

## Props and Pillars Demolished.

(A stirring experience of an evangelist.)

By Rev. George C. Needham.

During one of my evangelistic tours in Ireland I had a very unusual experience. The place of appointment was in an Orange lodge, twelve miles from the railway station. After the long drive in a jaunting-car I found myself physically and mentally disabled. I was overworked, and did not know it until the collapse came suddenly.

When I reached the platform and faced that packed congregation, to whom I was a perfect stranger, brain and heart gave way. I did not faint nor fall, but kept on my feet by leaning against the desk.

After the opening hymn, I said something like this: 'Dear friends, I cannot speak to you to-night. I am utterly prostrated. I cannot think. Why God permitted me to come here and be humiliated before you I do not know. He knows, and I can trust him. I will read a few passages from his word, and you will go on with the meeting. I will read first what God declares about sin, and what he testifies concerning salvation. Let us expect the power of the Holy Spirit to make his word effective.'

With faltering voice, and body trembling with weakness, I read these scriptures on sin:—

Rom. 3: 9-11—'What, then? are we better than they? No, in no wise for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.'

Rom. 3: 19-20:—'Now we know that what things, soever, the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.'

Gal. 3: 10, 11:—'For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith.'

The following I read on salvation:

Rom. 5: 6: — 'For, when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.'

Gal. 3: 13: — 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.'

Isa. 53: 4-6:—'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.'

Acts 16: 30, 31:—'And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.'

John 3: 16:—'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

1 Tim. 1: 15:—'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief.'

After reading these magnificent texts I sat down. A deep hush was upon us. I felt enveloped with a strange power which made me insensible to physical weariness. My soul rested in God. Jesus was very real and precious.

There were moments of silence while a potent spell held the people. A solemn awe fell upon them which subdued every soul.

Then, suddenly, a piercing scream broke the stillness, while a young lady stood up reaching both hands heavenward. Some one whispered, 'Water!' Another cried, 'Fresh air!' but she held them in check with the reply: 'No, no. I want Jesus.'

Immediately a groan was heard as a strong man fell prone in the aisle, and then another, and yet another. Possibly one hundred men and women were now weeping, praying, and confessing their sins.

A sweet calm pervaded my whole being; I was not a stranger to such manifestations of the Holy Spirit. And, leaving the people to his oversight, I slipped out by a side door.

While walking over the field to the public road where my carriage awaited me, I heard footsteps behind me. Looking backward, I saw, by the light of a full moon, an elderly man on my track. He soon overtook me, and after customary salutations I inquired whether he had been at the meeting, to which he vigorously replied: 'Yes, sir, and I found it good to be there. I can truly say it was a blessed service for me.'

Then followed this conversation.

'I hope you have peace with God, and that you are a saved man.'

'Blessed be God, I can indeed say that I have peace with God through my Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to his holy name.'

'Glory be to his name indeed, for his great love wherewith he loved us. It is cheering to meet with fellow-travellers to the heavenly city. I suppose you have been for many years a child of God.'

'For many years it was my hope that I would become one of God's children, but now it is more than a hope. I know whom I have believed, and can look up to-night and say 'Abba, Father.' Here the old man looked towards the full-orbed moon, while the tears rolled down his cheeks.

After a moment of silence he thus soliloquized, apparently unconscious of my presence: 'Yes, yes, bless the good Lord, I know it now! I know it! I am saved! To him be all the glory. He led me to trust in him alone as my saviour. I cannot deny his finished work. I do believe him when he said, "It is finished." Oh, my Jesus —.' The venerable man was now overcome with emotion.

We stood in silence a few minutes, when he dried his tears, and with a steady voice said: 'I will tell you all, sir. For forty years I have been clerk of the church (Episcopalian) in this parish. I believed Jesus Christ was the only saviour for guilty sinners, and that he died to save us; yet I supposed that was not sufficient for my salvation. I must do something to save myself. I held many discussions with preachers and laymen, always arguing that every sinner must do his part, that he must try to make himself worthy, and have some merit to offer; then he could get some benefit from the Saviour. I had been erecting pillars and props for many years, out of my virtues and character, to lift my soul towards God. I read prayers and responses in the church, with, as I thought, a good heart. I harmed no man. I abstained from dissipation, and supposed myself to be a

more highly moral man than our rector. My motto was "God helps those who help themselves." During these years I was a Pharisee. I did not know, indeed, that I was a ruined and guilty man; a poor, deceived, religious sinner, going down to the lake of fire. But it is all clear to me now. Oh, sir, the words you read to-night out of the blessed bible convicted me. That message came as a great sledge-hammer, breaking to pieces my props and pillars of many years' building, and a little while since, in yonder lodge, I dropped into the arms of the Lord Jesus just as I was. I understood then, that a sinner is not justified by his works; that only by grace we are saved. I can see now how the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin; that not by any merit of mine am I made meet for the kingdom. Nor do I fear the judgment day now, because he said, 'Whosoever believeth in me shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'My hope now,' added this young-old convert, 'is that I may be the means of leading other deluded souls to the almighty saviour.' — 'Golden Rule'

Narbeth, Penn.

## A Cheerful Money-Raising.

My Dear Miss —: You asked me to tell you about our cheerful little money-raising the other day, and I am not slow to respond, as our experience may help some other bodies.

For a year or two past, our pledge to the Woman's Board has not collected itself easily. We had pledged some hundreds and a fraction. The hundreds came easily by canvassing; but the fraction, a large one, caused us anxiety, and finally anguish of spirit, as fractions always did of old.

Last year we essayed an entertainment. A sober, respectable little affair it was, such as became the middle-aged ladies who largely compose our auxiliary. Instead, however, of entering into it with fire and zeal, as is the wont of our Young Ladies' Auxiliary, we took up the burden with a sigh, and carried it with painstaking heaviness. Somehow it didn't kindle a great deal of enthusiasm in our cause, and the proceeds failed to cover the whole amount of our deficiency.

This year our annual meeting approached again, and we began to see the not unfamiliar cloud over the face of our treasurer. 'We are behind again,' she said; and the president and vice-president looked into each other's faces for light, and found none. Finally, one gloomy morning in November, when days seemed dark and friends few, our president said, 'We shall have to let our balance go by default. We cannot make it up.' 'Never!' cried the vice-president, righteously indignant; 'we will do something. Let us have a supper and call it a banquet.' 'Might call it a court reception,' suggested another officer, drily. 'No; but we will really have a nice, dainty supper, with pretty china, and toothsome eatables, and charge a good price.' And our vice-president expatiated upon the advantages of a social hour around a tasteful supper—I mean banquet.

The ladies did not seem to catch her enthusiasm, but finally one said, with a doleful cadence, 'We can but try!' Now, 'can but try' is sure death to anything it undertakes. Still, these devoted officers were ready to enter upon the banquet in the same martyr spirit that had characterized their effort the year before. 'Suppose we submit our perplexities to a limited number of our ladies, and ask advice,' said the president. 'Also, suppose we find, by a little effort, how much our deficiency can be reduced,