

NEANDER  
ON  
PHILIPPIANS & JAMES  
AND ON THE  
COMING OF OUR LORD

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THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL  
TO  
THE PHILIPPIANS,  
AND THE  
GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES,

PRACTICALLY AND HISTORICALLY EXPLAINED.

BY  
DR AUGUSTUS NEANDER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
COMING OF THE LORD, AND ITS SIGNS.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER NAPIER, M.A.,  
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EDINBURGH:  
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.  
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.; SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.  
DUBLIN: JAMES M'GLASHAN.

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M D C C C L I.

EDINBURGH:  
ANDREW JACK, PRINTER,  
NIDDRY STREET.

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# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO

# THE PHILIPPIANS,

PRACTICALLY AND HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

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WHEN the Spirit of God revealed to holy men of old the word of Truth, to be by them proclaimed for the salvation of men,—when He revealed Himself, through their life, their discourses, their writings, as the vessels of His Spirit,—this is not to be regarded as a fact of sole occurrence, and as belonging only to the Past. To us, as living members of the body of Christ, partakers of the communion of the Spirit—a communion which connects the Present, as a part, with the progressive development of the whole, since the first outpouring of the Spirit by the glorified Son of Man,—this cannot be as a dispensation in which we have no interest or concern; the Past must become to us the Present. We need, it is true, no further new revelations, but we must feel, as if the Lord had spoken to us at this moment, inasmuch as He has given us instruction, sufficient for all the higher requirements of the Present, inasmuch as He has declared everything which it is needful for us to know, that we may find consolation under all present sufferings,—the means of certain victory in all our conflicts,—the clue to extricate us from a labyrinth of embarrassments of an age however disorganised. As the pre-requisite to this attainment, we must attentively investigate the ascertained historical conditions and relations under which these vessels of the Spirit of God spoke and acted; we must place ourselves livingly in the Past, and in

those circumstances in which, and in reference to which, these holy men spoke and acted. Herein we recognise the designs of Divine wisdom in the government of the church, that Divine truth has been revealed to us, not in a law of the letter not in any summary of determined articles of belief, but that it has been communicated to us in *this* historical embodiment, in its particular application to particular cases, to ascertained historical relations and circumstances of life, through the instrumentality of appointed human organs, who lived among men as representatives of Divine truth, who, amid the world and its concerns, witnessed to and revealed the things of God, and who, in their peculiar human manner, though in a manner sanctified by the Spirit of God, humanly spoke and acted. Thus was it ordained, that Divine truth should, humanly, be brought near to us. To our own intellectual and spiritual energies, animated, indeed, and guided by the Spirit of God, without whom nothing Divine can be apprehended or understood, it has been committed, to investigate the Divine in its connection with the human; from the particular, to deduce the universal; and again, by its application to the special circumstances of our own time and life, to show the action of the universal in our particular relations; and in what these organs of the Spirit of Christ spoke and did, under the peculiar conditions of the Past, to discover its applicability to the conditions and relations of our Present times. As, in order rightly to understand the word of God in its human embodiment, and, according to this understanding, to apply it, humble submission to the Divine Spirit, who alone guides into all truths, and reveals the depths of His word, is always requisite; so also is it always requisite that we carefully attend to all these human relations. The word of God desires no indolent hearers, but claims all the powers of feeling and of mind. So only can its treasures be discovered. If we fail to discover them, if amid the darkness of the present, we murmur for want of light, we must attribute this to our own shortcomings of these requirements. That pregnant saying of our Lord, "He that hath, to him shall be given," may here be applied, as well to excite and encourage, as to warn and rebuke us in our inquiries.

The principles above stated find especial application in the Epistles of the Apostles, in which we should find far more to instruct, to edify, and to guide us in all the relations of life, if, with due attention and earnestness, we endeavoured to investigate their contents in this manner, if, in accordance with these rules, we sought to weigh each word. May the Spirit of God enlighten and guide us, thus to learn to understand and apply one of the noblest epistles of the apostle Paul, who wrote as no other could write, and in which, the living image of the apostle of the Gentiles is placed before our eyes,—the Epistle to the Philippians.

We must, therefore, first realise to ourselves the peculiar circumstances and aspects, under which the apostle wrote this epistle. Zeal for the salvation of the Gentile world had brought upon him his last persecutions from the frenzy of the Jews, who refused to grant to the Heathen equal participation and equal rights in the kingdom of God. It was this which occasioned his seizure in Jerusalem, his captivity of several years in the city of Cæsarea, and; on his appeal to the Roman emperor, his imprisonment at Rome, the issue of which was still uncertain. Care for the welfare of the churches in various parts of the world, which, through the dangers that had befallen their apostolical teacher, might become unstable in their faith itself, and which, in the approach of troublous and agitated days, would be deprived of his personal guidance, occupied his thoughts in his bonds and imprisonment, far more than care for his own life. This deficiency he designed to supply through the medium of his disciples and companions in the preaching of the Gospel, who formed the living bond of union between himself and these churches, and by his own epistles. Of these the church at Philippi in Macedonia was one, and the first which Paul had founded in that country. Having witnessed the odium and the sufferings endured by Paul for the cause of the Gospel,—of which we have the record in the Acts of the Apostles,—having seen before their own eyes the example of his boldness in the faith, of his devotion to the Lord, of his triumphant enthusiasm for His cause, of his rejoicing amid all his trials, of the wonderful dispensations of the Lord, through which he

had been delivered, the faith of the Christians there had been peculiarly confirmed and strengthened, while their love to him, who was ready to sacrifice everything to bring them the glad tidings of salvation, became the more warm and fervent. They followed the example of their faithful teacher. Although, at that period, Christianity had not attracted the attention of the Roman government, nor was the object of persecution through any express edicts, as, on account of its revolt against the old state-religion, it must soon become, according to the Roman constitution in reference to the affairs of religion; and although, therefore, no general persecutions against Christianity and the church had as yet taken place, and the Christians, in most regions, enjoyed rest, yet, in this respect, Macedonia formed an exception. From the very first, the rage of the Jews, who were dispersed in considerable numbers among the commercial towns, had been excited against the preachers and the professors of the Gospel, and the dissensions which necessarily arose between believers and their heathen fellow-citizens, they sought to strengthen. Although there were no statutes in force against Christianity, the heathen population, from whom the new Christians were so strikingly distinguished by the peculiarity of their Christian life and conversation, could easily devise manifold means to disturb and annoy them; just as, in the history of modern missions, we see a repetition of such efforts in the intercourse of the newly converted and their old heathen associates. Amid such persecutions, the church at Philippi remained steadfast, and thereby their faith and their love were tested. Hence, also, the persecutions which had befallen their apostolical teacher could not confound their faith. They were conscious of a communion in a higher life with him, amid all his conflicts and sufferings. Through his afflictions and the dangers impending over him, their love and sympathy for him were only the more kindled. To prove this to him, they had sent one of their own number, Epaphroditus, to obtain, through him, more accurate intelligence of his situation. We know that, although the Lord Christ conferred on His apostles the power of imposing on those for whose salvation they laboured, the provision of their bodily wants, Paul had not availed him-

self of this right. As the preventing and saving grace of the Lord had manifested itself in so peculiar a manner in him, as from being the most vehement persecutor, it transformed him into a preacher of the Gospel, so he felt himself constrained to do more than the others, whom Christ had called to himself in the usual way, and had gradually trained for His service, and to renounce a right, which, like the other apostles, he might have exercised. By his more abundant labours and sufferings, by his greater acts of self-denial, did he, who had been called as by force, seek to show his free love in the dispensation committed to him. (1 Cor. ix. 17-19.) His own peculiar nature, strengthened by the supernatural gift of the Spirit, enabled him to be of those whom Christ counted blessed, because they renounced marriage for the kingdom of heaven's sake; who were so counted blessed, not on account of the celibate life in itself,—as if Paul could have any pre-eminence above Peter, who, in marriage sanctified by the Lord, laboured for the advancement of the kingdom of God,—but on account of the feelings which prompted them to renounce it, viz. love, sacrificing all for the kingdom of God. It was this spirit of all-sacrificing love which animated Paul, which led him to regard as his duty, and undertake with joyous zeal, everything which, under any given circumstances, tended to promote his vocation. From the same principle he supported himself amid all his labours of preaching, by the work of his own hands, as a tent-maker. He felt in himself the truth of the word spoken by the Lord, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” To avoid every appearance of self-seeking, to remove every ground of suspicion from his opponents among the Jews and Judaizing Christians, he took on himself alone the care of his temporal maintenance. The Christian community at Philippi, however, urged by their sincere love, had anticipated his wants, and had several times sent him contributions in money, well knowing the straits he would often be put to, in order to gain his livelihood; and Paul, though himself desiring nothing, would not, considering the source of such feeling, repel these offerings of free love. Thus, at that period, had this church shown its active sympathy for Paul, through their emissary Epaphroditus. This

mark of affectionate remembrance, and the information regarding the state of the community at Philippi, which he learnt from Epaphroditus, were the occasion of Paul's writing this epistle,—the design of which was, to express his gratitude and love to the church at Philippi,—to comfort them regarding his own condition,—to exhibit before it his Christian tone of feeling amid his conflicts and dangers,—and to impart those exhortations and encouragements which were adapted to its own state.

We must now, therefore, direct our attention to Paul's condition during his imprisonment at Rome,—to those lessons which are to be learnt from his conduct during it, and from that picture of his state of mind, which this epistle affords us,—and to his instructions to this church, in reference to its peculiar position, for the various application of which, our own cognate circumstances will afford us abundant matter.

First, then, with regard to the condition of Paul, which was one calculated to produce a conflict of feelings in his heart. He had publicly testified to the cause of the Lord, and made his own defence. His apology had produced the general impression, that his imprisonment was the result, not of any disturbance he had raised against the public peace, nor of any other criminal transgression laid to his charge, but solely on account of his preaching a faith odious to the Jews, against which new faith, as we have already remarked, no statutes were in existence. If then, on this point, Paul could triumphantly prove his innocence, his safety might thence appear secured. According to the Roman laws, however, the act of seducing the citizens and subjects of the Roman empire to revolt against the religion of the state, and of seeking to make proselytes to a faith, which, though not yet expressly condemned by an edict, from its very nature must perpetually conflict with this state religion, would be regarded as punishable. Paul's case<sup>1</sup>, therefore, was not so simple; there might still be room for manifold perplexities. At one time, expectations, founded on the impression, which his public defence had made, would arise in him, that he would safely be delivered from his bonds, and that it would again be possible to him, to visit the churches he had formerly

founded, and among them, therefore, the church at Philippi; at another time, the thought of death would present itself to his mind. But what then? Do we find his soul a prey alternately to fear and hope, to dejection and joy, as dependent on impressions received from outward changes and chances, as is the case generally with other men in a similar position? No; a prevailing tone of cheerful repose, and of submission to the will of the Lord, breathes through the entire epistle. We recognise a man, whose confidence rests on a foundation firm as a rock, independent of the alternation of events, and unshaken by any waves or storms. He is assured that the Lord, in one way or other, will carry him victoriously through those conflicts, to a glorious end. With joyous confidence he is ready to meet the termination of a life consecrated to one holy cause. He is conscious to have laboured not in vain, as a faithful preacher of the truth, which he sees producing fruit in the churches. These, like the church at Philippi, are the living monuments of a ministry devoted to the Lord,—the testimony, that he has purely preached the word of God the Lord,—his rejoicing before the Lord, on that day, when He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, when much, that bears an imposing appearance here, will be exposed in its nothingness, and when much, that was mistaken and condemned by the world, will be acknowledged as His own by the Lord. The feelings of Paul, in this respect, are nobly expressed in the words of this epistle, where he says,—“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and (priestly) service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me,” (chap. ii. 17, 18.) The full import of these weighty words, we must seek to make clear. As the Lord Christ is the alone Mediator between God and the sinful human race redeemed by Him, all who believe in Him, enter into communion with Him, are freed from the world, which is alienated from God, and through Him are consecrated into one holy Church of God, and thus become one priestly race; in this relation, there no longer exists the distinction of priests and laics, but all through Him, and in communion with

Him, become, what He himself is, priests before His God, who is also their God, before His Father, who is also their Father; their whole life is a priestly vocation, as it is described by Paul, (Rom. xii. 1), a rational service, *i. e.*, a spiritual service, one proceeding from the reason, from the spirit, wherein the whole spiritual life manifests itself as consecrated to God, as a sacrifice offered unto God; wherein, every inward and outward action, as done in communion with Christ, as performed in His name, as filled by His Spirit, as expressing His Holy Image, is the offering of praise and thanksgiving of the Redeemed, acceptable and well-pleasing to God. This being true of every action of every Christian in his own particular calling, Paul regards his calling as an apostle, as his peculiar priestly vocation, and the faith planted through him in the heathen world,—the Christian life of the Gentiles converted by him—as the acceptable sacrifice offered by him to God; and in this sense he speaks, in these words, of the “sacrifice and service” of the faith of the Philippians, offered by him to God. Further, as wine was generally poured out as a seal to the sacrifices, the so-called libation,—and as he plainly foresaw that he would pour out his own blood in his priestly vocation of preaching the Gospel among the heathen, and would testify what he preached even in the face of death, and at last, by the testimony of his martyrdom, would seal what formed the vocation of his whole life; so, in this respect, he speaks of pouring out his blood, as the offering himself on this sacrifice. The apostle, therefore, is ready to meet so glorious an end of his labours with confidence and joy. Far from needing the consolation of others, he is enabled to invite the Philippians to rejoice with him. Uncertain, therefore, whether martyrdom would terminate his imprisonment, or whether his life would be preserved for further labours in advancing the kingdom of God on earth, his mind is prepared for both, and in either case submissive to the will of God,—the Lord’s will was his will. The turn which events might take would be, to him, the appointment of the Lord, how his life could be made most subservient to His glory. He was divided between the longing



to be gone from the conflicts of this earthly life, to the peace of the heavenly home of the Spirit,—to depart from the land where the Lord is seen only by the eye of faith, to that, where, amid the society of the blessed, He exhibits Himself as the object of sight. Conscious, though Paul was, of communion with the Lord, he was yet far from feeling satisfied with what he had already attained. Not only did his many outward conflicts make him feel, that the land of peace promised to Christians and the object of his fervent longings, is not to be found here below; inward conflicts, also, through which the life of faith must pass, and harder far than those from without, were not unknown to him, conflicts in which even his Saviour, who cried out, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death,” and, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” led the way. He had suffered much from the “thorn in the flesh,” as he calls it, (2 Cor. xii.), which, like wounds, incessantly inflicted in the body by the prickings of a goad, ever accompanied him. Thus must he experience the weakness of man, a weakness the more felt by him, in contrast with the revelations of Divine glory, which, from time to time, were imparted to him. But thus was he to learn what is Divine and what is human,—what belongs to this, and what to the other life. Thus also was he to discover, that the land of heavenly peace, the object of the longing of every spirit which partakes of the Divine nature, is not to be found on earth. Although, as his life and epistle testify, Paul had made great advances in sanctification, he was yet far from desiring to make any distinction between himself and the number of sinners seeking their justification in Christ,—far from esteeming himself a sinless saint. He knew that he had still and ever to battle with sin, and to persevere in this conflict even to the end, if he were to stand before the Lord. We need only hear his own confessions; as, when writing to the Corinthians, he warns them against a false security: “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway,” (1 Cor. ix. 27); wherein he describes his continual conflict with himself, lest, having been the means of leading others to salvation

through the preaching of the word,—whose effects, in virtue of its inherent Divine Spirit, are independent of the preacher, and productive of fruit unto eternal life,—he himself should yield to temptations, and fall short at last of that object to which he had conducted others. The metaphor here used by the apostle was derived from the pugilistic contests of the ancients. He represents the body as the antagonist with which the pugilist contends. The presupposition here, therefore, is the continual antagonism of the body, which formerly served sin, to the Divine life in the spirit. Paul describes himself as one who, by constant efforts, renders his body, the vessel of sanctification which he has received, obedient to himself as the servant of Christ. This conflict with the body of sin, so far as in the body the whole outward life of man is exhibited, thus describes generally the entire contest which the spiritual man has to maintain with the fleshly, the new man with the old man, even in a Paul. Taught, therefore, by severe self-examination, he is far from supposing he has already attained the ends of Christian perfection; far, when he contemplates his own life, from building his confidence on it, as if it were one of perfect holiness, as he expresses himself so beautifully in the words of this epistle, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect,” (chap. iii. 12.) Therefore Paul knew that the blessings pronounced by the Lord, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;” and “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” were words which, even in him, were not perfectly fulfilled; but, rather, were still, in certain respects, words of a promise. Further, although Paul had risen to greater heights in the contemplation of Divine things than others of his own or of all time, although he had been deemed worthy of special higher revelations, over and above what was to form the subject of general preaching, and of deeper and higher views of the connexion of the visible and invisible world, he knew that all this was but fragmentary and partial, and still far from perfect knowledge, and that when this is given, all the higher views entertained in this life, all prophecy, and all speaking with tongues, will vanish. He

reckoned himself among those whose knowledge of Divine things was still but "seeing through a glass darkly," where much still remains mysterious,—a knowledge which bears the same relation to that of eternal life, which the knowledge of a child bears to that of matured manhood. He knows that, once exalted to the contemplation of eternal life, the knowledge of Divine things he attained in this life would be cast off by him, as the natural man casts off the notions of his childhood. His lofty spirit, ardently desiring knowledge, longs to depart from the dim twilight of the earthly life of faith to the bright-shining light of heavenly glory, where our knowledge of God and the things of God will be inward and immediate—a vision of immediate presence—a knowing even as we are known. In all these respects, therefore, Paul felt in the depth of his soul, that the life of the Christian, as it subsists in faith now, can only subsist in hope of the future; without this assured view of the future, the whole Christian life appears in his eyes as endeavours without object—the pursuit of a phantom, the sport of delusion, as he himself says, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable," (1 Cor. xv. 19.) For the life of other men is directed to the higher or lower aims which are to be attained in intellectual pursuits, or in the gratification of the senses, and which can actually be attained on earth; but the life of Christians, with all its conflicts, its efforts, its renunciations, refers to an object which has no truth, if it is not to be realised in the eternal life of the future. Hence Paul, from this point of view, reproaches the Corinthians with living in a boasted security, that they had lost the consciousness of the difference between this world and the next, between the conflict of earthly life and the triumph of eternal life, that they thought and acted as if already in possession of all their rights, as if already enjoying the perfect satisfaction of all their needs, as if no conflict from within or without any longer awaited them, and contrasts, in this respect, the very different life of the apostles: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us," (1 Cor. iv. 8.) They seemed to think and act, as if the kingdom of Christ in its plenitude had already come among them, as if, partaking in this, they had already

attained all its riches, and all its enjoyments. And I would, he says, that this were the case: "I would to God ye did reign," (1 Cor. iv. 8), that ye were already partakers of the full glory of Christ's kingdom, for then certainly the apostles would hardly be excluded—"that we also might reign with you;" then our position would be different indeed from what it was. And, in contrast with this their false security, with this unauthorised and unfounded triumphing, he sets before them his own trials and conflicts, (1 Cor. iv. 9-13.)

There was ground enough, therefore, even for Paul, although he rejoiced in his conflicts, and found in them his glory, to long after perfect communion with the Lord in the other world. And although, in earlier years, he makes mention only of the difference between the earthly life of faith and the state of perfection consequent on the resurrection, in later times, and especially from the date of his second Epistle to the Corinthians, the consciousness acquires in him a more distinct and prominent form, that believers, through the indissoluble union between them and the Lord, in virtue of which they are to follow Him in every stage of existence, shall, immediately after their departure from their earthly bodies, enter into a higher life, where they shall actually behold Him, and into a higher and purer communion with Him; as, in the fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, he describes the life in the body as being, in this respect, an absence from the Lord, *i. e.* separated from the actual vision of Him, and the state consequent on this, effected through death, the laying aside of this earthly life, as the being present with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.) He expresses also a similar conviction in this epistle. He here describes Christ as his life, (chap. i. 21.) From life in this sense he distinguishes his life in the flesh, (chap. i. 22.) Christ is his true life; he has no life but in Him, and none without Him. That which alone he calls life, has its foundation in Him; it has its root in communion with Him; Christ is the principle and soul of this life; it is the life of his life; and therefore this life is one with Christ himself. And as Christ is now triumphant in the Divine life, as He has put off human weakness, and in the power of God lives a life exalted above

the sphere of death—a life over which death has no more dominion, and since he rose from the dead, and has ascended into heaven, so the life of believers, as one with His, one with Himself, will resemble it in these points. And hence Paul concludes, that although Christ was his true life while living in the flesh, death would yet be gain to him, inasmuch as, by casting off this earthly life, the true life, which has its foundation in Christ, would be delivered from all the restraints and hinderances and vexations to which it is now subject, and attain a more perfect development of the powers inherent in its nature and essence. He knows, that his being with Christ in that more perfect sense, the being with Him as the object of vision, will be coincident with his departure out of this earthly life, (chap. i. 23.) It is, therefore, the end of his longing.

There are two errors, then, against which the example of the apostle warns us, the subsiding of that longing after the other world, which, as we have seen, is inseparable from the very heart and essence of the Christian life; and the one-sided, fanatical predominance of such longing, where patient submission to the will of God is checked. With regard to the first, it may happen that the Christian, not only through the enjoyment of earthly pleasures, the transitory nature of which he should ever remember, and never suffer himself to forget, that they are but the shadow and the pledge of the higher eternal joys of heaven, may be drawn away from that longing; but that his very energies, devoted to the vocation committed to him for the interests of the kingdom of God, may so entirely absorb him, that the consciousness of having here no “enduring city,” but that his true eternal home is in heaven, may thereby become obscured within him. He so labours, as if his work on earth, which is but the commencement of higher energies destined for eternity, were here to attain perfection, as if it were already the work of eternity. The thought, therefore, that everything here below is at best imperfect, that nothing attains perfection, nothing attains its aim and end, imperceptibly departs from him, and death surprises him in the midst of his labours, even those consecrated to the service of God, as an unexpected and unwelcome guest. He is summoned away before he has finished his reckoning, and

instead of joyously obeying the summons of redemption from the sufferings of earth, his heart cleaves to the duties of his earthly sphere, from which he is so unwilling to depart, and to their successful results, which have too much value in his eyes. Here we find the application of the warning of the Lord, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you, but rather that your names are written in heaven." This longing ever remains the salt of the Christian life, amid all its sufferings and its joys, alike in repose as in activity. The other error consists in this,—when this longing, which has its perfect right, only with the necessary limitation, that it be found with submission to the will of God, who has appointed our vocation in our earthly existence, and has assigned His term to it, and with fidelity to our vocation, oversteps these limitations, and issues in a one-sided bent of feeling, which renders us impatient to meet a summons, which should be awaited in the persevering exercise of faith and patience. Thus it comes to pass, that the predominance of a one-sided longing for the eternal makes us forgetful of the importance of this earthly life, and of its duties in reference to eternity. The joys and employments of earth lose the value which is their due, and which is founded in the appointment of God. That which God has given for the present moment, as the pledge of and preparation for the higher blessing of the future, is impatiently and unthankfully despised. There is a want of the consciousness, which should ever be found in the Christian, that, to the redeemed, standing in communion with Christ, everything earthly, in all they receive and all they do, in their enjoyments and in their labours has even in this lower world been transformed into the character of the heavenly. The state of feeling, exhibited in the words of Paul, observes the true medium between both these opposite false tendencies. The longing for the eternal, for the state of perfection which is found in being with the Lord, remains the key-note of his soul, unquenchable by aught else. The longing for heavenly rest is never suppressed, never extinguished by all the pressure of his Divinely consecrated employments; but, at the same time, he is far from a precipitate impatience, which cannot await the end of the earthly conflict; far, also, from that more refined self-seeking

which can no longer endure to fight and labour for the salvation of men, and be without the calm enjoyment of heavenly blessedness. Although his desire is to depart from the earthly body, and to be with the Lord in perfect personal communion, he is ready to deny even this desire, which proceeds from whatever is noblest in man, that he may labour longer on earth, and strive for the salvation of his brethren. He is willing to renounce the object of his ardent longing, and to continue longer on earth, if it should serve to further the work committed to him by the Lord. Love for his brethren, who need his aid for their salvation, disposes him willingly to make even this sacrifice; and though tossed to and fro by the conflict of his desires, he remains, in each case, resigned to the will of the Lord. His one enduring desire, to which every other gives place, is, that Christ may be glorified by him, whether by his life or by his death. Let us hear his own noble words: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that, with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not, for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," (chap. i. 20-23.) Still, however, he gives the preference to that which would be most subservient to the good of the churches established by him, and says, therefore, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you," (ver. 24.) And love for the churches inspires him even at this moment, with the expectation and hope, which, as he well knew, might prove deceptive, but which, we have reason to suppose, was fulfilled, that God, by delivering him from his first imprisonment at Rome, would again bring him among them for the confirmation of their faith, and the furtherance of their joy; as he says, "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again," (ver. 25, 26.)

Here we recognise in Paul the example of resignation to

the Divine will, in suffering and in acting, in his self-sacrifice and in his self-preservation. He is ready to deny his own will to obey the call of God, whether it be, that his life or his death should be the more instrumental in promoting the work which was committed to him to perform. Though filled with longing for his home in heaven, he yet does not seek death. He is willing his life should be preserved for the welfare of the church. Death shall find him in the faithful fulfilment of his vocation, and as the appointment of God, to be received with joy from the hands of his Heavenly Father. Thus it is the same act of self-denying love, in living and in dying. The example of Paul refers, indeed, principally to true Christian martyrdom, purified from every fanatical element. But has it no application to the death which happens in the course of nature? Yea, it may happen, that there be found in the heart, either a self-willed impatience of the yoke of earthly life, though it stop short of the crime of severing the thread of life; or a self-willed love of earthly life, which cleaves to it with all its power, and is loath to relinquish its hold, even when the call of God demands it. In both these respects the example of the resigned love of Paul, in his self-sacrifice and self-preservation, may find its true application. Thus should every Christian, in life and in death, be one with him in feeling, though his vocation may not lead him to martyrdom.

Further, we here find in Paul that higher grade of self-abnegation which expresses itself, not in the denial of sensual and earthly interests, which could have no charm for a Paul, but in the denial of the higher interests of the spirit, which partakes of the Divine nature. It is a heavenly longing which kindles the lofty soul of the apostle. He desires to escape from the narrow bounds and vexations of this lower life, to gain the beatific vision of Christ, and find in Him the satisfaction of all the needs of the higher life. This would be the highest interest of his soul. He does not, however, become its slave. He is ready to deny the most precious object of his heart, to renounce the satisfaction of his heavenly longing, and to remain longer in a strange land, that he may continue longer to labour, and struggle, and suffer for the good of others. The welfare of the



churches, the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth, has more value, in his estimation, than his own individual advantage. This example finds its application, not only according to the letter, in a precisely similar case,—when one, possessed with the longing for his heavenly country, is necessitated to bear the burden of earthly life for the benefit of others; we may apply it, according to its spirit, to all cases where a man is called to abandon a life which promises most for the higher interests of the soul,—a peaceful life, consecrated, in undisturbed composure, to meditation, and prayer,—and to throw himself into the midst of duties, and labours, and conflicts, with which the higher desires of his soul have no sympathy, but where he is summoned to work for the salvation of others, who need his aid. In this respect, Paul gives us the example, to be imitated, of a self-denying love, which dreads no sacrifice in the service of others. How often have Christians, who have withdrawn from amid the corruptions, instead of seeking to be the salt, of the world, acted contrary to this example!

