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CHRIST AS REDEEMER,
THE DELEGATED KING AND HEAD OF CREATION.

BY THE REV. H. GORDON,

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(CONCLUDED.)

In surveying the glories of redemption let us *always remember this*. We never have any right view of the glory which accrues to God from redemption if we confine its effects to redeemed sinners, although that were enough of itself to entitle the Saviour to all his glorious reward. We must view redemption as a vindication *once for all and for ever of the character of God*,—of his law—of his government—of his throne. Then the Scriptures seem to encourage this delightful view, that redemption has achieved so glorious a triumph over sin and the works of the devil, as to place the unfallen angels and the redeemed beyond the possibility of fall: the restored part of the creation beyond the possibility of being ever again exposed to the ruinous influences of sin.

But how little justice can be done to this great theme by the discourses or books of mortals. For does not our Bible tell us, that it is in redemption that the highest intelligences in the universe find the treasury which contains all the rarest and most wonderful secrets of God's wisdom; that it is through the Church that all the manifold glories of that wisdom are in panoramic view exhibited to all the most glorious creatures that God has made.—The Holy Ghost, in Ephesians iii. 10, tells us, "God created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Here, indeed is a study fit for heaven's inhabitants during all heaven's ever circling ages. Even here on earth we can see no little of the wonders

of that wisdom which redemption discovers.

Where can we find such insight into the wondrous workings of God's attributes of power, justice, holiness, truth, mercy, and love?

Where can we find such an insight into the various ways by which God has produced good out of evil?

How marvellously various is the good that man has derived from it.

Deliverance from all evils; supply of all wants; good for the body: good for the soul; good to meet every variety and change of condition; good to last as long as eternity; to crown all, perfect satisfaction in the blessed God, *the supreme good*.

Then the angels get a marvellous good too. They get in the redeemed new brothers and sisters, without the danger of ever losing them again out of the family. They are brought much nearer to God than they were ever before, being united under Jesus the new and common head.—They know God through the medium of redemption in a way they otherwise never could.

Again, what wonders rise above wonders in contemplating the *manner* in which the good has been bestowed and secured.

The wonders wrapt up in justification, for example. How a sinful creature should become innocent, and instated by the righteousness of another in a far more glorious righteousness than that which was by sin cast away.

Then the wonders in the rare means by which all this good is produced. Death, for example, being made the death of death, and the productive cause of life

eternal to the believer and of everlasting confusion to the devil, by turning against him his own weapons. Yes, my friends, it is because this world is the very stage of redemption that so peculiar a significance is attached to it.

We cannot tell what may be the glorious manifestations of God in other parts of creation. We cannot tell what may have been the deeds of glory done by Jehovah in the records of the past, or what new and further displays of his glory may come forth from that infinite duration still in reserve.

But this we do know, that *this* world is the field where redemption was transacted. This we do know, that it is not possible to conceive of a world where there ever has been or ever shall be another *incarnation, another Calvary, another crucifixion* of the Lord of glory. This we do know, that it is not possible to imagine any work of God, more glorious and godlike in design and end,—involving interests dearer to God and to all holy beings in the universe,—than that work of which this world has been the theatre.—For what questions of greater, or even of equal interest to God and to all his moral universe is it possible to conceive of, than those which redemption involves? What questions can be so solemn and momentous, can so deeply concern the honour and glory of God, and the happiness of all his moral creatures as these?—The vindication of God's law—whether that law shall stand or fall,—whether holiness or sin,—heaven or hell, God or Satan, are to have the ascendant?

Indeed, my friends, the great fact declared by the Holy Ghost in our text, that "*all things were made for Christ,*" may be said to have been made manifest and visible to every eye. For when the work of redemption came to its crisis at the crucifixion, the whole universe seems

to have assembled at Calvary. So absorbed were all creatures in Calvary's amazing scenes, that it looked as if the whole universe had made a solemn pause from all other business that all eyes might gaze on the cross of Christ. Representatives of all the intelligences of the universe were there, and had all their several parts to act. Representatives from earth, representatives from heaven, representatives from hell were there. Good angels and bad angels, good men and bad men, learned and unlearned, rich and poor were there,—yea, even the irrational creation had *their* part to act; and dumb, inanimate matter, received a tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord of all. Yes, whether as actors, or spectators, or witnesses, all were present at Calvary, and its accompanying scenes at or about the time of it, to give their accumulated testimony to the great fact of our text, that "*all things are made for Christ.*"

III. Many are the important lessons which this subject urges upon us.

1. How strikingly does it shew *the peculiar solemnity of our position in creation.*

In being born into this world we occupy a position the most solemn, the most critical and eventful to be found in all the universe of God. For small in material bulk though our world be, sin having entered it, it has become the stage for redemption. From the moment of our birth, therefore, we come into the very spot in all creation, which is the battlefield of a stupendous contest between Christ and the works of the devil, on the issue of which contest hangs everything which most nearly concerns the glory and interests of God, and the safety and happiness of all his moral universe.

Being born into a state of sin and ruin belonging to a race who have sided with God's enemies. From the day of our

birth to the day of our death, God and Satan are both claiming us; and hell, with all the powers of darkness, are ever working against us. So that it may be said, that over our very cradles it is written, and in baptism it is most impressively sealed, "Take Christ, oh child, for the polar star of thy life, and be happy." Attempt to steer thy course without Christ, and ruin eternal must be the end. For besides Christ, "There is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved."

How unmistakably does this subject shew—

2. The utter impossibility of *neutrality towards Christ*. Cast we about as we may for illustrations to shew this impossibility, all are too weak.

The impossibility of stopping the sun in his course; the impossibility of a single individual resisting the united physical force of the *material*, or all the weight of influences of the *intelligent* creation.—These are cases of impossibility as extreme as imagination itself could suggest, and yet they feebly set forth *the impossibility of occupying neutral ground towards Christ and salvation*.

For what does the mortal who would be neutral towards Christ attempt? He attempts to fly in the face, resist, defeat all the most glorious plans and purposes of God: For these all centre in constituting his Son Head over all things. In order to maintain the honour of the divine government, and to repair the ruin which sin, if suffered to go without a remedy, would bring upon it, Christ is the divinely anointed universal King.

For any mortal, therefore, to stand out against Christ, under this deep aggravation too, that Christ comes forth in his gospel as the Saviour who, "to seek and to save that which was lost," has not hesitated to come from the throne to the cross

—who has not spared himself, but has cheerfully thrown himself in the gap between us and ruin. Who has ever rightly measured the mad impiety and guilt of attempting neutrality here?

Oh! what an emphasis does our subject give to the Saviour's words, "*If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.*" "*He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*"

3. Consecration to Christ is the call which the subject loudly sends forth to the world in its associated relations.

It calls on nations by the argument, that they are specially designed agencies, and means of influence in the hands of Christ their King, of bringing the world over to him. It calls on families and heads of families by the argument, that they are designed to be in the hands of Christ, the head of all the families of the earth—nurseries for the rearing a holy seed—one godly generation after another to serve him in his Church.

But if the call for this national consecration be *addressed* to one nation above all others, *Great Britain is that nation*.

For, if Britain holds a pre-eminence among the nations; if it wields a master influence over the world's affairs, if its dominions be so large that the sun never sets on them, if it be mistress of the seas, if it be the *world's great workshop and banker*, to whom but to Christ is it debtor for all? And for what end did it receive all, but to use it for Christ, for whom are all things, and to advance the interest of his kingdom. Let Britain beware of unfaithfulness to the high and glorious trust, lest all its national glory may depart.

"Be wise, ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth."

"For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and

keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people.— For all the earth is mine.”

But the subject earnestly calls on each individual most seriously to consider and take home—

4. The all momentous alternative involved in the great fact, that “*all things are created for Christ.*”

In the very fact that we are beings brought into the creation of God, it is most undeniably true that we were made *for Christ*: because all creation is for Christ, from the highest angel up in heaven to the very smallest atom down on earth.

But what an infinite difference does it make; whether we belong to Christ as his necessary, but *unwilling*, subjects, who do not wish him to reign over us; or whether we have by faith been drawn to him by the gospel, and by the sweet captivity of his all conquering love, have become Christ's willing devoted subjects and disciples.

