word again. But now how pleasant the feeling; and the light that shines around me, how bright and beautiful it is! God bless you. God bless you all.

"They tell me when I leave this poor woman I shall go up with them. I am sorry I have given her so much trouble; but she has helped me—oh how much—and they say goodness is always rewarded. You have all helped me. God bless you all. When I leave her now, I will never trouble her more. Now I am going; close around, and sing that happy song."

We did so, and when we finished, in a faint and feeble voice he said, "Oh, how beautiful is all around me! I feel so happy now I am going. Ask God to take me now."

Then after a little pause he added, as his voice faded gently away, "Hark! that beautiful music—music—music! Farewell!"

And so he left us, rewarding us for all we had done for him by the full assurance his fate has given us, that indeed, indeed our Redeemer liveth!

After he left, we asked for some of the brighter spirits to come, if only for a brief period, in order to relieve and cheer our medium.

ELIAS HICKS came, and said:

"My dear friends, I have only to say to you this evening, that you have done your duty to God, to the spirits, and to man, in this instance, and you shall see before long time shall elapse that you

shall reap benefit from the charity and good-will to the poor, which ye have shown to the poor spirit who was in your midst to-night. God will bless you, richly bless you in your efforts to do right, and may you ever be found willing to walk in the path of duty, if you should see and know that thorns are in that path as well as duty. Ye can not now see with your mortal eyes the good you have rendered that spirit; ye have sent him away rejoicing in the knowledge that his Redeemer liveth; ye have introduced him from behind a wall of darkness into a field of light. How pure and beautiful it comes on his hitherto blinded vision!

"His heart, weighed down with doubts and sorrow and uncertainty, is now drinking in light which comes from spirits in an atmosphere of light. It will yet approach him so clearly as to lead him into the path where he can gain light to progress in the way that leads to eternal life high in the heavens.

"It may seem like a new phase to you, but the same has been done ere this. Spirits have been helped on their way by mortals, and been able to progress more rapidly in this way than if they had been without such aid. It is a new field of thought and study to you all, and you will yet see benefits now unknown to you. Oh, yes! that light will gently lead to the light that makes perfect day.

"As little children, ye are just beginning to learn the ways of wisdom and beauty and knowledge, which God has vouchsafed to mortals in this day and age. Let those sneer who may. Ye, my friends, look steadily forward to the end in view. I mean progression—the glorious wisdom that is being unfolded to you now. Not in one, or ten, or even twenty ways alone will the will of God be made manifest!

"With grateful hearts think of this, and be ever ready to do as God would have you do to your fellow-men, that the world may see how bright is the light that has led you to know this mystery of mysteries."

Here the interview ended, leaving behind it to us an invaluable lesson, for which we can not be too grateful to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.