

Pastor and People.

THY LOVE TO ME.

Thy love to me, O Christ,
Thy love to me,
Not mine to Thee, I plead,
Not mine to Thee!
This is my comfort strong,
This is my only song,
Thy love to me.

Thy record I believe,
Thy word to me.
Thy love I now receive,
Full, changeless, free.
Love from the sinless Son,
Love to the sinful one,
Thy love to me.

Immortal love of Thine,
Thy sacrifice,
Infinite need of mine
Only supplies.
Streams of divinest power
Flow hour by hour,
Thy love to me.

Let me more clearly trace
Thy love to me,
See, in the Father's face,
His love to Thee.
Know as He loves the Son,
So dost Thou love Thine own,
Thy love to me.

—Mary C. Gates, in *N. Y. Independent*.

THE GOSPEL AFLOAT.

The experience of "my first Sunday at sea" opened up new possibilities. On Monday morning we rounded Tarifa Point, and entered the Bay of Gibraltar.

As we were gazing on the giant rock before us, and steaming slowly up to our anchorage, a seaman passed me in the discharge of some duty; and as he passed whispered a word of thanks for what he was pleased to call "kind words to poor Jack yesterday." This unexpected recognition led to reflection. "We have a short meeting for prayer in the saloon for the passengers; why not have something like this for the men 'for'ard'?" This was the thought which pressed itself upon me, and to which I determined, if possible, to give practical effect. Tuesday found us skirting the Spanish coast toward Cape de Gatta. We had hurriedly "done" Gibraltar, penetrating its wonderful "galleries," gazing with wonderment at the picturesque Moorish and Spanish costumes which filled its streets, and were now *en route* for Malta. I had come to the resolution to try the experiment of a service with the men that very night.

Between the hours of six and eight in the evening was what was called the "dog watch," that is a time of leisure for all but the few on that watch.

I laid my plans before the captain, and asked permission to put them into practice. He gave me *carte blanche* to do what I liked, cautioning me, however, that I might not receive as friendly a reception as I should like. I laid the matter before the Lord, and prayed for courage and wisdom in what was manifestly a difficult task. I had experience enough to know that if I won the confidence of the men, good might be done; if I made a false step, harm might be the issue. Very fearfully, I must confess it, did I venture to go "for'ard." Lounging around the "for'ard hatch" were thirty or forty men—seamen and firemen—engaged either in a variety of games, or watching the fortunes of the players. There were cards, dice and draughts. For some time I stood a spectator of their enjoyment, hazzarding a word ever and anon to some player who was garnishing a brilliant move of his opponent by an ugly oath. "Swearing won't help you to win the game." "No, no, sir" was the only response I could get.

After seeing several games concluded, I ventured to interpose, and said: "Now, men, suppose you and I have a chat together," pulling out a pocket-Bible as I spoke. Instantly the hatch was cleared, and to a man they scampered off to the starboard bulwark, as though a special interest had been suddenly born in a Peninsular and Oriental steamship which had been slowly making upon us all the day. I was left alone, the interest of the men being apparently riveted on a ship which they had seen many times during the day. The situation was not assuring; I felt dreadfully embarrassed and disheartened. Sitting down, however, on a camp-stool, and opening

my Bible, I waited. By and by the bo's'n's mate, by nickname, "Sandy"—a young fellow always the leader in anything daring or mischievous, and yet withal an honest, manly fellow—came, or rather "sidled" toward me, as though rather ashamed of himself. His example was quickly followed by two or three others. Noticing that those who came had put out their pipes, and fancying that this might be a hindrance to the others, I said: "I don't want to interfere with any man's pleasures; you can smoke and listen too." Thus reassured, the bulk of them came near, and lay on the deck or sat on the hatch around me. I reminded them that we were to be in the same ship for many weeks together, and, as we should always be ready to help one another, I was anxious to do them what little good I could. We were all away from home, our dear ones were far away from us, we were in common conditions of danger; brought hourly face to face with solemn evidences of the Creator, we might surely spend a few moments together in talking about God, and in talking with God for those we had left behind. "Are you willing," I asked, "that I take up a quarter of an hour of your leisure to read God's Word to you?" "Aye, aye, sir," was the fairly-general response. I read the story of the Prodigal Son, and applied it in the simplest and most practical way. On concluding my address, I asked permission to pray. The same ready response came. Smoking ceased, and caps were doffed as I rose to pray. As I commended the ship and its living freight to God, our wives and children and friends to the care of our faithful Father, there was solemn silence, broken only by the noise of the engines, and the splash of the waves.

The night, the sudden Mediterranean night, had stolen upon us before our little service was done. The crimson horizon cast a weird light upon the scene, and added to its solemnity. Before we separated, I made the proposition to come every evening, if they would consent to forfeit a quarter of an hour of their evening's leisure. To this they readily, and with acclamation, agreed. Their hearty "Good-night, sir," assured me that some little progress had been made in reaching the susceptible heart of "poor Jack"; and as I heard the shrill whistle of the bo's'n arranging the watches for the night, I felt that they would not be less faithful to their trust because of the little service which had preceded work.

