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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON FOR THE NEW YEAR,

By the Rev. Allan Pollok, New Glasgow.

"Redeeming the time"—EPHESIANS v. 16.

THE solemnity of this admonition is intensified by its repetition, in the very same words, in this Apostle's letter to the Colossians. In both passages he is employed in urging his readers to adopt proper principles of conduct and resolutely carry them into practice. Their theory of life, which is here pre-supposed to be the Christian theory, is to make itself known to the world, not so much in loud profession, as in a zealous, active, and loving discharge of their duties towards God and man. While professing the inward light, they are to make it shine, like a beacon, across the waters of human strife and storm, to light other tempest-tossed mariners to the haven of eternal rest.

Observe, that the common, and, undoubtedly, here, the proper translation of the word translated "time," is, *season* or *opportunity*. It means, not time as a whole, or even any portion of it, but rather events or circumstances in which we may shew our Christian principles by good actions. The term "redeeming" embodies a peculiar sense. Ordinarily, we would say "improving the opportunities;" but there lies embedded in the phrase a metaphor both beautiful and instructive. The active and zealous Christian is viewed by this eminent teacher as a merchant looking out for chances of trading with profit. He is, like the merchant in the parable of Jesus Christ, in search of goodly pearls. When he discovers goods going to waste, he

seizes the opportunity of buying them up and making a large profit. If our opportunities are not bought up—if they are not turned to good account, they will turn to evil account, and condemn us in the great day when the books will be balanced, and the Master will take an account of His servants.

Brethren, you enjoy, even in these evil times, many opportunities of doing good—of discharging commanded duty. What these duties are, depends, in some measure, upon circumstances. To refer now to these duties specially, would be to treat of the whole range of Christian morals—an attempt, in present circumstances, impossible. The important query for you and me is: Are we improving our opportunities of serving God, and how shall we do it better? These questions may be most easily answered by considering, in a few paragraphs, what is meant by "redeeming the time."

One obvious method of redeeming the present, is, reviewing the past. Our past times are gone, and gone for ever. We cannot recall the flowers of summer, which have bloomed and died. Their glory and their perfume have alike perished. But they are not more effectually gone than is yesterday. It is but yesterday, and yet Omnipotence cannot restore its vanished hours—hours which have vanished like the sunbeam on the cloud.

To-day is added to our time,
Yet, while we sing, it glides away.
How soon shall we be past our prime,
For where, alas! is yesterday?

Now, in ordinary circumstances, when we have lost anything, we think it prudent to