

penitent man ever approached God on the side of His *justice*. Can the insolvent debtor appeal to the *equity* of his creditors with any rational hope of being absolved from his obligation? Such an appeal would betoken moral insensibility or intellectual obtuseness. The only hope of guilt is in mercy. Failing there, it fails entirely: if mercy should give way, the dependent criminal must fall into the abyss of hell.

There is zeal for the other's salvation. He "answering rebuked him," and sought to convince him of his sins. The Psalmist says, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways." Mark the connexion between true personal conviction, and true world-wide benevolence! This is how true conversion operates. When man has received benefits immediately from God, his first impulses are intensely grateful; he must evangelize; the good news of his own pardon must be told to all who come within the sphere of his influence; he would bring others to the altar at which he met his Heavenly Father and received messages of moral conviction: hence no regenerate man can be careless respecting the spiritual interests of those by whom he is surrounded.

There is admiration of Christ's purity and innocence. "This man hath done nothing amiss." I am a sinful man; all punishment that comes down upon me is richly deserved; but this man is pure and righteous. He is the "Holy One, and the Just." The most ingenious and eloquent sceptic of our times, in the last line of his book, all of which denounces Christ, says, "All ages must proclaim that among the sons of men there is none greater than Jesus;" and this most notorious criminal on the cross, in his last words, says, "This man hath done nothing amiss."

There is here also a confession of Christ before men. The other reviled him; the penitent thief declared