

matter of arrangement or covenant." God was able, and has graciously been willing, to accept of the sufferings and obedience of our blessed Redeemer in the stead of our own.

Let us suppose, moreover, there had been no substitution. Suppose the criminal bears the penalty of his crime in his own person. Does *that*, we ask, wipe away the stain or undo the crime any more than substitution? Even after the last penalty of the law has been paid we speak of the murderer as a "murderer still," and his execution does not recall the life of his victim. Yet the demands of justice are satisfied. The majesty of the law is maintained. The interests of the state are conserved and evil-doers are deterred.

By the substitution of Christ in the room of His people all has been accomplished—nay, far more has been accomplished than would have been possible by leaving the guilty to bear the penalty of their sin: and we believe that in the transaction there is nothing which is at all contrary to man's reason or his sense of justice.

We refer to the ordinary books of theology for answers to the objections brought against the Divine procedure in the matter.

We refer to the fact, that we do frequently see the innocent suffer for the guilty—if not exactly in their stead, at least on their account. We refer to the universal prevalence of expiatory sacrifices, proving that man's sense of right is not offended by the principle of substitution. If God has dealt with the holy Saviour as if he had been guilty, let us remember that Christ voluntarily took the place of the sinner. He was not constrained to die by another. *Volenti nulla fit injuria*. He willingly identified himself with those whom he determined to save, and became their federal head and representative for the very purpose of suffering in their room. He had the power to dispose of His own life, and He laid it down of Himself. He was not held *blameworthy* though he became legally answerable for the sins of others. We remember further that the peculiarity of the case permitted the most glorious compensation. His sufferings, because infinite in value, were but temporary in duration. Our deliverance is not embittered, as Rupert Hall has well said, with the reflection that we are indebted for it to the irreparable destruction of our Redeemer. And if, for a little, He was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, He is now, for that very reason, highly exalted as Mediator—made the Heir of all things—crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God.

Has God, again, dealt with the sinner as if he had been righteous? Remember that all that could have been gained by their punishment (and more than all), has been otherwise more gloriously attained. Remember that as Christ identified himself with His people, so they also, when they repent and believe, do identify themselves with Him. They do, as it were, die with Him in His death. They most fully assent to the sentence which God has pronounced upon their sin. "If our souls were sent to hell, God's righteous law approves it, well." They respond with profound submission and consent to the condemnation of sin; and could wish almost, if it were possible and right, to bear it in their own person. Through this same death of Christ the guilty

conscience is appeased and the polluted heart is cleansed. The chosen people are brought into newness of life. They abhor and renounce their past sins and are renewed in the whole man after the image of God.

Why should reason object to salvation on such terms? God is satisfied. Christ was willing. Sin is punished—the law is honored. We may surely be content.

TERRIBLE FAMINE IN CHINA.

NO sooner has the Indian famine ceased to occupy public anxiety, than one even more disastrous calls for succour and sympathy. An eye-witness describes it as "perhaps the widest-spread and most fearful scourge that has befallen humanity for the last two hundred years." More than 70,000,000 of the people of North China are absolutely without the bare means of sustaining life.

"Fancy a tract of country larger than thirteen Switzerland a prey to want that it is well nigh impossible to relieve. The people's faces are black with hunger; they are dying by thousands upon thousands. Women and girls and boys are openly offered for sale to any chance wayfarer. A respectable married woman could be easily bought for six dollars, and a little girl for two. In cases, however, where it was found impossible to dispose of their children, parents have been known to kill them sooner than witness their prolonged sufferings, in many instances throwing themselves afterwards down wells, or committing suicide by arsenic. Corpses lay rotting by the highway, and there was none to bury them. As for food, the population subsisted for a long time on roots and grass; then they found some nourishment in willow-buds, and finally ate the thatches off their cottages. The bark of rees served them for several months, and the most harmless stuff to which the unhappy creatures were reduced was potato stalks, tough, stringy fibre, which only the strongest teeth could reduce to pulp. The other description of 'food' was red slate-stone. It appears that this substance when rolled about in the mouth and chewed will eventually split into small splinters, which can be swallowed after practice. To such frightful extremities have the famine-stricken people in China been brought."

The immediate cause of the famine was the long absence of rain. In the Province of Shan-Si no rain has fallen for three years, and there are no means of irrigating the soil. The Governor of this province reports that there are in it alone more than 4,000,000 people dependent on official support. Ordinary food stuffs have altogether disappeared, and in the southern portions of it there remains neither bark of trees nor wild herbs to be eaten.

This most appalling calamity is clearly traceable to the disregard of those natural and providential laws by which the world is governed.

The great increase of population has led to the destruction of the forests. The vast table lands of Central Asia and Northern China have been made utterly bare of trees. Hence the rain has ceased, and the harvests failed. The same evil was experienced in parts of France, until the replanting of the forests restored the rain-fall. There are in these experiences most significant lessons for our own country. Let us be warned in time. The physical laws of the world and the wise laws of the Creator can never be broken with impunity. Human suffering is at once the effect and the punishment of disobedience to moral and physical laws.

Yet even the evil, God overrules for good. We speak of laws, but they are simply the expression of the wise and holy will of the Law-giver. The Law-giver is the Redeemer, the Lover of men; and in and by every calamity He is carrying on His grand redemptive workings, bringing good out of evil, making even suffering and death work out life and happiness. So it will be even in this

great calamity. He is working out good for the prostrate millions of China.

The great curse of China and the barrier to its progress and enlightenment has been the isolation in which for more than 200 years it has been jealously shut up by the policy of its Tartar rulers. Thought, energy, life are crushed. Complete stagnation reigns. Only from without and upon the merest fractions of this immense country have the civilizing influences of the West been able to make themselves felt. But the very pressure of its dense population is beginning to make itself felt. Of late years thousands have emigrated to Australia and California; and returning, have carried back a knowledge of the greater unknown world without, which will in time modify the crude and conceited public opinion of the Celestial Country. Now, the famine must immensely increase this emigration and its results, and in a short time the Gospel of Jesus will find access to the very heart of China.

But indeed by a more direct and spiritual way this access is already being given. The Chinese have a proverb that he who subjects men by strength may overcome but cannot conquer them; but he who subjects men by goodness and piety is king and master. The generosity which this distress has called out is already making itself felt. The sight of the self-sacrificing labours and Christ-like self-forgetfulness displayed by the missionaries throughout these troubles has filled the Chinamen with astonishment. "What," they are reported to have said on one occasion when thousands of them came flocking around the missionaries who had brought them timely succour, "are these the foreigners we have heard so much about,—the malignant, unscrupulous foreigners? We will never speak evil of them again, nor believe what the mandarins tell us of them. The mandarins leave us to die of starvation, while the foreigners they have taught us to hate are spending their very lives in saving ours." The assistance which is now being sent from England will intensify this good-will and draw out the hearts of the people in grateful affection. This will be a nobler conquest than any the sword could achieve. And indeed there may be given in this way to England an opportunity to atone for the wrong—the grievous wrong—she has done to China in the opium traffic. Into this strange land so long sealed up, God is indeed opening up a door of entrance for the blessed influences of the Gospel of Peace.—*Evangelical Churchman*.

CONVERSION OF ROMISH PRIESTS.

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