Oh! let any creature, to whom the name of Christ and his gospel are made known, most closely examine, ere it be for ever too late, the two sides of this alternative; *for Christ*, as forming a part of his dominion over apostate devils, and apostate sinners, his enemies; and *for Christ*, as forming a part of his willing, loving subjects, won over to him by a cordial acceptance of gospel offers.

What a striking contrast in condition and prospects between these two different classes of persons!

How utterly hopeless and forlorn is the state of unbelievers.

It is bad enough that they were by nature in that state of sin and ruin, which have come by the apostacy of our race from God. But they have this deep aggravation of guilt to answer for.

Christ has graciously stretched out to

them his benignant sceptre of gospel mercy, making to them, in his character of Saviour as well as King, a free offer of all that great salvation with which God is eternally well pleased, and by which he is eternally glorified. But they have refused it, and the gospel day, and their day of merciful visitation, has for ever gone by.

What, then, *can remain after this*, but an eternity to brood over the guilt and self-ruin which now everlastingly and irretrievably cleaves to them as the necessary consequence of having despised and thrown away *that* which brings glory to God in the highest; and which, if it had been rightly treated, would have brought to them heaven and all its eternal weight of glory.

But what a contrast is there on the other side of the picture, in the condition and prospects of those who, by a cordial surrender to the gospel call, belong to Christ as his willing subjects and true disciples.

First, what a *blessed safety* in their condition.

The world may change like the winds, as often and much as it pleases. Convulsions may happen in the natural world,— revolutions in the political or commercial worlds. It might seem that that which the Scripture speaks of had come, “the foundations of the earth dissolving, its pillars giving way.” What then? The hearts of those who have not Christ to rest on may fail them for fear. But what has the Christian to fear? Seeing that Christ and the Christian, in mind, heart, purpose, interest, are *one*; and seeing that Christ and the divine mind and purposes in creation are *also one*; Christ, the Sovereign Ruler of all creation and providence, will so touch every secret spring, and move every wheel as to make all most surely

work together for the good of his loving loyal subjects.

What a delightful confirmation does this subject give to the truth of Job's beautiful description of the believer's condition in being at peace with creation, in being at peace with creation's King, (Job v. 28.)

But to speak of the believer's *perfect safety*, in the fact that he is the subject of Him, "*by whom and for whom all things were created*," is the least that can be said. All the amazing privileges and blessings, consequent on the plan of salvation, are unfailingly the believer's.

By this plan of godlike, *unearthly wisdom*, there is such a complete *oneness of interest by reason of union between Christ and his people*, that *Christ's* exaltation becomes theirs, that he has gone up to be enthroned as *their representative*; that they may share in that glory and reward which, at so inestimable a cost, he *died* to purchase, and *lives* to bestow.

The believer can say that he and creation's Lord are, in respect to interest, benefit, relation, *one*,—

"One when he died, one when he rose,
One when he triumphed o'er his foes:
One, when in heaven he took his seat,
And angels sang all hell's defeat."

How sweet the thought that Christ the King is the believer's ever devoted unchangeable friend, "Henceforth, I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my father, I have made known unto you." How sweet the thought that Christ the King is the believer's friend, yea, kinsman and elder brother. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," (Eph. v. 30.)

These are the privileges flowing from the relationship between Christ and believers even *here*. As to the prospects *hereafter* of heaven and glory—who can rightly speak of the believer's *heaven*?—but this

much must be *most certain*, that a heaven in the securing of which the whole resources of creation have been expended—nay, immeasurably more, the all precious blood of the Son of God and Son of Man; a heaven bestowed on Christ, and to be shared by his people as one in relationship with him, as the appropriate reward for a work by which God's glory and the honor of his moral government shine out with transcendent lustre and beauty to the whole intelligent universe. Surely, oh surely, such a heaven as this cannot be a mean one,—one of which God will be ashamed. But this heaven, oh, believer, is thine,—thine as unchangeably sure and eternal as thy King's great word can make it. "*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*," (John xvii. 22, 23.)

In taking leave of this subject, and of his native land, the preacher feels it to be a great privilege and comfort to be able, by the authority of his Lord and Master, to send abroad with these pages this invitation, *large as the heart of Jesus*, to all and each by whom they may be read.—Come and be Christ's devoted subject and disciple, and all that his glorious work has deserved and secured shall be assuredly thine. For, King of kings, and Lord of lords *as Jesus is*, hear his own gracious invitation, "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" yea, more marvellous still, "*Behold I stand at the door and knock*."

The power of Christ will be manifested in all, by the destruction either of sin or the sinner. The hearts which now yield to the impressions of His Spirit are broken only in order to be formed anew, and to become vessels of honour fitted for the Master's use.—Those which continue stubborn must be dashed in pieces by the stroke of eternal vengeance.—*Bishop Horne.*

IMMORTALITY.

“The doctrine of man’s immortality, when once the mind can be brought to dwell intently on the subject, is certainly the most interesting and the most important that can be presented to him. Other objects may and do often occupy more of our attention and take a stronger hold of our feelings; but that in real importance all those objects are comparatively trifles no one can doubt. Other matters of contemplation, again, may be in themselves not less awful, stupendous, and wonderful; but none of these can so intimately concern ourselves. Admirable as is the whole of God’s creation, no other work can be so interesting to man as man himself; sublime as is the idea of the Eternal Creator Himself, our own eternal existence after death is an idea calculated to strike us with still more overpowering emotions. That man, feeble and short lived as he appears on earth, is destined by his Maker to live forever—that ages hence, when we and our remotest posterity shall have been forgotten on earth, and countless ages beyond—when earth itself and, perhaps, a long succession of other worlds shall have come to an end, we shall still be living; still sensible of pleasure and pain, to a greater degree perhaps than our present nature admits of, and still having no shorter space of existence before us than at first.—These are thoughts which overwhelm the imagination the more the longer it dwells upon them. The understanding cannot adequately embrace the truths it is compelled to acknowledge; and when, after intently gazing for some time on this vast prospect, we turn aside to contemplate the various courses of earthly events and transactions which seem like rivulets trickling into the boundless ocean of eternity, we are struck with a sense of the infinite insignificance of all the objects around us that have reference to our present state alone, while every the most minute circumstance that may concern the future life, like a seed from which some

mighty tree is to spring, rises into immeasurable importance as the awful reflection occurs that, perhaps, something which is taking place at this very moment may contribute to fix our final destiny. There is no one truth in short which tends to produce so total a change in our estimate of all things.”

PAPACY SUBVERSIVE OF LIBERTY.

If any fact is attested by the universal testimony of history, ancient, modern, and contemporary—if confessions, boasts, threats, laws, practices, examples, and sufferings have been unanimous on any one point, it is this—that the Church of which John Hughes is the leading counsel in this country, is intolerant, persecuting, murderous. So she was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, unless her end comes. She will never repent and reform. There is no promise or prophecy of her amendment.—Look at her at home. See her in the mountains of Piedmont. Survey her in Spain.—Think of her Inquisition. Read her history. She is drunk with the blood of the saints. Go now, in this the nineteenth century of Christ’s era of good will among men, and let any Protestant attempt to do in Rome what John Hughes does here in New York—viz., to preach what he believes to be the Gospel of the Son of God, and a dungeon would be his doom before sundown. Let him venture to give his neighbour a few religious tracts in the Tuscan dominions, and bonds and imprisonment await him. Here the constitution secures equal rights of conscience to all; and under that protection all the religious of the earth may gather, and strive to bless each other by demonstrating their respective power to make their professors pure, peaceable and loving. And can any man tell us why the Roman Catholics do not unite heartily in our efforts to secure religious liberty for all in all parts of the world? Why do Christians of all names and creeds combine to extend freedom of conscience to their brethren in every clime, while the Roman Catholics alone stand aloof, and never raise a voice, except to make sport of the noble endeavours of others to give liberty to all the longing sons of men? Is it not because the spirit of Romanism is everywhere the same—like master like man. In Rome and in New York, in London and St. Louis, wherever Romanism has a voice to speak, it is heard on the side of intolerance, or if afraid to speak, is silent when all the people are crying out for freedom.—*New York Observer.*

"FREELY."