Standing between life and death, what is the ground of Paul's confidence? This is a point so important for all Christians, that it claims we should dwell on it. He, if any one, was a true labourer in the work of the Lord. He was conscious of having laboured more abundantly than all the apostles in the preaching of the Gospel; but he was conscious also that this was not his work, but that the grace of God had wrought everything through him, as he himself says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me," (1 Cor. xv. 10.) Where higher considerations required it for his self-defence against suspicions tending to unsettle the confidence of the churches in him, he knew well how to enumerate all that he, more than others, had laboured and suffered and borne for the cause of the Lord, (2 Cor. xi. 22, 23); he could appeal to the marks of the Lord Jesus which he bore, signs like those imprinted on slaves and soldiers, testifying whose servant he was, and impressed on him by the Lord himself, in whose communion he bore these his sufferings, and whose example in suffering he followed in his. (Gal. vi. 17.) But yet, when he looked to the end of his earthly career, and surveyed

a life so rich in deeds and sufferings in the cause of the Lord, not upon what he himself had done, did he believe he could ground his confidence; in his eyes all this appeared defective. All that he had hitherto performed, he believed he must forget, and look only to that which still remained for him to do. His principle was to forget all past performances, and ever to press forward towards the prize of his heavenly calling. It may, at first sight, appear strange to us, that Paul should express himself with so much hesitation and doubt, as to whether he shall attain the prize of eternal life, a participation in the blessedness of the Resurgent. This seems to conflict with the Divine confidence which breathes throughout the epistle, and with which he expresses himself elsewhere upon the object of his hope; as, for instance, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day," (2 Tim. iv. 8, 9.) But these are discrepancies which belong to the essence of Christian life, and which must always be found in the life of Christians. When the Christian looks to his Redeemer, to the grace of redemption assured to him, to the unchangeable word of promise, the end to which all his conflicts are directed appears to him as an object of undoubted certainty; but when, on the other hand, he examines his own life by the measure of Divine holiness, his confidence has no firm foundation; defects and stains everywhere present themselves to his view, and all this the more he has advanced in holiness, the keener his spiritual glance has become, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to apprehend the ideal pattern of Divine holiness, in its application to the duties of his own life, to test, in reference to this, his inward and outward life, to prove its nakedness and its shortcomings, and to penetrate the dark corners of his heart. Hence the source of this fluctuation in Paul's expressions regarding both what he is, and has done. His past actions appear as nothing in his own eyes,—he considers only what he has yet to do. He is filled with the consciousness that he is still far from perfection—that he has not yet attained the perfect. But this is the foundation of his confidence, that as Christ had drawn

him into communion with Himself, as Christ had "apprehended" him, so, therefore, he hopes that, having been thus apprehended, he also would apprehend the prize offered him by Christ. He knows that Christ, who apprehended him, will not leave His work in him unfinished, but will carry it through all conflicts to a glorious termination, if he yield himself truly to Him. Let us hear his own words upon this—words which, though few, express so much: "Not as although I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," (chap. iii. 12.) This is a topic of such magnitude in Paul's mind, that he dwells on this thought, and urges it on all Christians, from his own Christian self-consciousness and experience, in order to warn them against all danger of self-satisfaction, and self-righteousness, and spiritual pride; and therefore, he once more addresses them, and says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (chap. iii. 13, 14.) Conscious of the insufficiency of all human righteousness—not merely of that righteousness preceding regeneration, which is wanting in the true principle of life, and which subsists independent of Christianity, but of that which has the true principle of holiness in faith, although still imperfectly developed and imperfectly realised,—the alone immovable ground of Paul's confidence is Christ, through whose grace he has been apprehended, and whom he seeks more and more to apprehend and make his own. Turning his glance from himself, and directing it to Christ, he is full of confidence; directing it to himself, he is given over to doubts and uncertainties; in order that, by averting it from himself, he may again cleave more and more to Christ, from whose love nothing can separate him. The righteousness given to him by God in Christ alone has value in his eyes, as he says in these words of this epistle, "The righteousness . . . which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith," (chap. iii. 9.) To him Christ is all in all.

Everything depends only on entering into communion with Him, and making it more and more our own,—on following Him, by taking His cross upon us, therefore, on following Him as the crucified for us, by dying, in His communion, to sin, ourselves, and the world, on following him in self-denial and renunciation of the world, and in the fellowship of His sufferings, which we fear not to share with Him, and on following Him as the Resurgent Christ, experiencing in ourselves the power of His resurrection—a resurrection to an imperishable Divine life, exalted above sin and nature, which passes from Him upon us, if so be He has apprehended us, and we have apprehended Him; as Paul says in these words, “That I may know the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death; if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead,” (chap. iii. 10, 11.) We have already remarked how compatible it is with the assurance of faith, that the apostle should express himself here with such apparent hesitation.

It was the greatest joy of the apostle to perceive, that his imprisonment,—when once it became known that no charge of any kind could be proved against him, but that zeal only for the faith he pleaded, had brought his afflictions upon him,—must tend to the furtherance of the cause of the Gospel. Attention would necessarily be directed to a cause, for which such a man as Paul felt himself constrained to sacrifice everything. The impression, moreover, which the noble enthusiasm of his testimony, his steadfastness, and his whole life, made on those who were witnesses of them, contributed to the same end, (chap. i. 13.) The report of these things was spread abroad, as he hints, by the different reliefs of the soldiers of the Emperor’s body-guard, the *Castra Prætoriana*, who were appointed to watch him in his dwelling, more and more among their comrades, and through them was still further disseminated. The example of the apostle inflamed other Christians at Rome to imitate him in zeal for the preaching of the Gospel, without showing fear, when they saw him so dauntless. And thus there was an increase of preaching.

But among those preachers, Paul himself draws a great distinc-

tion. He says, namely, in expressing his joy, that his bonds in Christ contribute to the spreading of the Gospel: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will; the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the others of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel," (chap. i. 15-17.) With regard to the latter, he means to say, that such, with their love for the Gospel, joined also a love for himself. They knew, that they could give him no greater joy, than in co-operating in rendering his imprisonment a means for the furtherance of the Gospel; for they knew, that this is the great function of his whole life, that he regards this as his life-long appointment from God, the end of all God's dispensations towards him,—even of his present "bonds." This is clear; but how are we to understand the declaration, "the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds?" Who are those who sought, by preaching the Gospel, to add to the apostle's vexation in his imprisonment, and whom he reproaches with want of sincerity? Along with this we must take, what he afterwards says on this difference, that, by the one, Christ was preached "in truth," by the others, only "in pretence," (chap. i. 18.) Are we, then, to assume that these men, without any love for the cause of the Gospel, without any inward conviction of its truth, preached Christ, merely, in order to contribute to render Paul's position worse, and to expose him to greater dangers,—that their motive, in the further diffusion of the Gospel in Rome, was to make that Paul, who was the centre of the whole movement, an object of greater suspicion and hatred to the Roman authorities? It is easy to be seen, how unnatural and intrinsically improbable such a supposition is. If by preaching, they could bring Paul into greater dangers, they would, at the same time, have incurred the same dangers. And is it conceivable, that they would have played so dangerous a game, merely to gratify their hatred of another? He, who did not himself believe the Gospel, must, at that period, have been prejudiced against it, and could not certainly have gone so far as to preach it, as a means to another end. We must, therefore, seek another explanation

of this difficulty. When it is said of one, that he preaches the Gospel only in pretence, this need not be so understood, that he has no interest in the subject of his preaching, that he employs it as a means for another end, without any personal interest in it, without any personal conviction of its truth. This may be so understood, that his preaching is not pure and perfect, but mixed up with heterogeneous matter, and that, although an interest in the thing cannot be altogether denied him, this is not pure and undivided. Thus is it to be explained, how Paul could express himself in this manner, with regard to those who, although their testimony to the Gospel of Christ was sincere, yet preached not the whole unmixed, pure Gospel in its fulness, but one impure, corrupt, and mutilated. Further, when Paul says of such, that they acted from party spirit and hatred to himself, and desired to occasion fresh annoyance in his afflictions, this need not be so taken, as if their testimony was feigned and hypocritical, there being no occasion, no ground, in the circumstances of these times for the existence of such hypocrisy; but it is very conceivable, that in their preaching, not sincere love to the Lord was their motive, but that, consciously or unconsciously, the design to vex Paul by their mode of preaching, and to form themselves into a party against him, prevailed in all their actions.

If we examine the historical development of Christianity in this first period, the history of the apostolic church; if we more closely investigate the peculiar relations of, and antagonisms to the ministrations of Paul, we shall soon be in a condition to specify with more exactness the generalizations of the above remarks. We know that Paul had many conflicts to sustain with opponents, to whom all that has been said is strictly applicable. There were those, who acknowledged indeed, and preached Jesus as the Messiah, but made of Him a Messiah in the Jewish sense, recognised Him, not as He Himself had revealed Himself to be, as the only ground of salvation for mankind,—those who, along with the one article of faith in Jesus, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, would, at the same time, join and retain the whole Jewish Law, who understood nothing of the new creation, which

Christ came to found, but sought to patch, on the old garment of Judaism, faith in Jesus as the Messiah, merely as another new piece. These were the opponents with whom we see Paul so frequently combating in his epistles. Of such he could partly say, that they preached the Gospel, not purely and sincerely, but only "in pretence," for they were concerned far more for Judaism than Christianity, and through them, people were made rather Jews than Christians. Of such, also, could he say, that they endeavoured to form a party against him, and occasion fresh annoyance to him in his bonds; for always we find these men animated with a spirit of jealousy against Paul, the preacher, in the heathen world. of the Gospel freed from all dependence on Judaism; they are his constant assailants, unceasingly dispute his apostolic authority, seek to encroach on his sphere of action, and seduce men from him to themselves, from the pure and perfect, to their impaired and mutilated Gospel. And that such persons were found even in Rome, need occasion us no surprise; for the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, written some years before his captivity at Rome, shows us, in this church, consisting for the greater part of Gentiles, to whom, as the apostle of the Gentiles, he felt himself peculiarly called on to write, a smaller party of such Judaizing Christians. It was natural, therefore, that when the pure Gospel, in the sense of Paul, was preached by the one, the others should rise up against it, and, led on by the spirit of jealousy, should endeavour to introduce a Gospel, mutilated and corrupted by the introduction of Jewish elements. The attitude Paul assumes towards them, we must endeavour properly to understand, for, rightly interpreted, it affords us an important rule, applicable to many cases. First of all, then, it is evident that these men were personal enemies of Paul; all their actions were based on the design, to counteract him in his efforts, and to form a party against him. How great, then, is the self-abnegation of Paul, that he treats with indifference this personal relation, and, unconcerned about the design which was levelled against himself, only rejoices, that the one Christ, whom alone he seeks to glorify, is preached, even though it be by his own personal enemies! Every selfish principle gives place to the absorb-

ing love of the Lord, and of those for whom he is ready to give his life. How rare the examples of a love so exalted, so purified from everything pertaining to self? A man may really be filled with zeal for the cause of the Lord, which, notwithstanding, may be stained by the intermixture of the purely personal. When the same sacred cause is furthered through the instrumentality of others, who, with feelings hostile to himself, seek to counteract him, this inspires him with no joy. That this is effected, not through him, but through those who seek to oppose him, is of more moment with him, than the common cause of the Lord; and instead of rejoicing, it becomes to him only a cause of vexation, of jealousy, and envy. Everything is not made to depend alone on Christ's being preached, but that He be preached by him, or at least by his disciples, by those who, in everything agree with him, and who look to him, as their teacher in Christianity. Least of all can he brook it, when Christ is preached by those, who place themselves in a hostile attitude to him, whose earnest endeavour it is to depreciate his fame and reputation, to render him suspected as a teacher, and draw away men from him. To feelings so often occurring, the self-denying zeal of Paul forms the most striking contrast. But it harmonised with the great principle laid down by him elsewhere, with respect to the manner in which the preacher of the Gospel should be regarded: "Let no man glory in man," (1 Cor. iii. 21.) The glory of Christ, and the salvation of believers, should be paramount.

This point would thus admit of an easy construction, and the conduct of Paul might serve as an example to us, were it here a question, merely of opposition encountered from individuals, and not of a controversy on the very essence of doctrine. This, from what we have seen, was not the case. He is speaking of a false doctrine, opposed to his own preaching, of a mutilated and adulterated Gospel. To those opponents of Paul, Jesus, indeed, was the Christ, but not in the sense in which He was so to Paul. To them, He was not the alone ground of salvation, the centre of the whole Christian life, as He was to Paul. It might, therefore, be thought, that he could not rejoice that Christ was preached by them, because it was



not Christ, purely and entirely and perfectly. And, in fact, we find Paul elsewhere acting otherwise with such persons. With what indignation does he combat them in the Epistle to the Galatians! He does not admit them to be preachers of the same Gospel; he declares there that there is no other Gospel, than that preached by him, and that such sought to pervert the Gospel of Christ, (Gal. i. 7.) To those who would unite the righteousness of the law with the Gospel, he says: "If righteousness came by the law, then Christ died in vain," (Gal. ii. 21.) And in this very epistle, Paul, as we shall afterwards see, expresses himself most emphatically against such tendencies. How, then, are we to reconcile his mode of expression here with his declarations in those other relations? To understand this, we must rightly apprehend and distinguish the different circumstances, which conditionate this diversity of judgment and action. Paul manifests vehement indignation against such tendencies only, where the foundation of the Gospel already existed among the Gentiles, and where such Judaizing tendencies threatened to pervert it, or alloy it with so much Judaism, that the distinctive character of Christianity was thereby altogether suppressed. In that case, it grieved him that men should be deprived of what they already possessed. But it was otherwise where he is speaking with regard to Heathens, who knew nothing of the Gospel. These his opponents testified at least, that Jesus had appeared to establish the kingdom of God among men,—of His history, of the fact of His sufferings, His resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, although their minds were unconscious of all that was involved in these truths, and, therefore, unable to develope them. It could, therefore, and it would, rejoice Paul, that the general ground of the Gospel, the Person of Jesus Christ and His history, were made known among those, who knew nothing of them. This was the germ, from which all future growth must issue. This Person, those facts once made known, once made the object of attention, something further might be built on this. They who had once attained to the knowledge and acknowledgment of Christ, Crucified, Resurgent, and Exalted, might, from this ground, be led on to find still more in Him, and make more and more pro-

gress in searching out the inexhaustible riches which are in Christ Jesus. Paul, therefore, might rejoice that Christ was preached, though not yet preached, purely, truly, and completely. There are different grades of the knowledge of Christ; more or less is found in Him; and our aim must be, not to assail any one, because at first he has less, but from this less to lead him on to the attainment of more, till he become conscious of greater riches, which he has only to gather from what he has already received, "until," as Paul describes it in the Epistle to the Ephesians, "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," (chap. iv. 13.) Paul here acts according to the spirit of the principle laid down by Christ himself; who, when certain of his disciples met one, who trusted in the power of the name of Christ to cast out evil spirits, and was so applying it, and supposed they must not permit the name of Christ to be so used by one not yet a decided disciple, and enrolled in the common cause with them, rebuked them in these memorable words, "He that is not against us is for us." The not being against Christ contained a germ from which a decided love for Christ might be developed. Although the person described, as yet knew not Christ, as the apostle knew Him,—although many errors were joined with his faith in the name of Jesus Christ—although the true meaning and power of this name were still strange to him,—there was yet, here, a germ of faith not to be despised, capable of still further development, a connecting link of still further progress to him, who had advanced thus far. Such an one might be led to consider, what there must be presupposed in the name of Christ, that its invocation should be followed by such effects. Who must He be, from whose name such power proceeds? In what relation to the kingdom of the wicked one, must He stand whose name has such authority over evil spirits? It is clear, that he who had admitted so much, if met on the road with patience and love, might be led further in knowledge and love. By building on that which was received by himself, he, who as yet knew and acknowledged Christ only partially, might become a decided disciple of Christ. If, however, we

acted otherwise with him, if we forthwith demanded of him more than he, from his standing-point, was able to give, we might entirely repel him, and not only hinder him from making further advances, but even, by such abrupt opposition, unsettle his mind as to what he already possessed. Against such a mode of proceeding these words of Christ warn us; and Paul, in harmony with their spirit, rejoices, that Christ was preached and acknowledged, even though corruptly and defectively.

Although the example of self-denying zeal and love for the cause of Christ must have been recognised by us in the apostle, even before the whole relation of the opponents to himself was clearly laid before us, and while they were regarded merely in the general light of his personal enemies, we are now in a position, this relation having been considered more in detail, to direct our attention to a new aspect under which this example exhibits itself to us. Nothing but a love purified, in a more than common measure, from every selfish element, could embrace and greet with joy the cause of the Lord, when that cause is found in the hands of our personal enemy. But the might of this pure and exalted love here reveals itself to us under another point of view, in this, namely, that the fundamentally true, found in the erroneous view, is acknowledged and welcomed; that the seed of truth is not disdained and assailed on account of the error, even though this error is opposed to the more pure, more perfect view of the truth, which is preached by himself, but rather is welcomingly received as one step gained in the progress of truth. Such is the force of love, purified from self, which we here perceive in Paul. How seldom is such found in practice? Even the man who is capable of hailing the work of the Lord, when it was furthered by his personal enemies, is not, therefore, in a condition so far to forget himself, as to receive with good-will and love, and use, for the common cause of the Lord, the fundamental truths which he finds in the errors propagated by his opponents, and propagated, too, in open contradiction to the pure truth which he is conscious of teaching. How much would have been otherwise in the church! how many divisions might have been avoided! how many, who now work in opposition to each other, might

be working together for the propagation of the Gospel! how many who have become hardened in their errors, and who have gradually lost the portion that remained to them of Christian truth, might, from that portion, have been led on to the knowledge of the truth, and been recovered from the bonds of error, if, instead of desiring, with the impatient zeal of a love not sufficiently purged from the selfish element, to have everything at once, the different degrees of faith and of knowledge had been more respected, and cherished with circumspection and love.

The principle here expressed and followed by Paul admits of manifold application. In what kind of operations must it be said, that it is to be especially applied? In that kind, which entirely corresponds with the peculiar labours and agency of Paul; where, namely, the Church has first to be established on the one ground, which is Christ,—we mean missionary labours. There should all, according to the example given us by Paul, direct their eyes solely to Him,—the paramount object should be, that Christ be everywhere known, and that all testify of Him alone. There, therefore, should all contentions about different confessional views disappear; and, amid all differences, all should co-operate only in this,—that Christ be preached. Their disagreements on other points should be offered to Him as a sacrifice. Each should rejoice, that Christ, the centre of all, is made more and more known by others, even by those who, according to his opinion, may have a less perfect knowledge of Him; and that to Him the attention of all is, from every side, directed. We may, also, apply this example of Paul in another respect. There are times, in which the Church, even where it is already established, is called on to renew her missionary agency, in which, although the unconscious influence of the ideas and tendencies first called forth and disseminated by Christianity still continues operative,—times which deny, notwithstanding, their connection with it, and even set themselves in opposition to it. There are, also, times of far-spreading apostacy, when the civilisation, which has grown up under the guardianship of Christianity, revolts against it, when this very revolt is produced by the corrupt combinations of Christianity with human ordinances. As, in the history of all

Religions, there are periods in which, reason, grown up to independence, severs itself from that religious tradition under whose guardian care it has attained this growth, so, too, Christianity cannot be exempt from the same destiny. It is subject to the same laws and conditions to which everything human is subject. It manifests its difference from all Religions,—a difference which it owes to its Divine nature and character,—only in the manner in which it emerges victorious from all such conflicts. While, namely, all other Religions find their grave in these trials, they are to Christianity but the points of transition to a resurrection in exalted purity and majesty and renovated power. In such periods, equally as in those of missionary agency, again does the principle find its application,—“that Christ only be preached.” The main aim and endeavour should be, that Christ be brought near to the alienated minds of men, so that they may be drawn to Him, and made subject to Him. And here, again, everything cannot at once be effected; but gradually only, will the road to a union among minds, which have to be brought to Him, from principles the most various and opposite, be opened. Here, also, the example of the high-minded denial of self, which Paul gives us, must be our instructor. Every one, who is filled with the same spirit which animated him, will rejoice if only Christ be preached in manifold ways, even when he cannot but perceive, that these modes leave much to be desired.

The Christian character of Paul exhibits itself also, in a peculiar manner, in the way in which he received the gifts transmitted to him by the church at Philippi. There is, in the natural man, a false straining after independence, a pride of self-will, often adorning itself with noble names, which makes men ashamed to accept from others the gifts they stand in need of, lest they be humbled before them; or a still more depraved tendency, which proceeds from the same fundamental vice of the natural man, when, namely, men receive gifts for their own advantage, but are, notwithstanding, too ready to forget them, dread the very recollection of them, and refuse to pay the gratitude due to others, and all from fear of rendering themselves dependent on others, and of degrading themselves in their eyes. But the Christian is pervaded with the consciousness, that all men are

related to each other as members of one body, and that all should continue in this state of mutual dependence, as members under the one Head Jesus Christ. He knows, that the increase of the whole, from the one Head, which guides, and animates, and sustains all the members, can be truly furthered, only when all the individual members, as organs of that one Head, are ready mutually to support and aid each other, and in love and harmony to co-operate, equally in things spiritual as in things temporal; as Paul himself so finely describes it in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "That we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working, in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love," (chap. iv. 15, 16.) Christ is here described as He, to whom the whole development should tend; to grow up into communion with Him, to receive Him into ourselves, to be filled with Him, as the end and aim of all; and, at the same time, as He, from whom this development to himself can alone proceed, from whom issue all vital powers and principles, and from whom alone all the members can receive their motives of action and their guidance. Christ works upon the whole body, by working through the instrumentality of the different members, through whom this animating energy diffuses itself, and therefore "the increase" from Him and to Him, can only there truly flourish, where all the members equally yield themselves to Him, and in mutual dependence upon, and mutual co-operation with one another, continue under his guidance, in close union with one another. The Christian, then, bears in mind, that wants, and abilities to satisfy these wants, are distributed in different ways and in various measure among the different members, in order that their mutual dependence upon, and mutual co-operation with, each other may be maintained, so that no one, dissociating himself from union with the whole, should imagine that he can, in any way, subsist for himself alone; and that thus, along with the mutual need of help, mutual love also should be more furthered. The Christian, therefore, will not be ashamed of this relative dependence on others, but will recognise in this

the natural order in the relation of the members one to another. As the giver rejoices in having received from God what may be employed for the relief of others, and regards it as conferred on himself by their common Lord for this very end,—a mean to manifest that love, which the Spirit of God sheds abroad in the hearts of believers, and which is the characteristic by which the disciples of the Lord, as members of His body, are to be recognised,—so the receiver rejoices, even more than in the momentary bodily advantages which he derives from the gift, in the Divine feeling, which expresses itself therein, in the love, that element of life to the church, which displays itself in it. He knows that this will turn to the true interest of the giver himself, while, through works of love on earth, he is sowing what he will reap in eternal life, and while he manifests in his works that feeling which prepares him for Heaven. And this Christian conduct exhibits itself to us in the manner in which Paul received the gifts of the church of Philippi, while he writes, (chap. iv. 10, 11), “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but he lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want.” He then concludes with these words, (ver. 17), “Not because I desire a gift, but I seek fruit that may abound to your account”—fruit, which procures eternal life for the Philippians.

Further, Paul here gives us an example of the true Christian character, in the way in which he bears himself to outward things. The Christian, in the power of the Lord, which strengthens him for everything, shows his independence of the things of the world, and his superiority over them, by his cheerful disposition to bear all those wants, which the Lord, through circumstances, and the requirements of his vocation, imposes upon him. His spirit, filled with the Divine life, cannot be bowed down under earthly wants; in all his renunciations, the Christian proves himself to be master of the world, and as such, feels his inner man the more exalted. But the Christian is, also, far from a self-imposed mortification of the flesh in fancied spirituality, which serves only to gratify the fleshly sense; for Holy Scripture places everything which proceeds not from the Spirit

of God, everything which is merely self-imposed, all kinds of vanity and spiritual pride, under the category of the flesh, (Col. ii. 13.) He is far from imposing renunciations on himself, in order thereby to recommend himself to God or man; but cheerfully submits to those imposed on him by God, and, with lowly thankfulness, receives whatever God is pleased to bestow on him, over and above the satisfaction of his own immediate needs. The nobleness of the Christian is ever built on humility. His independence and conquest of the world consists in this, that, in all circumstances, whether of fulness or of want, he is the same, neither bowed down by the one, nor secularised by the other, and that everything is used by him alike, to manifest and exhibit the Divine life within him raised above the world and its cares. This is the mind which we discover in Paul, when he says that, although he needs not the gifts of the Philippians, he yet rejoices in the display of their love in them, and when he testifies, at the same time, how, amid all the changes and chances of life, whether amid fulness, whether amid want, he is taught to accommodate himself to all, through the strengthening influence of Christ: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," (chap. iv. 11-13.) Here we have true Christian strength of mind and greatness of soul based on humility.

Having now contemplated the frame of mind exhibited by Paul, in this juncture of his history, as well as this juncture itself in its various relations to things and persons, we proceed to consider the state of the church at Philippi, and those directions which he gives, in reference to it, for their exhortation and safe guidance in the future.

We shall, in the first place, direct our attention to some general truths, and then pass on to the consideration of the Epistle in detail. Paul generally begins his Epistles by acknowledging the good which he finds in the Churches. This is a point in which his wisdom in the conduct of souls displays itself; for the confidence of men will be easier gained for what we



have to say to them in the way of exhortation or reproof, and we shall more easily secure a hearing to ourselves, when we show, that we are by no means unjust in mistaking the good which is in them, and that we are by no means disposed to blame, but ready cheerfully to acknowledge every actually existing good. Further, it often happens that good and evil are closely connected with each other, that the evil is based on the good, and the good soiled by contact with the evil. It will be best, therefore, to pass from the one to the other. And the wisdom of Paul shows itself in rightly perceiving this relation, and in the judicious manner in which he makes the transition—a wisdom of which the first Epistle to the Corinthians especially is a pattern. But, then, all the truly good, which he is constrained to acknowledge in the Churches, is regarded by Paul, not as proceeding from themselves or effected by themselves, but as wrought in them by the Spirit of God, who has begun to transform them into new men. Therefore, he feels himself bound to thank God, first, for what He has wrought in their souls and their life by His grace, before he prays, that He would more and more purify, and further, and perfect the work He has already begun in them. Upon the good already found in them, he builds the hope, that they will grow more and more in good, even unto perfection. Not on the good as the work of man, does he, or can he, ground such hope; he knows too well the weakness of man, and how liable to continual change is everything human; but the ground of his hope is this, that in the Christian life once begun, he sees not the work of man, but of God. Thus his hope is built on the truth and faithfulness of God, who will carry on what he has begun, through all conflicts and tribulations, to perfection. It is not God's way to do things by halves. And in this manner Paul commences the Epistle to the Philippians, thanking God, "for their fellowship in the Gospel, from the first day until now," (chap. i. 5.) He then expresses the confidence, that He who has begun a good work in them, will also perfect it, (chap. i. 6.) He presupposes, however, at the same time, that they will perform their part, that they will yield themselves to the power of God, which, although it works not without man, without it, man is able to do nothing;

in the same manner, as in the eleventh chapter of Romans, he makes the continuance of the revelation of the goodness of God to men, dependent on their continuance in the goodness of God, by true obedience on their part, which renders them receptive of the grace of God. And, in virtue of this connection of the Divine and human, he exhorts them, (chap. ii. 12, 13), "to work out their salvation with fear and trembling," while he adds, "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Paul here presupposes that man's salvation is conditioned by his own actions. He is himself to work out his own salvation. And yet he always regards the salvation of men as effected only through Divine grace—as God's work in man. He specifies also in this passage the frame of mind with which they should work out their salvation, by subjoining, "with fear and trembling." This designation would be unmeaning, if in the work of his salvation everything depended on man's power alone. But, even because he is conscious of the weakness and insufficiency of all human power, because he presupposes that man can do nothing without God, and must continually watch over himself, lest he forfeit, through his own fault, the assistance of Divine grace, without which all human efforts are vanity itself, does he designate the frame of mind which must ever be found in them, as one of "fear and trembling,"—and the consciousness of responsibility and weakness that needs to be strengthened, of the insecurity and instability of our own hearts, ever exhorting us to constant watchfulness, and ever leading us anew to God, as the source of all strength in us. The consciousness, therefore, that we can do nothing of ourselves, that it is God who alone gives us the power to will and to do, all that pertains to our salvation, is the argument he employs for such exhortation; everything is dependent on His Almighty will. The fundamental feeling of our dependence on His will should ever be maintained in us. It is this which must counteract the confidence of a vain human self-trust, which, while it sees itself deceived so often by the result, is so apt to fall into despondency and despair.

