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THE CHINESE CRUSADERS.\*

IF that patient Chinese who so resolutely awaits his fate in the middle of the little bridge in the willow-pattern, should suddenly, during the pauses of some tedious dinner, move off before our eyes, and scull himself in that odd little boat to the very margin of the plate, it would scarcely awaken more interest or surprise than the information of the last year concerning the late revolution in China, which, the more we hear of it, even from those who most dislike and distrust it, all the more looks like the instantaneous melting of a morally petrified people. Till now China and the Chinese have been the only human part of the inhabited globe that it was next to impossible to be much interested in, except in the way of curiosities. You attempted to read their history, and found it, although full of moral atrocity, far duller than inorganic chemistry, and not half so intelligible. With a material civilization that would match the merely material civilization of Europe,

\* From the London Inquirer, October 7.

only of far greater antiquity — with a population much denser and more industrious than that of any European empire, everything that marks Chinese history and literature has hitherto given a distressing sort of impression of *charred humanity* that has only choked us in the attempt to get it down.

Their history seems utterly devoid of the rhythm and human depth which characterizes more or less that of every other Oriental as well as Western people. Like their language, it appears to be bandaged up out of stifling monosyllables. There is nothing, even in the national crimes, to inspire the awe and consternation which invests the sin of other nations; its blackness is the dead blackness of charcoal, not the darkness of those perverted affections which usually make national guilt as majestic as it is fearful. All this kind of impression, which may have arisen to some extent from want of sympathy and intelligence on the part of Englishmen, as well as from Chinese peculiarity, has, at all events, been tolerably universal amongst us. Tartars and Hindoos, Turks and Egyptians, and even the savage Dyaks, the negroes of Dahomey, and the inarticulate Bushmen, all of them touch chords of interest which the elaborate civilization of China has failed to reach. The poor cheated Mongols — mere tools of the Chinese — seem in *their* neighborhood like simple estimable human beings, beside shrill, artificial dolls, whose very knavishness is thin, passionless, and monotonous. Even Chinese religion seems to have been utterly devoid of tender or majestic elements — their prophetic mood never rising above pithy and sensible Proverbialism — and their ritual being linked with the most dreary and craven superstitions. In short, the

general impression which reports of Chinese customs, history and literature, have made on Europeans, has been that their national life is sapped by a universal spirit of suspicion, which, in its human relations, is allied with weakness, cowardice, and cruelty, and in the national religion has produced slavish superstition at the same time with moral levity and scepticism. The *shallowness* of character which invariably accompanies the absence of faithfulness and faith, has only been rendered more glaring and distressing by the enormous numbers and the laboriously minute civilization of the people. Suspiciousness in the groundwork of character dries up all the springs of moral power — not only annihilating that generous, social confidence which creates national unity, but that religious enthusiasm in which all movement begins. There is no living root of permanent civilization but faith; for without faith there is no courage, and no self-forgetfulness, no great impulses of any kind, not even great miseries and great sins, for a great fall must be a fall from a great height.

And now amid this vast world of petty and selfish external civilization, amidst a nation which has lost the scientific clue to its own ancient inventions, which had apparently lost its hold of national traditions, its love of liberty, its respect for purity of life, its honor for the military virtue of enduring hardness and submitting to discipline, and above all had lost its belief in anything higher than Buddhist incantations for the people, and a dry moral theory of the universe for the philosophers — amongst a nation seemingly plunged in license and the love of physical excitement, arises this strange tide of national impulse, bent on executing what is at least a

patriotic purpose, and, what is far more striking, originating in a new and seemingly deeper spring of religious faith than any which has hitherto greatly moved China. Moreover, however true it may be that the movers in this revolution are guilty of harsh and unsparring severity, they are at least able and willing to submit themselves to a rigid yoke of discipline and self-restraint, which sufficiently marks their own reverent belief in the Divine authority for which they fight. If they are merciless in their attitude to their opponents, they seem to be sufficiently exacting in their rules of self-government, and thereby are sufficiently distinguished from any mere mob that fights from selfish, rapacious, and licentious motives. With almost Puritan severity they prohibit the consumption amongst themselves of all opiates or stimulants, and guard their vast camps from every other kind of license and disorder; and they exact that scrupulous fidelity in the minutiae of military discipline, which only a well-strung purpose, and a high-wrought loyalty of feeling can ensure.

