

same time rapidly striking a wooden bell or tub, and then a copper one, and so on alternately for an hour or so, except sometimes he ceases to strike with the mallet, and rubs the beads together with both hands, and renders his voice finer or more slow and plaintive. This appears to be all the worship they have, and their belief is that the priest can and must do all the praying. There appears to be no solemnity attached to this service by the people or the priest, for go into a temple during prayer, and the priests get up and begins to laugh and asks questions, &c., the same as though we entered a shop. In short, I am informed that the people in general have no respect for their priests, but treat them as we would some outcast from society. The field for missionary labor must be unlimited here. I trust ere long that we shall see American enterprize exhibiting itself in Japan. Not long since, some of the leading officers of this government came to visit me on business, and their attention was attracted to a sacred picture or painting hanging on the wall. They asked me what it was intended to represent. Our Saviour in his mother's arms. They asked if people in our country had wings. I said no, they represented angels. 'Aha!' said they, 'angel! we have none in Japan,' manifesting the most perfect surprise and ignorance of beings like us having wings. I asked them if they would not like some here. They said, no, we like not angels.

"Yesterday, while these same officers were here discussing some question about my right to stay here, &c., the interpreter accidentally picked up the Bible lying on the table, and began to read aloud to me from the first chapter of Genesis; and he read four verses quite plain, and stopped, looked to me and said, 'What book is this?' I told him it was the Bible, the American book of religion, that all families had one, and it was the only book in the world that told how the world and he and I originated. I asked him to take it and keep it, but he declined, saying, 'I cannot, although I would be glad to do so,' and at this time he got such a look from the other officers as obliged him to close it at once and put it away. From what I have seen and what I can learn, I am convinced that the Bible and its teachings would produce a most wonderful and speedy change here, but whether or not the Emperor would allow of its promulgation here, is more than I can say. I am under the impression that he would resist it most firmly. I do hope that before this year ends, some will attempt to teach its principles here."

From the American Messenger.

OLD ALFRED.

This good old man was an African by birth, brought to this country very young. While still in the prime of life he was converted in the way he mentions below, and ripened into a most admirable Christian character. When I became pastor of my present charge upon the coast of South Carolina, I found him among its members, known and respected even by the godless, for his consistent, eminent holiness. The secret of it was, that having learned to read and write—rare accomplishments for a native African—he was a zealous, humble persevering student of the Bible.

One of the privileges allowed him in his age, was the use of a lamp in the dwelling-house of his master's family, where he could enjoy his evening devotions free from interruption. There, when he had completed his day's duties, he might be found kneeling at the table, with his open Bible before him, reading and praying, till, overcome by weariness and age, he slept.

About eighteen months ago, he had a paralytic stroke, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered. As fast as he could be persuaded to give them up, his duties were gently taken from him. Last winter another stroke brought him still lower; but he so far recovered as to come once more to God's house on his holy day. After that he sank almost steadily into the grave.

During his last illness, at old Alfred's request, his master sent a boat for me, that I might see him once more. It was a scene I shall never forget. He was in almost intolerable bodily distress—great oppression of breathing and violent pains—it was impossible for him to sit still or lie still. Great beads of sweat rolled from his forehead; one minute he propped himself upright in his arm-chair; the next, his head would fall upon his knee: but his peace was like a river.

Perceiving that my coming had somewhat excited him, I talked for some time of the Christian's comfort, commenting on some words of the twenty-third Psalm. As soon as he seemed calmer, I said, "Alfred, do you feel quite sure where you're going when you leave the world?" He looked at me very keenly for a moment, his piercing black eye shining under a gray eyebrow, and then, instead of answering my question directly, began to tell me of his youth. The story was broken in a manner indistinguishably touching by the groans his anguish forced from him. He spoke of being taken away from his country, "No fader, no moder—nobody to learn me for say, Our Fader," and landed friendless and sorrowful in this country. "One good old woman see me at las', tek pity on me, bring me for see 'em every night, 'ee read for me in de Bible, teach me Our Fader; de Lord bless 'm!" Then, as if suddenly remembering my question, he looked up through his agony with a radiant smile, a smile of victory and peace, saying,—"Oh no, massa, I don't doubt. I NEBER 'FRAID TO DIE, WHILE MY REDEEMER LIVE."

Some mention was made of his daughter, who was travelling in another state, and prevented by freshets in the rivers from returning. As soon as he understood the remark, he said in the most natural manner, "Oh, I give her to de Lord, long ago." She was a Christian, and he had no further anxieties about her. When I asked him if he had anything in his mind about which he particularly wished me to pray, he shook his head, but he showed the deepest feeling when prayer was offered for the impenitent members of his master's family.

Calling on him at another time, I said, while in the act of entering the room, "Well, Alfred, you must be very weary of suffering so long." "Me weary? No, massa; I not weary at all, not at all; I neber weary wid wat de Lord sen." Then throwing up his trembling hand, he exclaimed, "Beg Him to do 'ee will. I can wait on Him!" Said I, "Do you mean you are ready to go on suffering in this way?" "Ef He would please to tek m.," was the touching answer, the thin hands clasping almost in spite of him; "but I not weary massa; beg him to do 'ee will."

It has never been my lot to see that Christian grace so often talked of, yet so rare—*oneness with God*—so sublimely exemplified. God was all to old Alfred; comfort and life nothing in the comparison. His end was in perfect harmony with those scenes.

If the eyes of any of the impenitent who knew this saint shall rest upon this sketch, let them ponder these words: "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."