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"I will love them freely."

We use the word "freely" when a favor is conferred *without its being sought*. It can hardly be said that our king in the old histories pardoned the citizens of Calais freely, when his queen had first to prostrate herself before him, and with many tears induce him to be merciful. He was gracious, but he was not free in his grace.—When a person has been long dogged by a beggar in the streets, though he may turn round and give liberally, to be rid of the clamorous applicant, he does not give "freely." Remember, with regard to God, that his grace to man was utterly unsought. He does give grace to those who seek it, but none would ever seek that grace unless unsought grace had first been bestowed. Sovereign grace waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men. The love of God goes forth to men, when they have no thought after him; when they are hastening after all manner of sin and wantonness. He loves them freely, and as the effect of that love, they then begin to seek his face. But it is not our seeking, our prayers, our tears, which incline the Lord to love us. God loves us at first most freely, without any entreaties or beseechings, and then we come both to entreat and to beseech his favor.

That *which comes without any exertion on our part* comes to us "freely." The rulers digged the well, and as they digged it they sang, "Spring up, O well!" In such a case, where a well must be digged with much labor, the water can hardly be described as rising freely. But yonder, in the laughing valley, the spring gushes from the hill-side, and lavishes its crystal torrent among the shining pebbles. Man pierced not the fountain, he bored not the channel, for, long ere he was born, or ever the weary pilgrim bowed himself to its cooling stream, it had leaped on its joyous way right freely, and it will do so as long as the moon endureth—*freely, freely, freely*.—Such is the grace of God. No labor of man procures it; no effort of man can add to it. God is good from the simple necessity of his nature; God is love simply be-

cause it is his essence to be so, and he pours forth his love in plenteous streams to undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving objects simply because he "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion, for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

If you ask an illustration of the word "freely," I point to *yonder sun*. How freely he scattereth his life-giving beams! Precious as gold are his rays, but he scattereth them like the dust; he sows the earth with orient pearl, and bejewels it with emerald, and ruby, and sapphire, and all most *freely*. You and I forget to pray for the sun's light, but it comes at its appointed season; yea, on that blasphemer who curses God, the day ariseth, and the sunlight warms him as much as the most obedient child of the heavenly Father.—That sunbeam falls upon the farm of the miser, and upon the field of the churl, and bids the grain of the wicked expand in its genial warmth and produce its harvest.—That sun shines into the house of the adulterer, into the face of the murderer, and the cell of the thief. No matter how sinful man may be, yet the light of day descends upon him unasked for and unsought. Such is the grace of God; where it comes, it comes not because sought or deserved, but simply from the goodness of the heart of God, which, like the sun, blesseth as it wills. Mark you the gentle winds of heaven, the breath of God to revive the languishing, the soft breezes.—See the sick man at the sea-side, drinking in health from the breezes of the salt sea. Those lungs may heave to utter the lascivious song, but the healing wind is not restrained; and whether it be breast of saint or sinner, yet that wind ceaseth not from any. So, in gracious visitations, God waiteth not till man is good before he sends the heavenly wind, with healing beneath its wings; even as he pleaseth so it bloweth, and to the most undeserving it cometh.—Observe the rain which drops from heaven. It falls upon the desert as well as upon the fertile field; it drops upon the rock that will refuse its fertilizing moisture, as well as upon the soil that opens its gaping mouth to drink it in with gratitude. See, it falls upon the hard-trodden streets of the

populous city, where it is not required, and where men will even curse it for coming, and it falls not more freely where the sweet flowers have been pausing for it, and the withering leaves have been rustling forth their prayers. Such is the grace of God. It does not visit us because we ask it, much less because we deserve it; but as God wills it, and the bottles of heaven are unstopped, so God wills it, and grace descends. No matter how vile, and black, and foul, and godless men may be, he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and that free, rich, overflowing goodness of his can make the very worst and least deserving the objects of his best and choicest love.

Do understand me. Let me not leave this point till I have well defined its meaning. I mean this, dear friends: when God says, "I will love them freely," he means that no prayers, no tears, no good works, no almsgivings are an inducement to him to love men; nay, that not only nothing in themselves, but nothing anywhere else was the cause of his love to them; not even the blood of Christ; not even the groans and tears of his beloved Son. These are the fruits of his love, not the cause of it. He does not love because Christ died, but Christ died because the Father loved. Do remember that this fountain of love has its spring in itself, not in you nor in me, but only in the Father's own gracious, infinite heart of goodness.

To you who are going about to establish your own righteousness, here is a *death-blow to your works and carnal trustings*. God will not love you meritoriously; God will love you freely. Wherefore go ye about, then, spending your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? You may boast as you will, but you will have to come to God on a par with the worst of the worst; when you do come you will have to be accepted, you that are the best of men, just on the same terms as if you had been the foulest of the foul. Therefore, go not about, busy not yourself with all this fancied righteousness, but come to Jesus as you are, come now, without any works of yours, for you must so come or not at all. God has said, "I will love them freely," and depend upon it he will never love you in any other way. You may think you are

toiling to heaven, when you shall be only tunnelling your way through mountains of self-righteousness down to the depths of hell.

This doctrine offers *comfort to those who do not feel fit to come to Christ*. Do you not perceive that the text is a death-blow to all sorts of fitness? "I will love them freely." Now, if there be any fitness necessary in you before God will love you, then he does not love you freely; at least this would be a mitigation and a drawback to the freeness of it. But it is, "I will love you *freely*." You say, "Lord, but my heart is so hard." "I will love you freely." "But I do not feel my need of Christ as I could wish." "I will not love you because you feel your need; I will love you freely." But I do not feel that softening of spirit that I could desire.—Remember, the softening of spirit is not a condition, for there are no conditions; the covenant of grace has no conditionality whatever. These are the unconditional, sure mercies of David; so that you, without any fitness, may come and venture upon the promise of God which was made to you in Christ Jesus, when he said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." No fitness is wanted; "I will love them freely." Sweep all that lumber and rubbish out of the way! Oh, for grace in your hearts to know that the grace of God is free, is free to you without preparation, without fitness, without money, and without price!

Nor does the practical use of our doctrine end here. There are some of you who say, "I feel this morning that I am so unworthy; I can well believe that God will bless my mother; that Christ will pity my sister; I can understand how yonder souls can be saved, but I cannot understand how I can be; I am so unworthy." "I will love them freely." Oh, does not that meet your case? If you were the most unworthy of all created beings, if you had aggravated your sin till you had become the foulest and most vile of all sinners, yet "I will love them freely" puts the worst on an equality with the best—sets you that are the devil's castaways on a par with the most hopeful. There is no reason for God's love in any man; if there is none in you, you are not worse off than the best of men, for there is none in them. The

grace and love of God can come as freely to you as they can to those that have long been seeking them; for "I am found of them that sought me not."

Yet once more here. I think this subject invites backsliders to return; indeed, the text was specially written for such—"I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely." Here is a son who ran away from home. He enlisted for a soldier.—He behaved so badly in his regiment that he had to be drummed out of it. He has been living in a foreign country in so vicious a way that he has reduced his body by disease. His back is covered with rags; his character is that of the vagrant and felon. When he went away he did it on purpose to vex his father's heart, and he has brought his mother's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. One day the young lad receives a letter full of love—His father writes:—"Return to me, my child; I will forgive you all; I will love you freely." Now if this letter had said—"If you will humble yourself so much, I will love you; if you will come back and make me such-and-such promises, I will love you;" if it had said, "If you will behave yourself for the future, I will love you," I can suppose the young man's proud nature rising; but surely this kindness will melt him. Methinks the generosity of the invitation will at once break his heart, and he will say, "I will offend no longer, I will return at once." Backslider, without any condition you are invited to return. "I am married unto you," saith the Lord. If Jesus ever did love you he has never left off loving you. You may have left off attending to the means of grace; you may have been very slack at private prayer; but if you ever were a child of God you are a child of God still, and he cries, "How can I give thee up? How can I set thee as Admah? How can I make thee as Zeboim? My repentings are kindled together; I am God, and not man; I will return unto him in mercy." Return, backslider, and seek thine injured Father's face. I think I hear a murmur somewhere—"Well, this is very, very, very Antinomian doctrine." Aye, objector, it is such doctrine as you will want one day; it is the only doctrine which can meet the case of

really awakened sinners.* God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

DEATH OF AN ACTIVE CHRISTIAN.

