CÆSAR OR CHRIST?

A Sermon
Preached in the Foreign Chapel, Amoy,
January 11th, 1863.

By
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Of the London Missionary Society.

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NOTE.

The substance of the following sermon was preached by the author on his arrival in Amoy from England in the beginning of 1856. When lately preparing to leave China, it fell to his lot to preach on the last Sabbath he was to spend in Amoy. It was suggested to him that he should repeat the sermon, which a missionary brother remembered as having been delivered seven years previous. Several friends having subsequently requested its publication, he has with some reluctance complied. The request was accompanied with the condition that the sermon should be published as preached, otherwise he would have preferred to recast the whole discourse and present it in a fitter form for publication.

It is commended to the attention of those among whom the preacher has been seven years resident, with the prayer that it may lead some, through the blessing of God, to make that decision for Christ, on which not only the happiness of this life, but the issues of eternity depend.

Feb. 1. 1863.
The following persons were present:

[Names of persons]

The meeting was then adjourned.

[Date]
CAESAR OR CHRIST?

JOHN xix. 15.

"We have no king but Caesar."

"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

Christ came in a threefold capacity; as a Saviour, a Teacher, and a King. The world had sinned;—he came to die for its salvation. It was in ignorance through unbelief;—he came to teach it the way of God in truth. It had revolted from its Creator;—he came to bring it back to its moral allegiance to his Father and himself. He was the Christ, the anointed One; "Behold I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

It is of Jesus in this latter relationship to us, that we have now to speak. He claims the throne of the world, he demands the homage of the whole intelligent creation. That claim was rejected by the Jews;—"he came unto his own and his own received him not." But there was more than rejection. Look at the scenes depicted in the chapter before us. Here we have mockery and insult. "The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, king of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands." Falsely, cruelly
he is arraigned before the bar of Pilate. Unawed by the rude clamour of the frantic populace, he stands calm in the consciousness of innocence and truth. The heathen judge himself finds no fault in him, he even seeks to release him. But the Jews demand his life;—

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." The feeling of mercy is stayed. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat." "He saith unto the Jews, Behold your king!" But the infuriated rabble cries, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him." Pilate saith unto them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar."—Let us take these words as the motto for a few remarks upon the conduct of mankind generally, in the rejection and denial of the kingly power of Christ.

Cæsar, then the representative of worldly power and glory, was placed in antagonism to the Saviour. The name of the Roman emperor was used by the Jews, with a contemptible hypocrisy, as a mere excuse for ridding themselves of the claims of Christ. With this, however, we shall have but little to do. We wish to shew in the outset, that the refusal by man to acknowledge the Saviour as his king involves him, whether he be conscious of the fact or not, in direct subjection to a rival power. Here in the case of the Jews, as with mankind generally, the earthly and temporal was chosen in preference to the spiritual and eternal. This then is our subject.
Let us notice

I. The alternative;

II. The choice;

III. The consequences.

I. The alternative.—The God of Heaven, or the God of this world.

Here are two propositions.

1. Man must have a ruler.

2. He is, in spiritual matters, restricted in his choice to two.

1. Man must have a ruler.

It is manifest that the Creator designed the creature to live in a state of subjection. The law almost universally obtains. Upon the existence of legitimate government the maintenance of order depends; and man is ever restless unless he is conscious of being under authority. The rudest horde of barbarians must have its chief; the most civilized nation acknowledges a superior. If politically this law be violated, anarchy and confusion are the inevitable results. One of the most deplorable periods in Jewish history was that in which “every man did what was right in his own eyes.” But the principle will bear a higher application. There is not merely a government whose province it is to take cognizance of man’s social and political condition; but there is also a spiritual kingdom, a government of the thoughts, the affections, the desires. Powers higher than man exercise an authority over him; and there is not a thought, or word, or deed, which may not be morally characterized either as obedience or transgression. There is a throne in every
human spirit, and it can never be unoccupied. If He whose right it is to rule sway not His sceptre there, another and an adverse ruler will be exalted to His place. Nor can there be any freedom from this state of subjection; for there is no such thing as neutrality. Disobedience to God is direct obedience to the great enemy of God. The transgression of the moral law is sin, and the sinner is the servant and slave of the devil. "When ye were the servants of sin," says the apostle to the Romans, "ye were free from righteousness; but now, being made free from sin, ye are become servants of God." There is but a change of servitude; to be free from sin is to be a servant of God, to be free from righteousness is to be a servant of the devil. Man is thus ever subject to a spiritual authority. "He that is not with me," said the Master, "is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

