

the hands of persecuting tyrants by the victories of Constantine, they praised God for his goodness, and the glorious success and establishment of Christ's religion, no words were found so exquisitely adapted to the purpose, as those of David, in the *xvii. xxviii* and other Psalms—"Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, and praise his name, be telling of his salvation from day to day. Declare his honour unto the heathen, his worship unto all people,"—&c. &c. &c. In these, and the like Psalms, we continue to praise God, for all his spiritual mercies in Christ, to this day.

For the Colonial Churchman.

PASTORAL CONVERSATIONS.

THE UNBELIEVER.

Some time ago whilst riding slowly along the road in a distant part of my parish, I heard a voice behind me murmuring out something in the shape of a well-known musical air. Presently the words—"Good morning, Parson!"—greeted my ear.

"Good morning!" I replied, turning round and recognizing the speaker. "How do ye do, Mr. C.? How is Mrs. C. and all your family?"

"Pretty well, thank'y Sir. Only Mrs. C. is complainin' a good deal, since her mother died."

"Indeed: I am sorry to hear that."
"Yes, Sir. You see, she was so anxious like, and fatigued herself so much by sittin' up night after night while her mother was ailin' that we are a' most afraid of what 'll be the consequence."

"I am extremely sorry to hear this account of Mrs. C.'s health. I will make it my endeavour to see her as soon as possible."

"Thank'y, Sir," said he, urging on his horse, and passing me.

"Stop a minute," said I, "I want to speak with you on a subject which cannot but be interesting to you."

"What is that?" he enjoined.
I answered by asking another question—"How is it that I never see you at Church, Mr. C.? Are you a dissenter? or do you go to any place of worship at all?"

"Indeed, Sir," he replied—"I can easily tell you how it is. My father was a most an excellent man; brought us up well—and went constant to meetin'. But ever sin' we removed to the distant back place, meetin' was so far off, that we seldom none of us went; except in the winter time, now and then when there was good goin'. Since he died things war'nt very smooth with me: and so I left off goin' altogether. And for my part I think I get on in them 'erc matters as well as them, as are goin' to meetin' always."

All this was spoken with an air of careless indifference, which gave me great concern: so I replied—"I regret to hear you speak in that way of the duties of Religion, Mr. C. For it is impossible that religion can prosper or grow in the human heart, unless it be frequently watered and refreshed by the dews of heaven, which are to be gathered in the house of God."

"I daresay, it's all very well, Sir. But to tell ye the matter o' fact at once, I do'nt believe there's any use in religion at all."

"What! Mr. C.—is it possible that you can entertain for a moment such an enormous—such a dangerous opinion. You! who according to your own account have been well brought up, and known something of christianity from your earliest youth."

"To be sure I'm sometimes angry with myself for thinkin' so: but I cannot help it. You see, they tell me there's a God: but how can I believe it, when I never saw him?"

"Will you allow me to explain to you some of the grounds on which that great truth is founded?"

"Surely, Sir; and will be obliged to you."

"Well: look around you. There is the sun in heaven; there is the trees of the forest on the right and on the left of us. Here is a well of water; and there is a large rock. Now whence have all these come? Who made them? They could not of course make themselves. How then were they created?"

"God, I know, created them: but that is not exactly what I mean?"

"What do you mean then? For you now admit that there is a God, although you said a little ago, that you could not believe it?"

"Yes: but I mean, how can we know that it is any great matter whether we believe or not, that there is a God?"

"Ah: I understand you. You seem to think, that although there be a God, still the fact is a matter of perfect indifference to us as beings, who live to-day and die to-morrow."

"Just so: that's my opinion."

"If we were to live and die like the beasts that perish, of course we might treat the fact of God's existence with indifference: but you must know, my friend, that there is a principle in man, which lives forever,—a soul which will live after death, and forever."

"Well so I heard: but how am I to know this?"

"You need not go far for an illustration. Look at the horse you are now riding. He is much stronger than either or both of us. But you can lead him, and do what you like with him."

"Yes: I can."

"Well: that proves your superiority over, not only him, but the whole brute creation. Now what is it that gives you this superiority. It is neither power, nor strength, nor agility: what is it then?"

"I do'nt know what to call it: but I know that I can manage the wildest horse as ever was."

"Well: perhaps you can: but the means by which you can accomplish that management is "reason:" you can think, and judge, and plan, and contrive,—which a horse cannot. Now, the principle of reason is nearly allied to the soul, which is immortal. I do not mean to say that *reason* and *soul* are both the same; but they are so nearly allied that I could not explain the difference to you without entering into a tedious discussion. It is only necessary therefore that I repeat what I said before, which is—that reason not only gives you superiority over every brute animal, but, also proves the future existence of the soul."

