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Communications.

For the Advocate.

The Great Amnesty.

BY REV. VICTORY BENNETT.
The President of these Confederate States has recently issued a proclamation, in which he offers a general pardon to all offenders in the army, with the exception of the small class, which includes those who have been guilty of the gravest offence against the country. The mercy and leniency of this proclamation is well calculated to accomplish much good in reuniting the erring soldiers who have deserted their country's flag, and have basely shirked the greatest responsibilities which attach to them as defenders of civil and religious liberty. We have been cheered with the announcement that many are returning to their places in the army, encouraged to do so by the very liberal terms of the amnesty, thereby swelling our ranks, and better enabling our skillful and valiant Generals to present a formidable front against the advancing hordes of the cruel and merciless enemy.

This is as it should be. But whilst so many brave men who in an unmerciful hour were seduced from the path of honor and duty, are availing themselves of the merciful terms of our President's proclamation, to return to their degraded places in the ranks of the army, and are determined to fight bravely, and well for their country's liberty and glory, how are they and others of our noble southerners acting with reference to that other proclamation which is infinitely of more importance, which is more general and comprehensive in its terms? What remains of manhood to the deserting and unfaithful soldier; which is bereft with meanness, and which emanates from a source of incomparable intelligence, power and goodness?

The Almighty Ruler of the universe, the King immortal, eternal and invisible, the Great Commander of the armies of heaven and earth, hath long since issued His proclamation to all the people of the earth—to every tongue and nation, of every age and clime, in which a *general amnesty* is offered to all offenders, save one class (they that have sinned against the Holy Ghost) who may promptly and cheerfully return to their allegiance, and like loyal and devoted soldiers, arm themselves under the ample folds of the blood stained Banner of the Cross, and to "do and die" in the blessed service of their Spiritual Leader, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

The proclamation is of considerable length, filling as it does a large volume, and yet its essence, its entire gas, its commanding excellence, may be given in a brief compass. Hear this language:—"Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God he will have mercy upon him; and to our God he will have abundantly pardon." "The Lord—is long-suffering—not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "He that repented toward God, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved." "he that whosoever will, come."

To these blessed promises of reconciliation are coupled certain awful threatenings for those who will not turn and repent. Hear ye them:—"He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "The unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Such are the terms and conditions of the great proclamation which comes from Heaven, proclaiming to the fallen sons of Adam mercy and deliverance. If the deserter, he who hath sinned so long and so grievously against God, and hath so persistently refused to acknowledge the Divine Redeemer as his Captain and Deliverer, if he will only return to his Father and his God in a spirit of submission, humility and faith, were he vile, unworthy and condemned as he may be, shall receive a full pardon, and shall be crowned with the joys of the gospel of peace.

The earthly proclamation does not promise pardon to those who may have deserted and gone over to the enemy. But the wonderfully gracious proclamation, freighted with precious messages of love and condescension, which comes from the skies, even promises pardon to the culprit who has deserted to the malitious and mighty foes, who have subverted the Royal authority, and introduced every disorder into this rebellious province of the Heavenly Ruler's empire.

The earthly proclamation does not bring freedom from penalty to those that have

sinned against the country repeatedly. But the proclamation of God offers pardon to every variety and degree of sinners, of every condition in life, and of whatever age, whether they have sinned once or a thousand times. "Though your sins be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The earthly proclamation often comes into effect within a certain period of time, whilst the terms of the Heavenly one, are such as to denote the most evidence and lasting duration, as well as the most enduring and powerful influence to return to his spiritual leader. The President's proclamation gives scope for the returning fugitive to take time from a violent and cold heart, and the means of pardon proclaimed and published by God, seizes to every broken-hearted sinner deliverance from death spiritual and death eternal—from the death that never dies.

The proclamation of the earthly ruler only promises a temporal and transitory blessing. Whilst the amnesty of Heaven secures for the loyal and devoted soldier the approval of conscience and the approbation of the righteous in their cause; and in the world secures the full reward and perfect joys of the skies—still bring him that power which will wash off understanding here, and the garnet of eternal glory and fidelity hereafter.

Any soldier who refuses to avail himself of the earthly proclamation, and still continues his sin career as a deserter, is actuated to probe the tomb and death to keep the filth of hell. So any soldier or subject who will not heed the invitation and call of the terms of the proclamation of Almighty God, shall be turned forever by the unfeigned love of hell, and be eternally pressed upon by the unyielding womb. Some earthly deserts from the earthly government may escape and go unpunished of justice. But there is no probability of escape from the swift messengers of God's wrath, not from the unmerciful punishment which will inevitably overtake every impudent and recreant servant who has failed alike in doing his duty to his God and himself. "I think not thus—that then shall escape the judgment of God." "Thou art turned up onto thyself with thyself against the day of wrath, and thou art a witness against thyself." "Teach them subordination, they will not learn; or who have less interest in their welfare, to blot their minds and form their characters. Many are ruined in this way; they must have teachers; they must learn. When from under your care they are being taught, and often by ungodly and vicious instructors, their principles are polluted, and in turn they soon begin to teach others the principles hid learned when you little thought they were in the school of Satan. Early impressions are lasting, and can be constantly at work through his faithful teachers, poisoning the minds of the youth. If we are to have a christian nation, we must have christian mothers. Our women must be pious and holy.