2. There are but two rulers presenting themselves to mankind.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, bringing the world to the recognition of His authority. The great Representative of Jehovah was equal,—was one with the great Being he represented:—"I and my Father are one." If God be the Creator of the human race, the right to govern dwells in Him alone. And He is jealous of this right. "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." He has thus revealed himself in all ages of the world. To the first father of the race in Eden, by intimate communion. To the patriarchs in their wanderings, by vision and by angel. To the
Jewish nation, amid the thunderings of the mount, and by the mouth of His holy prophets. In these last days He has spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. Throughout all we have the working out of the same gracious purpose, to gather together all things in one, even in Christ;—to establish a kingdom that shall never be moved;—to provide for human security and happiness, not only in this world, but in that which is to come. The Messiah, the Anointed one, has appeared; his kingdom—the kingdom of heaven—has come unto you; Christ as the head of that kingdom is presented to the world, presented for man's acceptance or rejection.

On the other hand, there is the kingdom of this world. Satan has established his government in the earth. He has so increased his empire and consolidated his power, that the history of the world has become to a great extent the mere record of his reign. He is emphatically the god of this world. In the assumption and promulgation of this title is the secret of his success. He seizes upon the present. He offers momentary gratification, and thus blinds the eye that was striving to look onward and upward. Many may be the forms his government assumes, but the power is one. In direct contravention of the Divine command,—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," he has introduced "lords many and gods many." At his bidding man has worshipped all creation, from the sun in its glorious course, down to the sightless reptile and the crawling worm. Idolatry has been the vast machinery by
which the great enemy has crushed all the higher aspirations of humanity, and by which he holds in bondage millions of immortal minds. This can be no system, as some assert, wrought out by the mind of man in its search for truth,—no gradual uprising from ignorance to knowledge; but a mighty masterpiece of Satanic power and skill, insidious in its beginning, overpowering in its progress and results; by which man, once the servant of God, has been led captive by the devil at his will.

But in addition to this, or in connection with it, he has taken hold of the passions of men. Ambition, pride, avarice, sensual gratification,—these are the appliances which he has made use of to secure his own elevation; until, from being the rebel spirit ignominiously cast from heaven, he has become "the prince of the power of the air," "the ruler of the kingdoms of this world," "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

We must recognize this fact, if we are to understand the word of God, and the dark phenomenon of human guilt. From idolatry in all its numberless gradations, on the one hand, to bold and reckless atheism, on the other; from false and offensive hypocrisy, to cold and senseless indifference;—man is supplied with various methods, whereby he may render homage to the wicked one. For, however varied may be the form of sin, it is service to him; however diverse may be the badges worn by the votaries of the devil, they all distinguish the wearer as his slave. Be it that man chooses a form of service that shall give licence to all his sensual
II.

II. The choice.

This is dependent upon the exercise of man's free will. He is called upon by God to choose whom he will serve. In different voice and tone from the Roman judge, the Almighty says to us as we look upon the suffering Saviour, "Behold your King!" It is for us to choose this King as our own. We can do it if we will; our own consciousness of the power of free, deliberate action affirms the truth of this; and the word of God attests it with its seal.

But let us go out amongst men, and look upon those who have chosen already, or who may be choosing now, and find out, if we may, the reasons of their choice.

We come first to the Jews. To them the King of Glory was personally manifested, he preached in their synagogues, he taught in their streets, he wrought mighty signs and wonders in their midst. For ages, prophets and holy men of old had foretold his coming, and at length he came. But the Christ of God was
not the Christ of Jewish expectation. Their ideal Messiah was in direct antagonism to the reality. The king came, not with pomp, with shoutings, with streaming banners, with sounding trumpets and the clash of swords.—Born in a stable, his cradle a manger, himself the reputed son of a carpenter, his home the disreputable Nazareth, poor, lowly, and lightly esteemed, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And is this the long looked for Messiah? This the king of the Jews? This the anointed one who was to redeem Israel, and raise it to unexampled grandeur and glory? No, it shall not be! "We will not have this man to reign over us. Away with him, away with him." They looked upon externals as the all in all, and bitter was their disappointment. Nor did they find less of uncongeniality in the character and teachings of Christ. Instead of pandering to their ambition, or ministering to their vices, he proclaimed a spiritual reign, and lifted up his voice in deep and solemn warning. Pure, spotless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, to them he was a living reproach. His kingdom was not of earth, and they cared about little beyond earth. They rejected him. They crucified him. It was but human nature after all;—human nature as we see it every day, despoiled and degraded by sin. Disinclination to do right begets dislike to the right itself. Refusal to obey engenders a desire to get rid of the being to be obeyed.—"Crucify him, crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Hark! the shout of derision! "He, the despised Gallilean, who was born among us, who has ever been with us! He, our king, whose
palace has been but the open firmament, whose courtiers but a few poor fishermen! Away with him. We have no king but Caesar."

