

## Our Contributors.

### Bell's Story.

BY ANNA ROSS

It is a serious story, and a true one; and perhaps He who so tenderly led one little pair of feet will use this account of his doings to help others into the good way too. May he do so, and to him be the glory. Amen.

It was a Sabbath evening, and it must have been about the 11th of February, 1861, that Bell was standing by the window in a dark up-stairs room looking out upon the night. Voices sounded pleasantly up from the room below, but she felt no inclination to leave her dark retreat. Would you like to know what Bell was seeking? With her brow against the window pane she was pleading almost hopelessly that God would keep his own promise and blot out all her sins, making her a new creature in Christ Jesus. For weeks this had been her uppermost thought and ever-recurring prayer; and it seemed that no ear regarded.

But now a strange thing happened unto her. While standing sorrowfully at that little upper window, sometimes thinking, and sometimes pleading with God to be faithful, two little words darted through her mind with wonderful power. "Forgive, and accept me," had been her cry. "Through Jesus," came almost an audible answer—"through Jesus, through Jesus!" At every repetition joy welled higher; why, she could not tell, how, she never knew but the peace she had so often read of and prayed and longed for seemed to fill and satisfy her beating heart. Just then, up from the room below came the first lines of the hymn,

"In the Christian's home in glory

There remains a land of rest."

"My home, mine 'through Jesus,'" was the song that went up from a full heart as she clasped her hands and looked heavenward in an ecstasy of joy and thankfulness.

Surely, that night her face must have shone as she took her place at the tea-table and as she moved among the others doing her accustomed part, for all the time that song was ringing through her.

Dear reader, had Bell got what she wanted? She certainly was enjoying what she wished, but had she got what she wanted? You may judge for yourself.

When the next morning came she had not forgotten the two words, "through Jesus," that were to be her joy and strength for ever, her staff for each difficult place. "Through Jesus!" Again and again she repeated the words, and looked for life through them. But another strange thing happened: they now tell as dead upon the heart as they had before seemed full of life. All that week she went sorrowful, almost stupid and hopeless, because her peace and joy were gone and she had nothing left.

The next Sabbath evening Bell was again alone, this time in a large empty front room, with a high, unfurnished east window full in the moonlight. Here she stood and talked to Him who set the moon in the sky, until a deep peace settled upon her spirit; and she felt that she could sing, "I will trust and not be afraid." She had no words this time to lay hold of, and did not feel that she had need of any. She laid her head upon her arm at rest, and lifted eyes and heart to heaven to thank Him who had made that

calm light to shine there and given a peace within that was sweeter, far sweeter.

But Bell was not at anchor yet. Monday came with new interests and cares—very particular ones—and then Tuesday, and then Wednesday; and before the week was over the confidence of the Sabbath evening was only a bright dream, making it harder and harder to hope for any real peace.

A week or two more passed away. Bell was getting discouraged, but, though she neither knew nor believed it then, there was One leading her who did not get discouraged even at her repeated failures and continued blindness.

One Thursday, Bell came home from a visit. On entering the living-room she found upon the table the newly-arrived number of the Montreal Witness—a godly newspaper, if such a term may be allowed with such a subject. The two pages devoted to general information and religious teachings were always attractive. The first thing that caught her eye that night was a story about a little Jewish girl who went to Jesus while he was on earth. The story itself made little impression, but at its close were a few sentences that might have been something like the following:

"Now, is there not some little one among my readers who wishes that Jesus Christ were on earth again, that she too might go and kneel at his feet and receive his wonderful blessing?"

"Dear little body, whoever you are, do you not know that Jesus Christ is now ready to give you his blessing and is really close beside you, so that you can go right to him to receive it, as he was while on earth?"

"Perhaps you will tell me that you have already gone to him very often, but he never answers. He never blesses you, as he says in the Bible he will."

"Now, let me explain to you where you are wrong. When you go to him and ask him to take you for his own and wash your sins away, how do you expect him to answer you? Do you expect that some great light will suddenly shine into your heart or a sweet, strange peace steal over your spirit? Are you waiting for some such sign before you dare trust that he has been as good as his word?"

"Now, let me tell you what to do. You know that every word he has spoken is true. I think you can trust him for that. Here, then, is the word: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' Go to Jesus Christ again; tell him you have come to be his, to be forgiven and made clean, to be taken for one of his own lambs, and then rise up from your knees trusting him—trusting his own word that he has in no wise cast you out. Do not wait for any sign, but trust him right away that he has been as good as his word. You are not afraid to trust Christ, are you?"

Bell laid down the paper to think. Was this the way to become a Christian indeed? Had she a right to trust his word now, just as she was, without waiting for any sign of special pardon and acceptance? Was this faith?—just believing that what Jesus had said would stand true? Surely, surely, this was too easy, too simple. But she pondered it in her heart.

How she passed the hours before bedtime I cannot tell now, but when she knelt to

engage in her evening prayers she told Christ himself all about it—how she had often come to him before, but had always been hoping for some sign that he had heard and answered before she dared think she had a right to trust. Now she thought he meant her to trust right away, without waiting for anything, simply because she was sure every word he had said was true. He had said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" and now she was inclined to think she might trust that word at once, for she was sure it was true. Then I think she asked him to make it plain to her if this was really what he meant by faith.

She rose from her knees and got into bed. "Is this the way? is this all?" she wondered to herself. It seemed too easy to be true, and yet it was such a beautiful, safe way! "His word is true, and I may trust it," So, pondering this new idea of faith, she fell asleep.

The next morning she did again what she had done at night. The more she thought about it, the clearer it seemed that she had now been led into the sure way. She went to her accustomed duties, but by the time these were done her thoughts were too many and pressing to be kept longer within an ordinary manner, and she ran up stairs to be alone. Again she came to Jesus, and rested her whole soul upon the simple truth of that word: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Was it dangerous to risk an eternity upon one word of his? Her feet were upon a Rock now, and she was safe. Then there was joy and thanksgiving.

Do my young readers see any difference between the joy this time and that which passed so quickly away? Surely you do. The first two times her hope was not in Christ and his faithfulness, but in some strange joy that she did not and does not know anything about. Now her hope, her confidence, was in the certain faithfulness of Christ's own word, and the joy sprang out of that abundantly, because she knew such a hope to be sure and glorious. Then her faith rested upon a mysterious joy which faded in a night; now her joy was exceeding great, because of faith upon One who was faithful. Then she put faith in the joy; now she had the joy of faith. It is so sweet to trust in One we know to be faithful! Oh, let us "taste and see that the Lord is good."

So Bell learned what a simple, wonderful thing is faith in Jesus Christ. For some weeks she would still now and then stagger at its very simplicity, wondering again if that were really all. Then she did what was surely a wise thing: she went to God himself with her thought, and told him how afraid she was of getting wrong in this great business. She asked him, if she was deceiving herself, to make plain to her where she was wrong. God hears prayer, and yet to this day he has never shown her that there was anything wrong in that beautiful way of faith—simply trusting Christ in his word because he is certainly true.

Great and continuous was the peace Jesus thus gave to his little disciple. Yet, dear young readers, perhaps you will be sorry to hear, though you need not be, that these weeks were but the beginning of troubles. The next great question was, "How can one who is accustomed to do evil learn to do well? Some years passed away—years marked by sad failure and bitter sorrow—before she even began to understand that in this too all her hope was in Jesus Christ; that in herself she was as utterly helpless here as in her first great difficulty; that as by faith she had laid hold of forgiveness and acceptance, so by faith she must continually