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Some time ago an incident occurred at Plymouth which produced a great deal of excitement, and of which the papers gave a very graphic account.

In a heavy gale of wind a large steamer had become disabled off the Lizard Point. Two steam tugs came to her help, and managed to tow her nearly into the Plymouth Sound; but just as they got within two or three hundred yards of the Breakwater, the force of the gale became so great that they were unable to do anything more, and had to fling her off in the darkness of the night to shift for herself. In the midst of the furious storm they could not possibly help any further. The captain at once fired his signals of distress, let the anchors go, and hoped they might hold on until break of day.
INSIDE THE BREAKWATER.

But in such a gale and in such a place it was very doubtful if the cables would stand the strain; and as the tremendous seas swept over the ship, more than once the anchors actually began to drag. Then the tide went back and another peril appeared: the ship was in danger of being knocked to pieces on the rocky ledge of the Breakwater itself. As the morning dawned, the Hoe and the surrounding coast was covered by the people, who eagerly watched the perilous position. There against the stormy black sky was the steamer, the flag of distress fluttering in the angry winds; now hidden in the great seas that broke over her, then flung up into dreadful clearness on some tremendous wave, then straining at the cables, her frightened passengers and crew staring death in the face. So outside the Breakwater.

But inside the breakwater the ships lay calmly anchored under its shelter. The little fisher lad slept, gently rocked on the sea, all ignorant of the peril that was so near him. Inside all was calm and safe.

Such was the difference that day, as to

No. 232.
which side of the Breakwater a ship was. But there is a contrast immensely greater than that. Death comes to all men some time; and he could be met in many a worse fashion than bravely facing him as our noble sailors do in every gale that blows about our coasts. In such matters, even safety or peril is but a difference for a little while.

But there is a difference that is eternal. There is an outside that means everlasting death—an inside that means everlasting life.

All that peril of the steamer is past. She got safely into harbor, and now it is all a distant and half-forgotten thing. But this contrast is now and here—a difference that comes right home to us. We do not hear of it only. We are more than onlookers at it. We are on one side of the Breakwater or the other—outside in storm and peril; or inside in the blessed shelter and safety. And yet can we be mad enough to turn from it as of no interest to us? When some ship has been in danger, driven toward the coast by a storm, I have seen men
roused to any effort, flinging prudence to the winds in their earnestness to help; and as the peril has increased they have rushed, risking their own lives on behalf of those in danger. And can we think of this, our own peril, with little earnestness and concern? Let us pray to God for his Holy Spirit to take away this strange and dreadful blindness.

Our only safety and peace is inside the Breakwater.

Look at the stormy outside.—"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." How can there be? God the Most High is the great Creator of all things—their king and Lord. And he has made us and all things for this one end—to serve him. Every thing in us and about us is exactly fitted to this end, to find its only true life and blessedness in serving him. The dull earth he has shaped after his will. The stars he controls in their courses. The seasons he directs in their order. The great wild seas are held in his hand, they ebb and flow exactly as he bids them. The animals he governs by the instinct
he has given them. And to us, as having will and intelligence, he gives his holy word and commandments. And all things—earth and star and sea, and living things about us, and men and angels—are blest as they do his will. “I am the Lord thy God,” he saith to every one of us; “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.” Now when a man goes against God, what peace can there be for him? He is out of joint with all things. The great end and purpose of all things beats against him. Full of unrest and weariness, all living things seem happy compared with him.

Peace? What peace can there be when the laws of the great Creator are set aside? When the king tracks the rebel at every step, and reads all the guilty secrets in his heart, and every hour brings nearer the terrible reckoning day, how can such a one be at peace?

The wicked man is at strife with himself. Man is made for God, and he quickly finds out that he is too great to be satisfied with any thing less. The soul that is great enough
for God can never be filled by a round of eating and drinking and working and sleeping, or by any knowledge or honor or wealth. You cannot fill the heart with pleasures and hollow vanities. The whole world might belong to one man, and yet he might cry from his heart, "I perish with hunger!" Every now and then the forgotten and perishing spirit of the man speaks out against the dreadful emptiness within, and sends forth its great longing for some true, full, abiding blessedness. Thank God! there is too much of us,—blind blundering fools though we be,—there is too much of us to be filled and satisfied with any thing less than God himself. These hungry clamors of the soul can be quieted only in knowing him and serving him. There is no rest but in him. Then only can the soul cast anchor in any calm shelter—when we have found the safety of his love.

There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked. Every man finds it so. What peace can there be when poor weary hope goes cir-
cling over the dreary earth, and can find no
sure resting-place for the sole of her foot?
What peace can there be when beggary,
bankruptcy, ruin stare him in the face; the
man himself deathless, and yet the only pos-
sessions he has slipping daily out of his hand
as the moments pass? How can there be
peace when every now and then conscience
wakes up and mutters fiercely of the folly and
the emptiness of life without God? When
memory keeps uncomfortably whispering of
the wasted years, and fear keeps pointing us
on to where the thunder-clouds gather black
and threatening? It is true, miserably true
—“there is no peace unto the wicked.”
And to the man who is without God life it-
self is a storm and turmoil. God is the wise
and gracious Father ordering all things for
our training. The thousand circumstances
and events of every day are to teach and cor-
rect and develop us; to make true men of us.
As we seek to make men of our children, by
the daily lessons at school, so God seeks to
prepare us for higher service, and would make
No. 232.
us ready to be trusted with greater gifts. But what is life to a man who has no God? No Father's hand controls it, no loving wisdom orders it. The hindrances and annoyances, the losses and pain and sorrow, are just wild storms that beat upon him pitilessly. Life itself is a sea, pleasant enough in the summer-time; but where dreadful storms burst and angry seas sweep and toss in lawless fury, and there is no breakwater, no harbor, no anchorage,—"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." So it is outside.