Mr. Hull, Secretary of the Western branch of the Young Men's Christian Association was one of those London Christians who brought back good tidings from the scenes of the Ulster awakening in 1859, and who themselves received a fresh baptism of the Spirit of life and love.—Soon after his return a daily prayer meeting was established. He had previously written to a friend from the midst of revival scenes, deploring that, while souls were brought to Christ by scores at a time, London Christians were content with their poor twos and threes. "Oh, dear friend, get them all to pray; dare any not to pray; charge them all to cry to God as they have never cried, and he will bless as he has never blessed." There was begun also a Friday evening prayer-meeting, at which many young women from the large drapery establishments in the neighbourhood were savingly converted. This led to the formation of young women's associations and homes, repeatedly referred to in former papers, as affording shelter, safety, and religious privileges to young girls far away from the parental roof. Mr. Hull was most active in his co-operation with this movement, and ladies of rank, who gave both means and personal attendance at the home in Crawford-street, for the benefit of their sisters in a humbler station than their own, availed themselves of his counsel. His labours, indeed, were unceasing, and even when he went out of town once a year for recreation, he was not idle. Many provincial towns were visited by him, and great good was done by his evangelistic labours. But he had overtaken his energies. In July last the writer met him at Carlisle, in evidently failing health. There was, however, no alarm felt by himself or his friends. He spoke to us of a probable tour to Germany, partly for health, and partly to carry good tidings to a number of British workmen employed in Prussia, far from the means of grace, in whom a pious lady was deeply interested. But his work on earth was completed. His strength rapidly gave way. His last hours were calm and happy. His parting message to the young evangelists, who were his spiritual children, may well be pondered by every herald of the cross. "Tell the young men to preach the gospel—preach it earnestly, solemnly, affectionately." He had, indeed, a "noble avarice for souls," hence the opportunities furnished by the London multitude were prized and improved to his power, and beyond his power. And so, when one spoke of the charm of a country life, its quietness, &c., he replied—

"The town for me,
With its mighty sea
Of human souls quick moving;
WORK TO BE DONE,
SOULS TO BE WON,
Christ's compassion proving."

THE GOOD NEWS.

DECEMBER 15th, 1863.

"THE DEBT OF NATURE."

"He has paid the debt of nature," is a very common way of stating that a person has died. It is, however, an improper one. *Reason* is against it. Look at this corpse, cold, stiff, deaf, dumb, blind, insensible. Does not the judgment—if suffered to speak freely—at once say; "Death is unnatural?" Does not it do so the more readily if putrefaction has commenced his horrible work, whereby the subject of it has become not only disgusting, but also dangerous to the by-standers? But, *Scripture* also is against the expression now under consideration. It teaches most clearly that death is a consequence of sin—that if sin had not entered, death would have been unknown in our world. No one, therefore, who fully believes the Scriptures can believe that death is the debt of nature—though he may, without thinking, and through the influence of example, speak of it as such. Yes—death is "most unnatural."

In connection with the remarks now made, we would add an extract or two from an excellent work by Landis, entitled—"The immortality of the soul and the final condition of the wicked?"

"Corporeal death is not a debt of nature, but a result of sin. The true idea on this subject is thus presented by *Paræus* (in Gen. ii. 17) in reply to the allegation of Socinus, that death is natural to man: "God did not create death; how then can it be natural to man? And how can death be called natural to man, when it is, *per se*, the destruction of his nature? How shall that be natural which is against and not according to nature, and which is totally abhorrent from nature? and which, with such great sorrow and suffering, is conjoined to nature? and of which nature, previous to the fall was free, and shall be also free after the final judgment? Death is therefore not natural because it destroys nature." And *Schmidt* with equal force remarks.—

"Certainly not that which is congruous to nature, and which pertains to it in its integrity, cannot be called an *enemy* and *hostile*, as death is here expressly said to be by the apostle (1 Cor. xv. 26)."

Bishop Bull says:—

"That Adam should not have died if he had not sinned, is so manifestly the doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Church of God, both before and since Christ our Saviour's appearance in the flesh, that Pelagius of old, and Socinus in this latter age, are justly to be esteemed the most impudent of mortals for daring to call it in question." *Gregory Nazianzen* says, "For if God had created man mortal from the beginning, he never would have condemned sin by death; for in no conceivable way could he condemn a mortal by inflicting on him mortality." *Augustine* says:—"It is agreed upon among Christians, who truly hold the Catholic faith, that corporeal death is not by a law of nature, but deservedly inflicted on account of sin; because God, in avenging sin, said to the man in whom we all then were, 'Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt go.'" The Council at Milevia in Numidia, A.D. 416, said: "Whoever shall say that the first man, Adam, was created mortal, so that whether he should sin or not sin, he would have died corporeally, not from desert of sin, but by a necessity of nature, *anathema sit*." See the work referred to Pp. 346-7.

Metis, C.E.

T. F.

THE THREE ANGELIC REJOICINGS.

I.

In olden time Jehovah spoke,
And light from darkest night awoke;
And then, with His Almighty wand,
The great enchanter raised the land,
And decked it out in softest green,
And bade the ocean roll between.
Creation vast then harmonized,
And told of love, which all devised;
The angels saw the wondrous sight,
And sung the great Creator's might,
"Glory to God who reigns above,
On the celestial throne of love."
"Glory to God," the scraps sung,
And "glory" through creation rang.

And highest angel veiled his face,
While through the corridors of space,
The undulating waves of song
From world to world were passed along.

II.

The golden harps were tuned again,
And all the angels caught the strain:
With tenfold transport God's own choir,
Now sung with high extatic fire.
Not birth day of some fair abode.
But stranger! *Birth day of a God!*
Awoke anew their heavenly joys,
And tuned their tongues to highest praise.
Earth's greatest story formed their theme,
Unfathomed mercy's mighty scheme;
For thus the chorus sweetly ran,
"Glory to God, good will to man;
Let evil's jarring discord cease,
For Bethlehem's babe—the Prince of Peace
Has come with his redeeming grace,
To save a fallen, ruined race;
To heal, where all physicians fail,
And none but He can thus avail:
'Tis He, whom prophets saw afar,
Creation's bright and morning star."

III.

And even now, these sons of song
On Zion's mount their notes prolong,
In rich, mellifluous strains they sing
The triumphs of their heavenly king;
For, when the wanderer, far astray,
Returns again from error's way,
Their congregating ranks of white
In harmony divine unite.
Oft, oft, as the repentant one
Is owned in heaven as a son,
They lift again their harps of gold,
And sing, as they have sung of old,
Adoring notes to God on high,
Who gave his only Son to die
That rebels from the dust might rise,
To join the harpers of the skies.
O may each give that minstrel band,
A cause to sing in yonder land,
And then with them, we shall, ere long,
Chant praises in the land of song.

X. Y. Z.

DEFECTIVE RELIGION.

A religion that never suffices to govern a man, will never suffice to save him; that which does not sufficiently distinguish one from a wicked world, will never distinguish him from a perishing world.—Howe.

"BOXY WEBB;" or, "A CHANGED MAN."

Many years ago, in a country village in the west of England, there lived a man whose habits and character had gained him a name amongst his neighbours which clung to him for years. He was a noted pugilist, and for the pure love of the "sport," as it is called, he frequented all the wakes and fairs for fifty miles round in hopes of a fight.

He was not a pleasant neighbour. At the least provocation his hand was raised for a blow, and in consequence he was feared and shunned by all the village. Thus he won his characteristic title. Far and near he was known as "Boxy Webb."

At length, one Sabbath evening, he was induced by one of his comrades to come to the Tabernacle, where my father preached, "to see the fun." "Such a cram, it's worth seeing," said his companion; "let's go for a lark." They came. In that, as in many other country chapels, one gallery was appropriated to the women, and the other to the men.—There was no room for them to sit in the men's gallery, so they stood in the group which, as the chapel filled, had gathered at the top of the stairs. I think I can still see the tall athletic figure towering above the rest, some six feet three or four in height; the nobly formed head, and the face which would have been handsome but for its long association with passion and sin.

