

The Hindu Girl.

(‘Faithful Words.’)

Not a breath of air stirred the leaves of the palm trees, and the Indian sun streamed down on the bungalow where the missionary sat; and as he looked on the burnt-up garden, he thought of the poor heathen around him, whose hearts seemed as dry and barren as the ground before him. He knelt in prayer for them, and a few minutes afterwards he heard a knock at the door, and found a little dark-skinned girl standing in the passage. At first she was too frightened to speak; but after encouragement she said her mother had once lived at Bombay, and had heard there about a great God of the white people, who was good and kind, and cared for children. Three weeks previously her mother had died suddenly, and in her last words to the orphan had told her to try to find out more about this God.

Tears fell fast as she told how she had begged and prayed the great idol in the sacred grove to let her find this new God. ‘I’ve asked, and asked,’ she said, ‘but he won’t give me anything. I don’t think he wants me to be happy or contented.’

Can you not imagine how overjoyed the missionary was to tell the little girl about his Heavenly Father, who loves to bless his children and give them true happiness? He read to her this text: ‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’ At first she could not believe that this great God could love her, and that he would give her eternal life without any offering or sacrifice on her part. She had been taught all her life to offer to her idols, who are not expected to give unless they are well rewarded. The missionary’s wife took the child into the house, and taught her about Jesus, and very soon she came to him, and he gave her eternal life.

That little girl has now grown into a tall woman. She is a Bible woman, and has twenty little native children under her care, whom she is trying to lead to the Good Shepherd. At the end of her school-room, in large red and black letters, is the text: ‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom;’ and she often tells how, more than twenty years ago, the missionary taught her those words in that same house, and what a great blessing they have been to her.

Many white children in England think very much the same as did the little dark-skinned heathen girl; they think they must beg and beseech God before he will answer them, and that unless they pray long and earnestly enough, they cannot be saved. They forget that Jesus said, ‘It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’ It would be wages if we had to pray and toil to get it; it is a gift if we do nothing for it, and have only to accept it. ‘The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ (Rom. vi., 23.)

An Italian fable tells of a lame boy who asked an olive tree to drop some of its fruit to him, promising if it did he would not let his little brother break its branches any more. ‘I never stoop to bargain: I grow great by giving,’ said the tree, as it showered down more olives than the lad could carry. Just so is it with God. He

will not sell; he will not barter the priceless possession of his goodness; ‘eternal life is the gift of God.’

The Power of Faith.

The following instance of the power of faith was recited by the minister of the chapel where it occurred:

‘I have a Bible-class of twenty-one young men, twenty of whom were converted. These have been the main supporters of our Sunday morning prayer-meeting, which is conducted from seven to eight o’clock. On a given morning two of their number agreed that they would call at the house of their unconverted classmate, and, if possible, induce him to attend that morning’s meeting. They met him on the road, and invited him to the meeting. He definitely refused to join them. They tried to dissuade him from taking his anticipated walk, till he went away in a rage. The two went on to the chapel; the praying proceeded to within five minutes to eight (closing time), when one of the two began to pray. He earnestly besought the Lord to save the young man who had refused to come with them. Then, after a moment’s pause, he said, ‘Lord, I believe he is coming to this service; and I believe that he will be converted here this morning.’ Immediately the chapel door swung open, the young man came in, and walked straight to the Communion rail, where he knelt and sought the pardon of his sins.’—‘Sunday Companion.’

The Letter ‘A.’

Mrs. Boyd Carpenter, in ‘Fragments in Baskets.’)

‘It’s a queer story,’ said Tom, ‘but it’s true; the letter A was the letter that led me to my Saviour. I was in a peck of trouble at the time; my wife and the babies were ill and I was worried, and I had less than no hope to look to anywhere, for I did not believe in religion and that sort of thing. Well, one night the paper given me to set up for printing was about a prize which was offered to anyone who could correctly tell the number of A’s in the Book of Hosea. It struck me I might try.’

‘I’d had extra expense at home through illness and the doctor to pay and so on, and my work being among letters all night, I thought I stood as good a chance of the prize as anyone, and so I determined I’d go in for it. I hoped to get the money, but I found what was better than silver and gold. I found the key of life. I used to fancy that life ended with what you see and what we made our own lives, but that little letter showed me that we are being led by a way that we know not, and are in the hands of One who orders all things for our good.’

‘It was Friday night I set it up. As soon as we were free I got to work, and by Saturday night my task was done. But as I was counting the A’s, one struck me more than other’s; perhaps it was a capital, and so I missed it at first, having been counting the small ones and had to go back for it; perhaps because it was an uncommon word, “Achor.”

“Achor,” I thought, “what a queer word! I wonder what it means?” And so I turned to the reference and saw in Joshua in the margin, “trouble.” “Well, that’s odd,” I said to myself, “the valley of trouble for a door of hope. I’m sure I’m

in trouble, and yet I don’t see where the hope is coming from.”

‘All day long that word “Achor” stuck in my mind. Saturday night I spent nursing my wife and wondering what sort of “hope” there could be for me with the prospect of losing her, for she was very bad that night. In the morning I got a turn out of doors, and as I passed an open church door, with services going on, I thought I’d look in and see if I could get any light in my difficulty, how trouble could bring hope.’

‘I was late, and the clergyman was in the pulpit, so I don’t know what his text was. He was talking about atheism, and that “A” meant “without,” and that without God there was no hope for any man. He then showed that Christ was the hope of every man, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things.’

‘I’d heard lots of similar sermons, but you see I’d got the letter A in my head, having counted so many the day before, and so it struck me as curious that I should hear a sermon which was so much about it, and it made me listen, and there I found hope, for I found my Saviour. He led me through trouble by a way I knew not, and now I feel I cannot be silent, but must spend myself for him.’

The Actual Presence of God.

We should never leave our prayer-closets in the morning without having concentrated our thoughts deeply and intensely on the fact of the actual presence of God there with us, encompassing us, and filling the room as literally as it fills heaven itself. It may not lead to any distinct results at first; but, as we make repeated efforts to realize the presence of God, it will become increasingly real to us, and, as the habit grows upon us, when alone in a room, or when treading the sward of some natural woodland temple, or when pacing the stony street, in the silence of night, or amid the teeming crowds of daylight, we shall often find ourselves whispering the words, ‘Thou art near, thou art here, O Lord.’

Then again we should try to recall the fact of the presence of God whenever we enter upon some new engagement, or sit down to write a letter, or start on a journey, or prepare to meet a friend. By practice, remembering God as much as we can, asking him to forgive when we have passed long hours in forgetfulness of him, this habit will become easy and natural to us, a kind of second nature. It was surely thus that Enoch walked with God, and it was this which enabled Bishop Taylor to say: ‘I am a witness to the fact that the Lord Jesus is alive, that he is a person, and, though invisible, accessible. I have been cultivating a personal acquaintance with a personal Saviour for more than forty-three years.’—F. B. Meyer.

Your Own Paper Free.

‘Northern Messenger’ subscribers may have their own subscription extended one year, free of charge, by remitting sixty cents for two new subscriptions.

Special Clubbing Offer, ‘World Wide’ and ‘Northern Messenger,’ \$1.00, for Great Britain, Montreal, and foreign countries, except United States, add 50 cts. for postage.