All the exhortations of the apostle to the Philippians, in reference to the Christian life, are contained in this one, that

they walk worthily of the Gospel of Christ, (chap. i. 27.) And in chap. ii. 15, 16, he describes what should be their demeanour, placed as they were in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Their call, namely, to live as the children of God amid a corrupt world, was a call to preserve the Divine life, of which, as the children of God, they were made partakers, undefiled amidst the pollutions of the wickedness which surrounded them, and to manifest its glory before the perverse generation in which they live. The expressions "crooked" and "perverse," which Paul employs to describe this generation, refer to the perversion of man's primitive Divinely-allied nature, which is restored again only through the new creation. Thus, as children of God, they are to show themselves as lights, as shining stars in the world of darkness. If darkness be everywhere around them, among them light only should prevail. Such is the language of Christ to those who belong to His kingdom: "Ye are the light of the world," (Matt. v. 14); even as He is the Sun, which shines into the darkness of the world—the Light of the world in the alone and highest sense. Thus, that which He himself is, is transmitted into those who enter into communion with Him, and they become, through Him, the light of the world. This light shines in the Divine walk and conversation of Christians; by this they testify of Him, who is light itself, and in whom is no darkness; by this they glorify Him, and lead others to acknowledge and reverence Him; as Christ himself says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," (Matt. v. 15.) They should witness to what life is, set forth the true life in this world of death. Whatever, according to the revelation of the law written in their conscience, and in virtue of the instincts of their moral nature, men reckon moral and virtuous, forms part also of the peculiar character of that Divine life, in which the children of God manifest themselves as such. Everything must here find its fulfilment; that only which proceeds from the defilement of sin, is abolished; as Christ saith, He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Hence, at the end of his exhortation, (chap. iv. 8), Paul bids them think of whatsoever things are true,—the true and the good, in

the Biblical sense, coincide; in the Bible, truth appears as the determining and pervading principle of all life, everything has its root in truth—"whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Thus Paul presupposes, that the Divine life must appear in an amiable form before men; and appeals, in reference to these exhortations, to what they had heard from his instruction, and had seen before them, in the example of his own life. Although far removed, as we have seen, from regarding his life as altogether pure and perfect, he could yet confidently assume, that in him doctrine and life harmonised in their fundamental character,—that his teaching was not rebuked by his actions. And thus, without untruth and self-exaltation, he could exhort the Philippians by an appeal to his own life and conversation among them. Self-exaltation was, here, the further from his mind, because he was conscious that everything in him, which he could set forth as an example, was but the work of grace, and proceeded from the new creation in him. So the Christian, if he has succeeded, as the comparison of his earlier and his later life will enable him to discover, in gaining a victory over his old nature in any of its sinful propensities, may be conscious of this, yea, and rejoice in this; for this is not self-exaltation. He knows that he owes all, not to his own nature and his own powers, but that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, has wrought this in him; and the discovery, therefore, only leads him to praise and thank Him, through whose power the victory has been achieved. He feels himself, at the same time, constrained to know how much there yet remains in him to be contended with, and, like the apostle, in the words we have already cited, to "forget those things which are behind, and to reach forth to those things which are before."

The church at Philippi, as we have already remarked, had various persecutions to undergo; to constancy under which, Paul was necessarily led to exhort them. How, then, does he express himself on this? It is important to dwell on this point; for his admonitions are applicable, at all times, to every species of opposition which Christianity may have to

encounter. "In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For to you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake," (chap. i. 28, 29.) What is implied in these words? Let us suppose, for the sake of illustration, the opposite to be the case. If the adversaries of the Gospel had succeeded in terrifying the Philippians, the extent of their power would thereby have been manifested, and the weakness of the Philippians, at the same time, revealed, while the cause they professed would appear as impotent; or it would have seemed as if it were merely a conflict between man and man, in which their opponents were the stronger and they the weaker; their conduct would have proved how far short they were of that power of God, which displays its operation in the souls of believers, and how far, therefore, they still were from the true life of faith. While, however, they were not dismayed by those who fought with the weapons of the flesh, this showed the divineness of the cause they served, victorious over all the opposition of man, and that the power of God wrought in them, against which no human might could prevail. The conflict with their adversaries, therefore, served only to test and verify their faith and its power. It was a demonstration of the vanity of all the efforts of their opponents; as Christ regards it as one of the operations of the Holy Spirit, to convince men that "the prince of this world is judged," (John xvi. 11), and has no power over His organs. Thus, through them, was this power of the Holy Spirit revealed. In so far, also, this was a witness of the condemnation which these adversaries, who were in arms under the service of the prince of this world, had drawn down on themselves. To them, on the other hand, it was a sure proof, an earnest of their salvation; for the faith, which endures in the trial, is assured of salvation. It was the pledge that the power of God, through which they were not dismayed by their enemies, would guide them through every conflict, even to the end of their salvation; for there is a correspondency in all the works of God,—the one guarantees the other. Hence Paul places peculiar emphasis on its being no mere human fact, no

delusive human proof, but an actual proof given from God. That to them it had been given, by God, to suffer for Christ, was part of this proof. For he who follows Christ in His sufferings, will also follow Him in His glory. Paul had said, "on the behalf of Christ," meaning at first only to say, "to suffer for Christ;" but desiring to express more emphatically what is implied in this, he interrupts himself, and says, "not merely to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. He who believes in Christ is assured of salvation, in so far as his faith attests itself as true faith; but it can only attest its genuineness, when those who profess to have it are to be dismayed by no opposition, and when it infuses such strength into those who, through its agency, have been brought into communion with Christ, that they are enabled to follow Him in His sufferings. Therefore, although with faith in Christ, as the root of all that pertains to the Christian life, everything also in the principle from which it issues, and in the generative power which produces it, is given, suffering for Christ's sake is more than mere faith, in so far as the power of faith displays itself in these sufferings, and in so far as faith thereby reveals its sincerity; since it may happen that a man imagines himself to possess true faith, and yet the result, if he shuns participating in the sufferings of Christ, testifies against it. In another aspect, indeed, suffering is less than faith, for there may be a suffering which would not be true Christian suffering, proceeding from the life of faith, from the faith which worketh by love, as Paul says, (1 Cor. xiii. 3), "And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The same is true, in a more general sense, of the relation of faith to the entire life and conversation of the Christian as it appears outwardly,—of the relation of faith to good works. This will always more or less find its application to everything which pertains to the relation of the inward and the outward,—of inner feeling, and its external manifestation.

The Christian life is not one partaking of the nature of instinct, and unconsciously obeying merely the dictates of feeling, but always demands the conscious distinguishing between godliness and ungodliness, in their bearings on all the circumstances of life, between that which is according to the will of

the Lord and the Spirit, and the essence of Christianity, and that which is opposed to it. It cannot subsist and fulfil its destiny without reflective, conscious examination, and separation. Since flesh and spirit are ever to be found in the Christian, and in a state of mutual opposition, so also the separating between what proceeds from the one or the other, and what corresponds with the one or the other is always imperatively demanded, so that the Christian may not yield to the suggestions of the flesh, while he thinks to act according to the motions of the Spirit. And since Christianity, conflicting, as it did, with morals and views and relations of life proceeding from a spirit and principle so different from its own, had to call forth a new creation, in which Christ should be all in all, such examination and separation were peculiarly necessary in those churches which were founded amid the Heathen and Jewish world. There the question must often have arisen, what are the requirements of Christianity? In what respect is the Heathen or Jewish standing-point in opposition with it? Wherein can the Christian assimilate himself to the world? wherein not? Therefore, among his practical exhortations to the church of the Philippians, Paul especially desires, that their love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in the faculty of discernment, so that they may test the differences of things, the good and the bad, the true and the false, to avoid the one and choose the other, (chap. i. 9, 10.) Paul assumes, that this demanded a peculiarly exercised faculty; that, from the various exercise of Christian judgment, such faculty proceeded; just as in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. v. 14), it is regarded as the attainment of Christian maturity, that the spiritual organs of perception shall have acquired by exercise the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. There are objects of knowledge and of judgment, where everything depends merely on the exercise of the understanding, and where he who is most accustomed to thought, will exercise the best judgment, and be the most secured from error; but in the objects which the apostle has in his mind, this is by no means the case, namely those, which relate to the moral nature of man. We shall frequently discover, how generally the bent of the feelings here determines

the judgment, how the errors, which lie at the foundation of actions, and deviations in acting, arise not from any defect of thought, but proceed from those propensities of the inner man, which dictate to the judgment. Now, it is especially true of Christianity, that it appoints entirely new ends and aims to life; and love must give the direction to the whole life, before we know its requirements. The more man is animated by love, the more will his moral judgment become assimilated with Christianity. The mind, however exercised in thinking, falls short of the right, unless it be inspired with love; and through love, the mental vision becomes healthy. Moreover, Christianity is no law of the letter, which lays down merely certain general dictates of duty, according to which, all cases of action may be determined; but it is a law of the Spirit, which enables each to ascertain the peculiar sphere of life which the Lord has assigned him to fulfil, and what its fulfilment demands of him. No man, from his own point of view, and under the peculiar shape which circumstances have taken with him, can prescribe to another what he has to do; but love is the spirit, the common element in all, which points out to each what is his peculiar duty, and which guides him, in reference to it, to that discernment. Here Paul assigns in this passage the first rank to love, and from the animating principle of love, derives knowledge, and the faculty of discerning the good and the bad, the true and the false, as he said in his own words, "that your love may abound, yet more and more, in knowledge and in all discernment," so that in them the abundant operations of love should be displayed. But as here, the theoretical proceeds from the practical, from the new direction of the will and the feelings, and the new direction of the judgment; so, again, the theoretical should re-act on the practical, the better judgment on action; and, accordingly, Paul places as the end to which they should thus attain, (chap. i. 10, 11), that they might be "pure and without offence" in their Christian conversation, till they shall all appear before the Lord, "filled with the fruit of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."\*

\* Such is the translation given by Neander, from a reading *καρπον δικαιοσύνης*.—TRANS.



Thus Paul here describes righteousness, not as something to be gradually acquired, in order to communion with Christ, but as something grounded in believers, in virtue of their communion with Him, flowing from Him upon them, and effected in them through His Spirit. He regards the whole Christian walk as the fruit of this righteousness, not here particular fruits in particular works, as he says in other passages, but the whole Christian walk, in its connective unity, as one fruit—the fruit which is produced through Jesus Christ. That, from Him everything proceeds, that through Him everything is wrought, this constitutes the peculiar character of such a walk of life, this is that which is truly acceptable to God, and through which God is glorified; even as the whole life of Christ was the glorifying of God among men. It is, however, clear from what has been said, that although Paul describes the life and conversation of Christians in the whole, as the fruit of righteousness produced through Jesus Christ, he presupposes, notwithstanding, manifold degrees of development, various consequences from the reciprocal re-action of the practical and the theoretical, of feeling and judgment, to bring about this collective result; even as, to follow the metaphor chosen by Paul, the fruit of a tree is not at once perfectly formed and matured, but has to pass through various processes and stages in the natural development of the growth.

We have before remarked how Paul regards the church, as a whole, consisting of different members, and how he makes its growth dependent on the harmonious co-operation of all the individual members. To this harmony, however, many hinderances stand opposed, which can only gradually be overcome by the might of the Christian spirit. That higher unity could be formed only by degrees, through the power of that spirit, from out of existing antagonistic principles. There were, in antagonism with the principles of Christianity, the prejudices of national descent from Jewish or Heathen races, the prepossessions of Judaism or Paganism. Hence the origin of those conflicting tendencies, of which we shall afterwards treat more minutely. Further, there were differences of condition and of wealth, which threatened to disturb the common Christian spirit.

Then, again, there were those which, having their foundation in peculiar natures peculiarly endowed, Christianity enlists into her service. Hence the diversities in the operations of the Holy Spirit, animating and inspiring these different peculiar natural gifts; hence the diversity of spiritual gifts, and of the offices connected with them in the church. From all these might spring antagonistic principles conflicting with the spirit of Christianity, and disturbing the unity and unanimity of the Church; each might assert his own; self-exaltation and dissension would be the result, and a conflict between the members would arise. Here, therefore, must the spirit of love display its reconciliative powers, in order that unity in the Church, which belongs to its very essence, might be effected and maintained. It is evident, therefore, how necessary and important, under these circumstances, were the rebukes and exhortations of Paul on these points, how needful the warnings against self-exaltation and disunion, and the exhortations to humility and unanimity. This is a topic we shall consider somewhat more minutely. His joy, he says, (chap. ii. 2, 3), is fulfilled in this, that they be of one mind, have the same love, be of one accord, of one mind, that they do nothing through strife or vain glory; but that, in lowliness of mind, each should esteem other better than himself. How are we to understand this? It is not in the power of man, how he shall judge another. How can he esteem his brother higher than himself, if this be not in accordance with truth, if he cannot but know in himself the good which is wanting in the other, and find defects in him, to which he himself is not liable? How can it be required of him to do violence to his judgment? Is he to deceive himself? Is humility to be based on falsehood? Assuredly not. If one should seek designedly to force himself into such a mode of judgment upon others in relation to himself, or should express such judgments without meaning them, this would be in fact hypocrisy more or less gross. But the apostle presupposes such a characteristic disposition, proceeding from the transforming agency of the Christian life, as would find its necessary and natural expression, in such a way of viewing ourselves with reference to others. The love of the Christian will cause him to discover first of all the good in other men, and

will lead him to recognise, even in their infirmities, those peculiar gifts which they possess above himself; while, through self-examination, stimulated by the spirit which animates him, his own faults are more severely regarded. And this severity toward himself, combined with love, will soften his judgment of that, which hinders the Divine life in others. This readiness, such as we have described it, to view himself with regard to others, will, therefore, be nothing accidental, artificial, and external in the Christian, but the result of the formation and the progress of the Christian life within him. And this manner of placing himself with regard to others, will display itself in the whole mode of his acting in reference to them. That a man should make himself the centre of everything, refer all to himself alone, and regard all others, as if they existed only for him, self is thereby at once excluded. The great importance, which others gain in his eyes, must also evidently flow from the same source. The spirit of love and humility will be manifested in his procedure towards others; as it is subjoined in the immediately following words of Paul, (chap. ii. 4), "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;" that every one be ready to subordinate his own interest to that of another, to deny himself in order to further the good of others. Paul says, "also," although from the first clause, no such limitation, no such "also" might have been expected; but he used this "also," not because he would desire to exclude all care for our own interest, but because he wishes to set himself against the predominating, all-absorbing tendencies of self-interest. He is speaking here, of course, of those merely human and temporal interests, which we should sacrifice for the good of others; for with regard to that, which, in itself is the highest and really true interest of each, the interest of his soul's salvation, the development of the inner man for eternal life, no such opposition could exist, no such requirement of self-denial could be made. Does this conflict with what we have above remarked on self-denial, in relation even to the higher interests of the soul? By no means. The true, the highest interest of the soul, that it increase more and more in self-denying love, be more and more purified from every selfish ele-

ment, and, thereby, more fitted for the kingdom of God and eternal life, this can only gain by such sacrifices, which concern even the higher interests of the soul, which, however, are not the highest. As the example and pattern for such modes of judging and acting, Paul then sets forth Him, after whom the whole Christian life, both in feeling and in action, should be formed, even Christ: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death upon the cross. Therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," (chap. ii. 5-11.)

To discover, in the above connection, the right application of the example of Christ to the Christian life, which is to be formed according to it, we must, first, endeavour to apprehend clearly and distinctly, the example itself. Before the eye of the apostle stands the image of Christ, the Son of God manifested in the flesh, exhibiting himself as Man. From this human manifestation, he elevates himself to the Eternal Word, to use the expression of John, Who, before the appearance of the Son of God in time, yea, before the whole creation, existed, in whom God, before all time, beheld and reflected Himself; as He is called by Paul, in the Epistle to Colossians, in this respect, (chap. i. 15), "the image of the Invisible God." And, after this elevation of his spiritual glance, he descends again to the depths of the human life, in which the Eternal Word exhibited Himself in human form. He thus regards the entrance of the Son of God into the form of humanity, as a self-abasement, as an act of self-denial for the salvation of those to whose low estate He condescended. He, who was "in the form of God," exalted above all the defects and restrictions of earthly and finite existence, was not eager to assert this equality, which He had, but,

on the contrary, concealed and denied this in human lowliness, and in the form of human dependence. And, as His whole life as Man proceeded from such an act of self-renunciation and self-abasement, so also, the whole earthly life of Christ, even to His death on the cross, corresponded with this one act. Throughout, there was the consciousness of Divine Majesty, which He might assert, and the concealing and denying this, in all the forms of humiliation and dependence of earthly human life. His death, and especially His ignominious and tormenting death, appears as the acme of all. Paul then shows, what Christ attained by such self-denial, continued even to this culminating point, by such obedience in the form of a servant, the recompense of the reward He received, the exaltation which was bestowed upon Him; here, also, setting forth the universal law which Christ described, when He said, that whosoever humbleth himself, and in proportion as he humbleth himself, shall be exalted. Now, it is self-evident, that He who, according to Paul's doctrine, was in His own essence exalted above all, the first-born of the whole creation, He, through whom, and in whom all things were created, could not, as such, be exalted. But Paul, as we have said, is here speaking of Christ in His totality, as uniting in Himself the Divine and the human. As this incarnate Christ, He may be described as being exalted as man above all, as the glorified Son of man. And this His exaltation ministered not to His own interests. He finds His exaltation in the salvation of fallen beings. That while all acknowledge Him as their Lord and Saviour, and subject themselves to Him, God should be glorified in Him and through Him,—the glorifying of God in the triumphant establishment of His kingdom,—such were the ends to which His exaltation should minister, and in such was it to manifest itself. What application, then, is to be made of this example set forth before us, viewed in its connexion with what precedes? As Christ ministered only for the salvation of others, so should Christians also be ready to minister to the salvation of their brethren. As Christ sacrificed His all to the salvation of others, so should Christians be prepared to sacrifice their all to the salvation of their brethren, to devote themselves to the good of others, and

thus, in self-abasement and self-renunciation, to follow their Master. Thus also, should the life of Christians, from its first beginning in the soul, from the first act of faith, be one continuous self-abasement and self-renunciation. And, as this was the ground and condition of exaltation in Christ, as the Son of man, so also will this be the ground and condition of exaltation to believers who follow Christ, until they attain the participation of His perfect glory, after whose example they have walked. We may compare this with a similar argument of Paul, where he says of Christ, (2 Cor. viii. 9), "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich." To the being "rich," corresponds the being in the form of God, the being equal to God, in the passage above cited; to the becoming poor, the self-renunciation and self-abasement, in all the compass we have described it. In the passage of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, this example is used as an exhortation to that care for the well-being of others which sacrifices its own, and imposes renunciation on itself, in order to alleviate their wants and necessities. The basis, however, of this, is the general thought proceeding from the contemplation of the love of Christ, that we be ready to sacrifice and deny our own for the true good of others,—communicative, condescending, self-denying Christian love, which embraces the Christian life in all its actions. And in the passage of our epistle, it is viewed in this universality. For it is the characteristic of Paul, as a moral teacher, that he always refers the particular truth to the highest, the deepest, the most universal—that he bases all his special exhortations on the universal ideas of the Christian life, the central point of which is the contemplation of the life of Christ.

The exhortations and warnings, addressed by the apostle to the church at Philippi, were such as the oppositions, which Christianity in its development had then chiefly to encounter, rendered especially needful. In every period, its development will have peculiar opposing principles to overcome,—principles, however, between which a certain affinity may be discovered, although at different periods, different forms will arise. An important distinction, however, is to be made, according to the

nature of these antagonisms, according as it is a question of those tendencies and doctrines, which are decidedly opposed to the distinctive fundamental doctrines of Christianity, where no reconciliation is possible, but where our choice must be either the one or the other, and where pure Christian feeling manifests its strength and integrity, in holding to the one, and in rejecting the other; or of those tendencies, which, along with a sincere acknowledgment of Christian truth, still retain some after-effects of their former abandoned standing-point, and which form points of transition to Christian truth. The latter was especially the case with those antagonisms, with which Christianity at that period of its development had to contend. As Judaism at first formed the transition to Christianity, so also the first important opposition to the development of Christianity, was the intermixture of the Jewish standing-point. And the distinction we have made here finds its application.

Such a predominance of the Jewish spirit then existed, that the consciousness of the peculiar nature of Christian truth was completely stifled and obscured. Although outwardly Jesus was acknowledged to be the Messiah, its true power and meaning were wanting to this conviction. They devised, in a Jewish fashion, a fleshly Messiah, with fleshly hopes. When Christ, after the miraculous feeding, said (John vi. 26) to the Jews that they sought Him, not because they had seen the miracles,—the tokens of the appearance of God in this lower world, which were designed to point to the Divine nature, which revealed itself through such tokens,—but because they had eaten of the loaves, and were satisfied, because a mere sensual want impelled them towards Him; so was it also with those Jews of whom we are now speaking. It was, again, the same want of sense for the Divine, the same absence of the higher inner spiritual needs; it was, again, but a merely sensual necessity which led them to faith in Jesus. And although they had this above the Jews, to whom Christ thus spoke, that they were not led by their fleshly minds, which had so much affinity with theirs, to open opposition to Jesus as the Messiah, but desired outwardly to join themselves to Him, nothing very important was gained thereby; for if the former would not believe in a Jesus, who re-

fused to satisfy their carnal wants, the latter, believing, indeed, in Jesus as the Messiah, yet made Him almost such a one as the former would have had Him, but which Jesus would not be. Along with this one article of Jesus as the Messiah, they combined, as we have above seen, the observance of the law in all its requirements. To them, not Jesus the Messiah, was the one ground of salvation, but righteousness and salvation were sought in the observance of the whole law, and in circumcision. They desired not the righteousness which comes from within, from faith, but such a righteousness as accrues to man from without. It is clear, then, that the existence of such an antagonism rendered compromise or reconciliation impossible. Christian feeling was required to decide whether it would have a carnal or a spiritual Messiah, and whether it sought righteousness alone in faith in the Redeemer, or in the law and its works; whether it desired the transformation of the Divine life regenerating man from within, or only a change in outward demeanour, God's work or man's work, the humble acceptance of Divine gifts, lowly submission to Jesus as the Saviour,—or a carnal Messiah, with the assertion of the merit of works. Hence, because the new Church had to decide on a question of such absolute opposition between the Christian and the unchristian, Paul felt himself necessitated to place this conflict of principles in its strongest light, and to testify so emphatically against these errors; (chap.iii. 2), "Beware of dogs," he says, (an expression designating, according to the original language, shameless opponents of the truth); "beware of evil workers," (those who sought to substitute the Jewish for the Christian point of view); "beware of the concision." How are we to understand it, that Paul should here so contemptuously describe circumcision, which, however, he acknowledges as a Divine ordinance for a certain period? Circumcision had value in his eyes, as the Divine sign, through which the Theocratic people were distinguished from the other nations given up to idolatry and the abominations connected with it, as the people consecrated to God, in order to lead them to the communion with God, which one day would embrace all mankind. It was to him, as he says in the Epistle to the Romans, (chap iv. 11), an outward figurative sign of the new re-



lation into which Abraham, by reason of his faith, had entered with God, a symbolical sign of that inward spiritual circumcision of the heart in the spirit, of that purification from the deformities of sin, through which only a true people of God can arise, and the idea of a people of God attain its realisation. But when justification and sanctification were sought, as was the case with these Judaizers, in outward circumcision as such; when, to faith in Jesus as the Messiah, who alone produces righteousness in the true sense, circumcision was to be added as something higher, and as alone imparting true righteousness, Paul felt himself necessitated to describe, in the most emphatic terms the nonentity of such an outward action in relation to that which it pretended to effect. No words are too strong for him to designate the perversion evinced in a mode of thought, which seeks to derive, from the outward and the sensuous, that which can be effected only from within, in virtue of an inner act in the heart, by the communication of a new life. Hence, in opposition to such an over-estimate of circumcision, he calls it a "concision," a mutilation, just as in the Epistle to the Galatians, he says against such, (Gal. v. 12),\* "I would they would even cut themselves off which trouble you," *i. e.*, I would, if circumcision has such virtue in their eyes, if they lay such stress on their receiving it, they would circumcise themselves as much as they please, yea, cut themselves off, *i. e.*, emasculate themselves, if only they leave other Christians in peace. Assuredly, that which appears to Paul so unchristian and irrational, and which fills him with so much indignation, has reference not merely to circumcision, not merely to this peculiar form, which belongs to Judaism, but to everything outward and sensuous, in so far as justification, sanctification, and salvation, are made dependent on it. All this, so far as such undue importance is attributed to it, is directly opposed to the standing-point of the worship of God in spirit and in truth, where all proceeds from the inner acts of faith. And this antagonism to the true Christian point of view is thus described by Paul in what follows, where he says, (chap. iii. 3), "For we are the circumcision," *i. e.*, these have not true circumcision, but mere concision; their misused so-called

\* The rendering of Neander is here given, which differs from that of our translation.—TRANS.

circumcision is mutilation; for they who really merit this name, the truly circumcised, are we Christians. And this the apostle then establishes, adding, "which worship God in spirit, and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The meaning of these weighty words we must now endeavour to develope. The serving God in spirit forms the opposition to a worship of God, tied to sensuous, outward, earthly things, and made dependent on such,—to a worship of God which has not its source in the inmost soul of man, as when it is thought, that God can be served by circumcision, by any outward works whatever of the law, whether of a religious or moral nature, by any particular action of the outward service of God. The true worship of God, on the other hand, is described by Paul as proceeding from the spirit; and by such he means, that which results from the renewal and sanctification of the spirit of man by nature alienated from God, through the Holy Spirit, which is communicated by Christ alone. And thus the only place from which God can truly be worshipped, is the spirit of man brought back to communion with God, and made the temple of God, and when the whole life and action of the spirit becomes one worship of God. But because the Redemption wrought through Christ is presupposed here, because faith in the Redeemer, and communion with Him, is the root and source of all, Paul connects with this, "boasting in the Lord;" *i. e.*, boasting in a way which excludes all pride of human boasting,—the boasting of humility; namely, in Christ only, and in that, which we are in Him, and which we owe to Him; and therefore—which is but the counterpart of what has been said,—having no confidence in the flesh, in anything human. And, in this respect, Paul sets himself forth as an example to the Philippians, (chap. iii. 4–6), as the proof of the sincerity of his doctrine and exhortation. He appeals to his own experience; he himself, though born a Jew, brought up in the severest Pharisaism, having spent his life in the strictest fulfilment of the Law, was yet conscious that all this could contribute nothing to his deliverance from guilt,—to his justification, his sanctification, his salvation; therefore he had renounced all this, to find everything in Christ alone. He was unblameable, he says,

in the righteousness which is in the Law; and this is to be extended, not merely to the ceremonial works of the Law, but to moral action, in so far as it exhibited itself before men; for both these are involved in the notion of the Law. In all these respects Paul had been blameless. Before men he stood spotless. What he says is true, not less of what we generally understand by moral integrity, than of a piety which subsists in particular religious actions. Although Paul satisfied the demands which man made on his integrity, this was of no value in his eyes. When, through the light of the Spirit, the true nature of the Law of God, and true self-knowledge beamed upon him, he appeared to himself, notwithstanding this blamelessness before men, nothing but a sinner, destitute of the true Divine righteousness, in which everything proceeds from God, and is referred back to Him, and in which God is the end of the whole life. What men call moral rectitude does not raise itself above the world. And therefore he says, (chap. iii. 7, 8), assuming the insufficiency of all this, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." He says here, everything which he before valued as peculiar and distinctive, such as descent from the theocratic people, blamelessness from the standing-point of the Law, all this now appears to him hurtful, so far as he might place his confidence upon it, and thereby be drawn away from Christ. Christ being now his all in all, everything else must give place to Him. Everything, however high in itself it may be, must appear as loss, if Christ, who can belong to him only, who seeks and desires Him alone, is thereby lost; because the knowledge of Christ, which is sufficient for all things and involves all things, outshines and obscures all else. And thus Paul says, that he was willing to lose everything for Christ's sake, to cast it away as dung only to win Christ, who compensates him for all. To be found in Christ, and to stand in communion with Him, is, he says, (chap. iii. 9), paramount to all. Therefore he opposes the Divine righteousness, which is grounded in this, and which

proceeds from faith, to a righteousness derived from without, and resulting from the works of the Law, which a man might think to possess as his own, or to have produced, or to be able to produce by human endeavours. Everything is here referred by him to knowing Christ. This knowledge, in the Pauline sense, is not something merely intellectual, or merely notional; not certain particular articles of faith concerning Christ, as they have been notionally developed and delivered; but, as the following clauses testify, a knowledge, which has its root in life, and which proceeds from life, a thing of inner experience, the consciousness of Christ as the Son of God and our Redeemer. He gives peculiar prominence to “the power of His resurrection,” which naturally presupposes the preaching of Him as the Crucified, of His suffering for the Redemption of man from sin. But, in the present connexion, he brings forward the power of His resurrection, because this was an actual proof of the Redemption wrought by Him—the actual proof of the immortal Divine life, which in His glorified Person, and in virtue of the Redemption from sin and its consequence, death, He brought to mankind,—a life which passes over from Him upon all who are in communion with Him through faith, and which in them is the beginning of a new Divine life, which shall more and more pervade their whole nature, until they are wholly assimilated to it, both in body and soul. Paul next proceeds to speak of the knowledge of “the fellowship of His sufferings,” thereby indicating that we must follow Him in His sufferings, if we are to partake more and more of the Divine life which is found in communion with the Risen Christ. And he then sums up all “in being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” We here refer to the previous explanation, which we have given in another connexion. Thus have we all, that pertains to, all that constitutes the Christian life, in contrast with and opposition to, the standing-point of the piety of the Law, or mere human integrity.