He attracted my eye, and after service I asked who he was. "That tall dark man in the gallery?" inquired my father. "It was Boxy Webb, child, the terror of C—."

"Why, what in the world could have brought him to Tabernacle?"

"The Lord brought him, I hope," was the reply.

During the week Boxy was not to be found, but the next Sabbath evening he again took his stand at the top of the gallery stairs. His eyes were fixed on the preacher, and the tears were running down his face.

"What has come to your neighbour, Charles?" said my father next day to a good man who lived at C—.

"I believe he's sitting at the feet of Jesus, sir, clothed, and in his right mind," was the reply. Charles was right.

A few weeks later, humbly, almost timidly, Boxy came to ask if such a sinner as he had been, might be admitted to the table of the Lord. Next, his cottage was opened for a village prayer-meeting, and we heard of him pleading with his old associates, distributing tracts, visiting the sick, and becoming in his own natural, open-hearted, fearless way, a kind of rural evangelist. Thus he continued

to let his "light shine before men," and to glorify God.

He had now been for a long time a converted man, when one day, as I was going out, my father called me. "Could you walk to C— and leave a message for Boxy Webb?" "Oh, yes, I should like to go." I received the message, and, joined by some young friends, set off on our pleasant ramble through the country lanes.

On entering the village, which was some miles distant from our home, we inquired where Boxy lived; but, to our surprise, the man of whom we inquired could not inform us. "Not know Boxy Webb!" I exclaimed; "I thought every one here knew him. He must be the tallest man in the village, at any rate, if you know him in no other way."—"Oh," he said, "he has a prayer-meeting in his house?" "Yes," he has. "I know who you mean, now," said the man, smiling, "but didn't think of him by that name. I believe people here used to call him 'Boxy,' but we call him *now* 'Long Thomas of Tabernacle.'"

Droll enough, certainly, the new name sounded, yet as we turned towards the pretty white cottage on the bank where "Long Thomas" resided, my heart was full. Happy man! the old nature gone, and with it the old name. The new name, though a nickname, was used as one of respect and honour. It marked the place in which he became a "new creature in Christ Jesus."

There he stood at his cottage door, waiting for the supper which his good wife was setting on the table, a little child leaning against his knee. And as he listened to my father's message, and eagerly helped to arrange the details of some village service, to which it referred, I could not avoid thinking that it was no wonder that his neighbours had forgotten the old name. "Boxy Webb" was to all intents and purposes dead and gone. His very countenance seemed to indicate the change that had taken place. More than that, his house, his dress, his family, bore witness to it. So did his own and many other villages, for his efforts to win souls to Christ were known far and near. What power had wrought this change? It was the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of Christ's love subduing the proud sinful heart, and drawing it to himself. And then, trusting in Jesus for safety, loving Jesus for having died to save him, what else could he do but live to his glory? I shall see him no more in the lower sanctuary which gave him his novel title, but I hope to meet him hereafter among the countless multitude to whom those glorious words shall be fulfilled—"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him

the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. iii. 12.)

Reader, has the change wrought in Boxy Webb been wrought in you? Whoever you are, you must be converted, "born again," changed in heart and life, ere you can enter into heaven. If you are thus changed you have fled for refuge to Jesus, you believe in him as having shed his blood to save you; you love him supremely, you aim to serve and honour him. And do you not want to lead others to that precious Saviour, that they may find the mercy which you have found? Yes, doubtless, you sing—

"I'll tell to all poor sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,
And say, 'Behold the way to God.'"

—*Tract issued by the Religious Tract Society.*

THE SPINNING WHEEL.

"Well, Mary," said Mr. Everard to one of his parishioners upon whom he was calling, "you are looking a little better, I think, than when I saw you last. I was quite glad, as I came to the door, to hear my old friend the wheel humming away again once more."

"Oh, yes, sir," she said, with a sigh, "the old hum must go on as long as I have strength to turn the wheel."

"No need to sigh, Mary; thank God that you have the strength. Depend upon it, if much longer unable to work, you would long for the employment. Persons are not happy when they are idle."

"Oh, sir," she said, stopping her wheel and looking up in his face, "I fear I am very ungrateful, then; for I often wish the spindle were in the corner, and I at rest."

The good old clergyman heard her, but did not immediately reply; it seemed as though he were thinking what he could say to check her murmuring thoughts. Meanwhile Mary's foot pressed the board again, the spool buzzed round, and the busy thread flew through her fingers.

And as he watched her working, and perceived her sunken eye and flushed cheeks, he could not but feel, indeed, that the spindle would soon be laid aside; and the words of comfort and admonition rose at once to his lips.

"Mary," he said, "that thread which you draw out hour after hour brings to my mind a very solemn thought, yet one which ought to be full of comfort."

"What is it, sir?" she asked, half listlessly. "I shall be glad to have something to think of; for, for this while back, I can fix my mind to nothing. It seems as if my thoughts were running round with the wheel till all is dim and confused, like its spokes. It's hard-earned bread, sir, spinning here all day alone; and at night, in my sleep, I often think I am still rocking at the go-foot."

"Well, Mary," he said, soothingly, "that spinning-wheel you might liken to your life, which goes on, round and round, day by day. You would not like to see your spinning-wheel going idly on, like a toy, spinning no flax for the weaver. You would be weary then, indeed Mary, of that monotonous work, when you saw no return for your labour. Is it not so? Now, God has given you a burdened life to sustain. It goes round heavily enough; but has it no flax to spin? There are homely duties he has appointed you, measured out according to your strength; and are not the days which he spares you like the threads which are gradually exhausting the distaff? You watch carefully over the thread till it is perfected for the spool, leaning lightly where it is frail, and seeing that it winds evenly away; so there is a watchful eye on the thread of your frail life, guiding it to its close. As, when the night comes, you lay aside the exhausted distaff and the perfected reel, ignorant of its precise destiny, though knowing well it lies ready for some useful purpose on the morrow; so, when

the night of death comes, and the distaff of toil and duty is for ever put by, and the days of sorrow and suffering have been wound off and perfected, let us trust they have not been for naught; they have had their appointed purpose, if God's hand has guided their course. At the great sunrise of the resurrection all will be made clear, and God will give you, Mary, if you are faithful to the end, a crown of life and a robe of righteousness, unlike your earthly garb. Not the result of your toil—not a robe made out of the threads which you worked—but he will say to you, 'I accept your work as done to me, and will write it down in my book of remembrance. You have now put off your earthly garments and I have given you an immortal robe. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."'

He ceased speaking. Mary's tears fell fast over her work. At length she said, earnestly, "I thank you, sir; I see it all. God surely guided your steps here to-day to fill my heart with peace. I do not think I shall ever sit down to my work again, or lay it aside at night, without thinking of your words. I can work cheerfully now in feeling God's eye is upon me; and, whatever I do, I will try to do it with all my might, as to the Lord."

A few weeks after this the old clergyman came again; but the spindle was laid aside in the corner, and the days had been wound off and perfected, and Mary was at rest.

TO DAY! TO DAY!

Many persons have strong expectations of becoming Christians at a future day, but invent excuses for present delay.—They imagine that a "convenient season" will come, when all hindrances will be removed, and they can give undivided attention to the concerns of the soul. But the road to heaven is always "strait and narrow," and only through much tribulation and many struggles, and resolute cross-bearing, can one enter the kingdom. How often is hope of future conversion quenched in utter despair, as in the following narrative:—

It has been my privilege to spend some of my most happy, and some of my most profitable hours, among the cottages of the poor. The scenes witnessed there have often sent me home again, feeling that if I had not imparted good, I had at least gained good for myself! An incident which I never can forget, proving the danger of delay as regards the soul's eternal welfare came under my notice while residing for a few years in a village on the western coast of Scotland.

During my morning walks, I often stopped to speak a word to Mary M——, a remarkably fine, healthy young woman, and the mother of a little family; but my visits never seemed welcome, and she would show her dislike to the subject of religion by constantly fidgetting as soon as I entered upon it. She would continue to sweep up her floor, remove her kettle from the fire, or turn to something of a worldly nature; in fact do any thing rather than sit and listen five minutes, though I tried by a kindly voice and manner to win her attention.