This is not the first time that we have called our readers' attention to the many remarkable features of this new Chinese faith. Certainly, as far as we have hitherto the means of judging, it seems to bear upon it many traces — though probably in connection with much that is less worthy — of a real divine influence. The moral energy, courage, and rigorous internal discipline of the revolutionary forces are quite recently spoken of in strong terms by a man of learning, \* who has been apparently a thoroughly impartial and certainly not specially favorable eye wit-

\* Dr. Bridgman, of Shanghai, in the *North China Herald*, for July 22d, last, for which we are indebted to the kindness of Sir John Bowring.

ness of their proceedings and their organization at their "Heavenly capital"—Nanking, at Ching-kiang-fu, the city which guards the southern point of the Grand Canal, and elsewhere.

The insurgents claim for themselves that their Government is a strict Theocracy. Their chief ruler or "Heavenly King," stands to them in the place of Moses to the Hebrews. He declares to them the "Heavenly Father's" will. This Heavenly King is the leader who was first known by the title of "Tien-teh," "Heavenly Virtue," which, it is said, he has since relinquished for that of the "Heavenly King." The curious American explorers who visited the insurgents and report upon them, seem doubtful whether he is a real person at all, or only a myth, for though their informants all declared that he was then resident in the very city (Nanking) where the inquiry was made, no one could assert that he had been actually seen since 1847. The second ruler, however, who takes the functions of Aaron to the Heavenly King, is a sufficiently real person, and has a string of titles, some of them to us not a little shocking, which indicate the divine authority which he is considered to dispense. Besides these, there are four other Kings, all from the southern provinces of Kwangsi and Kwangtong, and this royal fraternity of six are regarded as rightful masters, or stewards under the Heavenly Father, of the *whole earth*, and it is apprehended that *no other* Government will be acknowledged as rightful. Dr. Bridgman speaks of the remarkable energy of the Government, and the strict and even ascetic discipline of the hosts of insurgents in the strongest terms. Their hatred to the imperial government and troops seems to amount to a passion, but it is

not permitted to lead them into acts of license. Only four years ago their insurrection began in the Southern province of Kwangsi — through which they have gradually moved forward to the lake provinces, thence to Nanking, and have now got possession of many hundred miles of the great river (the Yang-tse-kiang) and of the grand canal which runs northward to Peking from the mouth of the river. All the insurgents seemed “well-clad, well-fed, well-provided for in every way, content, and as if sure of success.” “At their approach the people and the retainers of the old administration are everywhere appalled, and fly like chaff before the stormy wind.” The extremely high authority over *all* nations which these religious insurgents uniformly arrogate to themselves is that which most fills the English and French settlers with fear and dislike.\* Morally they seem to admit their superiority to the old *regime*.

The American visitors were allowed to examine the arrangements as they pleased. They saw a great many proclamations in the “Heavenly City” (Nanking from the acting King Yang—the Aaron of the royal confederacy), on “the distribution of food, of clothes, and of medicines; on the payment of taxes; the preservation of property;

\* To-day’s *Times* contains an arrogant proclamation to the English at Hong-Kong, purporting to come from the insurgent leader, and demanding their surrender of arms and ships, on which terms he offers them “their miserable lives.” He tells the English that they are “unfit for civilization,” and makes other amusing and opprobrious comments on their conduct and moral qualifications. We doubt if the document is genuine. It is consistent with the high claims of the Insurgents and with their patriotic desire to redeem their native land from very encroaching colonists. But it is inconsistent with their great and uniform politeness hitherto to all strangers, including the English. If genuine, it indicates that sufficient moral arrogance is mixed up with their religious and patriotic fervor (which was equally true of Hebrew enthusiasm,) but does not change our impression of the essential characteristics of the movement.

the observance of etiquette and decorum, and an injunction to repair to certain quarters for vaccination." There are twenty books published by the royal authority, though it does not appear that others are prohibited. Of these two are an imperfect translation of the Old and New Testament. "Their ideas of the Deity are exceedingly imperfect. Though they declare plainly that there is 'Only one true God,' yet the inspiration of the Scriptures, the equality of the Son with the Father, and many other doctrines generally received by Protestant Christians as being clearly revealed in the Bible, are by them wholly ignored." It seems they are Unitarians, but only imperfect in their doctrine as Christians. They regard the prophecy of the gift of the Holy Spirit as fulfilled in their secondary King Yang, whom they call the Paraclete. "Our Saturday we found observed by them as a Sabbath day; but they appeared not to have any hours for public worship, nor any Christian teachers—ministers of the Gospel properly so called. Forms of domestic worship, forms of prayer, of thanksgiving, etc., they have, and all their people, even such as cannot read, are required to learn and use these. We saw them repeatedly at their devotions. Some of them were exceedingly devout, others quite the reverse." "A form of baptism was spoken of by them, but no allusion was made by them to the Lord's Supper. We found them discarding the old notions of lucky places, times, etc."