Among the persons to whom the above is addressed, a certain class is to be considered, which, after having set before the Philippians the example of his own walk of life, and warned

them, with tears, against many whose ways were altogether otherwise, he describes, (chap. iii. 17, 18), as enemies of the cross of Christ. The notion of enemies of the cross of Christ is one admitting of various applications. By these, might be understood such as confess, indeed, Jesus the Crucified as their Saviour, but who, by their mode of thinking and acting, though themselves unconscious of it, prove themselves the enemies of the cross. Or it might be understood of those, who were the conscious, declared enemies of the cross of Christ; and, at that period of time, this might be the case in two respects, which, however, will always be found in the History of the Church; in the one case, from the point of view of the wisdom-seeking Greeks, to whom, as the apostle elsewhere says, Christ crucified was foolishness; in the other, from that of the miracle-seeking Jew, to whom Christ crucified was a stumbling-block. It might be the unbelief of the presumption of wisdom, of the arrogance of reason, of the claim of superior enlightenment, or it might be the unbelief of the carnal man. But, from the context, such open and conscious antagonism is here inadmissible. This would not suit with the manner of Paul's opposition to these enemies of the cross of Christ. He had no occasion to warn, in the manner he does, against such open antagonists. The class, therefore, we first described, is here to be supposed. But this, also, may differently be understood. An enmity to the cross of Christ, which is rather unconsciously than openly expressed, may be regarded either in a practical or in a more theoretical manner, as expressed in action only, or as exhibiting itself as well in doctrine as in action. With respect to the former, this again may be understood in two ways. By such might be meant those, who are destitute of the humility which proceeds from the belief, that we owe all to the cross of Christ, to Jesus Christ crucified for us all,—those in whose life the pride of their own righteousness, through which the cross of Christ is denied, predominated, although not manifested in the doctrine professed by them. Or such may be understood, who, so far from taking the cross on themselves and following Jesus the crucified, by their whole life devoted to the service of sin and the flesh, stood directly opposed to the cross of Christ, to faith in Jesus Christ

crucified to free man from sin, in order that all who cleave to Him might be crucified to sin, the world, and themselves. The whole carnal and sinful life of men, who, as much as lay in them, made nought of the end for which Christ was crucified, might be called an enmity to His cross. We admit, that all which follows might be understood as directed against men of such carnal propensities; but, if we compare the context with what has been previously said, we shall be led to think rather, that the apostle is speaking of such an enmity as appears not only in life but in doctrine,—of that class of Judaizing opponents, of whom he had before spoken. He calls enemies of the cross of Christ, those, in whom that standing-point, to which Christ crucified is a stumbling-block and rock of offence, manifests itself, not in an open and conscious, but rather in an unconscious and concealed manner,—those to whom the preaching which necessitated them to owe salvation to Jesus the crucified as their alone Saviour, to owe everything to Him alone, was especially offensive,—those who asserted a righteousness of the Law, and a self-righteousness against the cross of Christ. Such also, as follows from what has previously been said, were the opponents of a worship of God in the Spirit, by one which adhered only to externals, and by their sensual and earthly-minded tendencies. Such a Religion brought with it no moral transformation, and might co-exist with sin, yea, form a league with it, and give a false security to the service of sin; as we have seen often in the History of the Church, where such tendencies have made their appearance under the garb of Christianity. And thus all that Paul says will here find its application. He describes them as those, whose god is their belly, who act from sensual motives to gratify their sensual wants; for Paul frequently reproaches these Judaizing proselytizers with making a gain of their preaching, and with seeking to extort what served their own ends. He describes them as earthly-minded, which explains itself from what has been said, and all their hopes were in accordance with this characteristic. They expected in the world to come, in the millennial kingdom promised by them, not a Divine life, like that which the true Christian even here receives in the veil of the flesh,

but their dreams were of an amplification of the happiness of earth. He speaks of them as those, whose glory is in their shame, as those who seek their glory in that which conduces rather to their shame; for all that was supposed by them to confer peculiar honour on themselves above others, was, in fact, degrading to the Christian life, and a denial of the true dignity of Christians. To such, Paul opposes the heavenward feelings of true believers, their hope purified from all carnal colouring, and directed entirely to the heavenly. The standing-point of the Divine life, freed from earth, forms the contrast and opposition to these altogether worldly, earthly-minded religious tendencies. This earthly-mindedness, Paul means to say, must be far from us Christians; "for our conversation is in heaven." Paul considers that Christians, even now, in their life and conversation, belong to heaven, and that there their life, in all its directions, is centred. And this he derives from their relation to Christ, from their communion with Him, with whom they are so inseparably connected, that, where He is, there they are also. Sustained by the consciousness that Christ, manifested to believers, but hidden from the world, now lives in Heaven, thither their looks are directed, and thence they long for the Saviour, who shall come again to make them like unto Himself, to transform them wholly after His own image, and glorify them into the heavenly; hence Paul says, (chap. iii. 20, 21), "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Here is described, not a resurrection, as the restoration of this earthly body in its earthly form, but a glorious change, proceeding from the Divine, all-transforming power of Christ, through which believers shall attain a state, where, freed from all the defects of earthly existence, exempt from all its limitations, they shall perfectly exhibit the image of the heavenly Christ, in their whole glorified personality, in the soul filled with the Divine life, and in the glorified organ of the body, now perfectly allied with it. The heavenly form of Christian hope, which proceeds from faith in Jesus, Risen and Ascended into Heaven, is opposed, as well to the

comfortless unbelief which reduces man, as a passing shadow, to the brute, and cuts away all hope of anything beyond this earth, as also, which is the case in the present passage, to a merely carnal hope, which transfers the forms of earthly existence to the future. Both these are growths from one and the same root, from the tendency of the natural man, who, whether he manifest himself in the form of sensual coarseness, or of more refined culture, can yet never get beyond the narrow confines of the world, who has no organ to perceive and apprehend the Divine and Heavenly; whether it be, that he altogether denies that which he has no faculty to perceive and apprehend, that he negatives all personal duration beyond earthly existence, because he cannot think of anything beyond this earthly form of personality; or that he degrades that which he is not inclined or able to deny, to his own fleshly standing-point, and carnalises the hope which he admits. In all superstition there is ever an element of unbelief; for that aspiration of the spirit is wanting which alone is able to raise itself to the supramundane and the Divine. And in all unbelief there is an element of superstition. All unbelief makes idols for itself. It seeks in the appearances and powers of the world, that which can be found only in God and in the power of God. What Paul says of the idolatry of the things of the world, is true also of it,—it becomes the servant of the elements of the world. It cleaves the more tenaciously to the earthly, because it is quite alienated from that, which alone can give true satisfaction to the Divinely allied spirit of man. It contends the more vehemently for earthly interests, because it has denied the higher interests of the soul, which point to man's true home; and, therefore, the earthly interest swallows up every other love and every other desire, by which the spirit, which partakes of the Divine nature, is impelled. Christ Risen and Exalted to Heaven, whose life is hid with God, and in whom our life is hid with God, and to whom we shall be like in glory, when He, who is now hidden from the world, will reveal Himself in glory,—this is the opposition to both these standing-points of the natural man.

We have spoken of the antagonism of the Judaizing modes of thought, which had its roots in the process of development,



through which Christianity had then to pass,—how decidedly opposed it was to the pure Gospel, and how all reconciliation was excluded. There were, however, in the various churches those, who were in a state of transition from the Jewish, or cognate point of view, to the pure Gospel, and who were far from being enemies of the cross of Christ—who were filled rather with love to Jesus Christ crucified, as their Saviour—but who, in the development of their faith, were still subject to many weaknesses, and could not free themselves from many remaining effects of their not wholly subdued Jewish standing-point. In the Epistles of Paul, we find frequent mention of those, with whom, as weak, he is accustomed to contrast strong, matured Christians,—of those who, still possessed with fear of partaking of the flesh of sacrifices, still adhering to the Jewish laws of food and to the observance of certain days, could not at once shake off the yoke of the Law in these respects. Were these, then, to be regarded in the same manner as those, who have previously been described? Were those who had passed over to Christianity from another, from the heathen standing-point, who, though exposed to other dangers, could yet, from this side, advance more easily to Christian freedom; or those who, farther advanced in the development of their faith, had more nearly approached maturity of manhood in Christ; were such to withdraw themselves from communion with those who thought differently on many points, and at once repulse them? Such a course would have been directly contrary to what Paul demands from Christian love, which patiently endures the weakness of the brethren. By thus acting in an impatient and arbitrary spirit, limits would be placed to the operations of the Holy Spirit, who might yet further guide those in whom he had begun to work, and the thread of development, ordained by the wisdom of God, and alone leading from Christ and to Christ, would at once be severed. On the mode of procedure with such subordinate grades of development, such less important antagonisms, Paul gives, in this epistle, a doctrine, conveying much instruction in few words, the import of which we must endeavour clearly to ascertain.

After having set forth, in the manner we have before un-

folded, as a pattern for all, the standing-point, which forgets all that has hitherto been done, and, from Christian faith in submission to Christ, strives more and more after the prize of the Christian calling, he says, (chap. iii. 15), "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." This is the standing-point of the matured Christian, who has attained to perfect freedom, and who, hindered by nothing, makes greater and greater progress in his development. "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded," than is in accordance with this principle, "God shall reveal even this unto you"—*i. e.*, wherein ye think otherwise, even in that God will reveal the right to you, and thus lead you to unity in the maintenance and application of that principle. Paul, accordingly, points to this truth, that the Spirit of God, who revealed to them the light of the Gospel, will perfect this His revelation in them, and conduct it to that mark of maturity in Christianity,—that He will yet more and more further them in true Christian knowledge, and even in that in which they still err and vary in opinion, will cause them to find the one right thing. We should not, therefore, precipitately enter into controversy, by which our distance from each other is so easily widened, and by which, through obstinate adherence to our once formed views, we so readily become hardened in opposition; much less should we condemn each other, but endeavour to preserve that unity of the Christian spirit, which is raised above all subordinate differences. To the common Teacher, the Holy Spirit, should all yield themselves, and all trust, that He, who is the best Teacher, will yet more and more further them and each other. While all proceed from the Divine foundation once laid, the unfolding and progressive purification of the Divine work should be left to the operation of the Holy Spirit, who first began it in each. No attempt should be made to do violence from without to the unfolding of the Divine life in another, which follows its own law, grounded in the specialities of his character, or substitute anything imposed from without, in place of the free development which proceeds from within. This would be tantamount to seeking to penetrate into the inmost soul of man by human arts of persuasion, which can avail nothing, where they find no sym-

pathetic link in the already existing views of a man, and to bring forth what alone can be effected by the Holy Spirit, the inner teacher, whom, without constraint and with the entire accord of their freedom, all follow. Everything, alike in each individual, proceeds only from the leavening process of the same leaven of Divine truth, which gradually shall pervade the whole spiritual life, expurgating every heterogeneous element. And when Paul here speaks of a revelation by the Holy Spirit, through which the progressive insight of the believer is effected, this has for its basis the truth, presupposed and expressed throughout Holy Scripture, that all Divine things can be known only in the light of the Holy Spirit; as he says elsewhere, "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The notion of revelation, however, before us, by no means excludes the agency of human thought, which develops and works out according to the laws of human reason, that which it has received from the Divine light. But it is assumed that the agency of man's spirit is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, who is the soul of his whole spiritual life; hence all is referred to the Holy Spirit as cause, in so far as all originates in His revelation, guidance, and inspiration; all immediate or mediate progressive insight, proceeding from the Holy Spirit, is included in the notion of revelation.

We have now to consider more closely the necessary condition laid down by Paul, in order that, all yielding themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, should be led by Him to this progressive insight. But here it is essential to investigate the original form of Paul's words, which has been corrupted by the interpolated attempts at explanation, which, through misunderstanding, have been received into the text as if they were component parts of his own expressions. It has not been the design of Divine wisdom that such corruptions should be averted, in the lapse of centuries, by a series of miracles, or by the authority of a visible church enjoying the power of infallible guidance; but while natural causes have here been left to their course, so that such adulterations might, through misunderstanding, gain free scope, the impulse was thereby given to independent investigation, to the development of all the faculties

of the understanding in their functions of examining and distinguishing, in order that we might learn, through a spirit of examination exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and by the cultivation and application of that discipline which is grounded in the nature of the human mind, and which we designate by the name of criticism, to distinguish the true from the false, and, by comparison, discover the original form of apostolic words. Criticism, when guided and animated by the Holy Spirit, should be regarded as belonging to the spiritual gifts of the church. And thus we shall here also be enabled to restore the true form of Paul's words; and by continued investigation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, an agreement in this respect will be brought about in the church.

If we follow the later reading adopted by Luther, we shall, like him, thus translate: "Doch so fern, dass wir nach einer Regel, darin wir gekommen sind, wandeln, und gleich gesinnet sein."\* Thus, in this case, the condition of which we have above spoken, would be unanimity. It would be an exhortation to concord. But such is quite remote from this connexion, and unanimity could not be the condition which the context would lead us to expect, but the result of the conduct of the church required by the apostle. If they so acted with reference to subordinate differences, as, according to our explanation, Paul indicated, concord would be preserved undisturbed in the church. Further, what is said of the one rule and the walk according to this, and the being like-minded, is unsuitable to the words, "whereto we have already attained," (*εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν.*) For all had not attained to the same degree of insight. We here discover, therefore, the combination of words which tally not with each other, and it is easy to be understood, how, from false attempts to explain the words, "If only we walk according to that which we have attained"—words which are obscure, if not viewed in their right connexion,—the rest originated in falsely referring this to an exhortation to unanimity. We shall, therefore, following the most ancient and authentic manuscripts,

\* Provided we walk according to the one rule whereto we have already attained, and be like-minded.

regard this as the meaning of the genuine words of Paul, "If only we act according to that whereto we have already attained," *i. e.* if only each applies the measure of insight imparted to him truly to his own life. Paul says, therefore, the Holy Spirit will reveal to all what is still wanting to them of true Christian knowledge, and yet further advance the union of their spirits, by expurgating those heterogeneous elements which mar it, and will educe a higher unity from such existing differences, if that Christian communion resting on the one common ground of faith, be first and foremost maintained, and each makes it his concern, without disputing with another as to those points wherein he still thinks differently from him, rightly and truly to exercise the measure of his insight and knowledge. All progressive revelation of the Spirit, every new light which shall be imparted to man, presupposes that he has hitherto faithfully applied the gifts committed to his keeping. The words of the Lord, "He that hath, to him shall be given," here also find their application. How many dissensions would have been avoided in the church; how many differences might have been overcome and adjusted to her blessing, if it had been the earnest care of all rightly to understand and apply the principle here described by Paul!

Precepts, exhortations, and promises go hand in hand in Paul's epistles, as throughout all Scripture. The essential character of the Gospel, as it is distinguished from the Law, requires this; for as all promises are joined to certain conditions, without which these cannot be fulfilled, which leads, therefore, to exhortations and precepts, promises would be vain, unless in believers that promise was presupposed, in virtue of which they should not want power for the fulfilment of all requirements. Thus Paul begins with the words, (chap. iv. 4), "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." He, the prisoner of the Lord, who, it may be, expected death, finds cause to promise and require a continual joy in the consciousness of communion with the Lord,—to make joy the key-note of the Christian life. But this again is followed by a demand on the Christian walk and conversation, inasmuch as that rejoicing in the Lord cannot exist, unless the life of the Christian accords

with the law of the Lord, and testifies of communion with Him. Since, then, the Philippians, as we have above remarked, lived in such circumstances, where temptations to anger and revenge were many and great, he gives especial prominence to the exhortation, (chap. iv. 5), "Let your moderation (gentleness) be known unto all men;" and then adds, "The Lord is at hand," referring to the consciousness of His perpetual nearness. This consciousness leads Christians to such gentleness when irritated, that, as walking before the face of the Lord, they dread giving way to passion in the presence of Him, who, with heavenly patience and long-suffering, bore all manner of wrong. The consciousness also of this nearness of the Lord will restrain them from seeking to usurp the judgment which belongs to Him, and to take retribution into their own hands. These words also form the transition to the exhortation which follows, (chap. iv. 8), "Be careful for nothing." Here again we must call to mind the difficult position of these Christians under their oppressions; yet, in the consciousness of the nearness of the Lord, they were to care for nothing. Not that Paul rejects all human care,—for, as we have seen in this epistle, he demands human endeavours—but such an entanglement in cares as would conflict with his exhortation to rejoice always in the Lord; such only is objected to by him, and from this the consciousness of the nearness of the Lord to believers should restrain them. From such care he directs them rather to that elevation of their hearts to God in which everything should merge. In the antithesis we find the true meaning of these words of Paul, when he says, "But in everything, by prayers and supplications, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," (chap. iv. 6.) There is such care as stands opposed to the prayer of trustful confidence in God, and through which the feeling of child-like petition is obstructed. Such is the care which Paul objects to. As he has described the whole Christian life as one act of rejoicing in the Lord, so he describes it also as one continued prayer. Between the two an intimate connexion subsists. The one can exist only together with the other. He requires not the suppression of these wants, the feeling of which begets care; but the feeling of these wants should transform itself into prayer.

Thus the heart will be relieved, and care at once be removed. But although the Christian has to lay his wants before God in prayer, and to beseech Him for much for the future, yet he knows—since to those who love God, all things must work together for good—he may find enough, in every state, to lead him to thankfulness to God. Paul therefore, though he called on the Philippians, even amid their afflictions, to rejoice in the Lord, assumes there is no exaggeration in calling on them to thank God. The whole Christian life should be one prayer, the prayer of thankfulness and supplication in the consciousness of grace received, and in the feeling of the need of new grace. And under the assumption, that the Philippians would follow this direction, Paul was enabled to impart to them a precious promise, (chap. iv. 7), which would secure immunity from every anxious care amid all their conflicts: “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” What does Paul say here? What is the meaning of his deep, sublime words, so pregnant, yet so brief? If the Philippians thus act, peace with God, which they have received from Christ, will remain with them—that peace, which is the source of all other peace, which can subsist in the midst of conflict with the world, and which can be disturbed by no other power—the peace of which Christ spoke: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you,” (John xiv. 27); adding for the consolation of those whom He was leaving behind amidst the trials and strifes of the world, the exhortation, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” This peace, as it is one which has its foundation in God, Paul describes as exalted above all human conception. He who possesses it has more than he himself knows, more than he can explain in words and notions; it is an exceeding heavenly calm, which fills the heart of him, who, redeemed from a state of enmity with the Almighty and the Holy One, is conscious of being reconciled to Him. The might of this peace, says Paul, will carry those souls who live in communion with Christ safe and unharmed through every conflict and every temptation, either from within or from without. To this all their feelings and thoughts will

be attuned; this their refuge, outweighing all human cares. We may compare with this the words of Paul, in the Epistle to the Colossians: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts," (chap. iii. 15.) Peace with God, gained by Christ for believers, which is grounded in Him, and of which they are assured who are in communion with Him, is here described as that element in the Christian life, which maintains its superiority amid all the changes and chances of mortal life.



THE  
EPISTLE OF JAMES,  
PRACTICALLY EXPLAINED.

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It is the saying of an ancient Father of the church, that what Paul expressed in reference to himself, that he became all things to all men, to gain them to the Gospel, to lead them to salvation, is true also, in a still higher manner, of Him whose pattern the apostle followed in this, even of Christ himself, who, as well in His ministry on earth as after His ascension into heaven, in His revelation through the Spirit among all the nations of mankind, draws men to Himself, knows how to guide them to their salvation in ways as diverse and manifold as their various standing-points. The manner in which Christ worked upon earth is assuredly a type of the invisible Divine agency which embraces all times, and in which He still continually reveals Himself, as the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This diversity Christ Himself describes in the parables of the finding the kingdom of God. In these is indicated at once the one thing in which all must ultimately agree, the desire to be partakers of the kingdom of God, as well as the manifold ways by which they are led to it. To the kingdom of God they only attain who take it by violence. They only find the treasure hid in the field who risk all, convert their all into money, to be able to purchase the field in which the treasure lies concealed. They only gain possession of the costly pearl, which surpasses all others in beauty and lustre, who are ready to acknowledge its value, as one com-

pared with which all others are as nothing, and who fear no trouble, spare no cost, to secure this one pearl,—they who regard all other possessions as nought, to be able to gain the one highest good, the kingdom of heaven. But the inciting motives of the persons described in these parables, who take the resolution without which no one can enter the kingdom of heaven, are different, according to their different standing-points. The one is to be compared to merchants, who spare neither labour nor cost to find beautiful pearls, and who at last succeed in discovering that most glorious jewel, through this their zealous and earnestly applied exploration. These are they, who, impelled by the longing after the one good thing able to give full satisfaction to their spirit, have long sought after it. Many good things they have found in their search capable of imparting some sort of satisfaction to their own soul, but none of these, they at last become conscious, can fully and enduringly satisfy their spiritual wants; and therefore they again begin a new search, until at length, through this ever-renewed seeking, they succeed in discovering that one highest good, which now really imparts the desired satisfaction to their souls. Others come unexpectedly, without seeking a treasure, upon a field, where they, as it were, accidentally find it. Such are they, in whom the longing after the highest good, the kingdom of God, has not yet been evoked, and who, without their seeking it, all at once stumble on that which imparts to their spirit a satisfaction of which they had no presentiment, and which they had never sought. The one, by a gentle and gradual development, were drawn into communion with the Lord, from a life in which, from the first, preparative grace evinced its power in those germs of the higher nature of man, which displayed their vitality and unfolded themselves within them. The other, who have offered, by devotion to their own opposing passions, a long resistance to the Divine call, were drawn, as by a power constraining their refractory will, to Him whose love seeks to save all. As then, in such, the process of development which leads them to faith, is different, so also the form which faith assumes in them will be different. In the one, therefore, the new element imparted to them will exhibit itself, as having

been gradually prepared by antecedents, and blending itself with these, will appear as their end and consummation; and their previous accustomed form of life will ever remain agreeable and familiar. In the other, the new will exhibit itself rather in decided antagonism to the old. Each of these modes of view will have its peculiar rights; each, in its own way, will serve for the glory and furtherance of Christianity. In the former view, it will be seen especially how all these antecedents were destined to prepare that new element. The new will here appear in a more modified form. The second view will assuredly be the more pervasive and profound. The new element, in its peculiar essence, wherein it is raised above all else, will here appear more developed.

This character of diversity and multifariousness is to be recognised, as in the whole process of the development of Christianity, so also in its first process of development,—the apostolic period. But in the subsequent ages of the history of the church, these diversities which, as we have already remarked, were designed to serve as supplementary of each other, are often seen to diverge into mutually exclusive antagonisms. The notions of a higher unity disappear from the consciousness of men, though, even amid these differences, it will ever be discovered by him, who knows how to recognise the one Christ in all His revelations, however partial and however obscured by human one-sidedness. Hence the origin of those controversies, which have brought so much ruin, instead of edification. The relation, however, of the great teachers of the New Testament to each other, as it is exhibited in their lives and writings, discovers to us this character of multiformity in the reciprocal supplementing of different, not mutually exclusive, but mutually related modes of view,—the one Christ, in the beams of His manifold revelation, refracted through diverse organs.

Thus James, the brother of the Lord, appears to us in such antagonism to the great apostle of the Gentiles. In order rightly to understand and apply his Epistle, according to the rules laid down in our explanation of the Epistle to the Philippians, we must, first of all, endeavour to form a distinct image of his dis-

tinctive characteristics, as they present themselves to us in the course of his development and in his sphere of action, as also in this Epistle.

A very important point, in regard to the character of James, is found in the fact, that he was not of the number of the apostles. These were taken from those disciples, who, with immatured and childlike souls, joined themselves to the Redeemer and devoted themselves entirely to Him, with minds open to, and susceptible of impression. From the first, they unfolded themselves in communion with Him; they came not to Him, after a training received in another and previous school, and were, therefore, peculiarly adapted to receive truly His image, and, as plastic organs in His hands, to serve for the propagation of His word and Spirit in all ages. It is certain that, in the choice of the apostles, Christ aimed at gaining such disciples as had not yet been formed in other schools, and out of whom He could make everything. Paul, on the other hand, though he had this in common with the rest of the apostles, that he could testify of Christ the Risen, because he had actually beheld Him, and that he had received a personal impression from Him, was distinguished from them, in having come to Him with a decided system, formed in a very different school; and hence, what he became through Christ, necessarily developed itself in the most marked antithesis with what he was before. Altogether different from either the apostles or Paul, was it with James. He was a brother of the Lord, according to the flesh. All the passages of the Gospels in which the brethren of the Lord are mentioned, and Matt. i. 25, receive their most natural interpretation, when we assume that Mary, after the birth of Jesus, bore other sons, who are to be understood as the brothers of the Lord, of whom this James was one. Since marriage, and the procreation of children, like everything natural, were to be sanctified through Christ, in such an assumption, nothing contradictory to the dignity of the mother of Christ or His own, is to be found. The notions of a false ascetical tendency, of the unsanctity of the marriage state, or the pre-eminence of the celibate life,—which are at variance with the essence of Christianity,—and the misun-

derstood reverence of Mary, could alone be the occasion that anything objectionable should be found in this assumption. On the contrary, the birth of Jesus, as a fact supernaturally effected, thus appears in its right light and in its true meaning, in contrast with that which resulted according to the natural laws of procreation. Christ, as the son of Mary, begotten by means of a miracle, is thereby differenced from, and opposed to those who sprung from Mary in the natural way, according to the laws of human derivation. The antithesis between the natural and the supernatural, as it is described by Paul, (Gal. iv. 23, 29),—between that which is born according to the Spirit, and that which is according to the flesh, is one which runs through the history of the kingdom of God, in all stages of its progress. The difference, therefore, between James and the other preachers of the Gospel, in their religious development, consisted in this: that his neither originated from Christ, as in the apostles, nor did its later form ever appear in marked contrast with its earlier; but his path, starting from a different point, took at first an independent direction, not, indeed, opposed to, nor yet blending with that of the body which formed itself from Christ alone, until at length, at a later period, it completely merged in it.

