

PROVIDENCE IN LITTLE THINGS.



SUDDEN shower in the streets of London drives a number of persons under a covered gateway for shelter. The thing is common; but on one occasion, among the persons taking shelter were two men, one resolved by the grace of God to try to do good in every situation; the other, prepared by previous exercises of mind to receive instruction on matters involving his everlasting interests. The two men were strangers to each other.

The shelter which al. will need "in the great and terrible day of the Lord," but which many will seek in vain, presented a topic on which one might appropriately speak and the other listen. He did listen—was impressed—saw in the shelter spoken of exactly what he wanted—betook himself from that time to the Redeemer, and enjoyed a consciousness of safety and peace. Soon afterwards he was called to the ministry, and now very usefully preaches the truth which he had been brought in that covered gateway to receive. May not this usefulness be traced to the little un-noteworthy circumstance of a sudden shower on a summer's day?

So again, a valued minister of the Gospel was returning from a missionary tour in the west of England by the railway. During the first half of the journey he had occupied a seat among gentlemen whom he did not know, and who did not seem inclined to converse.

When the train stopped for refreshment, he met a friend upon the platform who was travelling by the same train, and who had occupied a seat alone in another carriage. They joined each other for the remainder of the journey. All this involved nothing specially worthy of note.

Within a few minutes of starting, however, an accident occurred to the train, dashing in pieces the carriage which the minister had left, and was fatal to a gentleman who had taken his vacated seat. Trivial as it may seem for friends to meet in such a manner, and henceforward travel together, in that small thing there was evidently that Hand under whose direction the spheres roll and the sparrows fly.

The doctrine, well established and believed, that God's providence guides and controls the small as well as the great events of our history, is fraught with practical teaching. It places us at all times and in all circumstances in direct contact with God. We shall feel Him with us, and shall have comparatively little difficulty in obeying a precept like that which was

given to the patriarch: "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

God will be at our right hand; we shall not be moved. We shall be weaned from self-confidence, and shall commit our works and ways unto the Lord. Difficulties and straits will not hinder our trust in Him. We shall prosecute our duty in the various departments of life none the less vigorously because the result is with the Lord; and in that duty we shall mingle much of earnest supplication. Diligence and forethought will be regarded as putting us in the way of God's blessing, without which nothing is strong and nothing good.

Jacob, on the eve of his victorious wrestling with the angel, is an example of the truth we are now inculcating. Anxious when he heard the report of Esau and his four hundred men, he betook himself to prayer; but he also adopted the likeliest means of appeasing his brother's anger.

In like manner, David goes against the enemy of Israel in the name of Jehovah, thus expecting a victory; but his sling and stones were regarded as indispensable. "To use means without respect to God is proudly to condemn Him; to depend on God without the use of means is irreligiously to tempt Him. In both we abuse His providence. In the one we disobey Him in not using the means He hath appointed; in the other we presumptuously repose upon Him for the encouragement of our laziness."



Caught in a shower.

A great happiness it is thus to trust the Lord in relation to the everyday engagements of life. It will lessen anxiety. It will stimulate to right action. It will induce contentment. It will encourage prayer. We shall feel that distance never puts us out of God's reach; darkness never hides us from His sight. Nothing is too great for Him to control; nothing too small for Him to guide. We shall have a friend near whom we can always consult—on whose wisdom and kindness we may place unlimited dependence; and we shall be under a protection in all scenes of temptation, effectually shielding us from mischief. Some such trust is indicated in the resolve of the Psalmist: "I will go in the strength of the Lord God;" and to this trust the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers: "Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

And this realising of God's hand in little things