

There was a cold calmness about him, as he spoke, that appeared strange under the circumstances. With the knowledge I possessed of his outward life, this tranquillity might mean total indifference, or it might indicate settled confidence in God. His words, taken alone, would perhaps justify an unfavorable inference; but his manner created a difficulty in determining the state of his heart. Charity inclined me to explain words and appearances favourably; and, calling up the fact of his natural reserve to sustain the conclusion, I ventured to hope that the poor sufferer had long been a secret disciple of the Saviour. A minute longer, and I stood trembling to hear him speak.

"Safe then in Christ," I remarked.

"Christ? Christ is nothing to me."

"What preparation was it you referred to then?"

"I said, sir, as prepared as I should ever be."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that I am lost, and that without a hope."

This reply was given with great composure, very much in the manner of a person of great decision of character, when expressing an opinion which he wishes those interested to feel shall be final.

For an instant the thought occurred that his reason was unseated. What followed, however, abundantly proved that he possessed unimpaired the use of his mental faculties.

I caught at the word "lost" which he had just used in respect of himself, and said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save you, then, according to your own showing, if you will but turn to him for salvation. You know you are 'lost.' You also know that Christ came to rescue the 'lost.' Ask him to save you as a poor helpless and 'lost' sinner, and he will do so to the uttermost."

"I thank you, sir," he replied, "for the interest you take in me; but your words are useless. I am eternally lost. There is no such thing as salvation for me. There the matter must rest."

There was not a motion perceptible. All this was said with an apparently utter absence of feeling.

"Will you not," I continued, "pray for salvation, using as your plea God's mercy in Christ?"

"I have no wish to pray. I feel no concern at all about the matter. I know I must perish; but I feel no alarm, nor shall I, here."

"Do you believe that there is such a being as God, and that he will shortly be your Judge?"

"Yes, I know there is a God, and I believe he is great, and good, and just, and that HE WILL PUNISH THE UNGODLY."

"Then have you no fear?"

"None."

"Do you think of the fact that you must so quickly meet your Maker face to face?"

"I know that this will be the case, but I cannot say that I think much about it."

"Shall I pray for you? and will you try and lift up your heart to God with me?"

"Let me explain, sir. I did not send for you; the people down stairs did so without my wish. I entertain much respect towards you, and if I wished any one to do as you propose, I should like no one better; but to pray for me is simply useless. If to pray will gratify you, do so; I am indifferent."

We talked for a time. His attention was directed to the fearfulness of his condition, the necessity of repentance, and the possibility of it even in the last hour; to the infinite compassion of God, and his readiness to pardon *whosoever* may come to him through Jesus. After a while, conversation ceased, and he simply listened to what I said. There was more placidity in his face than I ever witnessed in any body after so much talk, even when the subject of conversation has been the most common-place.

When I paused, he talked for some minutes. The following are, as nearly as my memory retains them, his words:—

"You are very kind, and I thank you for your good wishes and your endeavors on my behalf; but you must not conclude that I am at all altered by anything you have said. As I told you before, so I say again, (for I wish to go out of the world honestly in this respect.) I have no desire at all to converse on matters of religion. Do not suppose your talking further would offend me; it is not that. I am so totally indifferent in respect to personal religion, that to allow you to spend more of your valuable time would be inconsiderate in me. If, however, you can remain, and would like to hear my own account of myself, I will give it you."

I expressed my readiness to listen.

"My father and my mother," he continued, "were, according to the best of my judgment, good people; by which I mean, people who feared and served God. They did much to bring me up religiously. The Scriptures I have known from my youth up. My parents were chiefly instrumental in making me very early in life intimately acquainted with the contents of the Bible. Their mode of bringing me up was not perfect; and, if my opinion were asked respecting where they chiefly erred in my training, I should certainly say that it was in paying too much respect to my boish opinions, and in treating me too much like a man while I was yet a child. I attended the Sunday school, and took considerable interest in it after I had reached manhood. The gospel was interesting to me, and I listened to it attentively and with feeling. I can remember some sermons under which I even wept; but it appears to me now very strange how so much feeling could ever have been excited