

# The Christian Union

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HENRY WARD BEECHER, } EDITORS.  
LYMAN ABBOTT, }

## A PRAYER.

O GOD, the people come to thee  
With sinking heart, yet upward eye;  
Draw thou, O God, thy children nigh,  
And hear while still they bend the knee!

He whom thou lovedst, Lord, is dead;  
Our brother, whom thou mad'st so fair,  
Hath left this heavy-burthened air,  
And to some sweeter clime is fled.

Heal thou, O God, the bitter grief,  
Assuage, we pray, the lasting smart  
That tortures now the nation's heart;  
Oh, send thy suff'ring ones relief!

Help us to pray as prayed thy Son;  
Help us to trust a Father's care;  
And since thou couldst not grant our prayer,  
Help us to say, Thy will be done!

Draw thou the stricken widow nigh,  
Take the lone mother to thy breast,  
And guard, like fledgelings in the nest,  
These orphans when to thee they cry.

When wrath doth maim or malice kill  
Our rulers, chosen in thy sight,  
Keep thou, O Lord, our ancient Right,  
And be to us a ruler still.

J. BRAINERD THRALL.

## THE LESSON OF THE DAY.

NEVER in the world's history has a death produced mourning so universal and sympathy so profound. The cathedral chimes of England echoing back across the sea the solemn tolling of a continent's church bells did but utter England's lament over America's sorrow. The black emblems of America's mourning encircle the world; Berlin, Paris and London put on habiliments of grief; race and religious differences are alike forgotten. In its profoundest depths the heart of humanity is one; the tides and currents do but play upon the surface. From the Mohammedan Sultan, from the Greek Tsar, from the Roman Catholic Pontiff, from the Protestant English Queen come in varying forms the one sentiment of sympathy and sorrow; many voices tuned to one chord. Nor are these the official utterances of a courtly and conventional etiquette. That womanly message from the Queen, speaking condolence out of her own experience of widowhood, is typical of the sincerity of a world's sympathetic sorrow:

"Words cannot express the deep sympathy I feel with you at this terrible moment. May God support and comfort you, as He alone can."

As this grief has touched all nations, so in our own it has entered all hearts. In the long procession that moved silently through the Rotunda of the Capitol on Thursday, women in tattered garments and ladies in elegant attire, street arabs and fine gentlemen, stood for three hours on the hot pavement and beneath a broiling sun, that they might take one momentary glance at the emaciated face. This strange commingling was but the outward sign of the stranger commingling which makes the heart of the nation throb with one pulse in the presence of this death.

No man has ever taken a stronger hold upon the nation's heart. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield—of these four pre-eminent presidents of the century the last is not least. And yet!—it is easy to tell for what service we honor the others; for what service do we honor him? George Washington carried the American people safely through the long travail which gave birth to a free republic; Thomas Jefferson cut loose the chains which anchored the nation to the aristocratic traditions of the past, and put its prow toward the democracy of the future; Abraham Lincoln was sword of steel in the hands of an aroused people, and cut asunder the manacles that held three millions of God's children in slavery, and thirty millions in political serfdom to their slave masters. What parallel achievement links the name of James A. Garfield to this American triumvirate? Achievement? None. The nation—the world—honors him, not for what he did, but for what he suffered and what he was.

His record was an honorable one; but it was not preëminent. Other canal boys have toiled as industriously; other sons have borne mothers' burdens as joyously; other teachers have filled the young lives before them as full of noble enthusiasms; other soldiers have fought as bravely and imperiled life as cheerfully; other statesmen have plowed as deep a furrow and planted as fruitful seeds in the national soil. What he might have done had life and opportunity been granted to him, none can tell. But it is not for what he has done that to-day the illimitable group of mourners from every continent and the far-off isles of the sea gather at his grave. He is not the greatest actor in American history, but he is America's greatest vicarious sufferer. Its sin of political self-seeking he who was never a self-seeker has borne in his own martyred person. An element of remorse has entered into the nation's long and painful watching by his bedside. Whoever was in any

measure responsible for the self-seeking which is at once the shame and the poison of our political life—and who is not?—is in that measure sharer in the guilt of this innocent man's death. He who was without sin in this respect has been made sin for the nation. To suffer is more than to do. Learn this lesson from this sacred life, oh silent sufferers on beds of illness for love's sake; oh sharper sufferers in heart woundings, which no surgery can probe and no medicine can heal!