Thus shouted the Jews. Alas! from many a land, and from many a heart are we ever hearing the same words:—"Away with him. We have no king but Caesar."

The atheist, the secularist, the professed unbeliever, by whatever name he may call himself, echoes the shout of the Jews;—he is loud and unblushing in his rejection of Christ, and in his choice of the world and the things of the world. He calls out in the corners of the streets, in the markets, in the gathering of the people, in the presence of Christ himself;—his tone is a scoff and a jeer. "Shall I have this man to reign over me? I have no king but Caesar. The earth is my home, the world my heaven, the present my eternity." Deliberately he foregoes all the hopes of the future. He dares to risk eternity with all its honours, the fearful doom of the godless and disobedient, upon the frail and erring judgment of his own poor finite mind. He sets himself upon the pinnacle of his own reason, and vainly dreams that he has gained a height from whence he may survey the universe, and find—no God! But he has never got beyond himself, never passed the boundary line which divides the darkness within him from the light of the glory of God which fills the universe without him. Shut up within the narrow circle of his own vices, with even nature's light quenched by his love of sin, he still speaks as if an infinite, unerring wisdom were his. He has no appreciation of the
spiritual and divine; and why? Because all he wishes or hopes for is concentrated in himself. You tell him of Christ as the founder of a kingdom, and he points to the throne of his own heart, whereon the world, the flesh, and the devil sit crowned. You speak of a future state, and he talks of annihilation; of a heaven, and the closer does he fix his gaze on earth; of the Almighty and his commands, but he ignores their existence, and talks of the dignity of humanity and of the mighty laws of nature. But does he really believe all this? It is more than doubtful. In the majority of cases it is the choice already made which leads the way to unbelief. Infidelity in its many forms, generally finds its way to the head through the heart; and yet such men boast loudly of their sincerity, and taunt the believer in Jesus Christ with hypocrisy and cant. In the judgment of charity, is there not far more of insincerity with men who choose from inclination only, and then boast in the freedom of an opinion that a depraved disposition has begotten and nourished? Let me beseech any among you who may be in danger of following the counsels of men like those, to look beneath all this profession of superior wisdom, of sincerity, and of liberty. Take away this cloak of false philosophy, and see if, behind it all, there be not the evil heart of unbelief,—loving sin, pursuing it, enjoying it; the old carnal lusts hiding themselves away under the garb of infidelity or disbelief.

These are avowed enemies of Christ, loud is their cry of rejection, openly would they destroy Christianity, as the Jews crucified its great author. But the true
reason of all this will still discover itself. It was not love to Caesar, but hatred to Christ, that called forth the cry of the Jews; and it is still the hatred of the sinner to the Saviour and his holy gospel which too often leads the unbeliever of the present day, to say with the hypocritical Jews—"We have no king but Caesar."

But there are not only enemies without, who reject Christ, but traitorous friends within, who are ready to join in their cry. There are those who are called by the name of Christ, some who profess to be preachers of his gospel, who yet reject him;—who glorify the wisdom of man, by seeking to take away from the glory of Christ;—who will admire his human virtue, but deny his powers to save;—who will exalt the purity of his teaching, but reject his kingly power. And yet it was not as a virtuous man,—not as a wondrous Teacher,—but as a Saviour, and a King, that the Jews rejected Christ. Still the cry of old did not destroy his power, nor will it now. The very opposition to his gospel will tend to deepen and widen the bases of evangelic truth, and to add solidity and strength to that spiritual temple of which Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner stone. There may need on the part of his disciples a brighter trimming of the lamp, a closer girding of the loins, a more careful looking to the defences, and a more entire clothing in the whole armour of God; but the victory is certain. The King, rejected or despised as he may be, can never be overthrown;—His kingdom must be an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion without end.

