

because they serve Him, noble because they wear His livery and bear the mark of Jesus as their Lord.

II. The text brings into view the purchase on which that ownership is founded.

This master has acquired men by right of purchase. That abomination of the auction block may suggest the better "merchandise of the souls of men," which Christ has made, when He bought us with His own blood as our ransom.

That purchase is represented in two forms of expression. Sometimes we read that He has bought us with His "blood;" sometimes that He has given "Himself" for us. Both expressions point to the same great fact—His death as the price at which He has acquired us as His own.

There are far deeper thoughts involved in this statement than can be dealt with here, but let me note one or two plain points. First, then, that is a very beautiful and profound one, that Christ's lordship over men is built upon His mighty and supreme sacrifice for men. Nothing short of His utter giving up of Himself for them gives Him the right of absolute authority over them; or, as Paul puts it, "He gave Himself for us," that He might "purchase for Himself a people." He does not found His kingdom on His Divinity, but on His suffering. His cross is His throne. It seems to me that the recognition of Christ's death as our ransom is absolutely essential to warrant the submission to Him which is the very heart of Christianity. I do not know why any man who rejects that view of the death of Christ should call to Him, "Lord! Lord!" We are justified in saying to Him, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant," only when we can go on to say, "Thou hast loosed my bonds."

Then, consider that the figure suggests that we are bought from a previous slavery to some other master. Free men are not sold into slavery, but slaves pass from one master to another, and sometimes are bought into freedom as well as into bondage. Hebrew slavery was a very different thing from Roman or American slavery—but such as it was, there was connected with it that peculiar institution of the *Goel*, by which, under certain circumstances, if an Israelite had sold himself into slavery he could be redeemed. As the law has it, "One of his kinsmen may redeem him." So our Kinsman buys us back from our bondage to sin and guilt and condemnation, from the slavery of our tyrant lusts, from the slavery to men's censures and opinions, from the dominion of evil and darkness, and making us His, makes us free. He that committeth sin is the slave of sin. If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

III. Our text also brings to view the *Runaways*. We do not care to enquire here what special type of heretics the apostle had in view in these solemn words, nor to apply them to modern parallels which we may fancy we can find. It is more profitable to notice how all godlessness and sin may be described as denying the Lord. All sin, I say, for it would appear very plain that the people spoken of here were not Christians at all, and yet the apostle believes that Christ had bought them by His sacrifice, and so had a right over them, which their conduct and their words equally denied.

How eloquent that word "denying" is on Peter's lips. Did the old man travel back in memory to that cold morning, when he was shivering beside the coal-fire in the high priest's palace, and a flippant serving-maid could frighten him into lying? Is it not touching to notice that he describes the very worst aspect of the sin of these people in the words that recall his own? It is as if he were humbly acknowledging that no rebellion could be worse than his, and were renewing again his penitence and bitter weeping after all those years.

All sin is a denial of Christ's authority. It is in effect saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." It is at bottom the uprising of our own self-will against His rule, and the proud assertion of our own independence. It is as foolish as it is ungrateful, as ungrateful as it is foolish.

That denial is made by deeds, which are done in defiance or neglect of his authority, and it is done too by words and opinions. It is not for us to bring such a grave charge against individuals, but at least we may exhort our readers to beware of all forms of teaching which weaken Christ's absolute authority, or which remove the very foundation of His throne by weakening his power and meaning of His sacrifice.

Finally, let us beware lest the fate of many a runaway slave be ours, and we be lost in trackless bogs and perish miserably. Casting off His yoke is sure to end in ruin. Rather, drawn by the cords of love, and owning the blessed bonds in which willing souls are held by the love of Christ, let us take Him for our Lord, who has given Himself for our ransom, and answer the pleadings of His cross with our glad surrender. Then shall He say, "I call you not servants but friends."

Missionary.

THE PROGRESS OF THE KINGDOM IN AFRICA.

Africa just now attracts the attention of the civilized world. Nor is this interest confined to the Egyptian Soudan, a Moslem fanatic and his following, and British-Egyptian politics and arms, in the heart of which, to-day, stands a solitary Christian man of faith, ability, experience, and courage, trusted by a great nation and by African chiefs. There are more peaceful fields and alluring sights. One of them is in Upper Egypt, on the same wondrous Nile, where a Presbyterian missionary, on his errand of peace and goodwill, finds the people so eager to hear his message, as to have scarcely time to eat his meals. During a tour of six weeks' continuance, Dr. Hogg preached fifty times, in eleven districts, to audiences ranging from seventy to four hundred. In some instances, whole villages, in the open air, under the full moon's rays, listened intently to the Gospel of salvation. Well might the missionary exclaim: "My life's day-dream is realized at last!" For a time it is likely that Gospel work will be disturbed by military operations now pending.