Something of the universal and profound sorrow in his death is due to what we may call the accidents of his history. He was linked sympathetically to every class in the community; he successively belonged to every social rank. The canal-boy was of kin to every laborer in the land; the farmer at Mentor to every agriculturist; the student working his way through college, and college president at twenty-six, was fellow to every citizen in the Republic of Letters; the soldier, rapidly rising through successive ranks from colonel to major-general, belonged to every American who had love and honor for the volunteer defenders of the nation; the statesman, voicing for the silent multitude the best experiences of his party in many an eloquent and impassioned utterance, was identified with all that has honored and with nothing that has dishonored the twenty years of Republican political supremacy; the son and husband, punctuating his inaugural address with that reverent homage to his mother and wife on the Capitol steps, opened with that one act the door of every true American home and entered to become its guest; the Christian, sustained in all his pilgrimage from the tow-path to the Capitol by his piety, but never blazoning it, interwove his life insensibly into the holy catholic church, the universal communion of saints. The sudden bolt that struck him down, the long battle with death, the brave wife's devotion, the prayers of a waiting, hoping, fearing people, only deepened the sympathy which had already intertwined this singularly multiform life with all other lives. These last eighty days did not create, they did but make tenacious this kinship of hearts.

But the accidents of his position only gave great opportunity; and great opportunity without great manhood is always the precursor of great failure. James A. Garfield was great in manhood. He was a manly man. If life called on him to do no preëminently great thing, he did with his might what his hand found to do; whether it was the chores for the widowed mother, or the driving of the canal team, or the home study, or the district-school teaching, or the college presidency, or the military campaigning in the field or the political campaigning in the House. He made full proof of his ministry; and rose from the lowest to the highest rank by no other secret than that of fidelity in each new trust. He was pure, unselfish, sincere. He lived without ostentation and without covetousness. He saw Congressmen about him getting rich, and was content to treasure his wealth in the hearts of his constituents. He never sought an office. When proposed for Senator from Ohio he declined to go to Columbus to conduct a canvass, and received the news of his nomination quietly at home. When nominated for the Presidency, it was despite his protest. He brought to bear upon all political problems the test question, What is right? That answered, he asked, What is expedient? Other living statesmen equaled him in force of will, rivaled him in political knowledge, surpassed him in political strategy; but no contemporary politician equaled him in moral force. There were and are other men as conscientious; but it is doubtful whether any man since Lincoln has made conscience as conspicuous in public affairs.

He earned the confidence of the American people by his character. It was this confidence which re-elected him, term after term, from the Western

the flora and fauna of the land he traverses, and coming out with lawful plunder to enrich the museums of Europe; which in the end he does to the extent of many tons weight and tens of thousands of specimens, though perhaps he lost as much more by the casualties and misfortunes of the way. He has also fine descriptive powers, and does not let a charming bit of scenery escape him or the reader. To one not very well posted on South Africa these volumes will be a revelation of semi-barbarism; of tribes, Christian in a sense, on the way to the perfection which is a long way off, in connection with whom it is in point to be reminded that the modern Englishman is the outgrowth of centuries of culture, not a few of them very cloudy, not to say dark. Khame will compare very favorably, indeed, with some of the early Christian (?) kings of Britain; and Seehele—the Seehele of Livingston's day, whom Dr. Holub pronounces an out-and-out hypocrite—on the Dr.'s own showing has a good many redeeming traits. Indeed, a recent writer claims that the Doctor does not make out his case against Seehele; and there is force in the claim. Do the African full justice. Then, too, this is the land of the Boer, semi-civilized again; scarcely more; character plucky, but narrow; Christian not yet out of the Old Testament. Also a revelation as to the amount and kinds of game—from lions, hippopotami, crocodiles, cobras, ostriches, to the most harmless of fawns and the most brilliant-plumed birds. No need of menageries there. Need rather of a sharp eye and the best of weapons of offense and defense against the uncaged beasts and reptiles—need to be a Nimrod.

Dr. Holub in this volume does ample justice to those brave men and women of the various societies, noticeably the London and the Wesleyan Missionary Societies. Monsua and his Barolougs pass before us. At first the king persecuted the Christians among them. Finding it of no avail, and that "the converts not only remained just as faithful subjects as before, but were the most industrious and thriving of all his population," he desisted, and encouraged them, without himself embracing Christianity. Certainly these Barolougs seem to have root in themselves. Both he and Major Pinto give due praise to Khame's good qualities. He is the foremost of the Bechuana kings; a Christian, and a radical temperance ruler over a people who do him honor. His measures with those who bring brandy into his realm are righteously severe.