It might appear, then, that one who stood so near the Lord, as His brother according to the flesh, the daily witness of His life, must be pre-eminently fitted to be His disciple,—that one so peculiarly favoured from the beginning, must possess advantages even over the apostles. Such was the point of view which produced the judgment of the Jewish Christians generally, who considered themselves bound to exalt James above all other teachers, and to depend especially on his authority. In this estimate, by the measure of mere outward natural relation to Christ, we perceive the intermixture of the Jewish spirit in its notions of Christianity,—the Christian point of view being the opposite of this; for, generally, while Judaism seeks religion in its externals, Christianity, in direct antithesis to it, places the essence of religion within. The inward and the outward not unfrequently stand in an inverse ratio to each other. He who outwardly stood nearest the revelation of the kingdom of God, to His manifestation in humanity, to the appear-

ing of the Son of God, might inwardly be the most remote from it, if he rested only on the external manifestation, and accustomed himself to regard the outward merely with the bodily eye, and was hindered thereby from penetrating to the inward with the eye of the Spirit. And such is the relation which we see the Jews hold generally with regard to the kingdom of God, and to Christ, who sprung from among this people, whose destiny it was to prepare His appearing. Christ himself, in opposition to the spirit of Judaism, which seeks religion in externals, shows that all depends not on what is outward and pertains to the body, but on the inward relation to God, through the tendency of the soul and its affections, and that we can draw nigher unto Him, not through any affinity according to the flesh, but only through the devotion of our spirits; and thus, when on a certain occasion, it was thought necessary to interrupt Him, when he was engaged in the great work of His life, the preaching of salvation, and found hearts open to instruction, listening with all earnestness to His word, because those who stood nearest to Him, "His mother and His brethren stood without seeking Him," He rebuked this interruption, while, pointing to the disciples, who were receiving the seed of the word of God into the good ground of an honest and true heart, He said, "My mother and my brethren are they that hear the word of God and do it," (Luke viii. 21; Mark iii. 34, 35.) It is, therefore, of no moment how we are related to Him, according to fleshly derivation, but how we are related in spirit to the Divine will revealed by Him. In the same manner, also, when a certain woman, from the middle of a crowd hanging on His words, carried away by the impression made by His Divine sayings, exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps thou hast sucked;" He, on the contrary, describing the vanity of such beatitude, said, "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it," (Luke xi. 27, 28.) Prophetic warnings against the tendency to externals, which manifested itself, not merely in that blending of the old Jewish spirit with Christianity, but which has also, in after-times, often repeated itself in other forms in the Christian church!

The very thing, therefore, which might have been to the ad-

vantage of James, in his religious development, turned to his disadvantage. In him and his brethren the proverb found its application, which Christ referred to in the case of the citizens among whom He had spent the greatest portion of his life, and who had been eye-witnesses of His development from His earliest childhood, (Matt. xiii. 57), "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." Just because the brethren of the Lord had been witnesses from the beginning of the purely human earthly development of the Son of man, they held only by this veil of the flesh, which thus proved to them a stumbling-block. And although afterwards, the revelation of the Son of God, not merely in the inner might of the Divine life, which can be apprehended and known only by him who possesses the faculty to discern the things of God, but in the demonstrations of His miraculous power, came before them, by which the first stirrings of faith were called forth in them, yet again and again that doubt asserted itself, which springs from the prejudice of the natural man, who judges merely according to the flesh, and relies only on the outward appearance; and during the earthly life of Christ they remained in the same state of oscillation between faith and unbelief. Only when that stumbling-block was removed from them, when the Son of God no longer stood before their eyes in the earthly veil of the Son of man, when He who was believed dead appeared victorious over death, alive in Divine might, to those who needed such confirmation ere they could recover their powers, was this the decided turning-point of the development of the religious life of a James, (1 Cor. xv. 7); and henceforth we see in him, the declared steadfast zealous witness of the faith in Jesus, his brother according to the flesh, as his Messiah, Lord, and Saviour, (James i. 1.) But the manner in which he bore witness of Him was conditioned by his previous religious training. His was pre-eminently the standing-point of Jewish piety, as it manifests itself in the forms of the Old Testament; and under this he had been entirely formed, when faith in Jesus, as the promised Messiah, was superadded, and henceforth he beheld Judaism, in which he had hitherto lived, transfigured. Christianity appears to his mind as true Judaism. The Spirit

of Christ glorifies the forms of the Old Testament, and leads them to their true fulfilment. The standing-point which we perceive in the teaching of Christ, as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, which contains the germs of everything essentially Christian, but where the abolition of the Law is not explicitly declared, where everything proceeds from the idea of the kingdom of God, and the references of each and every of its principle to the Person of Christ, though everywhere implied as the basis and central point, is not so expressed in the letter,—this is the peculiar standing-point of James. In the development, therefore, of the kingdom of God, where, as in all His works, equally in those of Nature as of Grace, there is no sudden abrupt transition, but where the law of gradation prevails throughout, he forms an important transition from the Old Testament to the New. Something would be wanting had we not James in the New Testament; and a mind which, in its one-sidedness, disdains to follow patiently that law of gradual development, and which demands perfection at once, may be punished by a defective knowledge of Christian truth. The standing-point of James was also of peculiar service in bringing over devout Jews to the faith of the Gospel. To a Paul, who was elected for the conversion of the Gentile nations, it would have proved an hinderance; to James, in the sphere of action assigned to him among unmixed Jews, in Palestine and Jerusalem especially, it was serviceable. Thus does Divine wisdom display itself in the manner in which it assigns a peculiar sphere of action to each, and appoints to each a special task in the development of the kingdom of God, according to his peculiar standing-point; and the sole concern of each should be, that he rightly fulfil the task so marked out for him; that each, knowing his own peculiar line, and remaining true to it, stretch not beyond it; and, moreover, that each recognise the call of God in him also, to whom, as He has imparted different gifts, He has committed a different sphere of action, and place himself in such relation with him, that each may supplement the other. Such was the relation of James to Paul.

This, indeed, James knew from the beginning, that, as the voice of the prophets indicated, the time would come when the



worship of Jehovah would be extended among the Gentile nations; that they too should participate in the blessings of the kingdom of God; and that as this would form a part of the glory of the times of the Messiah, so was it to receive its fulfilment in Jesus as the Messiah. But this was hid from him, even when he had attained to a decided faith in Jesus as the Messiah,—that a worship of Jehovah, that a participation in the kingdom of God, is possible otherwise than in the old forms of the Law.

The indications in the discourses of Christ, which signified that the word preached by Him would be the leaven which, through its indwelling power alone, independent of all else, will pervade the life of humanity, and leavening Jew and Gentile alike, will make all things new,—that the new spirit of Christianity will burst through all the forms of legal Judaism,—these indications were not yet understood by him. This was one of those things of which Christ, when he took leave of his disciples, said to them, that what they were then unable to understand, the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit would afterwards reveal to them. This revelation of the Holy Spirit was not, however, imparted to all at the same time, nor to all in the same manner. This was conditioned by the different standing-points from which they had attained to the Gospel. Accordingly, to lead them to this insight, more or less preparation might be requisite; it might be more through a process of thought, quickened and guided by the Holy Spirit, which evolved till it clearly apprehended the entire import of the Divine truth which had been received through revelation; or more, through an immediate light, which the Spirit of God caused to spring up in them. Often, in the history of the church, must we discover, by mournful experience, that when views arise to one which are still hidden from another, when the Spirit frees the one from the narrow limits within which the other still remains confined, the result is an antagonism between the freer and more confined view. This was the source of much of the discord and division which manifested themselves even in the apostolic church. James, however, was far from that arbitrariness which adheres to its

own views as alone valid, which at once rejects the revelations made to others, because they are not its own, which would set limits to the further development of the kingdom of God, and is not to be refuted by facts. When, at the apostolic council at Jerusalem, (Acts xv.), the question arose concerning the debated point of the observance of the Mosaic Law, and Peter and Paul testified of the effects of the Gospel among the believing Gentiles, who had submitted neither to circumcision nor to any other ordinance of the Law, such undeniable facts were proof enough for him, that through faith in the Redeemer, the same Divine results had been produced among the Heathen as among the believing Jews. He saw in this a fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and he learnt better to understand their scope and import in a relation which had hitherto been hid from him. He then showed the mild conciliative spirit peculiar to him, in the way in which he sought to adjust the difference between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. He recognises the rights of views which were not his own. The believing Gentiles, it was decreed, were, in virtue of their faith, to have perfect equality of privileges with the believing Jews, in the kingdom of God, and, for the furtherance of mutual approximation, were required to accommodate themselves to the feelings of Jewish believers, in some few outward things, which, moreover, had a tendency to diminish the danger of participation in the concomitants of Heathen worship. While, however, James recognised the claim of the churches of the uncircumcised Heathen to the participation of equal privileges, and admitted the rights of the independent vocation of preaching the Gospel among the Heathen, he still remained true to his own standing-point, according to which the new spirit should continue to act in the old forms, and the Jews alter nothing in their religious national peculiarity. Yet, as the Acts of the Apostles show, he was ever the mediator between Paul and the zealots of the Jewish-Christian point of view, who were prejudiced against him. Here also he acted in the same spirit of conciliation and moderation.

In order rightly to understand and apply the Epistle of James,

we must now endeavour to form a distinct notion of the persons to whom it is addressed, and to whose peculiar state he chiefly has regard.

Nothing very definite can be decided with respect to the region where these churches are to be sought; the information we derive from the Epistle itself is conveyed in very general terms, sufficient, however, for our object, which is entirely practical. The important point is this, that these were churches consisting of Christians of purely Jewish descent, in which all the faults incidental to Judaism were combined with faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and where, in many, little or nothing was to be seen of the new creation which must issue from this faith.

That feeling, whose whole bent is the earthly, which was frequently found in connection with a false zeal for the glory of God, avarice and covetousness, and the consequent collisions of the selfish interest, and controversies,—these were the vices which those churches took over with them from their earlier Jewish state, to the domain of Christianity. The aristocracy of money stood opposed to the pervading influence of Christian love, which was designed to restrain and overpower all earthly distinctions. The contrasts seen in the varying measure of the possession of worldly goods, were not reconciled, as they should be, by Christian love, but asserted at the expense of that fraternal relation which should manifest itself among Christians. Furthermore, it pertained to the vices of their false Jewish spirit, that, instead of conceiving piety, as a whole, proceeding from the heart, extending to the whole life, reliance was placed only in certain particular and external acts in which piety should exhibit itself, and these were substituted for the whole,—the tendency to the external in Religion. In them this direction displayed itself in the great value which was laid on descent from the theocratic people, on circumcision, the works of the Law, on all of which justification was made to depend; and this tendency passed over also to the Jewish Christians. Where these asserted their privileges against Heathens, and Christians of Heathen descent, this would necessarily appear with especial prominence;—a tendency however, which, in its

essential character, is not to be regarded as having only once existed, which was for ever abolished with Judaism, and which cannot again appear in the Christian church. The saying of the Preacher of wisdom, that nothing new happens or will happen under the sun, which does not happen or has not happened, here finds its application. As that, which we designate with the name of the Jewish spirit, is not grounded in the peculiar fundamental character of Judaism, as a Divine institution, but is to be derived from the essence of the natural man, who has degraded the Divine to his own level, and would appropriate it without denying this; so, also, from this essence of the natural man, which ever remains the same, a similar error will again and again proceed, which we may describe as having affinity with the Jewish spirit. Even where Christianity is embraced, and the essential features of the natural man interfuse their pernicious influence with the views entertained of its nature, this peculiar characteristic, which we call the Jewish, will reveal itself. When one imagines that he has any pre-eminence, because he is descended from a Christian people, distinguished in former times by its piety, from one which assumes an important place in the history of the kingdom of God, without considering, that, if his own life is not in harmony with the peculiar character and standing-point of such a people, this will turn rather to his condemnation than to his glory; or if one prides himself on having sprung from a father conspicuous for his pious deeds, without in any way following his example, in these and similar cases, we must recognise the vice of the Jewish spirit. When one places all his glory, grounds his confidence in belonging to a particular church, without concerning himself about the practice of genuine Christianity,—when, in outward Churchism, he forgets what belongs to Christianity,—this, also, is something which, in that sense, we may call Jewish. When one puts his trust and security in his zealous participation in the external actions of Christian worship, attendance at church, the celebration of the Sacrament, while all this remains to him something merely external,—this is the same as when the Jews placed their confidence on circumcision and the works of the

Law. The name only, not the thing, is altered. All, therefore, that is said in Paul's epistles upon such tendencies, though that, against which the apostle's arguments and reproofs are directed, no longer exists according to the letter, may, nevertheless, be referred in all ages, to such practical errors as have been specified.

In the notions controverted by James in his epistle, we do not find, it is true, precisely the same peculiar mode of externalizing we have described, and which we find in Paul. It is, however, the same root, the same fundamental tendency. He has to show his readers, who, therefore, must have prided themselves on their manner of worshipping God, how the true worship of God, in which they were wanting, must manifest its existence. It is a question merely of another mode of externalizing, wherein, however, the same fundamental false tendency is not to be mistaken. As there was a mode in which this tendency displayed itself, in the undue estimation of the outward works of the Law, so there was another mode, which made the mere knowledge of the Law, of the true God, and that which pertains to His worship, the main thing,—which, through mere knowledge, mere profession of the known, through faith as the object of knowledge, thought to have and to be more than the Heathens, although the life by no means corresponded with this knowledge and profession. Paul, also, in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, combated this false confidence in mere knowledge of the Law. With this was connected dead Scriptural learning, as when Christ himself rebukes the Pharisees, who thought to have eternal life in the Scriptures, and yet were not guided by them to Him, who alone could impart it to them. Hence it came to pass, that each was forward to assert his religious knowledge, that each sought to set himself up as a teacher for others, without first considering how to conform himself according to Divine truth. Hence originated controversies between those who desired to usurp the office of teacher of others, passionate disputation and censoring,—thus another mode of externalizing, another fashion of the worship of the letter, proceeding from the same root, as that before described, and which might equally be found in harmony with an ungodly life, and equally also serve as its stay.

It may be asked, then, does the false notion of faith, and the one-sided exaggerated estimate of mere faith, which James controverts in this epistle, form component parts of this fundamental tendency? or must we here recognise something different from this, something which owes its derivation to another quarter? Is a reference to the Pauline notion of faith, here, unmistakable, so that we be necessitated to assume, that, in this church, the Pauline notion of justification by faith was falsely viewed and applied? It is possible, that men, who continued in sin, may have thought, they could boast in justification through faith in the Redeemer alone; as Paul, assuredly, in several passages of the Epistle to the Romans, guards himself against such a misunderstanding, or such a perversion of his doctrine. In later times, after that doctrine to which Paul gave especial prominence, in opposition to Jewish and Judaizing errors, had been again asserted in its rights by Luther, in similar opposition to a Jewish standing-point which had crept into the church, again, in this instance, a new worship of the letter, a new mode of externalizing introduced itself, and again the connexion between faith and practice was severed. Much of what James says in his day, against such a tendency, might here again find its application.

The question we are here discussing, viz., whether the polemic of James is directed against a misunderstanding of Paul's doctrine, or whether it has no reference to it, is by no means necessarily connected with that concerning the relation of the doctrines of Paul and James to each other. It might have been the purpose of James to controvert a misunderstanding of the doctrine of Paul, yea, even the doctrine of Paul himself, as it may have appeared to him only in the form of this misunderstanding, without a previous acquaintance with it; and, notwithstanding, a perfect harmony may be demonstrated between both modes of doctrine, which may serve as the supplements of each other; for, it may easily happen, that in controverting, from a different point of view, a peculiar mode of doctrine which another has formed for himself, according to his peculiar course of training, and the relation of the differences he had in his mind, we, in fact, in the disputation,

prove a substantial agreement, so that in combating the opinions of another, we rather express only what serves to explain and supplement them. Thus also might an exposition of Christian truth called forth by a controversy against the peculiar Pauline form of doctrine, find its place, as an important supplementary member in the collection of those writings which contain the original pure Revelation of Christian truth. Both modes of view and doctrine might be co-related as mutually supplementary forms in the one revelation of the Holy Spirit, through the different human organs who are inspired by Him. Of the relation of those two modes of doctrine to each other, we shall have, therefore, to treat specially in what follows.

Although, therefore, it is quite conceivable, that such an externalizing tendency as the one we have remarked on, might connect itself with the Pauline doctrine, and although, as we have seen, this afterwards actually happened, it may yet be questioned whether we are authorised in presupposing this among the churches depicted in this epistle. Precisely among such Judaizing churches, consisting purely of Jews, a misunderstanding of the Pauline doctrine could least arise, because the standing-point of Paul generally was so remote from them. The Pauline notion of faith presupposes the marked distinction between the Law and the Gospel, and antagonism to the righteousness of the Law, and the merit of our own works. That notion vindicated itself in direct opposition to the Jewish externalizing; and such a form of view, as well as the misunderstanding of it, were equally inadmissible, where such tendency predominated.

Is not the particular tendency which James impugns, to be reduced to that characteristic defect? Let us only compare what precedes and what follows these arguments of James, (chap. ii.) Immediately before them, we find him controverting those who presume on the mere hearing of the word, (chap. i.), on mere knowledge of it, without concerning themselves about its practice; and subsequently refuting the pretensions of a false and presumptuous service of God. What, then, is this, but that very externalizing tendency which finds its expression, when

men pride themselves merely on holding certain articles of belief concerning the one true God and the Messiah, and regard themselves thereby justified, without making clear to themselves the demands which this belief has on the life. When knowing and acting are not in accordance with each other, so is it with the belief and the life. A merely theoretical belief corresponds entirely with a merely theoretical knowledge. The man who satisfies himself with being able to discourse much of the law, without thinking of its practice, is also the same as he who boasts of his belief without concerning himself about the works which are required by belief. The man who thinks to have, in certain external works, the essence of the true worship of God, who boasts in being a true worshipper of God, simply because he professes the true religion, is the same as he who thinks to be just, through a belief which brings forth no works. And, if we look to what follows, we find James arguing against those who are so ready to assume the office of teaching others, (chap. iii.), and who, while they teach what they do not practise, render themselves the more liable to condemnation. Have we not, then, here again the same characteristic tendency? What, therefore, can authorise us to sever what lies between from this connexion, and refer it to something else, whose explanation must be sought elsewhere, than in this one characteristic tendency?

In the mode of combating these errors, which we shall pursue at greater length, the difference indeed between James and Paul, between the one as more practical, the other as more systematic, between the former, in whom faith in Christ had been superadded as the crown and consummation of an earlier development begun in Judaism, and the latter, in whom faith in Christ, as the centre of an entirely new creation, developed itself in abrupt opposition to his previous Jewish standing-point, will show itself in a peculiar manner. In James, therefore, the controverting line of argument exhibits itself rather in isolated theses and exhortations; in Paul, everything is connected with, and proceeds from one centre. In James, the reference to Christ is found as one among other elements, which has brought on his Epistle the reproach, as if Christ were not to be found in it;



whereas in Paul, the chief place is everywhere expressly and prominently assigned to Christ's agency. He is described as the central point of the whole life; from Him all is derived, to Him all is referred. But in the isolated theses and exhortations of James, the higher unity on which they are based may still be shown, and to Christ, as the living central point, all might be reduced, although He is not expressly mentioned. Thus, there may exist a moral conformation of life, which will receive its light and meaning by a reference to Him as the central point, though He be not explicitly named; and His name may be much on the lips, where, notwithstanding, the inner connexion of the whole constitution of the life with Him, is not manifested. In this sense must we endeavour to understand the arguments and exhortations of James.

The churches to whom this epistle is addressed, consisted of poor and rich, of which the former, without doubt, constituted the majority. We know that the Gospel, as everywhere, so especially among the Jews, found more acceptance with the poorer and lower classes of the people, than among the rich and powerful; not that riches exclude from the kingdom of God, or form a necessary hinderance to faith in the Gospel. When Christ says that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven and be saved; he means by this, such rich men as the one who was the occasion of His uttering these words, those to whom, even unconsciously, earthly good is the highest, who have their treasure on earth, and could not, therefore, have it in heaven, whose heart belongs to earth, as their treasure is on earth, and who are far, therefore, from that heavenward tendency, without which no one can attain to a participation of it. He says, further, in that same connection, that, although the salvation of a rich man is impossible with men, through merely human help, that yet, with God, all things are possible. He gives us thereby to understand that it needs the power of God, in order that his riches be not an hinderance to the rich man in attaining the kingdom of God. And thus these words imply, not that riches in themselves, but only that direction of the feelings into which the rich man falls more easily than others, constitute the im-

pediment. The rich man should be brought to the consciousness of this, and, in the feeling of the difficulty existing in his position, should be incited to turn himself to God, to implore from Him the strength which he needs, in order that, amidst all his earthly possessions, his treasure may be in heaven, and his heart thither directed. In this same Epistle we shall find what is required of the rich man, in order to attain to this. Not riches in themselves, therefore, form the hinderance to participation in the kingdom of God; but it often happened at that time among the Jews, that the rich and the mighty, amid the enjoyments of this world, forgot the higher needs of the inner man, lost the constant consciousness of dependence on the Power which alone gives and guides all things. They thought to have all and abound, and stifled in themselves the feeling of misery, and the necessity of a redemption from it. Thus, even in the Old Testament, the rich, the proud, and the godless, are often associated together. As every outward condition may impede or further the salvation of men, according to the different dispositions of men, as nothing, independent of the bent of man's will, can serve either for his furtherance, or turn to his prejudice; so also poverty, the wretchedness which crushes the spirit, which obstructs the development of the consciousness of the inner man, and permits not the emergence of the feeling of higher wants, may become an hinderance, opposing the attainment of the kingdom of God. Poverty, also, has its peculiar dangers, as this epistle shows. But yet, on the whole, the poorer and lower classes of the people, who languished under oppressions from the side of the rich and mighty, became more alive, in the feeling of bodily distress, to the need of a deliverance from the inner misery of the soul, their bodily distress gave them more easily the connecting point to bring the inner misery of their soul to their consciousness, and thereby lead them to their Redeemer; because there was for their souls no seeming delusive satisfaction, they could the more easily be led to that which imparted true satisfaction to all the higher needs. The worldly poor, also, could, more easily than the rich, be brought to that poverty of spirit, to which, as Christ says, belongs the kingdom of heaven. Thus, among the Jews, the Gospel found more acceptance with

the poor than with the rich; and because men perceived this, it came to pass that Christians were designated, in contempt, the poor. Not that we mean to say that all the poor, who received the Gospel, attained to it as the poor in spirit, and thus, as such, received the true riches of the Gospel. Even among these poor, there was not wanting that fleshly mind which prevailed among the Jews, and which, instead of producing a true hope, in harmony with a heart directed towards heaven, led them rather to expect compensation for their bodily deprivations in the dreams of a carnal blessedness in the kingdom of Christ. And as the faith of such, if we may apply the name of faith to this, originated in the fleshly mind of the natural man, so also would the earlier form of this natural man, derived from Judaism, necessarily subsist in their apparent Christianity,—against which we shall hear James speak. The Christians, then, as the poorer and the lower, had to endure many persecutions and oppressions from the mighty and rich, partly on account of their faith, partly on account of the selfish interests of these, or so that their faith served only as a pretext for these acts. The rich, also, who called themselves, without being, Christians, were infected with the common vice of the rich among the Jews, and were wanting in love and justice to their poorer brethren in the faith. Thus, then, this epistle contains consolations and exhortations to the oppressed and suffering, and rebukes to the rich, both within and without the church.

James begins at once, by exhorting the sufferers to steadfastness and submissiveness: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials,” (chap. i. 2.) The notion of trial is one capable of many meanings. By this is designated in Holy Scripture whatever may become a difficulty and occasion of falling to Christian faith and Christian virtue,—everything, whether favourable or unfavourable, outward or inward, which, while it may be the occasion that faith or virtue succumb in the conflict, thus brings them to the test, and may conduce to verify them. In this more general sense it might, taken apart and in itself, be understood, as Luther has translated it, by “Anfechtungen,” (temptations, as in our translation.) But it is evident, from the context, that, as in many passages of Holy Scripture, those

sufferings are here meant through which the Christian life is tried. To those, then, who sighed under such afflictions as we have described as the lot of these Christians, James says not, that they should patiently endure them by looking to future glory, but more than this, the feeling of suffering should resolve itself into joy—they were only to rejoice. On what principle could James so teach? He referred everything to that which is highest in man, to that which constitutes his true essence, his undying part, the inner man, as Paul calls it. And because he was convinced, and desired to express this conviction, that these trials, rightly used, must redound to the furtherance of the inner man, and were ordained by God for this purpose, he, therefore, calls upon Christians not to be troubled, but, reflecting on the end to which these sufferings necessarily conduced in the children of God, to rejoice in them. The right use of afflictions, as they appear in the light of Christianity, is therefore presupposed in this; as James describes it in the subjoined words, which contain the ground of this exhortation, “knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience,” (chap. i. 3.) James here assumes, that a continual process of development and purification is ordained in this life for faith, and such a one which consists in a continual struggle. To him faith is something totally different from and exalted above the ordinary governing principles in men, something in which resides an inner Divine power, but which must stand the test in the conflict with the opposing power, with all that proceeds from the flesh, from the natural man. Now, there are manifold trials for faith, and of all such, what James says, holds good. In the case before us, the question is especially of the conflict with outward circumstances. Here, therefore, it must be tested, whether faith be sincere, deeply-rooted in the inner life—such a faith, as, by its inherent Divine power, shall be able to overcome the world. But, while faith proves itself amidst these conflicts, and endures in the struggle with the world, it thereby manifests its Divine power, and the trial becomes a confirmation, and out of this victorious contest faith comes forth as an enduring faith. Man first learns by this to know what he has. Now, James was well aware of the characters of the churches to which he

wrote, and that the notion of faith was liable to the misunderstanding which we have described. It is throughout, therefore, his great aim to counteract the isolating and externalizing tendency in the Christian life. Hence, after thus expressing himself, he was obliged still to add, that, even though faith has proved its endurance amid outward conflicts with the world, this one thing was not yet enough for the Christian life. Faith was to pervade the whole life in manifold directions, and display its energy. Hence, after these words, James adds, "but patience should have a perfect work," (chap. i. 4.) Luther understood this of time,—patience should prove itself as perfect by its enduring to the end. But viewed in connexion with what follows, and with the train of thought of the whole Epistle, the words, we think, must rather be thus understood: that faith, which has proved its capacity of endurance, must be accompanied by all those works which are essential to faith, by those perfect works in which faith must stamp its image. James, referring to the unity of the whole Christian life, describes the entire Christian life and conversation, every Christian action, as one perfect work, which it must be, in order to correspond with true faith. And thus what James immediately subjoins,—in which, it is presupposed that the whole of the true Christian walk of life is combined with enduring faith,—may rightly be understood: "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." By perfection is here meant, not absolute perfection, which is never to be found in the Christian life on earth, but, as often in Holy Scripture, all that pertains to maturity in Christianity, to what Paul calls the manhood of the Christian; as by being "entire" is meant the exclusion of everything which threatens to hinder Christian life. When he desires that they may "want nothing," he understands by this the totality of all these qualities, powers, and capabilities which are produced, when Christianity has displayed its might as the heaven for the whole nature of man. Hence, therefore, subjoined to this, is something which is designed to compose their minds, if they were conscious of any defect in this respect. He points out to them what on their side must be done in order to the attainment of what was still wanting in them. Those

general expressions, which he might have used in referring to the defects of which they might be conscious, he applies,—as instead of the employment of general notions, he prefers bringing forward the special cases of life,—to that in which this particular church must or should be conscious of shortcoming. True wisdom is pre-eminently requisite, in order to give to the whole life its right relation to the kingdom of God. Wisdom or prudence, for which, in the original language of Scripture, this word is used, as only that prudence which is grounded on wisdom, and subservient to it, the prudence of Christian wisdom, is regarded as true prudence. This has often a prominent place assigned to it, even by our Lord Himself, as of main importance. Now, as we have already remarked, there prevailed in the Jewish spirit of this church, a tendency to false wisdom, a false and undue estimate of mere knowledge, the presumption of knowledge and wisdom. The greater need, therefore, had they to be shown that true wisdom is based on humility, that it is to be acquired, not in the schools of the scribes, but can be received only from the source of eternal light. James, therefore, proceeds to write: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men simply, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him,” (chap. i. 5.) They are thus exhorted, in the consciousness of their shortcoming, only to turn themselves to God in prayer. God is described as He who gives simply, *i. e.*, from the pure love of giving. The simplicity of His giving is opposed to a liberality restricted, measured out by partialities. He is described as He who upbraids no one with His gifts, but desires only to give more and more, where hearts are found prepared to receive them. They are not, therefore, to apply to such teachers as keep back from them some portion of the truth, who sparingly dole out to them what they do communicate, and who parade before them what they owe to them; but to the love of a heavenly Father, who gives without measure, and desires only to give.