What seems most to horrify the English reporters is the statement that the "Heavenly Father," in one of his recent revelations to their "Heavenly King," commanded him to receive forty strokes with the bamboo. This seems to be spoken of as blasphemous, and to be regarded as

branding the whole religion as an imposture. It is strange enough that when we find the very highest of the Hebrew prophets binding up what would be to us the strangest symbolic fancies with the very essence of his divinest prophecies, men should regard it as a proof of imposture that in another Oriental nation the same phenomenon should occur. For our own parts, we are content to hope that the high faith, the courage, the self-restraint, and the pious patriotism, which seems to characterize the insurgents — and which at least give these Chinese quite a fresh hold on human sympathies — are no uncertain signs of a very real and deeply-felt influence from above.

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## THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

(Concluded from page 329.)

THE oppression of the Roman governors, added to the insults offered to their religion by the insane vanity of the emperors,\* at last drove the Jewish nation to desperation, and they betook themselves to arms. The rebellion ended, as is well known, in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the total dispersion of the nation. † The circumstances attending this event, so amply detailed by Josephus, the Jewish historian, need not here be repeated; the fierceness of the defence, and the cruelty of the vic-

\* Caius Caligula had ordered his statue to be set up in the holy place, but rescinded the decree on hearing of the tumults it occasioned.

† The triumphal arch of the conqueror is still to be seen at Rome. It exhibits the only representation now remaining to us of the costly vessels of the Jewish temple.



tors, are but the common occurrences in the sieges of great cities in ancient times, and speak rather of the general state of the world than of anything special on this occasion. The same tale might have been told in many other instances, had any historian survived the massacre to tell of the ruin of his native place.

In A.D. 79, according to the vulgar reckoning, Pompeii and Herculaneum were overwhelmed during the memorable eruption of Vesuvius described by the younger Plinius. After being lost for many ages, a portion of these buried cities was restored to light during the last century; and the excavations made have afforded us a large knowledge of the domestic life and manners of heathen Italy. The great resemblance in all remains of Roman greatness or colonization, even in far distant countries, leads to a conclusion that the fashions of the metropolis spread even to its remotest provinces. The remains of the buried cities fully confirm the complete depravation of morals described by the Latin satirists; and amid proofs of great proficiency in the arts of painting and sculpture, we find ornaments, pictures, and even household utensils so licentious, not to say obscene in their design, that it has been thought proper to close the doors of the room in which they are deposited at Naples, allowing only those to enter who need the view for the sake of scientific research. This tells much of the state of manners among the middling ranks, for Pompeii evidently must have been inhabited chiefly by them, since the houses are small, and the town generally bears the stamp of a place of second rate importance. Had a Hebrew prophet been called upon to give an account of the ruin of Pompeii, it would probably have been in such terms as those used in describ-

ing that of Sodom : the catastrophe was similar, the sins of which it appeared the righteous punishment, were equal.

Britain meantime, was almost wholly subdued by the arms or the policy of Rome ; and our rude ancestors began to receive more and more of the civilisation of their masters. Probably the establishment of the Roman power was more owing to the faults of the native princes than the military skill of the governors : the Roman sway was steady ; it maintained peace ; and the cultivators under their protection, could gather the fruits of the earth in safety. The continual dissensions amid the petty chiefs, under whose sway the country had previously remained, must have harassed the people ; and as in India, the British power, though not without faults, is more just than that of the native rulers, and the natives in consequence submit to it quietly ; so in Britain the Roman dominion was consolidated by a sense of the benefits, among many evils, which it brought with it. We have no means of knowing with certainty how soon Christianity was introduced into the island, we only know that it was so at an early period, though the invasions of the northern tribes in a later age again heathenized the country.

In the other parts of the empire Christianity was spreading among the people. Though Nero had put to death an immense number in Rome, there was no pretext for accusing the Christians in the provinces ; for they, necessarily, were innocent of any share in the conflagration, and we do not find that the neglect of the public rites of the heathen deities was imputed to them as a crime till the reign of Domitianus, when they were considered either as a sect of the Jews, a nation held to be the constant enemy of Rome, or as Judaizing apostates from the

laws of their forefathers. With an even-handed injustice, which would almost make it appear that the offence of the Christians was their pure morality, Domitianus banished from Rome at the same time all who professed philosophy, and put to death all who were enough distinguished by virtue, riches, or talent, to excite his envy, his cupidity, or his fears. According to Eusebius, he dreaded all of the house of David so much, that he ordered as many as could be found of the family of Christ to be sent to Rome for examination. He found them hard-working, humble men, whom he had no cause to fear, and he dismissed them.