As Methodists you owe a duty, seldom performed, to strangers who move into your community. It is very often the case, however, that the foreigner, or neighbor, are more kindly received by persons of the world, and members of other churches than by Methodists. This should not be. We are commanded, and exhorted to love the brethren. The world loves its own. People associated in business pursue ends of the same calling in the same country, and why should not Christians, especially those of the same family. We are a church here but many members come prestidigitato into other communions; others have gone back to the world, because of the cold and indifferent manner they were received by the preachers and people on changing their homes. We should remember that we can take care of our neighbors better than others, and upon us rests a responsibility in this respect similar to those of parents for their children.

Yours sincerely,
JOHANNES.

Antithesis.

That enlightened pilot man, the Rev. John Foard, who died in Northamptonshire in 1843, in theheyday of nine-tenths, used to say to his sick friends,—Afflictions are to us poisons, which we may sweeten by faith and fervent prayer; but we, the most part, make them bitter, putting into God's cup the evil imaginations of our impatience and unbelief." You expect heaven to be the end of this journey, but you have perhaps never seriously and earnestly inquired the *way to heaven*. You have gone on with the multitude, and made light of the counsel of God, who tells you that *the ways* are wrong, and that *the few whereto lead and tread the narrow way* are the only paths going right.

The broad way is the way of *noise*—of his hopes, his pleasures, his sins, and even of his good deeds. You may be moral and upright before men, or upright before God and wicked in other eyes; if you have not learned *that you are to be a sinner*, and exposed to the judgment of God.

If you have not come to Christ for pardon and salvation, you are yet in the "broad road." Like Israel of old, you have turned to God "in the back and not the face"; you have mistaken the way to heaven and true happiness, and nothing lies before you but the prospect of death, and the yawning gulf of perdition.

The narrow road is the way into which God by His Spirit leads the sinner than the "straight gate" of *repentance towards God* and *faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. Those who walk in it have experienced a wonderful change "from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God." They have been born again of the Spirit; they have felt their need of salvation, and they have been enabled by grace to see in him who is exalted above all the glory of the angels, and that "his blood shineth from afar," and that "they have life through his death." They have turned from sin and Satan to love and serve the living God. This is the way of which God says, "It leadeth unto life, and *now* there be thou find it."

And why so few? It may be said that the way is narrow. So it is; but this, far from being a defect, is its excellency. His forces restrain from nothing but what would injure and destroy. We also are prone to put good for evil, and evil for good; to call sweet bitterness bitter sweet; and so we need to be held back from the flowery fields in which we should be gathering poison, because of their rich perfume, their pleasant taste or their exhilarating effects. Alas! it is folly's intoxicating cup which beguiles such multitudes in the "broad way" which leadeth unto death.

But is "the narrow way" itself devoid of pleasures? Ask any who are travelling thereon. Inquire of those who have frequented it the longest, and wandered from it the least. What do they say? With one voice they will assure you that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness" and "all her paths are peace." They will tell you that "peace with God" through our

Selections.

Selected for the Advocate.

The Two Ways.

Early on a bright spring morning a young traveller set out to go to a distant place. That place was the capital of the King's dominions, and all his future welfare depended upon his reaching it. He did not well know the road by which he was to go, and at last he was taken up in the heavy of the morning, and the heavy load of the carriage, and was carried along up into existence on the "narrow way." His guide seemed to cross his mind as to the happy end of his journey. He had taken the most judicious well frequented way, where thousands travelled on like him now, men and maidens, and, as he saw, some of the most wealthy, gathering up into existence on the "wide way." The wide way, whom you might expect to be worn out with fatigues, can tell you of but that level road of toil, that weary old, and a "desertion in the heavens" to which he is led. And that all his present enjoyment are but a faint taste of what lie will soon possess.

The broad road, however, he followed resolutely, to enter thereon "the straight path," and travel patiently to the end of the narrow way. It is the *one* way of escape from eternal death. It is the *one* entrance to eternal life and joy. To open the way for thee, the Son *left* it to be ploughed down and become waste, as a man he fulfilled all God's will—so a man he took the debt of man upon himself, and paid it. God is a righteous Judge, none can sin and therefore Jesus is infinite goodness; he has opened a way for us to immortality and glory.

Reader, will you not come with us on this heavenly way?

Come, and you will find it so.

God invites you. *Now* you hear and live.

God says in vision, "We will go with you."

He comes to us with the brightness of an infinite sun, which is armed with a host of reconstructive vigors as to purify him. He cannot bear thus to pause in imagination, on the distressing scenes of our mortality, but multiply it in every instance—say, how much of *eternal* rest has been kept together upon a single flag-staff, as the arithmetic of this annihilated see-busines, and by it he overcomes with all the accuracy of an official computation—and strange to tell, not one sight is there, among the crowd of eyes, but it is a picture of infinite beauty, and the eyes of all the spectators, and the ears of all the listeners, and they stand on tip-toe and catch every syllable of utterance, which is ready to thrill out of the registers of death. O! say, what mystic spell is that, which so charms us to the sufferings of our brethren—which decaus to outrun the waves of bleeding humanity, when it is aggravated by the shriek of dying thousands, which makes the very magnitude of the slaughter throw aside the dialogue over the entombed, and hishore— which causes us to eye with indifference the field that is covered with the most revolting abominations, and arises that sick, which each individual would only have driven from us, by the report of the many who have fallen and breathed their last in agony along with him?

When I think that the Christians, even

of the great world, are but a very little flock, and that an army is not a proportionate force for the growth of Christian principle,

and when I think of the *multitude* of

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