

## A PRISONER FOUND IN JAIL.

A REQUEST came through an officer to visit a prisoner in the jail. This is no unusual thing, and signifies generally nothing more than an urgent appeal for money to pay the fine or to furnish bail. And so while the summons was heeded it was not with any sanguine expectation of fruit. Inquiring at the office of the jail as to who the prisoner might be, the record was read off to us from the books: "John Kennedy *alias* Canfield, breaking and entering, cell No. 115." An old jail-bird, we thought to ourselves, whose last device is to light on an impressible minister and make a prey of him.

But, as we stood face to face with the captive looking through the iron bars, he surprised us by saying: "I have sent for you, reverend, because you have several times helped my poor wife in her trouble, and it seems like I knew you. What I want, reverend, is to confess my crime. I lied about it when they arrested me, said I didn't do it, and was determined to plead not guilty and stick it out. But, reverend, my mind has been totally changed since I came in here, and now I am determined to make a clean breast of it, sentence or no sentence, prison or no prison."

"And what has changed your mind?" I asked.

With a vehemence of manner which I cannot describe, he turned about, and seizing a Bible which lay on the table of his cell he held it out, exclaiming: "That is what did the business for me, reverend. I never knew there was such things into that book before. I have read it about all the time since I came in here. I tell you, reverend, it is wonderful; and if I had known that book before I shouldn't have been here now."

Thinking that all this might be a shrewd attempt of the culprit to impress me with his religiousness, I questioned him further.

"What have you found in this book which seems so wonderful?"

He then began searching through the pages of the Bible, many leaves of which I could see he had turned down, till finding the first Psalm, he put his finger on the first verse and exclaimed:

"Look at that, sir. That tells the story of my life exactly. I had a praying mother in the old country. She tried to bring me up well, but I very soon got with bad companions and went steadily down in sin, till I became one of the wickedest men living. But look, sir, how this book describes it." And then he read with great deliberation and strong emphasis: "Walketh in the counsel of the ungodly, standeth in the way of sinners, sitteth in the seat of the scornful." That's my history exactly, reverend. I tell you I never

dreamed there was such things into this book."

"But haven't you found anything in the book to give you help?" I asked.

Searching through the turned-down leaves again, he suddenly paused at the 18th Psalm and read: "'He sent from above, He took me and drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy.'" I tell you, sir," he continued, "that fits my case. Rum has been my strong enemy all my life. I have tried to get away from it, and sometimes have thought I had done so, but before I thought, it had me down again; and for months I would not see a sober day. But I was brought up to believe the Bible, and though I haven't looked into it since I was a boy in the old country, I know it is God's word, and when last night I read these words: 'He delivered me from my strong enemy,' I got down in my cell and cried half the night, 'O God! deliver me from my strong enemy'; and I believe he has heard me, and that hereafter I shall be a changed man."

"But," I replied, "you will not be able to stand unless your trust is solely in Jesus Christ, and not in any good resolutions of your own."

"I know it, reverend," he replied; and then with his open Bible we went into the blessed third of John, and read together its golden text: "He that believeth on the Son," all of which he drank in as good news from a far country. I cannot detail the entire interview. Enough to say that when prayer was proposed there was not the stolid mechanical response which is so often found in such cases. After I had prayed outside the grating, John Kennedy took up the strain inside. It was literally a prayer with strong crying and tears unto Him that is able to save, a lost sinner laying hold of a mighty Saviour. The interview was a prolonged one; and with the best judgment I am able to exercise, I have a strong conviction that whether in prison or out of prison, for the next years, John Kennedy will prove to be a regenerated man. The lesson from this experience is a rich one. How the Word of God finds the sinner! "I know the Bible is God's book," said the lamented Arthur Hallam, "because I find that it is man's book, because it fits into every turn and fold of the human heart."—*Dr. A. J. Gordon, in the Watchman.*

The duties one doesn't want to do he can't find time to do.

Christ shed tears three times, but he dried them hundreds of times.

The cruellest sentence in the English language is, "I don't care."