Thus month after month passed away, and Mary was still averse to holy things. Indeed the enmity of her mind evidently increased; for she would occasionally shut and lock her door when she saw me coming, or walk away from her house so as to avoid my speaking to her. Little did she think how soon she would, in very despair, send for one whom she had so often despised and turned from!

One morning early, while dressing, I was surprised by a message from Mary, begging me to come to her *immediately!* I did so, and was shocked to find her not only ill, but rapidly approaching her end. Unsuspected and violent inflammation had attacked her, and to the agonies of the body were added the far worse agonies of the mind. *Conscience* was fully at work, and she was tossing to and fro in all the horrors of a speedy removal into a world for which she felt herself wholly unprepared.

I prayerfully endeavoured to set before her the fullness and freeness of salvation, even at the eleventh hour, but she looked wildly in my face, and said:

"*It is too late!* I cannot understand you now!" Then raising her hands before her face, with a tone and manner I even now shudder to think of, and as if to her

eye the awful realities of the unseen world were already revealed, she exclaimed:

"O, *hide* me from the almighty: I *will* not, I *cannot*, meet God!"

These were the last words she ever spoke, and in a few minutes her spirit was called into the presence of her neglected God and Maker.

Such a scene speaks for itself. May it be a solemn warning to you my readers who now care for none of these things, who look upon the visits of a Christian friend as intrusive, and who are so much taken up with the daily cares of life as to find no time for seeking the pardon of sin and the salvation of your souls. O, think of it! You may be *as* suddenly called to render in your account to God. Make sure work now of an interest in Jesus, and never rest satisfied until you can feel that you are treading the safe and narrow path which leadeth unto life eternal.

BIBLE - WOMEN'S WORK.

The *Book and its Mission* furnishes the following incident of this good work in London:

There is one of our women who had many Roman Catholics in her district; and they were yet willing to welcome her to read the Bible to them; while some were even ready to subscribe for it.

In canvassing her district, this Bible-woman had sold a New Testament to a little Roman Catholic boy, and he one day said to his mother, "I am not going to give a penny a week to the priest any longer at my confession, for I find that Jesus Christ forgives for nothing." This having reached the priest's ears, the next time the Bible-woman called at the house and asked for the little boy, the mother replied, "Oh! he is dead; he took the typhus fever and died of it."

The Bible-woman expressed her deep sympathy, and rather wondered the mother was so calm. A few evenings afterwards, she heard a knock at her door, and on opening it, found her young friend. He was not dead. The mother, in concert with the priest, had sent him to the country to be away from the influence of the Bible-woman; but he maintained so firmly and boldly the truth he had taken hold of

that they were glad to get rid of him in the school to which he had been sent. He went to the Bible-woman on arriving in London, and begged her to take him to his mother, and make her promise not to send him away again, which she succeeded in doing.

But the priest was not to be outdone in this affair; he must try to frighten the woman, he thought.

As she went round to canvass her district another morning, she called at a house where a Roman Catholic lived, and asked her to buy a Bible. The woman replied, "I do not want one, but my neighbour does," pointing to the next door.

The Bible-woman walked confidently in, and there she found the priest waiting for her. As soon as she was inside, he locked the door, and said she should not go out till she had promised him not to sell any more Bibles to his people. She told him at once that she would never promise any such thing. He threatened, and she replied, "she was not at all afraid; she was never afraid of a man yet, and she was not afraid of him."

"But don't you know I can send your soul to purgatory?"

"No, I am not afraid of what you can do to my body, I am quite sure you have no power over my soul; it is in God's safe keeping. Will you buy my book yourself, and see why I wish to sell it?"

Soon after the priest thus shut her up, in canvassing her district, she came to *his* house without knowing it. A nun or sister of charity opened the door. The priest came out, and again scolded her, saying she must indeed have nerve to come to *his* door; did she not know he could lock her up again? To which she replied, "Oh no; I am on the right side this time."

The next time she saw him passing she was at her own door, and she called out to him, "It is here I live, if you want to buy a Bible at any time, sir."

Again she met him in the street, and renewed her proposal that he should buy the New Testament, to which he replied, "Do you not know that I might be turned out if I were known to buy that book from you?" "But then," she replied, "the day will come when you will have to give up your priesthood as it is." "What, do you mean to denounce me?" "No, I do

not; but when the Great High Priest comes, your Priesthood must be at an end. Why do you not read to your people about Christ?" He turned on his heel, saying, "It would not answer for us to do that."

The calmness and firmness of the Lord's servant made such an impression on the poor woman in whose house the shutting up scene took place, that she subscribed for a Bible at once, saying, "It *must* be the word of God since it made the Bible-woman not fear the priest." What resulted in the mind of the priest himself the sequel will now show.

A few days after this last conversation, he met our good woman in the street, and said, "You offered me a New Testament in the street the other day; now I will buy one from you." He paid four pence and took the book away, the seller remarking that she hoped he intended to read it. He replied that that did not concern her. She said, "I wish you to see for yourself that there is nothing in that book that can do your people any harm." He replied, "I did not say you did my people harm: it is to *me* you are doing harm."

A little time afterwards she met him again, and then he begged to change his New Testament for a five shilling reference Bible, and paid the difference. And now the Bible-woman had one more interview with the priest, and this was their last meeting. He shook hands with her very cordially, and bade her good-bye, saying, she would not see him any more. As she expressed great surprise, he said, "Do not be alarmed, I am not going to do myself any mischief. I have a fortnight's holiday, and when I have two week's start of them, they shall never hear of me again. I have had no rest night or day since you reminded me that the Great High Priest would soon come, and that I should then have to lay down my priesthood and to give an account of all my deceptions. Go on in your good work. I have advised the people to go to your mother's meeting, and I will write to you when I am safely away." A letter did come to her with an American postmark, but, her name not being quite correctly written, it was refused by the porter in her absence, and could not be reclaimed.

Sabbath School Lessons.

December 27th, 1863.

THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY.

Luke x. 17, 24.

The Seventy returned again. How long the mission of the seventy lasted we do not know. It may be safely conjectured that it was of short duration. *I beheld Satan as lightning fall, &c.* Here the Lord is speaking of what he had witnessed when Satan and his angels fell from heaven, and were cast down into hell, because they kept not their first estate. "There was a time when I saw Satan, great and mighty as he was, fall suddenly from his high position, and become a lost spirit. *Power to tread on Serpents.*—It may be doubted whether these words are interpreted figuratively or literally. In favor of the literal view, may be placed our Lord's promise in Mark 16, 18; and the fact that St. Paul took up a viper and was unhurt, Acts 28, 5. In favor of the figurative view, may be placed the fact, that Satan is called the "Old Serpent;" that his agents partake of his nature, and that there is a promise in Gen. 3, 15, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, in which all Christ's members are interested. *Scorpion.*—A scorpion is a poisonous insect, about four inches long, with a sting in its tail, found in tropical climates. Its sting is very dangerous. When coiled up it has some resemblance to an egg. *"Wise and prudent,"* v. 21. These were Scribes and Pharisees, and Elders of the Jews, who were wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight; and refused to receive the Gospel of Christ. *Babes.*—These were the fishermen, the publicans, and other poor and unlearned Jews who became our Lord's disciples, and followed him, when the majority of the nation would not believe.

Obs. 1. How prone Christians are to be puffed up with success. The seventy returned from their mission with joy. There was much false fire in that joy. There was evident self-satisfaction in that report of achievements.—Though success is good, the time of success is a time of danger to the Christian soul. Few

Christians can carry a full cup with a steady hand.

Obs. 2. *That gifts are very inferior to grace,* v. 20. It was a privilege and an honour to be allowed to cast out devils. But it was a far higher privilege to be converted and pardoned men. This distinction is of great importance in the present day, but it is sadly neglected.

Obs. 3. *The one instance on record of our Lord Jesus rejoicing.* The cause of our Lord's joy was the conversion of souls.