James, therefore, designates prayer as the pre-requisite, on the side of believers, in order to their receiving the gifts which are derived from that heavenly source. This is the necessary relation between the communication and the reception of the things

of God. The spirit of man can here be the recipient only, as it is God who alone acts and gives. The bent of the soul, which renders it capable of receiving what God is so ready to grant, consists in prayer. The turning to God, in the feeling of our own need, and under the consciousness that God alone can and will satisfy it, the longing, the earnest desire of the soul, which hungers and thirsts after wisdom, is prayer. To seek truth in God, and to pray, are one and the same thing. The whole life of the spirit, filled with this longing, is prayer, as Christ conjoins seeking and knocking in order to find the hidden, and asking: "Ask, and it shall be given thee; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to thee," (Matt. vii. 7.) But in writing to a church, so much addicted to externalizing in religious things, there was the more need of a caution against it in prayer, which merits the name of prayer only, when it proceeds from the inmost depths of the spirit; lest it should be imagined that prayer, through words, without the directing of the soul to God, satisfied this requirement. And this caution is conveyed in the following words: "But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting," (chap. i. 6.) Confidence in God is here described as that direction of the heart from which prayer must proceed. Faith must realise God, as Him to whom prayer is addressed; there must exist a confidence that He can and will satisfy the wants which are expressed before Him in prayer, if prayer is to be sincere, a prayer not merely of the lips, but of the heart. And James immediately adds the ground, why prayer of an opposite kind is not heard: "For he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." It is, therefore, essential to prayer, that the direction of the spirit to God be firm. Where doubt exists, this fundamental character is wanting. When, from the one side, the soul feels itself drawn to God, and confidence in Him begins to live, from the other worldly tendencies assert their influence, which oppose themselves to the germinating movements of faith and confidence. The man who is thus driven to and fro between these contrary tendencies, is, therefore, compared to the wave tossed by the storm. James describes him as one who is divided in himself, in whom there are, as it were, two souls, who is unstable

in all his ways, uncertain, not to be depended on in all his actions; and, according to this general character and constitution of his life, so are his prayers. It is implied, therefore, that prayer must be accompanied by the constant direction of the whole life to God; that everything must proceed from one predominant disposition. Here, then, the question may be proposed to us, How is a man to attain to the faith which is requisite for prayer? Is he to abstain from prayer, because deficient in this measure of faith? But, as in the above quoted words of the Lord, the indispensable condition, on the side of man, for receiving what God alone can communicate, is, that he knock and seek, and ask from God, we must assuredly apply this to faith, which is constantly regarded as the work of God in man. He, therefore, who is conscious of his want of faith, and who would have more faith, and become stronger in faith, must seek from God that which is wanting to him. As in the Gospel history, that unhappy father who was required to trust in faith for the deliverance of his son, cried out, under the conscious weakness of his faith, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief;" so here, the consciousness of that want, which is opposed to true prayer, the want of faith should lead men to pray for power to believe. He who is assailed by doubt, should turn his back on it, and, averting his soul from the world, which threatens to entangle his soul in doubt, should apply himself to God, and give himself to prayer. Thus, through prayer, will faith increase, and faith, thus strengthened, will then impart to prayer a new elevation and new power. A reciprocal reaction will thus take place.

We have seen how James began with an exhortation to constancy under afflictions, and how one thing led to another. His thoughts are now turned to the poor, of which class the greater number of these Christians consisted, and who had to suffer much from the oppression of the rich; and these he consoles, saying, "Let the brother of low degree boast in that he is exalted," (chap. i. 9.) The Christian, instead of being cast down by the consciousness of his poverty, and low estate according to the relations of this world, should rather feel himself exalted by the conscious possession of a greatness outshining all worldly glory, of



that Divine greatness which is grounded in the Divine life,—the dignity of the children of God. He speaks of this as a boasting, without needing to fear any danger from self-exaltation, for such a dignity is here meant which man owes, not to his own powers and endeavours, but such as he has received, without any merit of his own, from God, and which God alone could impart to him. This boasting, therefore, is directly opposed to all high-mindedness, all self-exaltation, and is inseparable from the essence of true humility. But as this dignity is not awarded to the poor, as poor, so also the rich, as rich, were by no means excluded from it, although, as we have already explained, riches might prove to many a hinderance to the attainment of this greatness. To the rich, also, the way is pointed out by which they may raise themselves to this dignity: “Let the rich man boast,” says James, (chap. i. 10), “that he is made low;” that is to say, while he humbles himself together with all that passes in the world for great and mighty, he gains the consciousness of the true greatness which proceeds only from the perception of the nothingness of all earthly glory. By becoming conscious of the vanity of his earthly possessions, he is prepared to appropriate to himself the true riches, and true greatness. Self-abasement is the way to true elevation. So long as the rich man presumes on his earthly riches, and thinks that their possession entails the possession of the true riches, the feeling of the want of higher and heavenly blessings, of the longing for true greatness, cannot spring up within him, and the feeling of this want, the desire for this true dignity, are the necessary conditions of their participation to every man. Thus the poor and the rich, among Christian brethren, must be united with each other by the consciousness of like dignity. James, then, represents the nothingness of riches, by images derived from the oriental view of nature. Just as when, in the morning, the fresh grass exists in all the brilliancy of its verdure, and suddenly withers away through the scorching breath of the south wind, so the rich man fades away in his ways. Because the rich man has his treasure only in earthly things, and has identified himself with them, so that which is

said of the vanity of the possessions, which are all in all to him, is transferred to himself.

As the sufferings of the righteous, under their oppression, are ever present to the mind of James, and as he has described these as trials for the confirmation of their faith, he pronounces a blessing on the righteous and enduring servant of God; because having thus proved himself, he would attain the crown of everlasting life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him, (chap. i. 12.) But how are we to connect this with the caution which James, immediately afterwards, gives them against attributing their temptations to God? Does not he himself regard God as ordaining outward sufferings as trials for faith? We must, therefore, distinguish the different notions of trial from each other. A distinction must be made between outward and inward temptation. The difficulties which occur to man from without, may serve to rouse the powers of the higher life, which slumber within him, but they may also make him conscious of his weakness; they may furnish the gate of entrance to those elements within him, which are opposed to the Divine life. That which otherwise might have been made subservient to the testing of his faith as to Christian virtue, becomes to him, through his own fault, a temptation to unbelief and to sin. Thus outward trials become inward, and dangerous, therefore, to man. When Christ enjoins us to pray to God, "Lead us not into temptation," this can be referred only to that which is inward temptation; for His disciples, amid all tribulation of the world, which ministered only to the testing of their faith, were to be more than conquerors. But this should be the object of their prayers, that outward temptation may not become inward. Thus James passes over from the one notion of temptation to the other, in virtue of the connexion subsisting between the two. But in the peculiar condition of these churches, he must have found a special ground for that warning. This is to be explained from the same spirit of externalizing which we have described in what precedes. This tendency shows itself, as well in the way in which good, as in the way in which evil is viewed. At no period have there been

wanting grounds for the palliation of sin, which has been regarded as something cleaving to man only from without, and which men have sought to explain from external causes, instead of seeking the inner ground of it in the depraved and sinful bent of the will. Thus it appears that many here excused themselves by pleading that they were subject to a higher power, which hurried them on to sin. The Almighty, whom no one can resist, precipitated them into these temptations. To this, then, James replies (ver. 13); "let no one, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted of God;" for as God cannot be tempted by evil, is exalted above all evil, so no temptation to sin can proceed from Him, the Holy One can tempt no one to sin. He then, (ver. 13, 14), shows, that within man himself the source of temptations is to be sought, and describes the gradual process of the development of the sinful tendency in its progress to consummation. He exhibits, as the source of temptation, the desire inherent in each, through which he is enticed and drawn away; desire, as it were, lying in wait for him, but yet so that he is able to resist it. It gains strength only from want of that resistance which should have been offered to it, while he, who might have been in a condition to withstand it, surrenders himself to it. Still gaining strength, and bringing its fruit to maturity, it generates sin, and sin, having issued in act, has death for its consequence. It is clear, from the connexion of the thoughts in this passage, that it is by no means implied, that desire is not in itself sinful, that the inclination of the will continuing sinful, even where it finds no occasion to manifest itself in act, does not entail the punishment of death,—that everything depends on outward action. He means to teach this, that evil, from the first breaking forth of desire, unfolds itself gradually as it advances, until overcoming all the counter-actions of the higher life, it becomes act. In this consummation, a greater intensity of sin reveals itself; and when man, at an early stage, by conquering the incitements to sin, might have preserved and confirmed true life within him, he now, through the victory which sin has gained over him, becomes subject to death. James, therefore, warns them against such falsities and delusions, as of God being the author of evil.

While, therefore, he led them to seek the source of all tempt-

ations in their own inner man only, while he warned them against the opinion, as if temptations could come from God, he opposes to such a delusion the thought, that, only that which is good and perfect proceeds from God. As He is the Father of all material light, so is He also the Father of all spiritual light. Thus in Him there can be no alternation of light and darkness; He is the unchangeable source of light, exalted far above all darkness, and nothing, therefore, which leads to sin can be derived from Him. Light and all good, darkness and all evil, are always severally found together in Holy Scripture.

From this general thought, James again passes on to apply to himself and his readers, how they owe it to God alone, that the Divine light has arisen upon them, and through this, a new life been imparted to them. Thus he goes on as follows, (ver. 18): "Of His own will begat He us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." Here, in James also, as in Paul, we recognise antagonism to Jewish externalizing. He presupposes in Christians a moral transformation from within—he regards the word of truth, the Divine power of the Gospel, as the instrument through which this new and higher life has been effected. He also describes this as a result, independent of human merit, which all owe to Him, from whom all good things proceed. He designates, also, this moral transformation as a new creation, and those in whom this creation had first been effected as its first-fruits, since from them it shall unceasingly extend, until it attains its consummation in a world glorified and pervaded throughout by this Divine principle of life. But it is always the peculiar characteristic of James to pass at once from the general to the particular—a characteristic which is grounded partly in his own spiritual individuality, and partly in what he perceived to be the special practical wants of those to whom this Epistle was addressed. He knew how ready they were to rest in general notions, without applying them to their own lives. It was always his desire to lead them to do this. Therefore, he at once proceeds to argue how the Divine word, received into the heart, must manifest itself as the generative principle of the new creation. And even this truth he does not view in its naked uni-

versality, but immediately passes on to that special application of it, which is most opposed to the views prevalent in these churches. We have already remarked how eager each was to assume the office of teacher, how much disposed they were to talk, and how little to act, how easily this led them on to pass judgment on others, and brand them with heresy, and how all their passions found herein their nourishment. Against this, therefore, he warns them, saying, (ver. 19), "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." There is such a thing as self-willed silence, and such a thing as self-willed loquacity. He who is inclined to be indolent and passive, to be silent where he should openly utter his sentiments, should be exhorted not always to maintain his silent humour, but to speak when he is called on to speak. But because James had to deal with those in whom the opposite fault predominated—with those who were wanting in the calmness, patience, and humility, which listen before speaking, he must have recourse to the opposite exhortation. In order to warn them against the temptation to anger, which may easily be given through such precipitate talking, he tells them (ver. 20) that passionateness is least of all suited to accomplish the work of piety; "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." From this particular, he again returns to the general thought from which he started, at the same time closely connecting both with each other. As passion allows not the word of God, which is the generative agent of the new creation, to penetrate more and more into the inner man, but rather expels it from that seat, he exhorts them to purify themselves from all wickedness, from all the deformities of the inner life, which are fostered by passion, and in meekness, to suffer the word ingrafted in their inner man, more and more to develop its power within them. "Therefore," (chap. i. 21), because, namely, anger is opposed to the righteousness of God, and nourishes everything evil within them, "lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the word ingrafted in you, which is able to save your souls." James is addressing those in whom the foundation of their salvation had been already laid; but he presupposes also that they

can only then partake of salvation when they continue building on this foundation, and yield themselves more and more to the word, which they have once received, in order to experience in themselves its purifying and glorifying power.

Having ever before his eyes the faults to which his churches are liable, he again and again returns to warn them against the semblance of externalizing. He exhorts them not to believe that they have enough in the mere knowledge of the word, and, in the exercise of the understanding with its contents. He warns them against deluding themselves, as if, thereby, they responded to what he had just said, as if by this they had received the word into their life, and were already Christians. This was the main thing, that they practised the word in their lives. Herein must its power, working from within, and embracing the whole life, display itself. "Be ye doers," he says to them, (chap. i. 22) "of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." He uses a comparison, to give greater distinctness to his meaning. He compares him who apprehends the word with the understanding only, without applying it to the life, to one who has seen his image in a glass, and then, going from it, straightway forgets how he looked. So one who has a mere superficial acquaintance with the word of God, who has learned to know the true form of his life in relation to the requirements of the law of God, a light indeed has arisen upon him, as to what he is and should be; but, turning himself again from the word of God, and carried away by the stream of life and its various passions, he forthwith forgets all, like the man who has seen his image in a glass, and all has been in vain for him. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass, for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was," (chap. i. 23, 24.)

With him who thinks to have done enough with the mere superficial contemplation of the word of God, and in whom knowledge and action conflict with each other, James contrasts the man who has looked into the depths of the Law of God, and lives in the meditation of it. He here distinguishes the

law of the letter in its outwardness, from the law written within by Christianity, the law of the spirit received into the higher life. This he calls the perfect Law, in opposition to the Mosaic law, viewed outwardly, which, as a law of the letter, could bring nothing to perfection, and leaves everything as it finds it. He calls it also the law of freedom, inasmuch as it frees the man, whose inner life has been assimilated to it, in opposition to the bondage of the letter. To this law, no one can be related as a mere outward hearer. He who has appropriated, as the perfect law, the law of liberty, is constrained from within to manifest it in his life. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed," (chap. i. 25.)

But how does this harmonise with Paul's statement, when he declares, "do this, and thou shalt live," "he that doeth these things shall live in them," to be the characteristic of the Law; and, on the other hand, "the just shall live by his faith," to be the characteristic of the Gospel? Here, it is true, there would be a contradiction, if James were speaking of the Law in the same sense as Paul, as if he meant, that, through the works of the Law, a man could merit salvation. But James is far from doing this. He is speaking of the Law as it is made to live within a man through faith in Christ, of the Law, as it is unfolded by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, and which presupposes and involves faith. In this respect, then, he says, and says rightly, that, in the practice of this law, we must feel ourselves blessed, and can only thus partake of the blessedness which Christ imparts to the faithful. His meaning is the same as that of Christ, when, at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, He says, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock." Paul, also, would assuredly have agreed in this. It is in harmony with the Pauline mode of teaching, that he only can experience in himself the Divine power of faith and can be saved through faith, who displays it in his life; for, in his mind, faith is the principle which transforms the whole life from within, even "that faith which worketh by love," as when he says, "If I had

all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) James then again passes from the general to the particular, and applies what he has said of practice in the life, to an individual case, which he prominently brings forward, making his selection according to the peculiar circumstances and faults of these churches. In writing to another church, he would have chosen other examples. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain," (chap. i. 26.) James, who proceeds upon the Christian principle, that the worship of God must embrace the whole life, calls, therefore, that, a fantastic, false and vain worship of God, in which the moral defects, which before prevailed, still continue to exist; as in application to this particular church, those excesses of passion, that want of government of the tongue. Of those who still continued thus to live, and yet presumed on their worship of God, James says that they deceived themselves, and that their religion was vain. As with such, he now proceeds to contrast the true worship of God which manifests itself in the life, so also he again brings forward those peculiar characteristics, in which such worship of God reveals its agency, and which were selected with an eye to the circumstances of these churches. To visit the fatherless and the widow, to protect them against oppressions from the arrogance of the rich, this is the true, pure service of God. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world," (chap. i. 27.) He does not mean that outward, often falsely-understood opposition to the world, which would hinder Christians from furnishing, in their own persons, the true salt and true leaven to the world, and which would render that active mingling with the world impossible, which James, in this epistle, everywhere requires. He means the keeping ourselves inwardly unspotted from the world, so that, whilst outwardly engaged in its concerns, we yet guard against all defilement from its impure elements, and remain exalted above the world, pure from it in all our dealings with it. There are, therefore, two requirements essential to the



true service of God, and which are always found together,— conflict with the evil that is in the world, the active exercise of love, and, at the same time, the being inwardly unspotted from all the ungodliness which prevails in the world. The former can only prosper in connection with the latter.

We have already spoken of the contrasts presented between the greater number of the poor, and the much smaller of the rich in these churches. The differences and inequalities which are grounded in natural relations and arrangements were not to be abolished, but rendered less perceptible by Christianity; these were intended to be reconciled by the common bond of love, and to furnish an occasion for the exercise of the Christian spirit of love. If the first Christian enthusiasm, although upon this nothing is to be decided with certainty, called forth for a passing moment an actual community of possessions, this must be regarded as natural only to this early standing-point, when the feeling of the communion of the Divine life powerfully expressed itself, to the entire absorption of all peculiar differences. But such a state of things could not continue. After the first enthusiasm of felt communion in that higher Divine life which had appeared in humanity had its sway, and supplanted every other feeling, the inequality which is grounded in nature must again come forth, and the distinctive qualities of individuals be recognised. The disposition only should endure, which made all of one heart and one soul, and which rendered the property of each the common property of all, by a love which provided for the wants of all. But herein consisted the fault of these churches. The differences of rank and property receded not before the consciousness of the common higher Christian dignity, but the latter must rather yield to the former. Against such an unchristian aristocratic feeling, therefore, he says, "My brethren, I would ye did not combine the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons," (chap. ii. 1.) Here is designated the contradiction, in which such a tendency, which estimates believers according to those earthly privileges, stands with faith in Jesus as the Lord of glory. To the man who recognises Him as such, the one dignity of belonging to Him must be so great, that all the earthly priveleges of per-

sons must appear as utterly vain in comparison. His glory, to participation in which all believers are called, far outshines all the glory of the world. He then carries that reproach more into detail: "for, if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not at issue with yourselves—and are ye not become judges according to evil thoughts?" (chap. ii. 2-4.) The Greek word which we have here translated "to be at issue with yourselves," denotes a state where hesitations, doubts, mutually conflicting thoughts spring up in the soul, as in the case where the simplicity of faith is corrupted, where heterogeneous considerations and worldly thoughts arise, and oppose themselves to the one thing which should be paramount to Christians. Thus are meant here, those extraneous worldly considerations opposed to the Christian point of view,—which judges that all who stand in the Christian communion should be honoured as partaking the same dignity,—according to which, one receives an unfounded pre-eminence, while from the other, the respect due to him as a member of this community is withheld. These are evil thoughts. He then shows further, from the history of the propagation of Christianity at this period, from living examples, how much opposed to the Christian standing-point was such a rule of judgment. He appeals to the fact, how to the poor of this world, the highest dignity of the Christian calling had pre-eminently been imparted—how they were called to the greatest riches in faith, and made heirs of the kingdom of Heaven; and these poor, whom God, through the calling of the Gospel, had placed so high, they were guilty of despising. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor," (chap. ii. 5, 6.) We must here remark, that when James designated the kingdom of God as one promised to those who love Him, this love of God, in his mind, is without doubt to be understood as connected with faith. It is Christian love

which is meant, and which presupposes the Revelation of the redemptive love of God in Christ, and the consciousness of this love, received through the Holy Spirit. With those poor, among whom especially this calling had found acceptance, he contrasts the rich who oppressed Christians, who dragged them to judgment, if not on account of their faith, yet through extortions practised upon them, and who blasphemed that holy name by which Christians are called. "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?" (chap. ii. 6, 7.) Those rich, we think, are here meant, who were the opponents of Christianity. James appeals to experience, that, while the poor were more open to receive the Gospel, the arrogant rich showed themselves the enemies of Christ and Christianity. It is possible, indeed, though not so appropriate to the antithesis, that the rich, who called themselves Christians, were meant, and by blaspheming the name of Christ, the injury done to this name by their walk of life.

He objects against them, how much such a mode of acting contradicts the essential fundamental character of the Divine law of love. With him, also, love is the fulfilling of the law: "If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors," (chap. ii. 8, 9.) But he had to do with those who, addicted to externalizing from every quarter, made a quantitative distinction estimated according to an outward measure, even among the transgressions of the Law, which their minds were incapable of grasping in all its majesty and severity, and who could bring themselves to believe, they could satisfy the requirements of the Law by such a measure. To them such a mastery of the selfish element, as displayed itself in the preference shown to the rich, and in the contempt of the poor, appeared no very heavy sin. He must, therefore, direct their attention to this, that the Law, as the entire exposition of the Divine will, of Divine holiness, demanded unconditional obedience; that through such only can we be justified, and that in every single transgression the whole law is transgressed: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet

offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law," (chap. ii. 10, 11.) We must, therefore, in the sense of James, apply to the particular case in question this principle thus: Whosoever suffers himself to be determined, if only in this one mode of acting, by the selfish principle, which is contrary to the Law of love, he has thereby transgressed the whole Law. He has violated it, in reference to its import, the exhibition of the Divine will, in which every moment is of equal consequence, and in reference to the principle of the feeling, where selfishness is opposed to love. Are we, therefore, to assume that James supposed that, in judging of those who sin, and of the sinful actions committed, no difference of degree can exist? By no means; but obedience to the Law and its requirements may be regarded from two points of view,—it may be regarded on its ideal side, and it may be regarded in its manifestation, and between these a distinction must be made. Where the question is of the whole severity of the principle of obedience in all its requirements, and where of the different relation of the men's actions to this principle, although all must acknowledge themselves guilty before the Law, yet in so far a difference of degree may exist, according to the greater or less measure, in which the higher nature of man asserts its freedom and power, or the corrupting element of self-love more shows its predominance. James, certainly, could not mean that any one, even among Christians, perfectly responded to the demand of the Law. The higher his conceptions of the dignity of the Law, the more he combated the customary measure of externalizing and isolating, the less could he entertain such a view. And his expressions, immediately following, testify directly against it. He presupposes, that however different the actions of men may be, all must still appear guilty before the Law. But as Christ teaches us to pray, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," so he exhorts, that, conscious of the sin still cleaving to us, we should make ourselves worthy of the mercy of God, by a display, on our parts, of gentleness and compassionateness. Christians should speak and act under

the conviction, that they themselves need Divine mercy. Thus should gentleness in speaking and acting be the involuntary expression, that they are animated with this consciousness. Thus shall mercy triumph over the severity of justice. From this side, therefore, he calls the Law, by which Christians are judged, a law of liberty, because they no longer stand under the yoke of a law which makes salvation dependent on unconditional obedience, which no one can render, but are referred to a law which, in the consciousness of the forgiveness of sin received, and in confidence in the mercy of God, is more and more fulfilled in the free obedience, not of fear, but of love. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment," (chap. ii. 12, 13.)

As James, on all occasions, separates appearance and reality from each other, and combats those tendencies which put forth the semblance for the substance; as he argues against a professed knowledge of the Law, which has no correspondence in the life, and against all pretended worship of God, not evincing itself in works of love; so, from the same point of view, and from the same connexion of ideas, he argues against faith which does not show itself in corresponding good works: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (chap. ii. 14.) James, be it remarked, does not say, if a man hath faith, but, if he "say he hath faith." He is speaking of a pretence of faith, not of sincere faith; and of such a faith which manifests its insincerity by a want of good works, he declares that, through such, salvation cannot be attained. Paul also regards good works as the necessary fruits of true faith. A pretended faith destitute of these, he would not have considered a justifying faith, would not have applied even the name of faith to it. The meaning of James becomes more clear by the example he adduces, when he compares that faith which is destitute of works, to a feigned love, expressing itself merely in words, and not in deeds, as he says, "If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye

warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone," (chap. ii. 15-17.) If, then, James calls the faith which is without works, a dead faith, it could not surely be his view, that works, which are but the outward manifestation, made faith to be living, that in these the life of faith subsists; but he must have presupposed, that true faith has the principle of life within itself, from which works must proceed, and which manifests itself in works. The want of works was, to him, therefore, a proof of the absence of life in the faith, which, accordingly, he calls a dead faith. He then introduces another, who argues from his own point of view with one, who pretends to have faith without works, in order to prove to him, how the one cannot subsist without the other: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works," (chap. ii. 18.) James, therefore, says,—for he only makes another say what he himself would have said,—to him who boasts of his faith, although he is without works, that he should endeavour to prove how faith could subsist without works. To him, to James, it would be enough to prove from his works the faith which animated them, and in the power of which he had performed them. As a proof that such a faith without works is utterly meaningless, he alleges the faith of devils. Faith in God, in the true sense, can only exist where He is consciously acknowledged as the Highest Good, and where the whole life is referred to Him—the faith which involves a communion of life with God, and is something not merely intellectual, but also practical. But the consciousness of dependence on an Almighty Highest Being forces itself on lost spirits against their will; from this dependence they would willingly sever themselves, but they cannot. It is a consciousness in which they are merely passive, in which their own free acquiescence, and the spontaneous surrender of the spirit, have no part. It is a faith, not of the heart, but of the mere intellect, where God exhibits himself only in antagonism with the spirit, which separates itself from him, where God the Almighty is viewed only as the object of fear to the spirit alienated from Him,

and which earnestly desires not to be constrained to acknowledge Him. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble," (chap. ii. 19.) Because by the Jews, Abraham was put forth as the representative of faith in the one God in the midst of generations tending to Idolatry, and because the great significance belonging to Abraham was placed by them in his circumcision, James then proceeds to show that this faith meant something very different from the inoperative faith of the understanding in the one God, and that it manifested itself in the devotion of his whole life to God, and that Abraham evinced the sincerity of his faith in the work of self-denial, when in love to God and trust in Him, he showed his readiness, in the most confiding submission to His will, to deny all the feelings of nature, by the sacrifice of all that was dearest to him to God. He who would follow Abraham in faith, and through his faith would become righteous before God, must also prove his faith in such works of self-denial. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar?" (chap. ii. 20, 21.) Thus might he say, that faith and works must have here co-operated. But how co-operated? To the justification of man before God, so that Abraham only after the performance of such works could appear righteous before God? Had James meant this, then he must have assumed, that God knows man only as he appears outwardly, and consequently he could not have recognised the omniscience of God, who sees the inward parts, and who knows man's heart before its issues are manifested. As it is certain he did this, so then also must he have been persuaded that to the eye of God the faith which afterwards proved itself in works of self-denial, already appeared as sincere, as justifying faith. But arguing from the point of view of human consciousness, and having regard only to the outward aspect of the thing, he so expressed himself, that faith and works must co-operate towards justification. Thus, also, when he says, that faith is made perfect in works, he could not mean, that works, which are but the outward manifestations, are the perfecting of faith, but only, that faith exhibits itself as sincere, as perfect

in these works—the evidence of faith in action. “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God,” (chap. ii. 22, 23.) And in the same sense he then says, “See, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only,” (chap. ii. 24.) With the example of Abraham he associates also that of Rahab. Here, too, in opposition to the false Jewish point of view, which would have justified this Heathen only through an inoperative faith in the one God, he insists, that this faith must evince itself by works proceeding from a heart which despised all worldly considerations for the glory of God. “Likewise, also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” (chap. ii. 25.) And he concludes the whole development of his argument with these words, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,” (chap. ii. 26.) In this comparison, the faith which is without works answers, as we see, to the dead body uninformed with the spirit; only the point of comparison is not sharply enough defined. It cannot be so understood as if the works correspond with the spirit; for the spirit is the inward animating principle; but works are only the outward manifestation, that which is generated from the soul within. Works would rather answer to the agency of the body animated by the spirit. The meaning, therefore, is this: the want of works is a proof that the faith is a dead faith, destitute of the animating principle, and to be compared, therefore, with a dead body.