Among those who suffered death, or were banished for the profession of Christianity, were several relations of the sovereign himself; and probably nothing contributed more to the spread of these purer doctrines, than the detestable vices of the emperors and their creatures; hateful to the pure-minded of whatever religious creed. The contrast between the two could hardly fail to be seen and appreciated; and such had been the almost silent progress of the Christian faith, that a little later we find Plinius embarrassed by the numbers of its professors in the province of Bithynia, and applying to the emperor Trajanus for directions respecting them: all proceedings against them having been discontinued under the mild reign of Nerva.

The mockery of adoring as gods the licentious tyrants who had occupied the imperial throne, seems to have put an end to everything like religious feeling among the nations under the sway of Rome. The free satire of Lucianus shows how completely it had faded away; for it introduces the gods of Olympus, complaining that they

were starved for lack of offerings ; not altogether because Christian or philosophic doctrines prevailed widely ; but rather on account of the total indifference of the people to their ancient mythology : for even if it ever had symbolized the truth, its meaning was now forgotten ; and even so far back as the time of Cicero, had become totally unintelligible to the learned, as well as to the multitude. It was useless therefore, and wanted but a slight impulse from without to overthrow it. But to the philosopher who was in earnest in his pursuit of this truth, buried under the rubbish of time, the doctrine of Christ afforded it : there he found all that the master minds whom he honored had taught and hoped ; but he found it simplified, purified, and confirmed by sanctions such as Plato had wished for, but scarcely dared to expect : — to the Roman patrician, if any there were who still looked back with fond memory to the purer morals and stern courage of his forefathers, the Christian simplicity of manners and firm endurance of torture and death, was the realisation of what he had heard of and admired, but scarcely seen till then : — to the slave, sighing under oppression, and condemned to hopeless bondage, the doctrine of the gospel gave all that was valuable in life ; — the Christian slave was the friend of his Christian master, partook of the same holy feast ; shared the same painful but glorious martyrdom : he was raised at once to all his intellectual rank ; found freedom beyond the grave, and lived already in a happy immortality : — to the women, degraded in her own eyes no less than in those of the tyrant to whose lusts she was the slave, it offered a restoration to all that is most dear to the human race : it offered intellectual dignity, equality before God, purity, holiness. The Christian wo-

man could die ; she could not therefore, unless consenting to it, be again enslaved to the vile passions of men ; before God she was free, and with Him she trusted to find shelter when the hard world left her none. Can we wonder then that Christianity found votaries wherever a mind existed that sighed after better things ? for the preacher of Nazareth had at last expressed the thought which had been brooding in the minds of so many, who had found themselves unable to give it utterance.

As the individual man has his bent, character, and object in life, so we always see that the human race, in the aggregate, has in every age its peculiar character and object which it follows with blind restlessness, till at last a man arises to give it shape and utterance : then the masses recognise the idea which had been rudely fashioned in their own minds, and embrace it with the eagerness of men who suddenly find their thoughts cleared ; and are convinced, or think they are so, — that their wishes are attainable. Every age has seen this repeated ; for man seems unable, even yet, to see the whole of the Truth and Good which his Creator intended for him, and though upwards of eighteen hundred years have elapsed since that Truth and Good was propounded in the plainest possible terms, we still catch at only one or two phrases of the gracious Message, and too often mistake its meaning because we are too indolent or too enthusiastic to consider the whole.

We have seen enough of the manners of the heathen world : it now remains that I should give a short sketch, and it shall be from the pen of the scoffer, — of the conduct of the Christian converts. In a letter from Lucianus to one Cronius, he gives the history of an impostor, called

Peregrinus or Proteus, who seems to have deceived the Christians of that time into a high opinion of his sanctity. The account of their habits thus incidentally given by the satirist, is valuable ; for it is not that of a friend, and therefore cannot be suspected of partiality.

“ About this time it was,” says he, “ that he (Peregrinus) learned the wonderful wisdom of the Christians ; being intimately acquainted with their priests and scribes. In a very short time he convinced them that they were all boys to him ; became their prophet, their leader, their grand president, and in short all in all to them. He explained and interpreted many of their books, and wrote some himself ; insomuch that they looked upon him as their legislator and high priest ; nay, almost worshipped him as a god. Their leader, whom they yet adore, was crucified in Palestine for introducing this new sect. Proteus was on this account cast into prison, and this very circumstance was the foundation of all the consequence and reputation which he afterwards gained, and of that glory which he had always been so ambitious of ; for when he was in bonds, the Christians, considering it as a calamity affecting the common cause, did everything in their power to release him, which, when they found impracticable, they paid him all possible deference and respect ; old women, widows, and orphans, were continually crowding to him, some of the most principal of them even remained with him in the prison, having bribed the keepers for that purpose : there were varied suppers brought in to them ; they read their sacred books together, and the noble Peregrinus, for so he was then called, was dignified by them with the title of the new Socrates. Several of the Christian deputies from the cities of Asia, came to

