

Great changes we have seen with our widowed Queen. 'Our Fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them.' But we are wiser than our fathers. We are little by little slackening our allegiance to the Lord and His Anointed. We are learning to 'break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.' The old laws of the 'time of man's innocency,' Holy Marriage, and the delightful day of sacred rest, are a weariness to us. The old word of the everlasting covenant, 'So help me God,' will not serve our turn. The 'spirit of the age' has chosen the motto of Caiaphas, 'It is expedient.' God's ways are far above out of our sight. 'Tush!' say we; 'how doth God know?' 'Who will show us any good?' says the spirit of the age; but it forgets the answer, 'Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.' The wise worship; (if so be they worship at all), not the unknown God—there is some hope in that—but the 'unknowable.' The old-world fool began to say in his heart, 'There is no God.' The modern fool shouts it through a speaking-trumpet, posts it on the walls, translates it into Indian dialects, and, more 'advanced' still, proceeds to demonstrate how there cannot be any God, and challenges God's ministers to disprove that black negation. And this is the Barabbas of to-day, the elect of a city exalted unto Heaven by its opportunities and means of grace. And must all England ratify that fatal choice? Must such an one be seated by the people's delegates in their midst to 'teach our senators wisdom?'

Bear with me, for I remember the hour when I was asked by the Bishop the solemn question, 'Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word?' and when the decisive answer was given: 'I will, the Lord being my helper.'

Now, brethren, if ever there was an erroneous and strange doctrine utterly contrary to God's word it is the doctrine, phrase it as you may, that Government is not a ministry of God. And any doctrine that would still further slacken our hold on that first principle of polity must be banished and driven away, be it never so expedient, as a doctrine of Caiaphas, and not of Christ—as a prelude to the chorus of national perdition: 'Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas!' Caiaphas had his 'expedient,' and so has Christ our Lord. Is it not as true of the body politic as of the individual body, 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, for it *is expedient* [the same Greek verb] for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell?' Acting on this principle, our forefathers in the time of Queen Anne expelled from the House of Commons a member who acknowledged himself the author of an anti-Christian book. But in the reign of Queen Victoria the most extreme contrary principle is asserted.

O England! it matters little what is the name of thy Barabbas. He is the incarnation of that expediency which in this Holy Week crucifies the Son of God afresh and puts Him to an open shame. It matters little who is thy Caiaphas, who thy Pilate; follow them, and thy place is vacant in the New Jerusalem—thy name blotted out from among the nations that are joined to the Lord.