

of all, of oars in the rowlocks—a dull, thumping sound as some fishermen urged their boat along its way. And still I listened, and what I heard was the sound of music; and as the boat came nearer, there was borne to me across the waves the sound of singing.

Those fishermen were Christians, and even while tugging at the weary oar in the dark and lonely night they were cheering themselves with the sounds of Zion. I have changed the figure a little from David's valley of the shadow. I have brought it from the country down to the sea, but the teaching is the same. That song told upon me in a wonderful way. I cannot describe how that simple music came into me—those voices and that sound of the rowing. How the singing changed it all. Apart from the singing, that dull thumping on the rowlocks would only have told me of hard-toiling men tugging at the weary oar; but when the sound of the music came, that dull thump became a musical beat, and the whole of the drudgery of their work disappeared. It became the musical beat of that song with which they helped themselves along in their toilsome task. We are down here in the valley. We are out here upon the dark seas of time and sin; but as I stood upon the shore and listened, so God stands upon the eternal shore and listens. Sing this Psalm of quiet confidence. Sing this song in the darkness and in the night. It will tell on God, surely, as no other singing does. There is something peculiarly plaintive in singing that comes across the waters. The water takes a something out of it, and puts an exquisite something into it, which I cannot describe, but which we have all felt. So let us sing amid these seas of time and sin. The very winds will carry our songs. Let us send across to the great God who stands upon the shore our quiet psalm of hearty cheer. Let it rise in the darkness, and it will tell upon God's ear and tell upon His heart as even the mighty hallelujahs round the throne do not tell. Pull out this *vox humana* stop of the great organ, and let God hear it as we sing to Him this quiet psalm in the night of trouble and storm and adversity, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." We shall never be without cause for praise; not even in the shadowless land.

Our days of praise will ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
And immortality endures."

In this quiet, trustful confidence, may we have the Lord continuing with us at His Table!

THE INTERPRETATION OF SORROW.

BY J. R. MILLER, D. D., IN EVAN.

There will always be mysteries in sorrow. Men will always wonder what it means. It is impossible with our earthly limitations to understand it. Even the strongest Christian faith will have its questions, and many of its questions will have to remain unanswered until the horizon of life is widened and its light becomes fuller and clearer in heaven. Meanwhile, however, some of these questions may be at least partially answered, and grief's poignancy in some slight measure alleviated. And surely no smallest gleam of comfort should be withheld from the world that needs comfort so sorely, and cries out for it so hungrily.

Human hearts are the same everywhere. Sorrow's experiences, while strangely diverse, are yet alike in their general features. Wherever we listen to the suppressed voices of grief, we hear the same questions. What has been answer to one, will therefore be answer to thousands more. This is my only reason for writing these words. Recently, in one day two letters came to me from sorrowing ones, with questions. Whether any comfort was given in the private answers or not, it may be that the mere stating of the questions, with a few sentences concerning each, may be helpful to others who are carrying like burdens.

Here is a Christian man whose only son has been led away into sinful courses, swiftly descending to the saddest depths. The story is too painful to be told. In his sore distress the father, a godly man, a man of strong faith, and noble wisdom, cries out: "What is the comfort even of Christ and the Bible for me? How can I roll this burden of mine upon God? There are some things that even the richest, divinest comfort cannot do. For one thing, it cannot take away the pain of grief or sorrow. In this case, it cannot lift off the loving father's heart the burden of disappointment and anguish which he experiences in seeing his son swept away in the currents of temptation. No possible comfort can do that. The perfect peace in which God promises to keep those whose minds are stayed on Him, is not a painless peace in any case of suffering. That crushed father cannot expect a comfort which will make him forget his wandering, sinning child, or feel no more the poignant anguish which the boy's course causes in his heart. Father-love must be destroyed to make such comforting possible, and that would be a sorer calamity than any sorrow.

The comfort in such a grief, is that which comes through faith in God even in the sore pain. The child was given to God in his in-