Now let us look inside the Breakwater. The wild winds are hushed, the waves have ceased to thunder and threaten. The anchor holds without a strain at the cable. There is no peril. It is as if the Lord had spoken his "Peace, be still;" and there is a great calm where the ship is gently rocked on the bosom of the deep.

See well what makes this safety. Against fierce waves and furious winds there rises the Breakwater. The great seas that come sweeping on madly are dashed against it into harm-
less spray, and fall back spent and powerless. The storm comes howling over the tumbling billows and hurls itself against the Breakwater, but it cannot leap over on its prey; there, within its kindly shelter, all is calm. It is the wondrous truth of our salvation. He is our peace. The man is an hiding place. "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," is spoken concerning him. Upon him the destroying tempest breaks, that we may be sheltered and safe. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Hiding in him, safe shelter is ours from the angriest storms that rage. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Who is he that condemneth?" In heaven or earth or hell, there is no voice that can be lifted against him who hides for refuge in this Rock of Ages. There all fear is quieted. Hope has found a sure and blessed rest. Over all the past God has breathed the hush of his forgiveness, and all the future is bright with the glow of heaven's sunny distance. Peace is within and peace
around. Ah, there is blessed shelter for the storm-tossed inside the Breakwater.

But look again upon the wild storm and the ship in peril. How is she to get within its safety? It is no use for her to begin to boast of herself, of her three thousand tonnage, or that she is A 1 at Lloyd’s, or of the gales she has weathered, that she has crossed the Atlantic a score of times, and been round the world—help must come to her or she will go down; and for crew, in addition to her own picked men, she has on board thirty of her Majesty’s naval officers who happened to be returning from special navigation in the Chinese seas. All her strength and size and all the skill of her crew will avail her nothing now. She is the wrong side of the Breakwater. What she is or what she is not counts for little. She must go to pieces unless they can send her help.

"Ah," you say, "if I were not so weak, or if I were only more like such a one; if I were only more in earnest or had more faith, I should do then." No; your safety is not in No. 232.
your strength, or your goodness, or your earnestness, or in any thing else. It is in him who comes to help, and in him alone.

And the disabled steamer can do nothing herself; it is no good to trim the sails or put the helm about. All she can do is to fling up the signals of distress and to fire the cannon for help. Ah, how often, when we find the sorry plight and peril that we are in, we spend all our time in trying to right ourselves! Let us learn this lesson—we are past helping ourselves. "I will try," or "we must do our best, you know," just means nothing at all in seeking salvation. We can do nothing but send up the signal of distress. Let the cry of our hearts go up into the ears of the Lord, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Look once more at the disabled steamer, flung on the wild seas outside the Breakwater there. She must get out of this peril, or all will be lost. If she stays where she is, she must be knocked to pieces on the rocks. Every minute makes her position one of
greater danger, and her escape more difficult. Do not let them stay a moment. Keep the danger-signals flying—let the cannon boom. Give them no rest within there. Let them know that it is urgent, and if they are coming to help they must come quickly.

Ah! what peril is ours until we have found the blessed way inside the Breakwater! The tide of life is running out swiftly, and we are held on by the brittle thread that may snap at any moment. And then the awful perishing, going down into death with black despair! And from the Judgment-seat of God the dreadful sentence waits for those who have rejected the offers of his mercy. There is no peace for the wicked on there. Oh, the terrible storm that shall sweep us forth from his presence, when, with unutterable grief, the Righteous Judge shall speak the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

O! the blessedness of the rest and peace into which the righteous shall come when he shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

If the crew are to be saved they must just receive the help that is brought to them, and keep fast hold of it. Out come the government steamers to the rescue. The men of the life-boat carry the royal cable with its scarlet thread on board, and bid them make it fast. Think what folly it would be for them to throw it angrily away! or to say that they thought it was not meant for them! or to tell their helpers to go away now, and that they would decide to-morrow! or to say that their case is past help! And shall any man trifle with the offer of salvation in that way? Here, brother, here now is the Saviour's message to you, a cable that has never snapped with any strain, that has led thousands out of peril inside the Breakwater: Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life! Take hold of the word. Trust yourself to him. The blessed Captain of our salvation can bring you safely into the Haven of Rest.

No. 232.
And now the cable is made fast—the steamers put forth their strength. But the disabled vessel will not stir. What is it? Why there, down through the boiling seas and right down to the rocks, gripping them tightly are the anchors. They must go. What if the captain should hesitate, should begin to count the cost of them, and to haggle about giving them up! Ah, many a man is lost because he will not let go the anchor! Some secret sin holds him; something or other that he holds too dear to give it up. In vain all the signals of distress. In vain all the booming of the guns. In vain all the help that comes, and the efforts of brave men to save them. If you will not part with the thing that hinders, you must let go the rope of his mercy. But he is come to loose us from our sins. Our hands are numbed and strengthless to break the chains; but He brings the help we need. His very name is Jesus, who saves us from our sins.

Then speedily there came the safety. Not in vain were rocket and cannon and signal of No. 232.
distress. A hundred men came out with eager hands, and in spite of furious winds and thundering seas they brought the steamer out of her danger, nor left her until she lay all calmly sheltered within the safety of the Breakwater.

Our cry for help can never be in vain. The Blessed Lord is ever waiting to help us, and comes forth swiftly for our salvation. Through all the threatening hindrances, and in spite of all our helplessness, he brings us safe into the Blessed Haven of his salvation, where is eternal peace and safety. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

No. 232.