South of the scene of strife, in the Central Lake region, the ambassadors of the Prince of Peace are greatly encouraged, especially around Lake Nyassa, where the Free Church of Scotland is prosecuting a noble work. The loss of Mr. James Stewart, a Christian engineer, who, after many years of service in India, was appointed missionary engineer, and built the road around the Shire Rapids, explored Lake Nyassa, built missionary houses, and was, at the time of his death, engaged on the Stevenson road, between Nyassa and Tanganyika, is deeply felt. This great undertaking—in its full extent two hundred and ten miles long—he had carried through about fifty miles when he was stricken down by fever. Mission work follows closely on the heels of this enterprise. The Free Church has been able to draw some capital help from Lovedale, "the busiest industrial school on mission ground." A British Consul, accredited to the kings and chiefs of Central Africa, has been sent out to this same region, and an engineer to take the place of Mr. Stewart is under appointment. There is special activity in the slave trade, which is still able to elude the utmost vigilance, both within the coast ranges and beyond, though signally interfered with by missionary occupation. Baffled at one point, it takes another outlet.

Captain Hare has launched a steel life-boat on Lake Tanganyika, which is transported overland from Zanzibar; this floats the name of "Morning Star." The "Good News" steam vessel is perhaps afloat by this time also, having been taken in by way of the Zambesi and Lake Nyassa. Thus far, the African Trading Company's steamers and agents have only furthered missions and an honorable traffic. By such agencies is a highway being prepared for our King.

One of the most hopeful signs of the times in South Africa is the missionary activity being awakened in the Native Church. This is a result long waited for, with but feeble response thus far, and yet with enough to awaken great hopes of future possibilities. Lovedale, Blytheswood, Maritzburg, Adams, Kuruman, are bringing forward young men from whose ranks a missionary force will be levied that will do good work for the regeneration of Africa.

On the West Coast, the missionaries of the American Board are moving forward from Bailundo to Bihi, with the full consent of King Kwikwi. This, for a long time, he would not permit, but now, not only says "go," but "we will help you to build."

The mission is in good health, and now so

far master of the situation as to begin to be aggressive. Probably, next after the Egyptian Soudan in general interest comes the Congo, with Mr. Stanley leading off into the interior. Events thicken on this mighty stream. Trade is already flowing in and out, and, alas! ardent spirits go with cotton; not, however, by the favor of the International Association. King Leopold, fertile in resources, and determined in purpose, is proving one of Africa's greatest benefactors. Without his open purse and royal aid, this highway of African nations must have long remained sealed to the world. It is now said that General Gordon, when sent to Egypt, was about to undertake the reorganization of affairs on the Congo, and to push into the interior, if possible, to assail the slave trade in its central sources of supply, and with a force adequate to meet the fierce tribes which made Stanley's descent of the river so perilous. The opening of the Congo has thus far been favorable to the missions of the English Baptists and the Livingstonia Inland Society. De Brassa's vast scheme seems to have vanished in thin air, outwitted by the alertness and vigor of Mr. Stanley and his backers. Mr. Stanley himself, at last accounts, was exploring amongst the almost interminable water-ways and innumerable peoples above "Stanley Pool."

Along the Niger, a recent map marks a dozen stations occupied by the Church Missionary Society—a Bishopric fully manned by natives of the country. It is noticeable how the great movements in Africa follow the magnificent river courses, the Nile, the Zambesi, the Coasa, the Congo, the Niger, and the Ogowe; and how conspicuous, just now, are these two men, General Gordon and Mr. Stanley. May their lives be long spared, and may the nations they represent, so guiltily associated with Africa's wrongs in the past, be foremost in taking to this dark continent such reparation as the Gospel and a Christian civilization carries with it.

Bearing upon this whole work, at once an outgrowth of missions in the past and a helper henceforth, is Mr. Cust's new book on the Modern Languages of Africa. Into it five busy years of collating and arranging the studies and results of scores of years of missionary and scholarly labors have gone, and as a result we have the one only standard work on the African languages, of which there are four hundred and thirty-eight, and one hundred and fifty-three dialects. In many of these languages the Scriptures, he says, are the only books. "The great propagandists of linguistic knowledge in Africa, as in Asia, America, and Australasia, have been missionaries of Christ's Kingdom." Mr. Cust is a man of affairs, and was never a missionary, but he has found time, and had the signal ability, to gather together the results of other men's linguistic studies over this wide field, as a little while ago he did the same thing for India. It is gratifying to find African scholars associated with such names as Krapf, Moffat, Grant, and others, as follows: "From the Niger came a language-map of the Basin of the Niger, and a linguistic notice from the pens of Bishop Samuel Crowther, Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther, and Archdeacon Johnson, all pure negroes, of such a character of precision and intelligence, as would cause any unprejudiced reader to lift up his hands in praise to our Heavenly Father, who in the first and second generations of liberated slaves has permitted such evidence to be given of the intellect of the Negro Race, if only it has the advantage of sympathetic culture."

And now let us look at an African Apostle. Samuel Mathabattie is described as a little man not more than five feet high, but as having the "courage of the Apostle Paul and the tenderness of the Apostle John." Sixteen years ago he left Sekukuni's country and went to Natal seeking employment. He fell in with a Rev. Mr. Alison, and was at length converted, par-