

leads you by the hand, you will go far astray.

3. *That the Lord employs diverse means for accomplishing the same end.* In the case of Blind Bartimeus, Jesus but spake the word, and the cure was effected. Here, however, there was the interposition of means; but the result was the same. So in conversion, or the cure of spiritual blindness, the means employed is the word; but the ways, in which the Spirit applies that word to the sinner's heart and conscience, are various.

4. *The restoration of Spiritual sight is generally gradual.* As in the works of nature, so is it in the works of grace. The law is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." As the believer advances, the things, of which faith is the evidence, become more real, more distinct.

6. *Beware of despising gospel privileges.* The inhabitants of Bethsaida had lightly esteemed the Saviour. The miracle was therefore performed without their town, and the man was forbidden to give them the intelligence of it. If we do not improve the means of grace, our candle may be speedily removed.

CHARACTER IS EVERYTHING.

In a house in which I am well acquainted there was a servant, who was a regular jack-of-all-trades. He was the cleverest fellow about the house and premises that ever was. The establishment was a small one, and it makes all the difference in the world in small establishments whether the one man has a handy set of fingers or whether he is all thumbs. Richard Phillips had handy fingers, and no mistake. He cleaned the horse, and milked the cow, and fed the pigs and chickens. If a job had to be done indoors, he used to do it. By Richard were the winter curtains taken down and the muslin ones put into their place. He took up the carpets, beat them and put them down again. There was, I think, no available carpenter in the village, and as long as Richard remained in his situation the loss was little felt. He used to brew the beer, and to stow away the wine. He could take a turn at the mangle when he had nothing else to do; and one summer when the gardener took it into his head to walk off the premises without notice, because his employer objected to his staying away from his work for a whole day at some neighbouring races, Richard

cheerfully undertook all the garden work with his master's help, till a new gardener could be found.

"Dear me," I hear you say, "what a treasure of a man that Richard was!"

But wait a bit; do not decide too soon. This was, as I have heard, the common opinion about Richard. He went one day to meet a gentleman at the railway station. This gentleman chatted with Richard on the road, and said on his arrival: "What a capital fellow that is! He is one of nature's aristocracy."

Ay, and so I have no doubt he was, if only he had kept from one bad habit. But his master discovered, after a while, that when Richard left the premises at night, it was very often not to go home, but to betake himself to the "Fox." His master spoke kindly to him, and warned him of the consequences. He had a very large family, all dependent on his labour. He had, I believe, high wages, good clothes, and many presents. But all was of no avail. The visits to the "Fox" grew more frequent. Innumerable evils followed.—Richard, I said, looked after the house, and he took to stealing the oats. He milked the cows, and wasted the milk. He fed the chickens, and robbed the master of the eggs. He pretended to feed the pigs, but carried their food to his own. He brewed the beer, and helped to drink it.—When he came to meet his master at the station, he was unfit to drive him home. Poor Richard! There were great lamentations over him, and many efforts for his recovery. But they were all useless. He was at length dismissed after many warnings. I am told that he is often to be met with in the village—Such an altered man! No smartness now; no light elastic movements. He has sunk, I believe, into a mere drudge on a neighbouring farm, at very different wages from what he received from his first employer. He forgot that *character was everything*.

Richard, as I found on one of my visits, was succeeded by William, a regular—shire rustic. Slow, heavy-heeled, with five thumbs on each hand, and knowledge of the most limited amount. There is a description of such a person, given by the son of Sirach: "How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occur-