The second volume is occupied with the great adventure for which the other two were only preparatory. By his own exertions he equipped himself and set forth, hoping to see the Atlantic at Loanda by the way of the Zambesi and the Barotse. Hastening to Shoshong, he crosses the Kalahari desert, moving northward between the same parallels of longitude as Major Pinto southward, with this advantage; that he was comparatively fresh and Major Pinto exhausted. At Impalera—Pinto's Enabarira—he gets permission to enter Sepopo's capitol, Sesheke. The king had been waiting for him as the man who "was coming to travel through the countrylike Monari" (Livingstone). He had already fallen into the company of traders familiar with the country and destined to be of no little service to him. He was detained at Sepopo's, first and last, many weary weeks, which though harassing to him were made the occasion for a fuller setting forth of this great tyrant and his Manetse kingdom, his court, his cruelties, his treacheries, the customs of the people, and the extent of the realm, than is elsewhere to be found. It will be remembered that Major Pinto passed Sesheke without stopping. Dr. Holub succeeded, after long delay, in starting westward of the Zambesi, but was forced to abandon his enterprise, having been wrecked in the rapids that Major Pinto passed in utmost peril. It was during the delay at Sepopo's that he made a visit to the Victoria Falls, and from him we have probably the finest description, on the whole, which has yet been given of this wonder of nature. For a taste of it take this: "Let the reader then imagine himself to have taken his position upon a rock facing a rugged, dark brown, rocky wall about 200 yards away, rising 400 feet above its base, which is out of sight. Over the top of this are dashing the waters of the Zambesi. About a hundred yards from the western bank he sees several islands adorned with tropical vegetation in rich abundance; further on towards the eastern shore and close to the edge of the abyss his eye will light upon nearly thirty bare brown crags that divide the rushing stream into as many different channels. To the left again, between the bright green islands and the western shore, he will observe that the great wall of rock is considerably lower, allowing a ponderous volume of water to rush impetuously as it were into a corner, whence it is precipitated in a broad sheet into the gulf below; beyond this and the next cascade he will see another portion of the surface of the rock, and as he carries his eye along he will be struck with admiration at the jutting peaks that stand out in vivid contrast to the angry foam that seethes between them.

The countless jets and streams assume all colors and all forms; some are bright and gleaming, some dark and somber; some are wide and some are narrow; but as they plunge impetuously into the depth below they make up a spectacle that cannot fail to excite a sensation of mingled astonishment and delight.

. . . In the diversity of forms the water takes I believe that the beauty of the Victoria Falls is quite unparelled." See also a beautiful picture of the waters above the Falls. On the other hand, for a scene to make one's blood curdle take the torture and murder of a bright boy, a victim to Sepopo's dark superstition. We will not quote it. May God hasten the end of such horrors, all too frequent still.

We may not follow the Doctor farther. We have said enough to attract attention to this remarkable story, which is lavishly illustrated. Seven years were thus consumed in professional work and travel. It is to be hoped that his life may be spared to accomplish his yet more hazardous undertaking, already projected, to traverse Africa from Cape Town to Cairo.

### THE FOLLY OF EXCUSES.

By REV. GEO. P. HAYS, D.D.

NEXT to the weakness of making excuses is the weakness of accepting them. To be of any use an excuse should remedy the evil which calls for explanation. Reflection will show that a case can hardly be conceived of where any excuse will effect that end. No matter what excuse Grouchy might have been able to give to Napoleon for failing to come to his aid at Waterloo, the excuse could not reverse the historic defeat. The fact was, he was not there at the crucial moment and the result was the same as if he was absent without excuse. Nature's government is the perfection of government; and she excuses nothing. The common law maxim, that "ignorance of the law doth not excuse," is enforced by nature as it is enforced nowhere else. We relieve no disaster by apologies. We take poison with the best intentions, and die just as if we intended to commit suicide. Malaria is all around us and it affects us just as if we had gone there on purpose, although we may actually be on an errand of mercy. Though thrust by another's unintentional awkwardness against the heated stove, it burns us as if we had planned it in malice.

The contrast between this natural government and most human government is very marked. At home children are taught by their acceptance to present excuses often forged and false; and they grow up believing that to refuse to accept them is a cruel hardship. At school the same course of false training is kept up, and they come to think that a good excuse is as good as a good deed. By and by they go out from home and school; and as a rule society refuses to accept excuses from all who offer them, and yet insists on their being accepted by all to whom they are offered. The parable of the unmerciful servant is thoroughly human. This morning I read a bitter criticism on the governmental management of a reformatory institution by a business man who has the reputation of never keeping a clerk who has to offer excuses for faults and failures. Yet here is a school which cannot expel its pupils which in his judgment could get along without any punishment in its control of the incorrigible inmates. We can only be taught the absolute necessity of diligent foresight by the refusal to accept or offer excuses. Nature controls all of us. When we go into a room to a stove we first touch it lightly to find out whether it is warm or not before we lean our hand on it. When we go to a new country we inquire what fruits are wholesome before we eat them. So shipwrecked sailors watch what berries the birds pick to find out what are healthful and harmless. When we travel in new lands we inquire into their laws to save ourselves from the penalties of the courts. By this method the responsibility of knowledge is put upon the subject. In most homes the responsibility of knowledge is laid upon those who are to govern. So parents hold teachers responsible for being sure that the rules of the school are known by their children before they are held guilty for their violation. The result of this vicious method of home training is that these same children have to learn in the bitter school of hard experience that excuses do not count. Half the grumblers and complainers who fill the world with the story of their unappreciated talents can only justify their own estimate of their abilities on the ground that an excuse is as good as a success. Alas for them, however, society looks at their failures and refuses to entrust them with any great office, and they are unwilling to discharge anything but great obligations.