Obs. 4. *The sovereignty of God in saving sinners.* Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. The meaning of these words is clear and plain. There are some from whom salvation is hidden. There are others to whom it is revealed.

Obs. 5. *The peculiar privilege of those who hear the Gospel of Christ,* ver. 24. The full significance of these words will probably never be understood by Christians until the last day.

PAUL'S CHALLENGE.

Fain would I picture the apostle as he appeared when he was uttering it. Hark! I hear a brave, strong voice, crying, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?" "Who is that?—Paul. What! Paul, a Christian? I thought Christians were a humble, timid people." "They are so; but not when they are arrayed in the robes and invested with the credentials of their Sovereign.—They are lambs in the harmlessness of their dispositions, but they have the courage of lions when they defend the honours of their King. Again I hear him cry, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?"—and he casts his eyes to heaven. Is not the wretch smitten dead? Will not such presumption as this be avenged! Does he challenge purity to convict him of guilt? O Paul, the thunderbolt of God will smite thee! "No," says he, "it is God that justifieth. I am not afraid to face the highest heaven, since God has said that I am just. I can look upward without distressing fear." "But hush! repeat not that challenge." "Yes," saith he, "I will.—Who is he that condemneth." And I see him look downwards; there lies the old

dragon, bound in chains, the accuser of the brethren; and the apostle stares him in the face and says, "Whoso shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Why, Paul, Satan will bring thundering accusations against thee; art thou not afraid? "No," says he, "I can stop his mouth with this cry, 'It is Christ that died;' that will make him tremble, for He crushed the serpent's head in that victorious hour. And I can shut his mouth again—'yea rather, that is risen again,' for He took him captive on on that day; I will add, 'who sitteth at the right hand of God.' I can foil him with that, for He sits there to judge him and to condemn him for ever. Once more I will appeal to His advocacy, 'Who maketh intercession for us.' I can stop his accusation with this perpetual care of Jesus for His people." Again cries Paul, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?" There lie the bodies of the saints he has martyred, and they cry from under the altar, "O Lord! how long wilt thou not avenge thine own elect?" Paul says, "Who can lay anything to my charge?" And they speak not; "because," says Paul, "I have obtained mercy—who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, that in me first He might show forth all long-suffering." "Christ hath died, yea rather, hath risen again." And now standing in the midst of men who mock, and boast, and jeer, he cries, "Who can lay anything to my charge?" and no one dares to speak, for man himself cannot accuse; with all his malevolence, and acrimony, and malice, he can bring nothing against him; no charge can stand at the bar of God against the man whom he had absolved through the merits of the death of Christ, and the power of His resurrection.

Is it not a noble thing for a christian to be able to go where he may, and feel that he cannot meet his accuser; wherever he may be, whether he walketh within himself in the chambers of conscience, or out of himself amongst his fellow-men, or above himself into heaven, or beneath himself into hell, yet is he a justified one, and nothing can be laid to his charge? Who can condemn? Who can condemn? Yea, echo, O ye skies; reverberate, ye caverns of the deep. Who can condemn when Christ hath died, hath risen from the

dead, is enthroned on high, and intercedes?

But all things pass away. I see the heavens on fire, rolling up like a scroll—I see sun, moon, and stars pale now their feeble light—the earth is tottering; the pillars of heaven are rocking; the grand assize is commenced—the herald angels descend, not to sing this time, but with thundering trumpets to proclaim, "He comes, He comes to judge the earth in righteousness, and the people in equity." What says the believer now? He says, "I fear not that assize, for who can condemn?" The great white throne is set, the books are opened, men are trembling, fiends are yelling, sinners are shrieking—"Rocks hide us, mountains on us fall;" these make up an awful chorus of dismay. There stands the believer, and looking round on the assembled universe of men and angels, he cries, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?" and silence reigns through earth and heaven. Again he speaks, and, fixing his eyes full on the Judge Himself, he cries, "Who is he that condemneth?" And lo, there upon the throne sits the only One who can condemn; and who is that? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who sitteth at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for him.—Can those lips say, "Depart, ye cursed," to the man for whom they once did intercede? Can those eyes flash lightnings on the man whom once they saw in sin, and thence with rays of love they did lift him up to joy, and peace, and purity? No! Christ will not belie Himself. He cannot reverse His grace; it cannot be that the throne of condemnation shall be exalted on the ruins of the cross; it cannot be that Christ should transform Himself at last; but till He can do so, none can condemn. None but He hath a right to condemn, for He is the sole judge of right and wrong; and if He hath died, shall He put us to death; and if He hath risen for us, shall He thrust us downwards to the pit; and if He hath reigned for us and hath been accepted for us, shall He cast us away; and if He hath pleaded for us, shall He curse us at the last? No! Come life, come death, my soul can rest on this. He died for me. I cannot be punished for my sin. He rose again, I must rise, and though I die yet shall I live again. He sits at the right hand of God,

and so must I. I must be crowned, and reign with Him for ever. He intercedes, and He must be heard. He beckons me, and I must be brought at length to see His face, and to be with Him where He is.—*Spurgeon.*

GRIEF AT SIN.

“Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.—Matt. iii. 5.

On this one occasion only is the expression used with reference to Jesus—(what intensity of emotion does it denote, spoken of a sinless nature!)—“He looked round on them *with anger!*” Never did he grieve for himself. His intensest sorrows were reserved for those who were tampering with their own souls, and dishonoring His God. The continual spectacle of moral evil, thrust on the gaze of spotless purity, made His earthly history one consecutive history of grief, one perpetual “cross and passion.”

In the tears shed at the grave of Bethany, sympathy, doubtless, for the world’s myriad mourners, had its own share (the bereaved could not part with so precious a tribute in their hours of sadness,) but a far more impressive cause was one undiscerned by the weeping sisters and sorrowing crowd;—His knowledge of the deep and obdurate impenitence of those who were about to gaze on the mightiest of miracles, only to “despise, and wonder, and perish.” “*Jesus wept!*”—but His profoundest anguish was over resisted grace, abused privileges, scorned mercy. It was the Divine Artificer mourning over His shattered handiwork?—the Almighty Creator weeping over His ruined world:—God, the God-man, “grieving” over the Temple of the soul, a humiliating wreck of what once was made “after His own image!”

Can we sympathise in any respect with such exalted tears? Do we mourn for sin, our *own* sin—the deep insult which it inflicts on God—the ruinous consequences it entails on ourselves? Do we grieve at sin in *others*? Do we know anything of “vexing our souls,” like righteous Lot, “from day to day,” with the world’s “unlawful deeds.”—the stupid hardness and obduracy of the depraved heart, which

resists alike the appliances of wrath and love, judgment and mercy? Ah! it is easy, in general terms, to condemn vice, and to utter harsh, severe, and cutting denunciations on the guilty: it is easy to pass uncharitable comments on the inconsistencies or follies of others; but to “*grieve*” as our Lord did, is a different thing;—to mourn over the hardness of heart, and yet to have the burning desire to teach it better things;—to hate, as He did, the *sin*, but, like Him also, to love the *sinner!*

Reader! look specially to your own spirit. In one respect, the example of Jesus falls short of your case. He had no sin of His own to mourn over. He could only commiserate others. *Your* intensest grief must begin with *yourself*. Like the watchful Levite of old, be a guardian at the temple-gates of your own soul. Whatever be your besetting iniquity, your constitutional bias to sin, seek to guard it with wakeful vigilance. Grieve at the thought of incurring one passing shadow of displeasure from so kind and compassionate a Saviour. Let this be a holy preservative in your every hour of temptation, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

Grieve for a perishing world—a groaning creation fettered and chained in unwilling “subjection to vanity.” Do what you can, by effort, by prayer, to hasten on the hour of jubilee, when its ashy robes of sin and sorrow shall be laid aside, and, attired in the “beauties of holiness,” it shall exult in “the glorious liberty of the sons of God?”

“Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.”

REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

Right believing is powerful praying: the knees, eyes, and tongue bear the least share in prayer; the whole of the work lies upon the soul, and particularly upon faith in the soul, which is indeed the life and soul of prayer. Faith can pray without words; but the most elegant words, the praise of angels, is not worthy to be called prayer without faith.—*Shaw.*

ISRAEL'S SIN AND MESSIAH'S LOVE.