But take another class. There is the man who has
no special theory to uphold, which would lead him to choose the world and reject Christ, but who in effect does so. He will not tell you that God is not, that Christ never existed, or existed only as a Jewish teacher, that Christianity is a myth, that the laws of the Bible have no claim upon him; but for all this he acknowledges no king but Caesar, no ruler but the selfish principle in his own heart. There may be a mighty throne set among the nations of the earth,—God in Christ may rule in his church; but there is yet a nearer throne, and an earthly sovereign, and to his gaze the nearer is the more distinct. There may be this heavenly reign, but in connection with it there is nothing to offer at the shrine of vanity and pride. Its subjects are unknown to the world, their lives and actions are alike undistinguished. There may be the Christian race, and its offered prize, but where are they who would envy its possessor? There may be the Christian conflict, but the battle-field is within, and hidden from the gaze of men; where would be the reward, the shout of victory, the triumphal procession, the plaudits of the multitude? And where the record of the victor's heroism? Written in "the Book of Life;" but who of mortal race ever broke its seals or brought to light its secret pages? What do the subjects of this kingdom gain, but contempt and poverty, nakedness, peril, and sword? "And can I sacrifice the glory of earth for this?—the service of a Caesar, whose present honours are abundant, for the service of a king who gives hereafter? No, it cannot be. Not this man, not this king; I have no king but Caesar."
So it is also with the avaricious man,—with him who has no higher motive in life than to make a fortune. He also, with different aim and motives, prefers the earthly to the spiritual. He holds so closely to his gaze the treasures of the world, that he excludes altogether from his view the imperishable riches of heaven. Grovelling in the dust, he crushes all his nobler powers beneath the burden of his wealth, and cares not what king he owns,—Christ or Cæsar,—if he may but be allowed to grovel still.

Or take the case of the general transgressor,—and the cry of rejection is his also. He cannot submit to the laws of this new kingdom. He has acquired certain propensities and habits in the service of sin, and they crave gratification. His great object in life is to satisfy the desires of his evil heart. "May I do this or that?" he asks. "Can I live as I please? I can be a Christian, if there be no restriction of my pleasures, my associates, no alteration in the course of my everyday life. I can even pay a certain Sabbath respect to religion, an hour a week to Christianity, if the rest may be given to the world and sin." But we tell him, "Not so."

To submit to Christ is to submit to the laws of his kingdom, to every commandment and ordinance of God. It needs the change of the whole heart, the reformation of the whole life, the turning away from the world to Christ. But this will not do for him who loves darkness rather than light; who is a law to himself, bows in subjection to every momentary impulse, and yields to the temptations of every passing hour. He too will reject Christ, will have no king but Cæsar.
But perhaps you are neither an atheist, nor an unbeliever; neither ambitious, nor covetous, nor yet a flagrant transgressor; you are content to live without any distinctive character at all; you are simply indifferent, and you say, "This at all events is not my cry." But you have not acknowledged Christ as your king. — Do not your actions then, with a louder voice than words, proclaim your rejection? Christ has come, you know it, but busied about many things, you are careless of the one thing needful. Your whole attention is absorbed in the objects immediately around you. And you live as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, no judgment to come, no immortal soul,—to enjoy the blessedness of the saved, or to endure the misery of the lost. The reign of Christ is unacknowledged because it is unthought of. There is an absolute indifference, an utter carelessness. Brethren, if a man can place himself in an awful position; if he can insult the Almighty; if he can prepare for himself a more fearful looking for of judgment:—surely he does it by this cool contemptuous indifference. After all that God has revealed of power, of love, of mercy, of goodness, of sin, and of the sinner's doom, and all for you, all to excite your attention and interest your heart,—all for you, poor, weak, sinful, as you are, yet you are not moved, yet you pass along in carelessness and inattention, mocking the eternal with your calm disdain! What can you expect when you awake to a consciousness of His power, and when the terrors of God you have neglected pass before you? Ah! then indifference would be a blessing. Alas for you! there will be no
unconcern with those who stand before the King, at
the last great day of account;—no indifference with the
unhappy spirits who suffer from the worm that dieth
not, and the fire that never can be quenched.