It is sometimes said for another purpose "nothing succeeds like success." But the truth is nothing succeeds but success. Failure is failure, and that is all anyone can say. It may well, therefore, be questioned whether it would not be well for us all at once to resolve that in no case shall we offer an excuse. It

would do all mankind good in their own thoughts of themselves to call their failures failures. This would at once change the use to which the reasons of failure would be put. Now they are employed as excuses to ourselves and others. Then they would be so many lessons toward wiser methods for the future. This at least seems sure, that we have no warrant from nature or revelation that excuses are acceptable to the Ruler of the universe. No excuse seems to be sufficient for the rejection of his Son. The judgment will not only reject poor excuses, but it will reject all excuses. Then the saved will be saved and the lost will be lost. Who ever heard of an excuse that the Bible gave good reason to believe would be sufficient to save the offerer, and so a substitute for Christ? In the next world, as in this, things will be dealt with in their true character. If now we needlessly build for shelter on some unstable foundation, we are left without time to rebuild when the floods are upon us; so then the wood, hay, stubble will consume away before our eyes and we be without remedy. It is this fact of their future utter uselessness that makes it so evil in us to teach our children to offer and rely on excuses. For this life and the next this vicious element in our unconscious education is only and always evil. The harm we do to them and, indeed, to all we so treat as to encourage reliance on excuses by accepting them from others or offering them to others, can only be repaired by their learning better habits by sad humiliations and bitter failures. To decline all excuses and call a failure a failure is nature's way, and the quickest way to develop the utmost practical caution and foresight.

DENVER, Colorado.

### THE THOMAS HERESY CASE.

[FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

THE Rev. H. W. Thomas, of Chicago, who, in a preliminary investigation, has been found guilty of heresy, will be formally tried, on substantially the same charges, at the next session of the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, which meets at Syracuse, Illinois, October 5th. The Discipline [Paragraph 213] provides for such trial, "when a minister or preacher disseminates publicly or privately doctrines which are contrary to our Articles of Religion or established standards of doctrine." Dr. Thomas is charged, under this paragraph, with teaching doctrines contrary to the Articles of Religion on inspiration and the atonement, and contrary to the established standards of doctrine on future punishment.

Touching inspiration, Dr. Thomas holds that all parts of the Scriptures are not equally inspired, or of equal authority, but that there may be, and probably are, errors in the Bible. He does not specify any which he maintains to be such, but in detending the book he insists, in general way, that we should not burden ourselves with upholding every passage, and risk the Christian religion on its verbal accuracy. He claims that the Bible contains a revelation from God; and, while he denies that all parts of it are critically infallible, he thinks that the will of God is plain enough in it to be morally infallible; so that one will not err in morals, for lack of the truth, who uses the Bible to the best of his ability.

These views his accusers hold to be contrary to the fifth Article of Religion, which is as follows:

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture do we understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. The names of the canonical books are (here follows the list of books in King James's Version.) All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

Dr. Thomas denies that his views are contrary to this Article of Religion, and the question of whether they are or not is the first issue in his case.

On the atonement Dr. Thomas holds what he calls the moral view, which is nearly the same as the moral influence theory of Bushnell. He loves to express his opinion in the words of Paul, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." He insists that the Father loved the world as much as did the Son, and came forth in Christ to save it. He denies that one part of the Deity was sacrificed to appease another part, or that Christ was punished as a sinner in man's stead. His sufferings and death, instead of being inflicted as a penalty, were voluntarily undertaken to do away with the necessity of a penalty. The atonement was intended to show the love of God and to save the sinner by wooing and otherwise influencing him to a better life, and also by making it possible for God to pardon him and still uphold the integrity of the law.

This view the prosecutors of Dr. Thomas charge is contrary to the second and twentieth Articles of Religion, inasmuch as it denies the necessity of a sacrifice