assist, to plead for, and to comfort him ; it is incredible with what alacrity these people support and defend the public cause ; they spare nothing, in short, to promote it : Peregrinus being made a prisoner on their account, they collected money for him, and he made a very pretty revenue of it. These poor men, it seems, had persuaded themselves that they should be immortal, and live for ever. They despised death, therefore, and offered up their lives a voluntary sacrifice, being taught by their lawgiver, that they were all brethren, and that, quitting our Grecian gods, they must worship their own sophist, who was crucified, and live in obedience to his laws. In compliance with them they looked with contempt on all worldly treasures, and held every thing in common, a maxim which they had adopted without any reason or foundation. If any cunning impostor, therefore, who knew how to manage matters, came amongst them, he soon grew rich by imposing on the credulity of these weak and ignorant men.”

To this may be added the well known testimony of Plinius, the friend of the emperor Trajanus ; so well known indeed, that were this work written for the use of the learned, the quotation might have been spared. In writing to his imperial master for instructions as to his proceedings with regard to the Christians who were become numerous in the province, he says, that even those who had now totally renounced the profession of that faith, nevertheless, asserted constantly “ that the sum of their crime or their error amounted only to this :— that they met together before it was light, and sung hymns alternately among themselves to Christ as God ; that they bound themselves by an oath not to be guilty of any

wickedness ; not to steal, nor to rob, not to commit adultery nor break their plighted faith, nor to refuse to restore the deposits placed within their hands, when called on to do so : which done, it was their custom to depart, and meet again to take food together, of any innocent kind without distinction.”

These feasts were what were called by the Christian writers *agapæ* : \* in them the richer members of the community brought food and wine, and shared it with their poorer brethren. At a later period, Clement of Alexandria complains that these feasts were made luxurious, and temptations to excess. Probably such abuses led to their final disuse, which took place rather early.

## CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

BY REV. J. F. BROWN.

IN order fully to appreciate and to reach the peculiar significance of Christ's death, we are to begin our inquiries impressed with the fact that we have before us the Son of God, him who spake as never man spake, lived as never man lived. No common martyr is thus nailed to the cross. His broken body, his bleeding side, and his agonized spirit, are not for the satisfaction of the vindictive and malicious hopes of his accusers and his foes, but they are offerings to the truth. The truth needed this vindication of its rights and its powers :— that truth which in Christ was to break the bars of the tomb, and

\* *Agapai* from *agapē*, charity or christian benevolence. The *Agapæ* have been sometimes called *love feasts* by later writers, but this is hardly a correct translation of the word.



was to walk forth in its ever ascending and unfading glory. The purer and gentler spirit, the tenderer and more heavenly soul, will feel the keener anguish when pressed upon by sin and by wrong. What anguish then must have flooded the soul of him whose nature was unstained by the first blush of sin ; the quickness of whose sympathies, the tenderness of whose affections no Christian experience has yet been able to fathom, or fully to apprehend. There were sufferings upon the cross that no earthly pen or experience has ever transcribed. The cloud of mystery that hangs over the real struggles of Jesus compels us to kneel with awe and reverence, as well as affection, at the foot of his cross.

It was well that he should so suffer and die at Jerusalem that the world might be led to embrace the true life and have the way of its salvation most successfully unfolded. How the cross then opened the minds of the early disciples, nay how it opens the minds of all Christian believers to their true necessities and interests ! Look at the early disciples. Read the record. It tells us that before Calvary received its victim, they were, though affectionate, ambitious, time-serving, power-loving, walking in the steps of an *earthly* Lord. What was it that broke the spell that bound them ? What was it that made them self-forgetting, and heavenly-minded, and brought them under the touch and sway of an invisible King ? What but the power of the cross ? Through its strength they overcame their prejudices and abandoned their false hopes, and then the kingdom for which they looked rose into its rightful position, and all its glory burst upon their vision. The cross annihilated their brilliant hopes of an earthly reign, but it dignified and elevated to its highest glory

