

# The Cobbler

*This extract is taken from the third book "The Ministry of Heaven" in the series "Life Beyond The Veil" written down by the Rev. G. Vale Owen in his Church Vestry on Thursday, November 15th, 1917.*

A cobbler who earned just enough to pay his dues and had nought over when his burial fees were paid came over here many years ago, as you say it. He was received soberly by a small group of friends, and was well content that they had borne him so much in mind as to come so far as to earth to show him his way to the sphere where he would go. It was one of those near earth, not a high one, and, as I say, he was well content. For there he found peace after much toil and weariness and his battle with poverty, and leisure to go and see the various interesting sights and places of that sphere. To him it was heaven indeed, and all were kind to him, and he was very happy in their company.

One day, to use your earth phrasing, a Lord from a higher sphere came along the street where was his home and went within. He found the cobbler reading out of a book which he had found in the house when he was taken there and told it was his home. The Angel Lord called him by his name of earth - I do not remember what - and the cobbler arose.

"What read you, my friend?" the Angel asked him.

The man made answer thus, "It is nought of much interest to me, sir, that I read. It is but just within my comprehension, indeed, for it was evidently written not for people of this sphere but of one much higher".

"To what end was it written?" the Angel asked again and he replied, "Sir, it tells of high estate and enterprise, of the ordering of great companies of men and women in those spheres above us in the service of the One Father. These people, I find, were once of nations and faiths diverse one from another, for so the manner their speech would seem to show. But to the writer of this book they do not seem diverse any more, for they have, by long training and much progress, come together as a band of brethren, and there be no longer any divisions among them to divide them, neither in affection one for another, nor in reasonable understanding. They are at unity of purpose and service and desire. By that I judge that the life herein written of is not of this sphere, but of one far above this.

The book, moreover, is of instruction, not even for that bright company, but rather for the guidance of leaders among them, for it tells of statesmanship and of high rule, and of the wisdom required of those who lead. For this reason, sir, it is not of interest to me presently, but it may be in some long distant age. How the book came here I cannot tell."

Then the Angel Lord took the book and closed it and handed it to the cobbler silently, and, as he took it from the Angel's hand, his cheeks flushed red in great confusion, for blazing upon the cover, were gems of ruby and of white whose order of spelling flashed back his name in light and fire.

"But I did not see it, sir," he said. "I did not see my name thereon until but now."

"Yet it is yours, and you see," the Angel said, "and so for your instruction. For know you, my friend, this sphere is but a resting place for you. Now you have rested you must begin your work, and that not here, but in that higher sphere of which this book tells and in which it was written."

The cobbler faltered in his speech, for he was afraid, and shrank back and bent his head before the Angel's words. This only could he say, "I am a cobbler, sir; I am not a leader of men. And I am content with a humble place in this bright home which is heaven indeed for such as I."

But the Angel said, "Now, for that saying alone you should have advancement. For you must know that true humility is one of the surest shields and safeguards of those who stand in high places to rule. But you have more weapons than this shield of humility, which is protective in a passive way. Weapons of offence also you have been tempering and sharpening in that life on earth. When you made boots, your thoughts were to make them so that they would endure long wear and so ease the purse of the poor buyer of them. You thought more of this than of the price you would be paid. That, indeed, you made a rule; that rule grew into you and became part of your character. Here such a virtue is not lightly esteemed.

"Again, though hard pressed to pay your dues, yet from time to time you gave an hour out of daylight to help some friend to gather in his harvest, to plant his plot of ground, to thatch his roof or rick, or perchance, to watch some sick man by his bedside. The hours thus given you restored by candle-light, for you were poor. This also was noted from this side by reason of the growing brightness of your soul, as we can see the world of men from our vantage-point, where the light of the spheres, sweeping over our shoulders, from behind, strikes on those in the earth life and is reflected back by the virtues in men, and finds no reflector in their vices. So the souls of those who live well are lightened, but dark and sombre show the souls of those who live ill lives.

"Other things I could tell you of what you did and why. But let these suffice, while I tell you now of my message. In the sphere of which this book tells, there awaits you a company of people. They have been trained and organised. Their mission is to visit a sphere near earth from time to time and to receive from the hands of those who bring them the spirits who have lately come over. Their task is to study these new-comers and to allot to each his proper place and to send him there by a band of helpers who attend for that purpose. They are ready to start at any time and have only been awaiting their leader. Come, good friend, and I will show you the way to them where they await you."

Then the cobbler knelt down and put his forehead upon the ground at the Angel's feet and wept and said "If I were worthy, sir, for this great service. But, alas, I am not worthy, Nor do I know this company, nor whether they would follow me."

And the Angel Lord replied, "The message comes from Him Who cannot err in choice of person. Come, you will not find a band of strangers there. For often when your tired body slept you were led into that same sphere, aye, even in your earth life this was done. There you, too, were trained, and there you learned, first to obey, and later to command. You will know them well when you see them, and they also know you well. He will be your strength, and you shall do valiantly."

Then he led him forth of the house and down the street and up the mountain pass beyond. And as they went his dress became brighter and lighter in texture, and his body gained somewhat in stature and very much in lustre, and, as they went ascending, so the cobbler was gradually left behind, and the Prince and Leader emerged.

After a long journey and a very pleasant one, much drawn out in order that the change be the more gently wrought, they came to the company. He recognised them one and all, and they, on their part, came and stood before him, and he knew he could lead them well for the lovelight he saw in their eyes.

This extract is published on the Internet by kind permission of the Greater World Association (3-5 Conway Street, London. W1P 5HA) who own the copyright to and sell the Vale Owen Books.