Matt. xxiii. 35, 36.*

Three times in the one verse does Christ mention blood, and now, from that point of view in which God regards the whole human race, lays to the account of this Jerusalem and Israel all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, just as His Spirit again does to the future Babylon (Rev. xviii. 24.) The first righteous person upon earth murdered through hatred of God and fraternal hatred is Abel; of his murder also is Israel guilty, for they have done worse to Christ than Cain did to his brother.

The great collective guilt of all the blood shed on the earth, as it is represented and shadowed forth in the history of the Holy Scripture from Abel to Zacharias, will break forth in vengeance upon this generation in a collective punishment, as well typical as real; this evil and adulterous generation, which speaks as at ver. 30, and acts as at ver. 34. Therefore the measure of sin against the long-suffering of God is full to overflowing. That is, indeed, first of all the last generation of this people, the wicked and adulterous generation, which is possessed by the return of seven worse devils along with the first, which, in its sins, repeats and sums up all that went before; yet, in so far as the fathers are represented as only meeting their full punishment in their children, "this generation," here includes at the same time the entire people of whom it is said (verse 35) "Ye have slain."

It may be asked, finally, Does not the blood also of the crucified Son of God, in and with all the others, come upon this generation? If this question means, Wherefore does Christ not expressly or chiefly specify this here? the first answer is easy, for even as regards outward propriety it would be highly unsuitable openly to say such a thing at this farewell.—For this would be more than the word of Zacharias: "The Lord will see and seek it." But the reason lies still deeper: partly in the Saviour's feeling of love and compassion, which makes it impossible for Him to express this threatening of vengeance; partly in the truth corresponding to this feeling, that in fact the blood of Christ, although His crucifiers call it down upon their heads, yet even to the last judgment of the world continues to speak better things than the blood of Abel—viz., grace, and not vengeance; so that, in the restored Israel at last, this blood-guiltiness is yet cleansed away (Joel iii. 21). and the

vengeance, on account of the rejected blood of reconciliation, extends to quite another sphere, belongs to quite another judgment, than that which is first of all historically represented in Israel.

Did Christ himself say (ver. 37.) Behold here a greater than Jonas? then may also his interpreter say to the generation of this time, Behold here is something incomparably greater than, and different from, aught that has ever been uttered in accents breaking from the heart, and penetrating to the heart, in poems or histories. "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" Thus exclaims the Messiah, the God and Lord, and Saviour of Israel in the flesh, who sent all the prophets, who is Himself come, and will again send apostles, who will soon, by the hands of his enemies, hang upon the cross—by His own and the Father's Divine power will rise from the opened grave, and sit upon the throne of heaven—thus calls Jesus over the sinners who will not have Him and His grace, but their sin and their judgment. What a tone and sound for the hearers must this word have had when it came from the mouth of Christ! the already filled up measure of all Divine grace and Saviour-love, in opposition to the measure of sin, now soon to be filled up by the children who, centuries long, had been nourished and brought up in vain—that first call of the Creator, "Adam, where art thou? whither wilt thou?" breaking forth inconceivably intensified from the heart of the Son of Man moved with human passion—the most perfect unity of alluring love and judging wrath in this doubly complaining. "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" Hear, ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for—the Lord speaks! And are we to take away these words from this place in His farewell, which alone is their proper place? are we to believe here that the Evangelist has presumed to elaborate and improve the Divine drama? Rather would we believe that Christ had already uttered three times—ten times before (which would not at all be so wrong)—this word which He now utters for the last time with most striking emphasis.

The word, as a whole, is a prolepsis of the decisive judgment, stretching beyond the preaching of the apostles, the rejection of which Christ already knew beforehand: the Jerusalem which he means is the entire people, those also of past times viewed in their centre. Vers. 34 and 35 are now partly connected together, as also already ver. 36; therefore the apostles, as opposed to the former prophets, are the new messengers who shall yet invite the guests to the marriage in vain, the first of whom was at once stoned (Acts vii.), as Moses commanded that the false prophets should be stoned. Between

* From the third volume of Stier's admirable work, "The Words of the Lord Jesus."

prophets and apostles, then comes the exalted *I* of the Incarnate Lord, who is, at the same time, above prophets and apostles; for this Lord it is who has always sent, and now sends, and who Himself also came and called in all His messengers. The *I* of Christ embraces at the same time all the past, as ver. 34 the future. "He never forgets His part,"—to speak foolishly for the sake of the fools; He can never at any time deny who He is; and even when He appears most human, the consciousness of His eternal Divine dignity shines through with all the more immediate reality. "Thy children"—that is, at the same time, all the people of this sacred metropolis scattered in the country or over the earth. It would be a very false narrowing of the discourse as a whole to explain the words "How often" of Christ's frequent visits to the metropolis at the festivals; it speaks in a higher and more comprehensive style. "How often"—this includes, at the same time, all the calls of the former prophets, with all the invitations of those afterwards sent, known beforehand to be in vain, although it places the calls and invitations of Christ Himself in the centre. Christ would ever, from time to time, have gathered them all as His people into His kingdom to His heart. But not by force: in this way no one is drawn into God's kingdom, to God's heart; even Israel's Messiah is only a Saviour who at last passively offers Himself, who must leave it to the will of men to come, and must go away when they will not and do not come.—As an eagle stretch up her nest, fluttereth over her young, and then beareth them herself on her wings so did Jehovah at first—(Deut. xxxii. 11)—and afterwards ever more kindly and lovingly offer His sheltering wing to His people, in the word of the prophets (Ps. xvii. 8, xxvi. 8, lvii. 2, lxi. 5; Isa. xxxi. 5, 6; Mal. iv. 2), until, with most familiar tenderness, Jesus, here speaking in the person of Jehovah (which is to be observed, see especially Isa. xxxi. 5), would spread his wings over them as a hen over her chickens, ere the birds of prey, as other eagles of judgment, come. The wings are still spread even for the murderers of the prophets, while Christ now speaks; even for the stoners of Stephen, as was shown in the case of Paul, He will still spread them out; but what He himself has experienced will be the result upon the whole—that, namely, which he expresses in the words "Ye would not" (Isa. xxviii. 12, xxx. 15, and many places in the prophets).—The grace that still remains will indeed gather others in their place who *will*, but they who *would not* what Christ would, fall into the condemnation. "The power of the Almighty appears as impotence before the obstinacy of

the creature, and has only tears (Lake xix. 41) wherewith to overcome them." Whose *heart* dares here to answer, with the system of the *head*, "Thy willing and drawing was not in right earnest, thy lamentation but a mockery and a sport, for Thine irresistible grace was not there to give them the power to will?"

T I M E .

BY MRS. A. C. JUDSON.

Time is flying, flying, flying,
Oh, how swiftly by;
Like a water-fall that's rushing,
Or a fountain ever gushing,
Hourly, daily, weekly, yearly,
Rapid as the lightning, nearly,
Do the moments fly.

Catch the seconds as they're passing,
Wa't not for the hours;
Prize them as a golden treasure,
Use them not in trifling pleasure,
Seconds, moments—prizing, holding,
As you would those buds unfolding
Into choicest flowers.

Act, for some important purpose,
Not with selfish zeal;
See humanity is bleeding,
And thy fellow-man is needing;
Hundreds, thousands, millions, hear them,
Breathing out their woes—go cheer them,
Seek their wounds to heal.

Soon another year, all freighted
With the deeds of man,
Will be borne to God, the giver,
And recalled by mortal never;
O be joyful, watchful, ready,
Heart and hand to bless the needy,
Thus fill out thy span.

S U C C E S S .

If others to their merits rightly trace
Their wealth or place,
It is not so with me;
All my success I owe, my God, to thee.

Clearly I see how all my morning schemes
Had proved but dreams,
To break to long drear day. [way.
Hast thou not helped my arm and hedged my

Full many a time I came to failure's brink,
And thought to sink;
But still thou gav'st thy hand,
And once again I stood, and still I stand.

Bears not the future more of cause for ease
To me than these?

Man's strength may soon be gone;
God's never fails, nor prayer to put it on.
— Lord Kinloch.