But you are not indifferent. You do not thus reject
Christ. You would not join the crowd to treat him
with ignominy and contempt. You would not pass by
his cross with carelessness and unconcern; your very
soul would shudder at the shout—"Away with him,
crucify him!" You would tremble to whisper to
yourself as the actuating principle of life, "We have
no king but Cæsar."

Christ is the king of your choice. You tacitly acknow­
ledge and partially revere his claim. You believe that
happiness and peace can only be enjoyed under his rule;
but you are not decided, he is not yet your king. You
are still in the world, your affections cling to earth, you
are in a state of allegiance to the god of this world. This
is true; but you look forward to an altered state, you
intend eventually to submit yourself to Christ. But
with all your good intentions the choice is not yet
made, you have not submitted yourself to his rule. The
boy intends to do it when he becomes a man; the
young man when he has seen something of life; the
man of business when he has gained a competency,
and has more time for such things. When old age
comes with its leisure and its freedom from care, then
you will submit to Christ. But not yet. You who
still remember a mother's prayers and tears;—you
whose early youth was surrounded by the influences of
a pious home;—you who are now attentive hearers of
the word, than whom no one better knows the theory of Christianity, the faith and obedience Christ requires; —yes, you do intend to receive the Saviour, to obey him unto righteousness, to consecrate the energies of your life to him. Your mind is made is made up, you will do it,—but not yet. Oh, beware! there is ruin in that not yet. There is present danger, there may be—eternal damnation. Not yet! and will Christ be satisfied with your good intentions? Are you assured that he will accept you after all these long delays? Is the Saviour himself,—the mercy he offers,—the heaven he reveals,—of such little worth or so easily to be secured, that he must needs wait your convenience for acceptance? Know you of the power and dignity of Christ? Is he compelled to save you after all? Is there so much of equality between yourself and him, that you dare to act thus, and defer his kind offers to a more convenient season? Are you certain that he will receive you then? Is the army of the living God so weak, so contemptible that it will enrol every applicant without reference to age, or standard, or character? What presumption, what infatuation is this! What if after all you should be too late! Smoothly and pleasantly you are gliding down the still, deep current, and you care not yet to seize the hand stretched out to save you. The sun is shining calmly above, and your heart glows within you. A faint murmur falls upon your ear;—you start, there may be danger ahead;—but soon familiar with the sound, you float along. Now the murmur swells into a roar, and there, right before you, the angry waters
are lashed into foam and fury. You see the danger now; and the straining sinew, and the glaring eye, and the choking voice, tell of your struggles to escape; but the hand that would have saved you is gone,—the Saviour you neglected cannot now be seen. The angels, who would have rejoiced at your salvation, look down in pity, and the hoarse laughter of unsaved demons mingles with your last despairing cry, as you are swept onward to perdition.

Such are some of those who act in accordance with the sentiment of the text. The world keeps them from the Saviour,—they choose its enjoyments, they seek its honours, they subject themselves to its influences. Sin reigns in their mortal bodies,—they obey it in the lusts thereof, and refuse to submit themselves to the righteousness of God. They choose the service of Satan, and must abide by the results of their choice.

III. This leads us, lastly, to notice, what indeed has been partly anticipated, the consequences of the choice.

These are not confined to the present life. The reign of Christ is not limited to earth;—it includes the heavenly state, and shall endure for ever. The subject of his kingdom is glorified, but is a subject still; for the highest happiness of immortal spirits will consist in the ascription of praise and dominion to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. The choice will influence eternity, and our view of its consequences must not be confined to our short existence here.

But to notice more particularly some of these consequences.
First we remark negatively:—

The man who rejects the spiritual reign of Christ, debars himself from participation in the privileges it secures.

Christ came, we have said, to bring back a revolted world to its allegiance, to establish anew the moral government of God; and at the same time to rescue man from the consequences of his rebellion. He proclaimed free forgiveness, through his own most precious blood,—a law magnified and made honourable,—a deliverance from the curse of that law,—a reconciled God and Father, through the efficacy of his one sacrifice. But our interest in all this is dependent upon submission. Whatever the extent of danger averted,—of blessing secured,—there can be no share for him who rejects the Saviour, through whom alone they are offered.