what they had looked upon as unworthy, common and low. The cross repeated the declaration, "My Kingdom is not of this world." The cross reaffirmed the whole former position of its victim, and proclaimed to the world that there was a majesty in virtue which no outward ignominy could sully or degrade, but which would shine forth with redoubled lustre by the contrast. The cross thus reversed the received principles, nay it turned aside the common estimate of life. Jesus, nailed to the cross, was more kingly than he by whom the mandate was given for his limbs to be pierced. The lesson here taught was at once received by the disciples. They prayed no longer for fire to consume their foes—they looked no longer for the material signs of the coming of their Lord; the beauty of princely courts had no attractive interest now. Imbued with the spirit of the Crucified, leaning upon his cross, they went out to rear the institutions of no earthly kingdom, to seek for no earthly crown. And this lesson, which wrought so powerfully upon the minds of the early believers and inspired a new faith, hope and life, the cross is enforcing upon us now. Its language still is that the princely reign of the Master is not earthly but spiritual. It would put to flight all earthly aspirations for temporal aggrandisement and power as the chief end of life. It would create a heavenly ambition for advancement in spiritual courts. It tells us that it is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. In the mind of a Jew the cross was associated only with images of degradation and shame. To him, Christ crucified was a stumbling block, to the Greeks, foolishness; but to us who believe, it has become the power of God and the wisdom of God. At the foot of

the cross how life's poor distinctions vanish away, and how the area of a common manhood widens and brightens! We preach Christ crucified as teaching most impressively this most important lesson. The crucified Lord thus determined for his disciples the legitimate results of their allegiance to him. They are to be crucified to the controlling power of the world's lusts, and the world is to be crucified to them.

We preach Christ crucified as fulfilling upon the cross the law of perfect obedience. This law found its noblest and most impressive embodiment in the life and in the death of the Saviour. His blood was the seal set to his mission. The special work given him to do was finished at the cross. The majesty of the moral law was vindicated. The soul had triumphed. Sin, with its seductive snares, was beneath its feet. The moral law had been broken; through Christ its unity and vigor were restored. And moral life is restored to us through the power and strength of Christ's righteousness in its controlling influence over the soul. He was obedient unto death — even the death of the cross. Its shadows fell darkly about his steps. He had been buffeted, scoffed at, neglected, and despised; and the law of perfect obedience had been sustained.

Turn our wills to this consecrated Lord, and we are furnished with power for that integrity of purpose, that strength of character, which shall render us faithful unto death, and shall fit us for the crown of life. So let us turn our wills — so let the moral powers of the Crucified work in our souls, until the cross with its lessons of spiritual obedience shall be re-erected in our affections, and the smoke of this free-will offering shall go up from the altar of our hearts.

We preach Christ crucified, as unfolding the richness of God's mercy, the plenitude of His forgiveness, the strength of His forbearing love. We see the glory of the Father as thus revealed, transcending all other manifestations of His presence. How ample the provisions of mercy, how unlimited the depth and breadth of the Divine forgiveness! It seemed as if human depravity and guilt had applied all the resources of their power, yet the arms of Almighty Love were stretched forth from the cross to draw the sinful and the wandering to their peaceful home. Said the Apostle, "peradventure for a *good man*" — one who inspires an affectionate regard — "some would even dare to die. But God commendeth *His* love toward us, in that while we were yet *sinner*s, Christ died for us." When the world was in rebellion against God, when there seemed to be nothing springing up here corresponding to his parental tenderness and affection, whilst this Divine Spirit seemed brooding over this human field of barren sympathies, God still loved: not that we loved Him, but that He loved us. If there is any appeal from the cross surpassing in power all others, it is this — the neverceasing tenderness, watchfulness and mercy of God. Christ is represented to us under the figure of a mercy-seat, from which pardon is proclaimed. Approach it with contrition, with confidence in the offers of mercy dispensed, and there is an inward apprehension of that reconciling Spirit, that produces comfort, strength and peace. Delay the hour of approach, and the pathway to life becomes more intricate, the charms that hold us back grow more subtle, and the desire to kneel at the mercy-seat burns lower and lower in our souls. God's forgiveness is ample, is adequate to meet all the demands and neces-

sities of the soul. There is nothing above it, there is nothing before it. It is the essential, it is the all in all. Give me this, and I am born and renewed. Withhold it, and though I have all things else, I must perish day by day. Give me this, and I ask for no stronger reliance. Withhold it, and I lean upon a broken staff. All the ritualistic appeals of Scripture, all the lofty imagery that inspires the emotions, that makes glad the affections, all converge to illustrate, to dramatize, and to enforce this. So Christ upon the cross addresses us now. He symbolizes in himself the great mercy-seat of God, sprinkled with His own innocent blood, indicating the unwearied devotedness of the Father. What a lesson, for man to ponder in his cowardly malice, his fretting forbearance, his perpetuated hates! Nothing can restore the world to its preordained beauty and dignity, but the personal indwelling of the Divine Spirit. Men, scrambling for wealth as though a golden sepulchre were the brightest vestibule to the courts of God; men, sporting with the frivolities, trifling amid the most sacred purposes of life, as though this were the true path to enjoyment, do but wander each hour from the real dignity and beauty of their birth. There is a sacred elevation of spirit, the prerogative of every affectionate soul, attainable only by the most strenuous exertions for the nurture of the highest instincts of our nature; an elevation, which the worldly and unpardoned soul, can, even in its best moods, but dimly see; and which the poor, indolent Christian, can but feebly experience. We have earthly men, who turn their backs upon the cross; but we have, also, sluggish and poverty-stricken Christians, whose faces are languidly set towards Calvary, revealing but little of the energy,