James next passes on to a topic apparently very different from the preceding, but yet, when more exactly considered, closely connected with it; for the same tendency, which presumes on mere knowledge and discussion of the Law, or an ostentatiously paraded faith, which has no correspondence in the actions, leads men also lightly to assume the office of teaching others, and to speak much in the congregation, without an inward call to this. Against this fault James warns them, (chap. iii. 1), “My brethren, be not many masters.” He grounds his warning on the greater amount of responsibility they incurred



who assumed to lead others: "Knowing that we shall receive the greater damnation." The reason, why in those churches, teaching was made so light of, was to be found in the want of self-examination and self-knowledge, with which all the vices rebuked by James were connected. From the superficial moral judgment which followed only the outward appearance, they had no knowledge how to regard, as they ought, the weight and importance due to words. They did not consider that speaking also is an action to be judged of according to a moral standard, and that sin can be committed as much by the immoral use of language, as by any other action. To this danger James directs their attention; he shows how hard it is to observe the true measure, and exercise true self-command in speaking, and that ruin may proceed from a single word, and by these considerations he would stir them up to be more conscientious in their desire to stand up to speak. He who well weighed the responsibility and the danger, would not be able so easily to decide to speak. Thus he says, (chap. iii. 2), "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body;" *i. e.*, he who always exercises self-command in the use of words, will be capable also of exercising self-command in other directions. He then illustrates, by many examples drawn from life, what power this apparently insignificant member can exercise, and how much depends on the government of the tongue, (chap. iii. 3-6), "Behold we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body; behold how the ships, which, though they be so great, and are drawn of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth; even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a forest a little fire kindleth; and the tongue is a fire;" *i. e.*, as a spark can set a whole forest in flames, so a word uttered by the tongue may cause much mischief. "As a world of unrighteousness, the tongue is among our members, defiling the whole body, and setting on fire the whole course of nature, and is itself set on fire of hell." He means to denote by this, that as the fire of hellish passion in-

flames the tongue; so also from the tongue, this fire spreads itself over the entire life. James then proceeds to show how vain is man's mastery over the world, when he who aspires to dominion over it, is himself enslaved to the world by his passions. How ignominious, when man who seeks to govern the whole animal creation, is unable to bridle his own tongue! "For every kind of beasts and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," (chap. iii. 7, 8.) From all sides James assails the spirit of hypocrisy in religion, and therefore the affectation of piety in our language, when the expression of the praise of God is found associated with a hateful cursing of men in whom we should reverence the image of God. He brings this inner contradiction to light, and sees in it nothing but inveracity, when he says, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter? Can a fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh," (chap. iii. 9-12.) Thus James points to the fundamental thought which formed the basis of his whole Epistle; that everything, namely, depended on the feeling which gave the direction to the whole life; the recognition of which principle was the furthest removed from the tendencies which he combats from all quarters.

Having controverted the false faith which is unaccompanied by works, James proceeds, also, to impugn that knowledge and wisdom in Divine things, which is not manifested in the life by corresponding actions. He requires of all religious knowledge, that as, issuing from the life of God in the soul, it should evince itself in a mode of life determined by it. "Who is a wise man, and endowed with knowledge among you by it? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom," (chap. iii. 13.) As meekness was the virtue most opposed to the faults of the churches to whom this Epistle was addressed, so he insists on it; thus rebuking the passionate

conduct of those who sought to assert their claims to knowledge, as the characteristic of true wisdom and of true knowledge. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth," (chap. iii. 14.) It is the inward disposition of the heart, which, according to him, betokens true knowledge and true wisdom, which comes down only from Heaven, issues only from the Divine life, and must display its Divine character in the life. The contrary wisdom is derived from a sensual, not from a Divine principle. All evil, everything opposed to the Spirit of God and the Divine life, is frequently described in Scripture by the flesh. When taken in this general sense, this epithet is appropriated, even to the spiritual element in man, to the reason, the soul, in so far as they are not rendered subservient to the Spirit of God, but seek to assert themselves as self-subsisting powers, independent of God, and therefore in antagonism to God; all this is involved in the notion of the flesh, in that Biblical sense. It is not exclusively referred to what we call flesh, the sensuous faculty of perception in the more restricted meaning of the term. From the flesh, understood in this sense, is differenced, according to the language of the Bible, that which is designated as the sensual, the spiritual, in so far as it is not devoted to God, but to the world. Reason, however developed, still remains in the sphere of the sensual. Of this James is here speaking. And this to him is the same as that which works in the spirits fallen from God. "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work," (chap. iii. 15, 16.) He then particularises and describes, though still with special regard to the arrogant assumption of wisdom common to those churches, yet in a manner, which has important practical lessons for all times, those qualities which should ever accompany true wisdom. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy," (chap. iii. 17.) The first characteristic of the wisdom which cometh down from above, which he mentions, is purity, *i. e.*, the being

pure from every worldly stain; then the love of peace,—the truly wise man, therefore, does not obstinately adhere to his own opinion, nor excite controversy with others upon it; next, that it be gentle, easy to be entreated, *i. e.*, that it be ready to hear others also, to be itself instructed, to acknowledge its own error, and acquiesce in the better. All this testifies of victory gained over self-love. Further, he ascribes to the wisdom which descends from above, that it is full of mercy and good fruits, *i. e.*, therefore, that knowledge is inseparable from action. We have spoken above of what James understood by that state of mind, in which we are at issue with ourselves. This, also, he excludes from genuine wisdom. He requires inner unity of soul, assured conviction, so that the soul be not driven to and fro, by extraneous considerations, and by conflicting doubts. James's meaning is hardly to be described in one word. The notion of impartiality and simplicity is most in accordance with it. Lastly, wisdom should be without hypocrisy.

Antagonism to the controversial spirit peculiar to this arrogant assumption of wisdom, being the predominant feature in the teaching of James, he now insists especially on this,—that everything Christian prospers only in peace and harmony: “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace,” (chap. iii. 16.) The fruit of righteousness is a notion, to be understood differently in the sense of the Bible. By this may be denoted the blessing, which righteousness brings with it,—the fruit for eternal life. But by the same expression may be denoted, also, the fruits of righteousness in the works, which these fruits produce; and although the expression is true in both cases, the latter is the meaning of James; and he means to say, that which proceeds from righteousness, everything truly good in our actions which we sow, can prosper only where there is peace, and among those whose actions aim at peace,—where nothing but strife exists, nothing truly Christian can flourish.

This, then, leads him to speak generally of the causes of the many controversies in the churches. The ground of these he finds in unsatiable desires, which allow none to be content. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come

they not hence, even from your lusts which war in your members?" (chap. iv. 1.) James, here, like Paul, presupposes an inner conflict in man,—the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. As Paul calls the power of sin, "the law in the members," inasmuch as the body exhibits man, as he is outwardly, and, in so far as in it the dominion of sinful desires is displayed, so James speaks of the lusts that war in their members. The movements of the higher spiritual nature, which are found even in the unregenerate man, are the only means of opposition, from his point of view, to the might of these sinful desires; but these are too feeble to secure a victory over that opposing power. In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul describes this conflict as leading to no decisive result, and leaving man in irreconcilable discord. But it is otherwise with the Christian, with the regenerate man; yet even in him there still subsists the same antagonism, only with this difference, that the higher spiritual nature of man has been strengthened by a Divine life communicated to it, through which it is empowered to overcome the opposition of those sinful desires. But conflict is the condition of victory, and failing this condition, the ungodly element gains strength more and more, until it may at last succeed in altogether quenching that higher life. To this conflict James exhorts them, and warns them against the danger which threatens wherever this is neglected, as was the case with many in these churches. Many were here to be found, as is evident from the rebukes of James, who, although calling themselves Christians, were still far from the character of regeneration, and in whom, the relation between these two contrary tendencies in no respect differed from that which is found in those who belong altogether to the world. To them, therefore, he says, "Ye lust," namely, after earthly goods, which ye would use in the service of your lusts, "and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain," (chap. iv. 2.) Luther has translated this by "ye hate," and, according to the sense, not without ground; for James can hardly mean to speak of the prevalence of murder, literally understood. But he, doubtless, designedly chooses the most forcible expression, in order, with

the greatest possible severity to designate this sin, which ever remains the same, in all forms of its manifestation. Therefore, he puts murder, which is the acmé of the expression of hatred and envy. For the desire to remove their object out of the way, is involved in the notion of hatred and envy. The desire that such a one might not exist, lies at the bottom of such feelings. The mode of self-love, which here finds its expression, sees in the existence of another the barrier from which it would be freed. Although, therefore, this has not issued in act, and the power of higher feelings has been exercised to avert such a consummation, yet this lies at the bottom of such a disposition, and the Divine word discovers in the hidden germs of the heart, that which, when consummated, becomes the object of general abhorrence. Christ, therefore, in the Sermon on the Mount, teaches, in opposition to the mere outward view of the Mosaic Law, "that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment," *i. e.*, of condemnation, (Matt. v. 22.) And the apostle John says, (1 John iii. 15), "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

As already in the beginning of his Epistle, so again James here refers them to the Source of all good, from which alone they could obtain the satisfaction of all their needs. The ground why all their endeavours ever failed of their end, and involved them in more strife through the clashing of their selfish interests, he finds in this, that they would create for themselves what should be sought only from God, in lowly submission to His will. He directs their attention to the want of prayer, which can alone procure a blessing on their labour, as the ground of all their vain endeavours and their disputings. In these churches, then, there were not wanting those who, together with every outward performance in religion, combined a certain kind of prayer, which, however, he describes as incapable of producing fruits, not being the true prayer of the heart, and not proceeding from the right direction of the soul to God,—a prayer of earthly desire only, which would make God the minister of its wants; for they sought from God merely that which they might use in the

service of their earthly lusts. "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts," (chap. iv. 2, 3.) He ever comes back to the one fundamental evil in them, the co-existence of many external religious exercises, with a direction of feeling altogether allied to the world. As in the Old Testament, the union of the people with God is exhibited under the image of a marriage, and falling away from God, under the image of adultery; so, therefore, James addresses them, in so far as they claimed to be worshippers of God, and yet served only the world, as adulterers. He directs their attention to this,—that God demands the whole heart of man, that it must not be divided between God and the world, that either the love of God or the love of the world must be the animating principle, and that a devotion to the world, as the end of their endeavours, the love of the world, which seeks its highest good in it, cannot subsist without a direction of the soul at enmity with God. As the Lord Himself says, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God," (chap. iv. 4.) James reminds them, in general terms, of the declarations of Holy Scripture, which everywhere testifies of the incompatibility of these two directions. "Do ye think," he says to them, "that the Scripture speaketh in vain? The spirit which dwelleth in you is a jealous spirit," (chap. iv. 5.) This spirit, he means to say, cannot tolerate any other spirit beside it; where it predominates, the love of the world is necessarily excluded. "But," he immediately adds, by way of consolation after this warning, "He giveth more grace," (chap. iv. 6), than that already imparted, larger and yet larger measures of grace, where only the one fundamental condition is fulfilled,—the entire devotion of the heart, the humbly receiving mind. Thus he adduces the passage from the Proverbs, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Although those to whom this epistle was addressed, were far from the arrogance of unbelief, they were yet wanting in humility, in the ever-present consciousness of de-

pendence on God, and of being nothing, and being able to do nothing without God. This defect showed itself in the too great confidence reposed in earthly possessions and on human means. The absence of humility ever lies at the bottom of the prevailing love of the world. James, therefore, inculcates upon them, that God withdraws His gifts and aid from the proud, because they are without the necessary condition, which the creaturely spirit must have in order to receive every communication from God the Creator; but where humility is found, there is the heart fitted to receive all the gifts of God's grace. To those who palliated their sins by pleading the irresistible temptations of Satan, or the want of God's Divine grace, he says, it was their own fault, if they believed they were necessitated to yield to the assaults of the devil, or that the grace of God was withheld from them. Everything depended on the direction of their own will; they had only to humble themselves before God, to turn themselves to Him in the feeling of their needs, to resist the Evil one, who has power only over those who surrender themselves to him, and God would impart Himself to them, and the power of sin would be forced to yield before them. "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God: resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you," (chap. iv. 7, 8.) The inward feeling and the outward manifestation, James views together as one. Purity of the heart, in its detachment from every worldly impurity, must reveal itself in the purity of the outward life. Instead of this order, James, who always prefers to particularise and express his meaning in sensuous images, puts the keeping the hand clean from everything sinful which it might serve as the instrument of sin, and from the purity exhibited in the outward demeanour, would have us infer the inward purity of heart. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded," ye that are divided between God and the world, (chap. iv. 8.) The Greek expression he uses, denotes the notion of a man, who has, as it were, two souls within him, who is destitute of the true unity of the inner life, which can proceed alone from the all-determinating direction of the soul to God; of a man drawn to and fro, be-



tween a leaning to God and a leaning to the world. Such a state of feeling stands in direct opposition to the sanctification of the heart, which James requires; for true sanctification is ever grounded in this,—that but one soul dwell in man, that love to God be the one animating principle. It is incumbent on him, therefore, to charge those, who were absorbed in worldly pleasures, that they must become conscious of the vanity of these pleasures, and of their miserable condition. He must seek to evoke in them godly sorrow, the pains of repentance, as the ground of true joy,—that joy in God, which is found in those who, having died to the world, have entirely devoted themselves to Him; as Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, of which we find so many traces in this epistle, teaches, “Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.” “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up,” (chap. iv. 9, 10.) James, therefore, comprises everything in self-humiliation before God, as the condition of all true exaltation derived from God, in accordance with the declaration of Christ, “He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” In this passage, James describes an action of the spirit, a process which cannot be the object of outward perception, though indeed this inward action must reveal itself in the conformation of the whole life. He speaks, therefore, of humiliation before God, as of something which can take place only between God and man. Such a relation is here denoted, in which man can place himself to God alone, and not to any creature. He who is conscious of such a relation to God, who has this for the key-note of his soul, will, from this very consciousness, be far from placing himself in any similar relation to man. Because his whole life is thus rooted in the consciousness of dependence on God, he will thereby be preserved from all slavery to man.

The want of humility displayed itself in the propensity to pass judgment upon others, in two ways. He who judges another is far from self-humiliation before the Holy Law, from comparing his life with this standard, and acknowledging, how great is

the gulf between his own life and the requirements of the Law. Therefore, James says, that such a one makes himself a judge above the Law,—a lawgiver, instead of applying the Law to himself, and acting according to it. He says, that such a one, while speaking against his brother, speaks against the Law itself, inasmuch as he contradicts the law which accuses him in his act of judgment. Further, the absence of self-humiliation before God, shows itself in such a one, because he forgets that he himself, and he whom he accuses, equally depend on the one Judge, who alone can bestow blessedness and misery. He puts himself in the place of the supreme Judge, when he presumes to anticipate His judicial sentence. “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?” (chap. iv. 11, 12.)

The antagonism between the pride of the worldly mind, and the essence of true humility, having led James to administer sundry rebukes against this form of evil existing in these churches, he now fastens on a particular point, which, however, stood closely connected with the former false tendency,—that secure confidence in the arm of flesh, through which they were led to reckon on future days, without one moment’s consideration of the uncertainty of human life, and in virtue of which they formed plans of earthly gain for the future, as if that future were certified to them. James, therefore, considered himself bound to remind those who were forgetting themselves in the concerns of the world, of the uncertainty of everything human, and of the dependence of the whole life on the will and guidance of God. “Go to, now, ye that say, To-day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that,” (chap. iv. 13–15.) It is evident that

James, in saying this, did not mean to urge upon them the necessity of the continual expression in words of such a condition. Such modes of speech might easily become mere forms, and these churches were prone, as a consequence of their whole tendency, to reduce everything to mere form. James, as we have already learnt, prefers to use a special case instead of a general thought, and so here also, instead of generalising on the uncertain and dependent condition of the whole earthly life, he expresses himself in words adapted to designate this general thought in its application to a particular case. From the particular, he then again passes on to the general, while he assails their whole false confidence on the world and self. "But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil," (chap. iv. 16.) His exhortation is concluded by reminding them, that the acknowledgment of the truth here expressed is not enough, but that all depends on their personally realising in their lives the truth thus acknowledged,—the point, however, in which these persons were chiefly defective. "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," (chap. iv. 17.)

James, then, turning to the rich, who were utterly absorbed in earthliness of mind, addresses them thus, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped together treasure for the last days," (chap. v. 1-3.) James denotes three kinds of riches, viz., the garnered fruits of the field, apparel, gold and silver. All these, he means to say, these rich accumulate to no profit. As their unused treasures of gold and silver are devoured by rust, so this will be a witness in the judgment against them,—their guilt being apparent from this, that that which should have been used for the advantage of others, they have suffered by unuse to be corrupted. The rust will gnaw their own flesh, while they are reminded by their own fallen condition and the judgment now at last impending over them, how, instead of laying up enduring treasures, they have heaped up for themselves the fire of Divine

judgment, in the treasures which they have suffered to become the prey of rust. He then depicts the oppressions which the righteous poor had to endure from the rich, whom we are not to understand as belonging exclusively to the Christian Church. "Behold," he says, (chap. v. 4, 5), "the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." That is to say, as the ox is fattened, which is to be led to the slaughter, so have ye, by your devotion to the service of your lusts, and by enjoying yourselves in all security, made yourselves ripe for the impending judgment: "Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you," (chap. v. 6),—the patient resignation of the righteous contrasted with the arrogance of the oppressor.

James then addresses himself to those Christian brethren, who had to suffer much from the rich and powerful. He exhorts them patiently to endure all manner of wrong, to wait in resignation, for the appearance of the Lord himself, to redeem His own from all evil, and to manifest Himself as the righteous Judge over all. It must here be considered, that this last time was then expected as nigh at hand. Such an expectation was natural to the apostolic age. Christ Himself refused to give any revelation as to this point of time. The deciding on this point of time, He said, His Heavenly Father had reserved to Himself alone, and that even the Son could determine nothing upon this. But the longing of the apostolic church "hasted unto" the manifestation of the Lord. All Christian time appeared only as the point of transition to the eternal, and thus, as something passing quickly away. As the wanderer contemplating in the distance the end of his wanderings, overlooks the windings of the road, and believes his goal already near, so was it then, when the eyes of men were directed to that termination of all earthly development. This is also James's point of view, when he says, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth

for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (chap. v. 7, 8.) James, to whom, as we have already seen, that mode of viewing nature in which the oriental delighted was familiar, transfers to history, the laws of natural life, the progress of whose development is gradual. As the fruit only gradually ripens, and the husbandman must patiently wait for the rain at the beginning and end of sowing, so it requires the same enduring patience, to wait for the ultimate, gradually preparing term of the development of the history of the Earth. In this sphere, also, everything has its appointed issue, and that precipitate impatience must be guarded against, which, not waiting upon the different stages of growth, seeks at once to secure the last.

James next proceeds to speak of the conduct of Christians towards each other, recommending that long-suffering which leads to mutual forbearance. They were not to accuse one another, nor invoke God against each other, but to leave the judgment upon everything to God, and not to desire to forestall, by their mutual condemnations, that Judge who soon will appear. The language of James reminds us of the words of the Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door," (chap. v. 9.) He then places before them the examples of the prophets, as models of endurance, especially the example of Job, in whom, after he had passed through all the trials of his patience, God's mercy so conspicuously revealed itself. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience," (chap. v. 10.) This train of thought, doubtless, is implied in these words,—in the name of the Lord these men spoke, and yet suffered so much, and for the sake of the Lord. If, then, the prophets, whose dignity was so great, since they were commissioned to speak in the name of the Lord, suffered such things, how should we expect anything else? "Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the

patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord;" *i. e.*, the end brought about by the Lord, the issue, which the Lord gave to all those temptations: "that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy," (chap. v. 11.)

James then passes on to particular exhortations, all of which, however, are opposed to faults connected with the main shortcomings of these churches. As Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, spiritualises and glorifies the whole Law, turning everything from the outward to the inward, and from the particular to the totality and unity of feeling,—as He, abolishing and yet fulfilling the Law, abolishing it according to the letter, and fulfilling it according to the spirit,—transformed the commandment, Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day, into the higher, Every day shall be to thee holy; so he transformed the commandment, Thou shalt keep thy oath sacred, into the higher, Every word spoken as consecrated to the Lord, having Him before thine eyes, shall be sacred to thee. What an oath is to others, every word should be to the Christian, and, hence, among true Christians, an oath is superfluous; each regards his word as sacred, and all have such mutual confidence, that the word of each will have this authority among them. So should it be in all true Christian churches, in which all are known to each other as true Christians. In these churches, however, the depraved habit of the Jews had been admitted, that inasmuch as words had not with them the force they ought to have,—a fault easily found in connexion with their general loquacity,—many asseverations were needed to procure for their words a weight which they had not in themselves. If they scrupled to use the name of Jehovah often, more disguised formulas of oath were substituted, the violation of which cost them fewer pangs of conscience. Against this, then, James speaks, when he says, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation," (chap. v. 12.) That is to say, their yea and their nay should be enough, instead of any other assurance, and that they exposed themselves to condemnation, when their mere word was insufficient, and

an additional asseveration was required to procure credence for it.

James, now, imparts some general instructions most opposed in their nature, to the worldly-mindedness of these churches, and to the contrariety between certain actions of worship, and the life, in other respects, wholly devoted to the world. For nothing can be more opposed to such a tendency, than the requirement, that the feelings of Christians, equally in suffering and in joy, should pass into prayer. Through this, suffering and joy should be sanctified and glorified. In suffering, the feeling of pain should be changed into prayer; from God help should be sought in prayer, and strength to endure sorrow and to be resigned. And in joy, the heart should be disposed to praise God, and to thank Him, to whom we owe all our blessings. The common element, therefore, equally in sorrowful and in joyous feelings, should be the direction of the heart to God. And since life is an alternation of joy and sorrow, the whole life will thus become one prayer. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

As James here refers everything to prayer, as the soul of Christian life, so he applies it to sickness. In this case there is a call for mutual intercession, in the name of the Lord. As the presbyters act in the name of the whole church, and as every member was conscious of membership in the church, and of his need of their sympathy and intercession, and of his being able to reckon upon them; so individuals, in their sickness, were to summon the presbyters of the church; and these were to pray for them. With this was joined a symbolical action, which obtained in many churches of the East, though it never was universally prescribed, viz., the anointing with oil, an usage which Christ Himself sometimes adopted in healing the sick, as a sensuous sign of healing and sanctifying power. If it were according to the will of the Lord, the sick man would recover his bodily health; but in all cases, spiritual refreshment, the renewed and strengthened consciousness of the forgiveness of sins would be imparted to him. But spiritual strengthening must also at that time have reacted on the body. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church;

and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him," (chap. v. 14, 15.) James, we thus see, ascribes the power specified, not to the anointing with oil, but to the prayer of faith. As he regards the presbyters as organs, acting in the name of the church, so he places all other Christians in such relation to each other, as members of one body, that they pray for one another in bodily and spiritual need, confess their sins to each other, and pray to God for the forgiveness of each other's sins. He ascribes great efficacy to the prayer of brotherly love: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed," (chap. v. 16); whether it be, that James here, as in the previously mentioned case, considers spiritual and bodily healing as connected with one another, or that he has in his mind merely spiritual healing. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," (chap. v. 16.) He then recalls to their minds the examples of the efficacy of prayer derived from the Old Testament. But because the Jewish mind, with its usual tendency to externalize everything, inclined to remove these holy men of ancient times to a vast distance from itself, and to regard them more as objects of veneration and admiration, than as examples for imitation; James reminds them, that those men were frail men like themselves, and that God's power could even now work through the weak; an application which must be the more admitted, since that which the Old Testament would have viewed as the gift and privilege of only a few, had been made common to all by Christianity, in virtue of that priestly and prophetic dignity which belongs equally to all. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit," (chap. v. 17, 18.)

An exhortation, not to cast off, in an unloving spirit, those who had fallen into errors in their moral and religious devel-



opement, but to interest themselves in them, and seek to recall them to the truth, is a natural transition from his incitements to mutual prayer in spiritual and bodily need; an exhortation peculiarly needed, where an inclination to brand others as heretics was evinced. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins," (chap. v. 19, 20.) To save a fallen brother from that spiritual death to which he has exposed himself, is thus described by James as the greatest work of love. To detach a man entirely from the sinful direction of his life, and restore the Divine life in its essence within him, is more than to excite him to repentance for a particular sin, and pave the way to the attainment of the forgiveness of that sin. Many sins, into which his earlier direction had thrown him, are thereby amended. This explanation of the words seems most suitable to the context. If, however, by the sins of which he here speaks, we prefer to understand, not the sins of another, but his own sins, the sense would then be; that by a love which shows its zeal in the salvation of the soul of another, he may amend many sins, into which, through the frailty still adhering to him, he has fallen, because love outweighs all else, and is more than any other quality adapted to overcome the still remaining evil; as the Redeemer says, "He to whom much is forgiven, loveth much." If the passage be so explained, the amending his own sins is not to be regarded as dependent on this result; for this falls not within the power of man—through whom nothing can be gained—even because this result is entirely independent of his feelings. The zeal of love, which is instrumental in converting another, is that through which a multitude of sins is covered. Thus the Epistle concludes in the spirit of love, which breathes throughout it from the beginning, and which is to be recognised in the whole agency of James.



ON THE  
COMING OF THE LORD,  
AND ITS SIGNS.



THE  
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THE Lord rebukes the blindness of the Pharisees, who marked the appearances of the atmosphere and the visible heavens, in order to determine beforehand the weather of the coming day, but regarded not the great signs of a deeply agitated period, so as to discover that a great day of the Lord was drawing nigh, for the salvation of those who would accept it with lowly hearts, and as a judgment on those who, devoted to the lusts of the flesh, or given up to the delusions of a vain and empty arrogance, showed themselves incapable of receiving the proffered salvation. A similar aspect of things has often since then presented itself, and will doubtless often present itself, till the final decisive day of the Lord dawn on the world. Before the Lord shall come for the last time, to execute the last sifting of His Church on earth, and to consummate His kingdom, He often comes in the Spirit, to breathe new life into her when dead, and to eject from her whatever manifests itself as unsusceptive of this new life; but the healthy and watchful eye is needed rightly to interpret these signs of the times. The inexhaustible source of all errors and misapprehensions is to be found in the heart of man. As the eye of the body, when unimpaired, can perceive everything presented to it from without, in its right character, —as, on the other hand, when diseased, it sees nothing clearly or distinctly, so also is it with the eye of the spirit, in relation

to those things which are spiritually discerned. Hence it is, that the Lord declared to the blinded Pharisees, who, with eyes to see, yet saw not the greatest sign which ever appeared among men, and always required new signs, that because the light that was in them was darkness, all, therefore, without them was also darkness. (Luke ii. 35.) The direction of the inner faculty of perception determines also the manner in which external objects and appearances act upon us, and are perceived by us. Thus it happens, that as, when given up to delusion in the inner sense, the signs of the times which point to the coming of the Lord are disregarded by us, or mistaken and misunderstood, so also, even that which was intended to undeceive us, is so interpreted according to our own prepossessions, as that we may find in it a confirmation of the delusion which overmasters us.

