

Bethany Home, Toronto by Mrs. R. I. Fletcher

AFTER knowing Christ as my Savior since my girlhood, and being engaged in Christian work of different kinds for some time, I was laid upon a bed of affliction for years, from which neither friends nor physicians ever expected me to rise; but God showed me that He would raise me up some day, to do a work for Him. Want of space forbids me telling of the wonderful way God Himself taught the divine healing, but a full account of His marvelous guidance and teaching all through my illness, can now be had in tract form.

When the Lord raised me up He gave me my commission for life. "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." This I thought to mean home mission work—a work very dear to me, and for which I thanked God most heartily. Forthwith, I took an active part in connection with the Mission Union of this city; but, by degrees, God showed me I was not in the place He wanted me to be. He laid upon my heart the necessity for such a Home as He has now established, by the cry coming from a distance, from several of His own children who were seeking light upon the truths of sanctification and divine healing.

Then the Lord called me to visit strangers, who, while in their own homes, had heard of

wonderful healing, and had come to the city to inquire into the truth, and to receive benefit there from. They were obliged to go to boarding houses. One day, while returning from visiting such a one my heart cried out. Immediately, as though confronted by a spirit in human form, the words came swift and clear. "Perhaps the hindrance is in yourself." I answered, "How can that be! I'm sure I would like to see a home established, but mine is the highway and hedge work." (I interpreted this as home-mission work.) Then the Lord led me to see what a highway and hedge work there was to be done in connection with divine healing, by leading me to visit several sick ones to, present the Lord as the Healer. In three instances, I found they required Christ as the Savior instead (or rather *first*). And in other instances the nurses were converted, and thus the Lord was fulfilling the longing desire of my heart by giving me souls for Jesus". The Home was more than ever laid upon me.

Fearful lest I should make a misstep, I cried to God to show me my He work through His Word, and taking my Bible He gave me Isaiah 58:5-12, particularly verse 7, which was God's voice speaking to my inmost soul, "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are

afflicted (margin) to thy house. My heart replied, "Father I've no house to which to bring them. "The Spirit promptly answered, "God has plenty." Then I said, "Father, I've no means for such an undertaking." Then the Spirit whispered, "The silver is mine the gold also is mine, saith the Lord." And from that day (October 10, 1888) I knew definitely my lifework. While waiting upon God to know what He would have me do in the matter, He gave, "Choose thou a place." Then I said, " Lord, if you want me to step forward now, just send the means at once as a token." That week ten dollars came "for a home." Still I hesitated and waited, and asked the Lord to send in more as a sign. He then sent five dollars.

Then I attended a convention of Christian workers at Buffalo, and my heart once more yearned for mission work, and great fields of usefulness seemed to open up, and I felt as if God might let me undertake this work, so dear to my heart, and appoint someone else to open a home, and He had to reprove me severely by giving me Exodus 22:29, 30. Then I saw I was frustrating God's plan concerning my life, and that He wanted me -'to stand in the gap to ' make up the hedge" that God had set about His people, saying, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, I will put none of these diseases upon thee," etc., Exodus 15:26. A hedge which had been broken down by man stepping in and saying, "All these

promises are for an age that is past and gone; the day of miracles is over; the anointing was for the apostolic age alone." If anywhere in the Bible you can find that Gad says so, then believe those promises restricted by a certain age. If not, just ask God to teach you what He wants you to believe. Then I sought God's forgiveness, and prayed that He would make me willing to be used by Him in *His own way*.

Then the command came again, "Choose thou a place." When I asked where He would have me go, at once the name of one of the poorest streets in our city was given. My heart sank within me; nevertheless I set out, and as I walked that street, I cried out, "Father, no *respectable* person would live on such a street; no respectable invalid would come to stay with me! Then think of these surroundings for my children—surely thou dost not require *all* this of me?" On reaching the end of the street I found there was not a single house "to let."

Then the enemy suggested that this guidance was not of the Lord, but, since giving us our pretty home on Maitland Street, the Lord asked me, "What lesson did you learn that day?" and, in reviewing it all, I found what emptying there had been of self, what humbling of pride, until, before I left that street that day, God had enabled me to say, "Anywhere, anywhere, Lord Jesus, as long as it is with thee, and in the place where thou dost want to use me."

After visiting many vacant houses, and meeting with discouragements, I at last received an offer to purchase some furniture at a very low figure, from a lady who was giving up housekeeping. I took it all to the Lord in prayer, and He gave me the assurance that I should have that furniture, amounting to about \$136, although I had only \$16 toward the purchase. Then He showed me I must see the agent and make an offer for the house at a much lower rent for three months (as it was a bad season of the year to rent houses), and, after waiting and praying that God would not allow the agent to accept the offer unless He wanted that house Himself for His own glory, at last the answer came that the offer *had* been accepted. For a few moments, the flesh failed me, and I greatly shrank from taking any step in the matter. I poured out my heart to the Lord, and He gave me, "Faith without works is dead." Then I said, "Father, you want me to act; but remember the solemn vow I made long ago never to go into debt. Would you ask me to break it!" Nevertheless, the command was "forwards. Then, bowing my head to the very ground, I uttered the words, " Father, at *Thy* command I go forward to take all in *Thy Name*." As soon as the last words had passed my lips, the Spirit came with such a sweet revelation: " When you are authorized to purchase in another's name, does not that one then become responsible for the amount," And I exclaimed, " Father, forgive me, I've been limiting

thee." Then came, "*God shall supply all your need.*" And my heart cried out, " Why, there is the bank check" Then He asked, "Now, is it going into debt when you have *your* Father's check for the amount?" And I went forward, trusting in God to meet a payment of about \$200 with only \$15 in my possession.

So here we are in Bethany Home, and it is very sweet to receive everything direct from God's hand. It is really wonderful how God has been supplying our every need by way of means, furniture and provisions; and it is such unspeakable, indescribable soul rest to one who is just in the place God has planned that she should be. Before coming here, and while visiting vacant houses, He asked me, "If God bide it, and you were in a vacant house, with nothing to sit on but a packing-box, and next thing to starving, could you still look up and say, ' I know I'm in the right place?'" And from the depths of my heart I could say, "Yes, Father." Then He asked, "If I still withhold this revelation from my most honored servants, to whom I delight to reveal my will, could you still go forward, saying this is the Lord's work; He has called you to it and bids you go forward now? And with my whole soul, I cried out, "Lord, though a host should encamp against me, in this will I be confident."

Now I see why God left me without a single earthly prop upon which to lean, and why I received

so little encouragement from anyone. He wanted to teach me to lean upon Himself alone. And among many other precious and wonderful promises He gave me, " I, the Lord thy God, will hold thine right hand, saying unto thee: Fear not, I will help thee."

He has since raised up a companion in the kingdom, Miss Griffiths, and together we visit the sick, and administer both spiritual and bodily comfort to the sufferers whom the Lord sends in. We hold the Home as a sacred trust for Him. It is His, not ours, The Lord would not allow us to make any terms, showing me that the guests were His, and must to Him answer the question, " How much owest thou thy Lord?"

"Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

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