

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., . . . DECEMBER, 1895.

## EDITORIAL.

A PRAYER AND AN ANSWER FROM TWO  
CROSSES.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 42, 44.)

Three men were nailed to three crosses high enough from the earth to be seen by the multitude and near enough to be heard. Their lingering death gave them time to speak to each other. The death of the cross proclaimed the shameful criminality of the victims. Two of them were dying for their own sins, but one of them was dying for our sins. One of the sufferers spoke. He blamed not himself for his sufferings nor the law which demanded his death nor yet the men who executed that law. He blamed Jesus, denied his claims before men and joined the Jews in bitter revilings. For what did he blame him? For not working a miracle in defiance of law, of justice, and of rights human and divine, and allowing two thieves to escape from the cross with himself and give them full liberty to do as they had been doing. "You will not do that," he said, "and so you are not the Christ but an impostor." Jesus made him no reply. He had already declared the certain doom of him who denied him before men.

The other malefactor rebuked him for ungodliness, as if he had said, "What right have you to revile a man though he is condemned to the cross when you are in the same condemnation. We deserve this death, but this man has done nothing amiss." He then turned from the reviler to the reviled, to him whom he had just confessed before men, and prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

It was a short prayer, coming from the heart of a helpless burdened sinner. Such prayers are mostly short. Let us consider:

## I. The prayer.

II. The answer,—both coming from the cross.

I. *The prayer* It was from one in great need. The last sands of life were nearly through and in a few moments the cry would sound, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

His crimes were against God and man. To whom could he look for sympathy or help? Not to men who would all say, "We have no need of thieves. Society is better without them. The world can well spare them. Let them be crucified as a warning to others."

What could he expect from that God whose voice once shook the earth saying, "Thou shalt not steal." And yet this helpless, dying thief had hope, for without it his prayer would not be heard. Viewing them separately, he had nothing to expect from

man but hated repulsion, nothing from God but tribulation and wrath; but seeing in the man Christ Jesus the two natures sweetly blended, and that, too, to meet such cases as his, hope rose above all his woes. It was a divine illumination in that hour that shined upon his soul, showing him in awful simplicity just two things—his great need and the great love of his dying Saviour.

The great love of the Saviour was all-sufficient for his need as a great sinner, and it was the discovery of this, and his acceptance of that love, which gave him peace of soul and encouraged his cry for recognition. Then and there that very love was consummating its sacrifice for him, a guilty, dying man, and initiating him into that soul-clasp which unites the penitent believer to his loving Saviour. On two crosses a union began whose glory was to unfold forever. In this case that unfolding was not largely accomplished in time, because time was just closing and he prayed his dear Lord to remember him when the mortal strife was over, *his victories achieved, and his true character exhibited and acknowledged by the whole universe.*

II. *Jesus' Answer.* In the 72nd Psalm David gives this as a reason for the wide dominion and universal adoration to be enjoyed by Christ, the Son, when "all kings shall bow down before him and all nations shall worship him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him who hath no helper." Throughout his whole life Jesus maintained that character. How often was he reproached for his friendship to the needy and the helpless! But in his death, in *this as in other respects, his brightest glory shone.* When this poor dying man (poor in character and in every way helpless) cried unto him, his simple and ready and loving response evinced unspeakable compassion—a love sufficient to meet the most obdurate and to encourage the greatest sinner to plead for pardon. Jesus' answer was brief. Even before the man cried to him he knew what was in his heart, and he waited to be gracious. He said nothing to him of his past crimes, for he knew how bitterly he regretted his past life, and how anxiously he resolved to turn to the service of God. All this was naked and open to his eyes. He did not tell the people what he would do for the man, but eagerly addressed himself as his new bosom friend, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

O Man of Sorrows here we see  
The lost, forsaken, turn to thee;  
When every other helper fails  
He pleads with thee and then prevails.

Some one has wisely said "that we have been defending Christ long enough, it is now high time to declare him." What is greatly needed is more contending for the faith and less contending against the faithful. Such a contention would be using Satan's weapons for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

H. M.

## Original Contributions.

## THE BIBLE versus INFIDELITY.

W. H. HARDING.

## III.

My present theme is "The Unity and Harmony of the Bible." We observe the unity and harmony around us in nature, and are apt to say that nature is a unit. Chemistry tells us that the whole mineral kingdom is composed of about sixty elementary substances united in the most exact and definite proportions; and we know that there is a close connection between mineral and vegetable and animal kingdoms; leaving the earth, though composed of millions of atoms and inhabited by multitudes of species, one harmonious whole. Nor are we confined to the earth. This world, with a number of other planets, is bound to the sun by the power of attraction, forming what we call a (the) solar system; this system to other systems by the same power, until the whole forms one glorious, boundless universe. It is true that in this vast and sublime universe there may be some apparent discrepancies. Some plants are poisonous; some animals fierce and cruel; some planets move in one direction, some in another; their orbits are not all alike; but these very discrepancies (so called), only serve to promote the harmony and unite in one the entire universe. And so it is with the Bible. It has its elementary parts (if I may use the expression), but they blend together in one harmonious whole. This shows that the God of nature is the God of the Bible.

The Bible is the oldest and best book in the world. It is translated into more languages and read by more people than any other book that was ever written. Man, as he was, as he is, and as he will be, are its three great themes. It reveals God by unfolding the mysterious relations of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the three great works of creation, Providence and redemption.

The Bible is divided into two great departments, called Old and New Testaments—it would be more proper to say Old and New Covenants. These two great divisions are again sub-divided into sixty-six distinct books or pamphlets; thirty-nine constitute the Old or Jewish Covenant, and twenty-seven the New Covenant or Christian Scriptures. We put down the immediate writers of the Bible as not many less than forty. From the birth of Moses, the first writer, until the death of the Apostle John, the last writer, is a period of about sixteen hundred years. These books were, therefore, in progress of completion not less than fifteen hundred years, and grasp in their historic outlines a period of over four thousand years. A volume of such immense compass, and of such transcendent interest to mankind seems to possess claims upon the attention of every human being capable of appreciating its history, its prophecy, and its doctrine, above