The "dog watch services" became, henceforward, an institution of the ship. The second night opened up a pleasant surprise for me. On reaching the for'ard hatch, I found that sundry preparations had been made for the service. Seats had been improvised out of planks, and formed three sides of a square—my camp-stool being placed in the centre. Sandy, whose good-will I had evidently secured, announced to the occupants of the fo'c'stle the commencement of our service. Out they came, and, occupying the seats provided, formed a most respectful congregation. Distributing hymn-books among the men, we commenced our services with singing. It was singing! The deep bass from those broad-chested sailors rolled through the ship from fo'c'stle to the saloon. It brought the officers in a body to the bridge, and the passengers from their state-rooms, forming a large and most respectable auditory.

This order of things continued as long as the weather permitted. After a hot day, with the thermometer at ninety degrees in the shade, it was pleasant in the cool of the evening, before the copious dews began to fall, to meet thus, and offer our evening sacrifice. But calm gave place to storm, and our conditions of worship became impossible. With a ship plunging, rolling in a stormy sea, and taking in tons of water almost at every pitch, the open deck was no place for a service. But the earnestness of the seamen was tested by the determination not (as they said) "to be done out of their service by a breeze of wind." By dint of no inconsiderable labour in removing of spare stores in chain and cable from the fo'c'stle, they fitted up what they called "the church in the fo'c'stle." The arrangements were of a rather precarious character, as they often proved. A heavier lurch than usual would overturn their improvised forms, and roll a dozen men occasionally on the floor. It was often precarious for me. With all the sea legs possible for a landsman, in time of prayer I would be rolled over in a most undignified manner. It was all taken as a matter of course, and nothing like a jest found its place in our worship.

"The church in the fo'c'stle!"—it was a holy place. The sound of many waters—now loud as a thunder-peal, drowning all other sounds, now hushed into a moment's calm—impressed each meeting with a deep solemnity. How near one felt to God in these wild nights! How grand it seemed as human voices and the storm's hoarse roar mingled in one song of praise! It gave the old words a new form:

Jesus, where'er Thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.

During a fortnight's anchorage in Smyrna Bay, with the city before us, nestling on the slope of Mount Pagus, and with the sites of the churches in Asia sufficiently near for purposes of reference, I gave the crew short lectures on the "Seven Churches." At the close of the course I was told that it was incomplete, for there were eight churches in Asia—the eighth being "the church in the fo'c'stle." The "eighth," to them, was of more importance than all the others—it was their own.

Many a letter from distant seas have I received from these men, full of tender mention of that rough church and simple service—not a few of them dating their change of life from the fo'c'stle service, and all expressing deep longings for some kindred privilege in their present spheres.—*Rev. W. Scott, in Canadian Independent*.

PRAYER MEETING RESOLUTIONS.

1. I will make it a matter of conscience to attend—"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together."
2. I will endeavour to bring others—"Come thou with me, and we will do thee good."
3. As I enter the room I will ask the Saviour's presence—"We would see Jesus."
4. I will not choose a back seat—"How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."
5. I will not so seat myself as to keep others from the same pew—"Be courteous."
6. I will fix my attention upon worship and the Word—"This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, but their hearts are far from Me."
7. I will lead in prayer—"Ye also helping together by prayer for us."
8. I will otherwise take part—"Teaching and admonishing one another;" "Confess your faults one to another."
9. I will avoid critical thoughts of others who take part—"Judge not."
10. After the meeting I will greet as many as I courteously can—"Salute one another;" "Be kindly affectionate."

POWER OF THE ATONEMENT.

"We have the blood of Christ," said the dying Schleiermacher, as, in his last moments, he began to count up the grounds of his confidence on the brink of the invisible world. Here was a mind, unusually contemplative and profound, that had made the spiritual world its home, as it were, for many long years of theological study and reflection; that in its tone and temper seemed to be prepared to pass over into the supernatural realm without any misgivings or apprehensions; they had mused long, and speculated subtly upon the nature of moral evil; they had sounded the depths of reason and revelation with no short plummet line—here was a man who, now that death had actually come, and the responsible human will must now encounter holy justice face to face, found that nothing but the blood, the atonement of Jesus Christ, could calm the perturbations of his planet-like spirit. The errors and inadequate statements of his theological system, which cluster mostly about this very doctrine of expiation, are tacitly renounced in the implied confession of guiltiness, and need of atonement contained in these few simple words: "We have the blood of Christ."

It is related that Bishop Butler, in his last days, drawing nearer to that dread tribunal where the highest and the lowest must alike stand in judgment, trembled in spirit, and turned this way and that for tranquillity of conscience. One of his clergy, among other texts, quoted to him the words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." A flush of peace and joy passed, like the blind west wind, through his fevered conscience as he made answer: "I have read those words a thousand times, but I have never felt their meaning as now."—*Rev. Dr. W. G. F. Shedd*.