the beneficence, the magnanimity, of its victim. There are too many small Christians in the race, too many who gaze at glow-worms through their microscopes, and contend for the discovery of stars; too many whose purposes are shaped in a common and contracted mould, whose characters show no healthy stamina, in the hour of real work, bereavement and trial. Oh, for a race of men, (and why can we not have them?) who shall measure their purposes by the rules of no earthly ecclesiastical geometry, but by the free, ever-expanding spirit of the Christian's guardian, that we may walk forth in the strength of his enlightened manhood, and take the world captive by our spiritual knowledge, and the winning grace of our spiritual power!

How innumerable are the appeals from the cross! We preach Christ crucified, as appealing to us in every walk of life, in every grade of culture, in every earthly experience that boldly or cunningly assails the integrity of the soul. No life, however flowery and smooth, is free from its martyrdoms. The shadow of the cross falls over every truly working spirit. The disciple cannot expect to be above his Lord: enough, enough for him to be even as his Lord; to walk in the glory of a *trying*, and perhaps, at times, a thankless service, when clouds group together upon his pathway, interlaced by a few scattered threads of light.

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ONLY a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like seasoned timber, never gives;  
But, though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

—George Herbert.

## WHAT HAS THE YEAR LEFT UNDONE ?

BY HENRY WARE, JR.

IT is the last month of the year. Reader, what account have you rendered for the past year? In closing up the books of the departed months, what have been the heaviest items against you? Have they been wrongs against others or yourself? Overt acts, or secret thoughts? Evil done, or good left undone?

We are very prone to limit our self-judgment and our self-condemnation to the visible, palpable acts of open wrong-doing. Able in no other way to judge of others, we come in this way to judge of ourselves. But herein we are wrong; and in an hour of serious contemplation, when we sit down to search ourselves thoroughly, we must perceive that there is very much besides *actions* which goes to decide our characters, and for which we must account. We may be unable to recall positive acts of sin; and yet may find that we have cherished a state of mind which has rendered the whole year little else than one long sin. Or we may find, that, through thoughtlessness or sloth, we have let pass opportunities of virtuous action, till our most innocent days are darkened with the guilt of negligence.

This is, probably, no uncommon case. A man comforts himself, perhaps prides himself, in perceiving that he cannot be charged with any gross deviation from moral propriety; but he is not aware how often he has neglected a moral duty. He does not consider that the frequent

omission of what is right is equivalent to the frequent doing of what is wrong. If he have not taken the name of the Lord in vain, yet he has just as much broken the commandment by neglecting to honor and worship Him. If he have not defrauded and trampled upon a neighbor, he yet has broken the spirit of the Divine law by refraining from affording him succor and aid.

The magnitude of this consideration may be seen, if we consider how much good and evil lie in the *consequences* of conduct, and how small a part of those consequences can be foreseen. If we omit an act, we sacrifice all the consequences which would have followed that act — consequences whose value and extent we could not guess. The grandest results often depend on an apparently slight deed; and it may be our punishment hereafter, to perceive that our selfish refusal to perform some act which lay in our power has prevented the bringing about of some very important purposes. This is a consideration of appalling moment; and it would seem as if only great thoughtlessness could overlook it.

Thoughtlessness — inconsideration — a careless state of mind — this is at the bottom of the evil. It shows that a man is not, as he ought to be, at his Lord's command. He is not always in the spirit of obedience — waiting for opportunities and ready to seize them; but is content that they should pass by unimproved. And who can tell how great wrong he may thus have done to others or to himself? In some of our congregations we see an example of this heedlessness. Many habitually neglect public worship, at least half the time; while yet they account themselves good Christians and friends of Christian institutions. Now what but the grossest thoughtlessness on



their part can account for such a breach of propriety and Christian obligation ? If thus careless in this, how can they trust themselves in other religious duties ? If unfaithful to so public and palpable an observance, how can they be expected to be true to the more private and secret ? And what may not be the disastrous consequences at last on their religious character and habits, from this habitual omission of one religious act ? How can they tell, how can any one tell, that it shall not introduce a rottenness into their souls, which will finally be their destruction ?