The reign of Christ ensures the peace and happiness of the subject;—that holy calm of conscience which arises from a sense of sin forgiven, and assurance of the Divine favour;—that peace which passeth all understanding,—which the world can neither give nor take away,—springing from the consciousness of deliverance from impending calamity, and assurance of eternal safety. How great this is, how enviable the state of the man who experiences it, none but the devout, the prayerful servant of his God can know. Whatever it be, he can have no claim to it, he can never possess it, whose mind is alien by wicked works, whose best affections rest on earth, and who himself is a slave to the devil, and the torment of sin.
The reign of Christ secures the protection, the care and counsel of God.

The frail and erring, the weak and weary need continual encouragement and help; and if there be a cheering thought to the Christian, it is this,—that the great Being to whom he renders obedience exercises a continual guardianship over all his movements;—that to his King he can ever resort in times of difficulty and sorrow, secure of receiving Almighty aid;—that the throne of the heavenly grace is ever accessible, and that there he can ever find mercy and grace to help him in time of need;—that from his king he is not separated by ceremonial forms, nor by hosts of attendant courtiers;—that the meanness of his condition will never preclude him an audience;—that although he may be poor and despised in the eyes of the world, yet to the Great Monarch of the skies he is an object of peculiar attention and unceasing regard;—that there too he has a great High Priest, the ever living one who has passed into the heavens and maketh intercession for him;—that upon him, the poor sinner, God looks down with pity and with love,—adopts him as his own, takes him into the inner circle of his favoured ones, receives him not merely as a subject, but as a child, and blesses him not with temporal good only, but with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:—of all this the man who rejects the Saviour knows nothing, feels nothing, enjoys nothing. At a distance from God, he moves in darkness, shut out from the light of his countenance and the blessings of his salvation.
Lastly here, the reign of Christ secures to the subject ample and eternal provision for his enjoyment. It makes him happy on earth. “The good man is satisfied from himself,”—satisfied in the knowledge that he is doing the will of God, and resting in the enjoyment of his favour. But there is also imparted to him a hope blooming with immortality, and a faith that looks within the veil! And this tells him of a better land, and of a mansion prepared for him by his Lord and King; and of a crown which the same Lord, the righteous judge, shall give him in “that day.” It tells him too, in the limitation of human thought and language, of joys which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which the heart of man hath not conceived,—joys which shall be unfading as the tree of life, and eternal as the throne of God! In all this he who rejects Christ can have no share.

Such are, negatively, some of the consequences of the rebel’s choice. Finally, let us glance at its positive results. What are they? In one word, eternal death. “We have no king but Caesar,” cried the Jews, and then they crucified Him, who only was their rightful king. With all the recklessness of sin, they said, “His blood be on us, and on our children.” They passed not scatheless from that fearful responsibility. The dreadful imprecation reached the ear of the eternal, and brought upon them His avenging arm. The tale of their woes is familiar to us all. And let us learn a lesson here. The very power they chose, in preference to Christ, was instrumental in the hands of Divine justice, in bringing upon them the temporal consequences
of their rejection. So is it with the sin we choose instead of the Saviour. It needs no sting but its own to bring upon us agony and death. As the Jews rejected Christ, so were they punished; and now they are driven to wander throughout the wide world, without a home, without a country, without even a nominal king, a by-word, a hissing, and a reproach.

Sinner! atheist, unbeliever, profligate, indifferent, procrastinating, you too have joined in their cry. You too have rejected the Messiah, and by that very rejection, you have chosen his enemy as your lord. You are the subjects of a rival kingdom, and you must share in the woes appointed to befall that kingdom. You are servants of Satan, slaves of sin; you are active subjects of his government working for the wages that he gives;—and as surely as there shall be a reckoning day for the world, you will have them. What are they? Death—the utter loss of all things. Death,—to all that is joyous on earth, to all that is glorious in heaven,—to the grace of God, and to the love of Christ,—to the society of sainted mortals, and to the fellowship of angelic spirits. Death,—in misery and wretchedness, in despair and guilt, amid the wrecks of immortal spirits lost and ruined for eternity! The kingdom of your master extends into another world, and the subjects of his government on earth must be partakers of his misery in hell.

May God save you from such a doom! He will save you. He seeks to save you. Now by his gospel he calls you to Jesus, and your eternal destiny depends upon your choice. Choose ye this day whom ye will
serve. Which shall it be?—the world or the Saviour?—Caesar or Christ? Shall it not be Christ?