"How is that?"

"Just consider: reason, or the power of thinking, proves that the mind can exist independently of the body—that is, that the soul is distinct from the body: because, while we are here, our thoughts may be at the other end of the world. Therefore, when the body dies, the soul will be separated from it, and will live."

"It may be so: I can't gainsay you, Sir."

"Besides it is God who gives the soul to man—God who made the sun and the heavens—the earth, and all it contains; and no doubt he will ask an account of both you and me as to the use we have made of our life here."

"Now that is what I do'nt understand."

"Indeed. Listen then. You own a waggon, do you not?"

"I do: but it's a very old rickety thing."

"I suppose you consider yourself at liberty to do just what you please with the said waggon. If it is a good one you take care of it, and preserve it as long as you can: if it is a bad one, you burn it, or destroy it in some other way."

"That is just what I'd do."

"Well: in the very same way God, who in fact is the owner,—or, rather the Giver of the soul, will just do what he likes with it. If it is good, he will preserve it: if it is bad, he will burn it with unquenchable fire."

"I am very much concerned, Sir, to hear all this. I should like to have some more talk with you on these subjects."

"It is likely I'll call and see Mrs. C. in a day or two, and then we can renew our conversation. In the mean time you can read your Bible, and pray God to open your heart and understanding."

For the Colonial Churchman.

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

It was on a dark and stormy night, homeward bound that I was standing on the quarter deck of a brig which I had the command, when I heard the momentous words—"prepare to meet thy God," uttered by the man at the helm, near whom I was standing. I had observed in him during the voyage a serious and thoughtful behaviour, which I am sorry to say seldom witnessed in men of his occupation; and he struck me the more forcibly, and was often the subject of my thoughts. I had several times endeavoured to draw him into conversation, in order to ascertain whether his serious deportment arose from a conviction of sin, and a resolution consequent thereon to live a more holy and religious life;—or whether it proceeded from some other cause. But I never succeeded in my attempts, whether it was owing to his natural diffidence to enter into a religious conversation with his superior, or whether he was unable to define his feelings and give expression to them. Although I judged by his demeanour that there was a work of grace begun in his heart, I apprehended he was not as yet sufficiently enlightened to enable him to see clearly those things that make for his eternal peace.

I said to him, James (that was his name) "what awful words were those that I have just heard you utter?" His answer to me was, "oh! Sir they are indeed awful words, we shall all be lost this night, our doom is fixed." I asked him why he talked so strange and alarming a strain. "Sir," said he, "I have great cause to believe in what I have just said. Listen and you shall hear why I have talked so strange.—As I was standing this evening for a while keeping a look out, I heard distinctly through the roaring of the wind, a voice which whispered in my ear these words—"Prepare to meet thy God," and from that moment to the present they have been absent from my thoughts. Oh! sir, I shall never see the light of another day—my hours are numbered; and am I prepared, that is the question. Knowing that seamen in general are very superstitious, and this man in particular being of a very nervous cast, I thought that it proceeded from his imagination, as he perhaps had been thinking on the danger we were then exposed to.—It being a very dark and tempestuous night, I endeavored to calm his mind by telling him so, and that such direct warnings are not given to man at the present day. Our Lord and Saviour has said, "Ye do not know the day or the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." However, made me no reply. But I clearly saw that I had not succeeded in doing away with the impression on his mind, that he had received a supernatural warning of his approaching end.

We were then scudding under a close reefed main topsail and foresail. The wind was increasing every moment in violence; and the night was pitchy dark and awful in the extreme. I ordered the maintop to be taken in. It was clued up accordingly, the men were sent upon the yard to furl the top. They had not been there more than a few minutes when I observed something dark descend from the yard to the deck, with great rapidity;—and instantly I heard a sound, as if something heavy had fallen on the deck. I immediately ran to the spot, there I beheld poor James lying on the deck, moaning piteously. He had fallen from the topsail, where he had been helping to furl the sail, to the deck. I examined him, and found his thigh broken and other parts of his body dreadfully bruised: I immediately conveyed to the cabin, and placed him in one of the berths. The conversation we had together previous to this accident immediately occurred to my mind, and I mentally exclaimed, is his doom indeed come? I felt greatly alarmed, to think that the awful warning he had received, was about to be verified. After he was laid in the berth, I asked him how he felt. He told me he was in pain. "Oh! sir I was convinced that something would happen to me this night, remember my warning—I shall not see the light of another day. Oh! I shall soon be called away to give an account of my spent life; and how shall I appear before a guilty wretch as I am;—I who have so often