Further, it is remarkable how a conscience, in proportion as it becomes tender, always testifies against this class of sins. It sometimes racks a man with keenest remorse on this ground, when it makes no complaint of any thing else. When no prohibition has been disregarded, when no positive wrong has been committed, when the outward life has been fair and the character is honored by all observers, yet a man's heart may be filled with insupportable reproaches because of sins of omission. This is the testimony of conscience to the heinousness of this class of sins. He has neglected his devotions, forgotten his prayers, or slothfully refrained from deeds of active sympathy and charity ; and all the satisfaction of other duties performed does nothing to outweigh the heaviness of shame, which now oppresses his heart at the remembrance of these negligences. How often and dreadfully is this seen in those persons whose consciences revive at the closing hour of life ! They have lived smoothly and inoffensively, committing no sins which attracted the observation of a friendly world, or disturbed the quiet of a prosperous life ; but they are now distressed and horror-struck, to find

that the chief things of the soul have been overlooked, and that the virtues they have done are far less than those they have left undone; and the plausible outside only makes more intolerable the real emptiness within.

There is another way in which conscience delivers its pointed testimony in this matter; it causes a man to be more and more sensitive to this guilt in proportion as he advances in Christian attainment. As he rises higher in holiness, his notions of what holiness is enlarge and expand, and he becomes more and more scrupulous. Failings and neglects to which he might have once been blind are now visible blots on his white robes, and he cannot endure them. Opportunities of usefulness, which it once would not have occurred to him to improve, are now seen by him as imperative in their call upon his fidelity; and a failure, that once would have been forgotten in an hour, now haunts him with an abiding anguish. A small omission burdens him like a crime.

I suppose, however, that few can honestly inspect themselves without finding this to be one of their easily besetting sins. Through sloth, or indolence, or procrastination, — because one loves his ease too well to move at all, or would rather move by and by, or does not think about it in any way, — he omits again and again what he ought to do. And what follows? Consequences that often shame himself, and greatly injure others; and beyond these, consequences which he cannot reckon, and would not dare to guess, and which eternity alone will disclose to him. The thought should startle him. Let it mix itself with the retrospections and resolutions of this solemn hour, and give vigor to the new purposes of the new year. It is not impossible that he may find some aid, in giving

direction and expression to his spirit, from the perusal of the following

## L I N E S.

It is not what my hands have done  
 That weighs my spirit down, —  
 That casts a shadow o'er the sun,  
 And over earth a frown ;  
 It is not any heinous guilt,  
 Or vice by men abhorred ;  
 For fair the fame that I have built,  
 A fair life's just reward ;  
 And men would wonder if they knew  
 How sad I feel, with sins so few.

Alas ! they only see a part,  
 When thus they judge the whole ;  
 They do not look upon the heart,  
 They cannot read the soul.  
 But I survey myself within ;  
 And mournfully I feel  
 How deep the principle of sin  
 Its root may there conceal,  
 And spread its poison through the frame,  
 Without a deed that men would blame.

They judge by actions which they see,  
 Brought out before the sun ;  
 But conscience brings reproach to me  
 For what I've left undone ! —  
 For opportunities of good  
 In folly thrown away ;  
 For time misused in solitude ;  
 Forgetfulness to pray ;  
 And thousand more omitted things,  
 Whose memory fills my breast with stings.

And therefore is my heart oppressed  
 With thoughtfulness and gloom ;  
 Nor can I hope for perfect rest  
 Till I escape this doom.  
 Help me, Thou Merciful and Just !  
 This fearful doom to fly ;  
 Thou art my strength, my peace, my trust ;  
 O, help me, lest I die !  
 And let my full obedience prove  
 The perfect power of faith and love.

## INTELLIGENCE.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian Register*, writing from Detroit, gives an encouraging account of some of the newly established Unitarian Churches in the Western States:—

AUSTENBURG, OHIO, contains a society of Unitarians whose independence and zeal deserve the affectionate interest of the whole fraternity. Their church is neat and well filled. Mr. Moulton, their newly ordained pastor, is a devoted minister, and he has secured not only the affection of his own flock, but the respect of the Orthodox seceding neighbors.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, is now favored with the services of Mr. A. D. Mayo, lately of Gloucester, Mass. He is preaching in a new and beautiful hall, to congregations that are said to average at least, three hundred persons. The society is organized on an unsectarian basis, and is styled The First Congregational Society of Liberal Christians in the city of Cleveland.

THE SOCIETY AT BICKFORD, ILLINOIS, have invited Mr. Murray of the last class from Meadville, to preach to them for six months, and he is now fulfilling his engagement. Bickford is a fine town of six or seven thousand inhabitants, and promises to be one of the largest inland cities of the North-west. The new Unitarian Church is of stone, and will be ready for dedication in December.