From this danger the study of God's word preserves us, while it holds before us the mirror, in which we may know ourselves as we are, while it enables us to discover the causes of self-deception in our own inner man, and while it leads us rightly to understand the coming of the Lord in the Spirit, and its precursory signs. Assuredly the reading, and even frequent reading of this Word, whose appointed end it is, to be such a light to us amid the darkness of the world, is not in itself enough. As History, in so many melancholy instances of human aberration, teaches, here too much depends on the eye of the spirit with which Scripture is read. Those who, even unconsciously, sought only themselves in Scripture, found also themselves only; destitute of that humble mind which renounces itself in order to receive ingenuously the spirit of Scripture, their knowledge led them to interpret it only in subserviency to their master delusion. The Pharisees of all times search the Scriptures, and *think* therein to have the road to eternal life; but they are not brought, through the testimony of these same Scriptures, to Christ, who alone can give eternal life; for their heart is far from the word of God. (John v. 38-40.)\*

\* It should not surprise us, if, in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, a far wider divergence has arisen, than could arise in that of writings of a different nature intended to communicate knowledge to the understanding. Rightly to enter into the meaning of Holy Scripture, partly, there

Only when we seek truth and light with ardent desire and prayer at the Eternal source of all light and truth; when, with a heart hungering and thirsting after righteousness, of which we feel ourselves destitute, we come to the word of God, in order that He, who alone is able, may impart that for which we hunger and thirst; when sighing under the yoke of bondage, which we all more or less bear, we long for the freedom of the sons of God, which the Son of God alone can confer; only then, with this sober self-consciousness, this feeling of need, this mind

is required the mind capable of receiving the things of God, without which they must remain as a closed sanctuary; partly, also, there are manifold stages in the development of that feeling, and, therefore, manifold stages in the development of the religious life proceeding from it. To this multifariousness the word of God should condescend, in order, in various transitions, to train mankind to the unity of the Divine life. The diversity of views which must result from this, is neither accidental, nor in itself an evil; but testifies of the riches deposited in Holy Scripture, and of that wisdom which has adapted them according to the requirements of the religious education of human nature in its vast multiformity. Augustin excellently describes this relation of Holy Scripture to the religious development of man, when he says, in his Confessions (lib. iii. § 9), "*Illa erat, quæ cresceret cum parvalis,*" in order to lead them on by degrees, and to reveal itself to them in its ever-increasing vastness, according to the measure of their growth. The same Augustin says that God has so accommodated Holy Scripture, that the truth should be found in it, in forms as diverse as the diverse natures of men: "*Deus unus sacras literas vera et diversa visuris multorum sensibus temperavit,*" (Confess. lib. xii. § 42.) And he prefers, certainly not unjustly, that exposition of the truths of religion, which presents no one-sided, exclusive tendencies, but in which every one able to receive the truth may find that one side of it adapted to his peculiar needs. "*Ego certe, si ad culmen auctoritatis aliquid scriberem, sic mallet scribere, ut, quod veri quisque de his rebus capere posset, mea verba resonarent, quam ut veram sententiam ad hoc apertius ponerem, ut excluderem, ceteras, quarum falsitas me non posset offendere.*" All the declarations of Holy Scripture, indeed, have their definite, simple sense, which reason, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, must deduce from the meaning of the words, from the connexion in which they are found, and from the relation which occasioned them; but there are various stages which conduct to the knowledge of this one truth, various beams, in which the light of this one truth is wont to refract itself in reference to the diversity of the minds which strive after it. Because

averted from ourselves and turned to the Lord, from whose Spirit we desire to be instructed, shall we make the word of God the lamp of our life, and be preserved, through its instrumentality, from the many and manifold delusions of our own minds, and learn more and more to understand ourselves, the signs of the times, and the coming of the Lord announced by them.\*

When we compare our own with the preceding ages of the Church, we cannot fail to recognise the signs of such an impending coming of the Lord in the spirit, to impart a new glory to the kingdom of God. As the Apostle Paul, in writing of the final decisive epoch of God's kingdom on earth, declared, that the dominion of evil and of Antichrist must first attain its culminating point, ere the Lord revealed Himself to destroy all that is opposed to Him, by the breath of His Almighty Spirit, so is this also fulfilled in every new period of the development of God's kingdom, each of which, in its own manner, prefigures,

then Scripture must thus become the point to which these so different interpretations annex themselves, there has hence arisen the notion, that a perpetual external authority was indispensable in the Church, to determine with certainty the meaning of Scripture, and to guard its interpretation against the exercise of such arbitrariness. But this was to mistake, on the one hand, the essential character of that unity which is grounded on the word of God, and of which man is to be made conscious through reason, as the organ of the Holy Spirit; on the other, that character of multifariousness necessary in the religious development of mankind; and to ascribe the training of the church, in the whole, and in individual souls, which can only be the work of God, and which He has reserved to His living Spirit, to the dead and deadening letter, and to transform the work of God into the work of man. Augustin's remark upon this is very beautiful: "In hac diversitate sententiarum concordiam pariat ipsa veritas," (Confess. lib. xii. § 40.)

\* It is admirably said by Augustin, who, after more than ten years of wandering and self-conflict, found at last the truth, which imparted the long and fruitlessly sought satisfaction and peace to his spirit: "Si veritas non totis animi viribus concupiscatur, inveniri nullo pacto potest. At si ita queratur, ut dignum est, subtrahere sese atque abscondere a suis dilectoribus non potest. Amore petitur, amore queritur, amore pulsatur, amore revelatur, amore denique in eo quod revelatum fuerit, permanetur." (De Moribus Ecclesie Catholice, lib. i. § 31.)



through the spiritual coming of the Lord and its precursory signs, that final epoch. By the conflict with the kingdom of Antichrist,—under which collective notion is understood, everything which, in hostility, either open and declared, or disguised under the garb of hypocrisy and dissimulation, is opposed to the course of the pure Gospel—is announced the approaching coming of Christ, who by the might of His Spirit will extirpate the whole power of Antichrist, and in antagonism to it, reveal Himself in new glory. Thus the one Divine foundation upon which the church of Christ is built, was for a long period covered with “hay and stubble,” and rendered almost irrecognisable; then the Spirit of the Lord manifested Himself in the purifying fire of the Reformation, to consume every extraneous element which adhered to that foundation, and purged from these alien accretions, that one foundation emerged with a brightness and a glory, such as had not been seen for centuries. Then appeared a time of a new and glorious out-pouring of the Spirit of Christ, and consequently a renovated and glorious age of the Church; but this too, like all the forms in which the Church appears on earth, was in some degree transitory. The end of that conflict, which shall endure till the consummation of all earthly things, was not yet, but again and again it must be renewed. A period of corruption once more intervened, while the one Divine foundation was again covered with “wood, hay, stubble,” and it was moreover forgotten, that nothing built on the foundation, whether it be of gold, or silver, or precious stones, is to be compared in value with the foundation itself, this being the alone immutable thing, and alone able to subsist, when the whole superstructure reared upon it falls to ruin. Thus were men to be taught by repeated experience, that the Divine foundation, concealed under so much extraneous matter, and hindered from emitting its beams with all their inherent glory, out-shining all earthly brightness, might thus be obscured, yea even fail to obtain recognition. The consciousness of the real character of this “wood, hay, stubble” having once been attained, all proved unable to sustain the fiery trial of a sifting and critical age. But after the nature of the superstructure had been discovered, as neither suitable to so precious

a foundation, nor adequate to the fiery trial, and when, therefore, this had been torn down, the minds of men did not at once observe their natural bounds,—for every human power once evoked to conflict, too easily degenerates into license, until in the conflict itself, it learns its true measure,—but only when these had been overstepped, were they led by the discipline of experience to make this discovery. Thus, then, it happened, that together with that, which had been formed of “wood, hay, and stubble,” that also which had been formed of gold and precious stone, was rejected, and at length even the Divine foundation itself was denied recognition. This, however, was the stone, which, though despised by the builders, would yet attest itself as the “head-stone of the corner,” by which the whole edifice is constantly supported, and without which it must collapse—the rock unshaken amid all storms and tempests. And as soon as men, driven by these very storms and tempests, again take refuge on this rock, and begin to gather themselves upon it, a new coming of the Lord in the Spirit, a new glorification of the kingdom of God is at hand; for whenever that Divine foundation is apprehended with new and ardent longing, then shall new Divine power infallibly issue from it, and pervade all who adhere to it.

The one universal and necessary preparation for the coming of the Lord in the Spirit, ever remains the feeling of *need*, which He alone is able to satisfy, although this may be excited in manifold ways, and from very different sides, and may, therefore, express itself under various forms, even as our heavenly Father knows how to draw, in ways as diverse as their character and condition, His children estranged from their heavenly home to the Son who alone can conduct them back to it again; whether, that from the feeling of bodily distress, He generates that of spiritual; whether, that the spirit of man, impelled by the consciousness of its Divine origin, after having long and fruitlessly sought peace and satisfaction in the systems of this world’s wisdom, and attaining even by the results of its experience, to the feeling of what is wanting and needful for it, is at last constrained to seek that which God has hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes, (Matt. xi. 25); or

whether, that, in a still shorter way, the immediately awakened consciousness of sin and guilt, which he, who thinks to have fulfilled all the commandments, (Matt. xix. 20), must share with the publicans, and the malefactor on the cross, causes the sinner to find his Redeemer. It ever is and remains the feeling of need, which, from the first appearance of the Gospel, forms and has formed, equally in particular centuries, races, and nations, as in the hearts of individuals, the necessary preparation for receiving the Lord.

This was shown in the condition of the Jewish people, when the Lord first appeared among them. Outward afflictions had excited in many the feeling and consciousness of inward misery; those, whose faith had been confounded by the controversies of sects on the right meaning of Holy Scripture, longed for instruction in Divine truth, in which they could rest their confidence. As they groaned under the yoke of the Law and of Pharisaic ordinances, under the hard commandments of those, who, while they laid intolerable burdens on others, themselves touched them not with one of their fingers, so they longed more or less consciously for Him, who could free them from this yoke, and impart rest and peace to their souls. Hence Holy Scripture, (Matt. ix. 36), compares such to a flock without a shepherd, which, scattered abroad, and deprived of a guide to places of pasture, sinks down, faint and exhausted. To these the Lord announces Himself as the new Shepherd, whose voice is recognised by His sheep, who came to reunite all in one flock, and who will lead them in safety to places of pasture, where they shall be fully satisfied. Thus He promised the kingdom of Heaven to those, who felt their inward need, and who longed to be delivered from it; thus he invited those, who, repelled by the arrogant masters of Israel, groaned under the yoke of the Law, to Himself, the meek and lowly, that in Him they might find rest unto their souls, and receive His easy yoke, —gentle and easy, because faith in Him, after it has first healed the wound of the contrite heart, and imparted the peace of Heaven through the forgiveness of sins, to the conscience tortured by the feeling of guilt, kindles the heavenly flame of holy love in the now calmed heart; and love, desiring nothing

but what the Law demands, there flows from it a free and joyous obedience. All this is true also in another respect,—even of the heathen. Through the consciousness of the vanity of their idolatrous worship, through the awakened longing after an unknown God, whom they ignorantly worshipped,\* through the felt experience of the unsatisfactoriness of all philosophy, which, presuming in its pride to reveal the things of God, became foolishness; through all this they were prepared for faith in Him, who was made to them from God, “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” (1 Cor. i. 30.)

In a similar manner was the coming of the Lord in the Spirit prepared at the time of the Reformation. The Church, which should bear only the easy and gentle yoke of her Lord, having sunk under the hardest and most galling slavery of man, and become, under a spiritual garb, subservient to earthly passions and desires, the evils generated by such a bondage, must first attain their utmost pitch, in order that men’s minds—as actually happened in a still greater extent in the fifteenth century—might be constrained to feel this slavery as a slavery, and to long for deliverance from it. Then it was thought to heal the evils of the Church by various measures of human wisdom, in the projection and execution of which, the most

\* Beautiful is the testimony of a Father of the church, who, from the point of view of Christian consciousness, could look back on the religious frame of mind in the heathen world, and which he himself had long shared. Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus*, (c. 17,) says to the heathen: *Et hæc est summa delicti nolentium recognoscere, quem ignorare non possunt. Vultis ex operibus ipsius tot ac talibus quibus continemur, quibus sustinemur, quibus oblectamur etiam quibus exterremur? Vultis ex animæ ipsius testimonio comprobemur? Quæ licet carcere corporis pressa, licet institutionibus pravis circumscripta, licet libidinibus ac concupiscentiis evigorata, licet falsis diis exancillata, cum tamen respicit, ut ex crapula, ut ex somno, ut ex aliqua valetudine, et sanitatem suam potitur, Deum nominat, hoc solo nomine, quia proprio Dei veri. Deus magnus, Deus bonus, et quod Deus dederit, omnium vox est. Judicem quoque contestatur illum: Deus videt et Deo commendo, et Deus mihi reddit. O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ! Denique pronuntians hæc non ad capitolium, sed ad Deum respicit. Novit enim sedem Dei vivi, ab illo et inde descendit.*

learned, the most important and powerful among the Christian nations of Europe co-operated; but all the vast efforts of a century, at the councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basle, ultimately succumbed to the yet greater might of an enemy who showed himself too crafty, and who, from each half-defeat, soon recovered strength again. Because they had not expelled the evil spirit from the Church through the might of the Spirit of God, because they sought gently to spoil the house of the strong man and rob him of his treasures, without first binding the strong man, and thus breaking his power; all was, therefore, vain. The unclean spirit, which they supposed to have expelled, again returned with new and greater power, and took still firmer possession of his house, which stood open and ready to receive him; for it had not been transformed into a temple of a mightier Spirit, to whom the unclean spirit must have yielded. Thus must man be taught by experience, the vanity of all external attempts at Reformation, until the Lord himself come to renew from within, by the Almighty power of His Word and Spirit, the life of the Church. Furthermore, after the consciences of men had been taken captive under the yoke of the Law, and new Pharisaic ordinances, this state of bondage must attain its acme, in order that men, from their own experience, might discover, that the righteousness, which avails before God, and accords with His requirements in the conscience, cannot be acquired through the works of the Law, and that, thereby, they should be the better able to understand and estimate what is the grace of Redemption. Thus the peculiar character of the Gospel, in its antagonism to a new form of the bondage of the Law shone forth at the time of the Reformation in new glory and power. The contemplation of the sign of our own times, compared with those of previous ages, and of the foregone providences of the Lord with His Church, leads us to expect similar results from an impending new outpouring and revelation of the Spirit of Christ. . . . .

That coming of the Lord which impresses a peculiar character on the great epochs in the development of the Church, is not prepared merely by the great spiritual movements in the bosom of the Church; but as the kingdom of God is the all-subordi-

nating end of the whole history of man, so also all the great events in the history of nations are mediately or immediately related to the coming of the Lord, as preparatory to it; whether it be, that great revolutions in the history of nations, in which the judgments of God reveal themselves, tend to rouse men from spiritual sleep, to evoke in them the feeling of higher needs, to excite and further those great preparatory spiritual movements within the Church, as was the case in the great period of the first manifestation of the Lord on earth, and as we have partly ourselves experienced even in our own times; or whether it be, that these events open a road for the more rapid and universal propagation among other nations of that which the Spirit of the Lord works in a particular nation, in order to pave the way for the fulfilment of the promise of the Lord regarding that which shall precede His great coming—the spreading of the Gospel among all nations of the earth. As, at the time of the first appearance of the Lord, it was the result of the great co-operative events of many past centuries, that, in a considerable part of the earth, the outward wall of partition between nations was removed, and that especially an unusual communication between the East and the West was brought about, through which the heavenly light which had risen in the East might easily and rapidly be spread among the nations of the West; so those events which issued from the great migrations in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries,—at first destructive, but destructive only to that which, through its own fault, fell beneath the judgment of God—contributed to obtain new ground for the propagation of the Gospel among men.\* The

\* These are the words of a man who, from what he himself beheld in the beginning of that irruption of the nations through which the Roman empire was overthrown in the West, thus, about the middle of the fifth century, expressed himself—the author of the work, *De Vocazione Gentium*. As he perceived, what we have above remarked, that the vast extent of the Roman empire necessarily prepared the way for the more general and rapid propagation of Christianity, so he also discovered that the overthrow of this empire would necessarily lead to the same result. With regard to the first he says, (lib. ii. c. 16): “*Ad cujus rei effectum credimus providentia Dei Romani regni latitudinem præparatam, ut nationes vocandæ ad unitatem corporis Christi prius jure unius*

very weapons, as an ancient writer expresses himself, by which the world appeared to be destroyed, became, in the hands of God, the instruments of grace. Where the eye of man saw only death, the germ of a new life was given through the Church; amid the work of desolation and destruction, the germ of a new creation of Christianity, which should continue to develop itself throughout coming centuries. And such, perhaps, may be the bearing, in our days, of the regeneration of that race\* to which we owe the communication of all the elements of human and Divine civilisation, and in which the Gospel first assumed a peculiar and distinctive character, and which, being again pervaded by the spirit of the Gospel, may become an instrument of great spiritual blessing for the nations of the East who have so long been estranged from the heavenly light—a consummation for which we earnestly implore the Lord, whose finger has revealed itself so apparently in the recent history of this people; and such of the access opened up to the Christian world to those regions which once were the seat of flourishing churches, and which may again become yet more influential in spreading the Gospel in a great portion of the ancient world; all this may form part of that plan which is destined to pave a way for the further emission of light, which shall issue from a new revelation of the Spirit of Christ. As alas! through the guilt of men, that which was begun in the spirit comes to nought in the flesh, so also is it often, that what human powers have commenced in the interest of merely earthly ends, is made, in the counsels of God, to subserve the higher aims of His kingdom. So may the presentiment be cherished, that the vast means for the furtherance of human intercourse, through which space is deprived of its separative power, will one day be made subser-

*consociarentur imperii.*” With regard to the second, (c. 33): “*Effectibus gratiæ Christianæ etiam ipsa, quibus mundus adteritur, arma famulantur;*” and then exclaims with enthousaism, “*Ita nihil obsistere Divinæ gratiæ potest, quominus id quod voluerit impleatur, dum etiam discordiæ ad unitatem trahunt, et plagæ in remedia vertuntur, ut ecclesia, unde metuit periculum, inde sumat augmentum.*”

\* An allusion to the liberation of Greece. This discourse was delivered in the year 1830.—TRANS.

vient to far higher ends than those for which they were first invented—to unite the nations of the earth in the communion of the kingdom of God.—The times of the coming of Christ in history always prove to be those in which the glorified Son of man, sitting at the right hand of God, reveals himself through special judgments and signs in the outward destinies of nations, as He himself predicted, when He collected all these signs in the inner and outward history of mankind, in His last discourses, which treat of the tokens of His second advent. And this coming of the Lord, in all its manifold relations, is to be compared to the shining of lightning from the east towards the west.

The times, in which such an advent of the Lord announces itself, are deemed by Him especial gifts of grace; but heavy also is the responsibility of those, whom in such periods He deigns to employ as His instruments; and great are the dangers and temptations incident to them; for of universal application is that saying of the Lord, “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required,” (Luke xii. 48.) The more a servant can gain for his Lord by the faithful employment of the talent committed to his charge, the more does he increase his responsibility by failing to use or by misuse. Where the longing for the Redeemer preceeds from a deeply felt need, but is unaccompanied by clear knowledge, it becomes exposed to many and various delusions, when it is met by that which pretends to be, but is not Christ, and by those simulations of His appearance and the revelation of His Spirit, which are rather directly opposed to the Spirit, whose mode of operation they counterfeit. When the powers of Heaven display a more than common fulness of their agency, forthwith also the powers of hell begin to stir, in order to mar and destroy the Divine work; and the danger is then the greatest, when, exhibiting themselves under the counterfeited appearance of the powers of Heaven, they imitate the work of God; when the angels of darkness seek to practise their deception, disguised under the garb of angels of light; when that which is natural and ungodly assumes the appearance of the Divine; when great things according to outward seeming, are wrought in the name of the



Lord, which, however, do not proceed from His Spirit, are not therefore truly performed in His name, and which He himself will not acknowledge. What the Lord, with voice of warning, declares of the dangers and temptations of the time of His second advent, (Matt. xxiv. 5, Luke xvii. 21, xxi. 8,) is, in this respect, applicable to each and every period of His coming in the Church. So was it in the first age of the Lord's appearance. When the fire, which He kindled among men, spread mightily in their hearts, forthwith there arose also many and various commixtures of the impure earthly fire of passion and fanaticism, with the sacred flame of evangelical enthusiasm. Already the apostles Paul and John saw this admixture in its process of formation; they saw the germinating of the Antichristian with the Christian, and warned the Church, both in their epistles and in their oral teaching, of still greater dangers impending; and, in the ages immediately subsequent to the apostolic era, the most heterogeneous intermixtures of the Christian and the worldly spirit, the most various imitations of the Divine by the natural,—and hence so many different sects, each of which thought and pretended to have the true Christianity—developed themselves from the fermentation engendered by the appearance of Christ in human nature. There was a repetition of kindred phenomena, when, after the Diet at Worms, the pure word of evangelical truth, brought to light by Luther, began to spread itself in mighty force, and to engage and penetrate men's hearts; forthwith also the breath of an impure spirit began to mingle itself, with an evil taint, in that which originally proceeded from the Holy Spirit. The same phenomena we see renewed even in our own days. There is a proverb, one of those pregnant sayings which have proceeded from the depth of the German mind, "Wherever God builds a temple for himself, the devil builds himself a chapel close by." Hence, therefore, because so much contamination and corruption always threaten the work of God, and because the ungodly elements are most destructive when they blend themselves with the Divine, the voice of the word of God exhorts us so emphatically to "watch and be sober."

Although, then, to him, who, in the light of the Word of

God, has discovered the interfusion of the Spirit and the flesh, of the godly and the ungodly, first, in his own inner man, and then in the whole historical development of human nature, this phenomena cannot be a matter of astonishment, but such rather as he would have anticipated, from those indications which the Lord gave in the parable of the wheat and the tares; yet it frequently happens in those times of movement, which prepare or introduce a new creation, that men, either because they have not yet attained to that self-knowledge, and, therefore, also to that mode of understanding history; or because, carried away by the overmastering impression of the present moment, they forget the oft-tested results of experience, perceiving the corrupting and disturbing influences of the irreligious factor on society, are led to mistake the originally Divine element from whom this movement proceeded. Sometimes those, who are altogether destitute of the faculty of understanding what proceeds from the operation of the Spirit of Christ, avail themselves of those extraneous accretions of the operations of that Spirit, in order to represent that which actually proceeds from and reveals Him, as something merely human or irreligious; sometimes those, who, when the first revelations of God's hand impressed their minds, formed for themselves, from a want of Christian self-knowledge, exaggerated hopes and expectations, seeing these deceived by the result, become perplexed and confounded as to that by which the coming of the Lord is prepared and prefigured or revealed, and at last even deny what is Divine in the great movements of the time. Thus, in the first era of Christianity, such appearances furnished a seemingly well-grounded cause for many of the accusations of Heathens against Christianity. And when, simultaneously with the pure evangelical enthusiasm, from which the first movements of the Reformation proceeded, manifestations of a destructive and licentious fanatical spirit, and vehement partizanship showed themselves, then those, to whom, from the commencement, the Reformation had appeared only as a revolt from the original Divine foundation of the Church, and who had predicted beforehand the worst consequences from it, saw their prophecies fulfilled. In

these results they sought to show the characteristics of that corrupt self-seeking spirit of innovation and revolt, from which they were eager to derive the whole work of the Reformation. Others, who had at the beginning recognised in the Reformation the operations of a true evangelical spirit, now lost their confidence in the whole cause; and, because appearances were not in accordance with their hopes, grounded in a defective knowledge of human nature and of history, finally renounced it.\*

But when we have placed our hopes not on man, and on what issues from man, but on the Lord alone, and on His Word and Spirit, when we constantly bear in mind, that only what comes from Him and returns to Him, and only in so far as it abides in communion with Him from whom it proceeded, has the eternal promise of victory, but that everything human must fall and perish, that the glory may be to Him alone; then, firmly grounded in this hope and this consciousness, all those painful experiences shall not prevail to confound us in our path in the work of the Lord in our own days, and in our love to everything connected with this work. Love, combined with clear knowledge, will be strong enough to prevail over all offences. Mindful of the dangers incident to the intermixture of that which proceeds from God, and that which proceeds from the natural man, we shall pray the Lord for the spirit of sober thought and reflection, that we be not carried away by the impression of everything which makes a great sensation under the garb of the Divine, nor by the excesses of a zeal, which, although proceeding from the fire of love, has become too much the slave of a passion which seeks its own, and that we may not be led to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God, (1 John iv. 1); but, at the same time, we shall pray to Him, that He suffer not our love to grow cold, so that we may acknowledge and embrace whatever, even among all these corruptions, proceeds from His Spirit and confesses His holy name, so that we may

\* The manner in which an Erasmus of Rotterdam, a George Vizel, a Bilibald Pirkheiman expressed themselves on the work of the Reformation, may serve as an illustration of what has been said.

not fall into the danger, while seeking to avoid and banish what is not God's, of mistaking and quenching the movements of His Spirit, and of uprooting with the tares the good wheat also, and so that we may be fitted, by a sober and considerate love, to try everything in every spirit, and from all to appropriate and further the good, (1 Thess. v. 19-21.)

But in order to be preserved from delusion through false spirits from without, the great preliminary requisite is, that we be instructed how to separate the true and the false spirit in our inner man; the examination of our own spirit must first precede our examination of that of others. If, in our own heart we have discovered, and by God's grace overcome the invisible enemy, who continually and everywhere threatens the greatest dangers to the kingdom of God, the victory over all his inveiglements from without will be easy to us. This most dangerous enemy is that self-love, which mingles itself with love to that which is God's, and with zeal for the cause of the Lord, and which imperceptibly impels us, while we think only to show our ardour for the glory of God, to seek ourselves in His cause. If we have experienced what heavenly blessings are, if we have tasted of the joys of the world to come, it may then cost us little to reckon sensual blessings as nothing compared with heavenly gain. It may be easy to us to despise what is usually called honour with the world, especially when it is weighed against the honour which is to be found with God. We may be prepared to take upon us disgrace for the name of the Lord; but it may still consist with all this, that under the dominion of a self-love, more refined and secret, and therefore the more dangerous, we seek to assert ourselves, and may withal still be far from following the Redeemer in the spirit of genuine humility and self-denial. The love of self, which rules over us, ensnares us, it may be, no longer through the charms of earthly blessings and worldly honour; it connects itself with the movements of the Divine life; it exchanges the worldly for the spiritual garb; it entices us by the semblance of a higher glory; and here the conflict with self-love becomes so much the harder, because it has spread its delusions over the hidden depths of the inner life, and we flatter ourselves how much we

labour and suffer for the cause of the Lord. That the kingdom of the Lord come, is not the alone desire of our heart, but this especially, although we ourselves be unconscious of it, that this kingdom come through *our instrumentality*, that it come in the manner, in which we, according to the notions which proceed from our spiritual individuality, have devised. It is not our wish that Christ be all in all, according to the different peculiar spiritual natures of men, all of whom God has so variously created for His own glory, which multifariousness must therefore also find its place in the new creation; but we seek to make that form, which Christ has assumed in us in conformity with the specialities of our own nature, everywhere and in all, the predominant; thus, therefore, our own shadow is cast on the highest and the holiest of our inspirations, and there exacts homage. In this one source of delusion originate various kinds of self-deception, and various hinderances which oppose the coming of Christ.

With the same mind that was in the Apostle Paul (Phil. iii. 12-14), we should constantly remember, that we have not yet attained the end of the heavenly calling, that we are still far from that perfection, that glorification after the likeness of Christ; forgetting what lies behind, we should ever press forward for the heavenly prize set before us, strive to become more and more like to Christ, and to be more and more purified from whatever in our inner man is opposed to the image of our Redeemer; and at the same time we should know, that only when this one condition is attained, shall we, maintaining the position the Lord has assigned us for the development of His kingdom, spontaneously effect that which He designed to work through us as His instruments. If instead of this, we direct our eyes without only, as if we ourselves were already perfect members of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. iv. 8), and seek our glory in working great things for the cause of the Lord, and producing great events, while we desire to stand high with our gifts of grace and our labours for the Lord, we are then easily seduced by the brilliant and imposing delusions which self-love paints before us. Instead of allowing the Lord himself alone to work, who, according to his Divine wisdom, orders times and

seasons in the gradual preparation for His coming, we desire, with impatient and self-seeking zeal, to anticipate Him, and while working for Him alone, as we imagine and pretend, but not in His name and His Spirit, but in our own name and our own spirit, we do but mar His work by ours. We do not allow the mustard-seed time, through its inner vegetative force, and according to the law of its growth, to develop itself into the tree, which is destined to spring from it. For it is with the word, which we should only sow and leave to work, "as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear," (Mark iv. 20-28.) The word of the Lord warns us against this empty joy of "doing many and great works," against this seductive straining after great events exciting attention, through which a human spirit, noisy and bustling, but without the power to transform the inner soul of human nature, so easily insinuates itself, instead of the genuine Spirit of Christ, which lowly, gently, and unobtrusively effects the mightiest results, without much noise and parade, and all the more deeply and thoroughly, the less, at first sight, it is to be discovered, (Matt. xii. 19, 20.) When the seventy disciples, whom the Lord sent out in order to test their capacities for the vocation, for which he had destined them, returned to Him full of joy, that, in His name, they had done great things, that in His name they could cast out evil spirits, He warned them, while He promised them yet greater works which they should produce through His Spirit triumphant over all evil, at the same time of the most dangerous of all temptations, to make these great works the occasion of vanity, and to estimate these particular sensuously perceptible demonstrations of power higher than the highest, to which everything should be subservient, and to which everything should be referred,—the hidden possession of heaven, the hidden life from God, common to all who are made partakers of this kingdom. "In this rejoice, not that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven," (Luke x. 20.) He says, (Matt.

vii. 22), that many would one day set forth their claims as those who had done great things in His name, who had prophesied, had cast out evil spirits, and done many miracles in His name, whom yet He never will acknowledge as His own. And the Apostle Paul teaches, that if one had such power of faith that he could move mountains, but yet had not charity, he was nothing, (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) He who rejected those who pretended to have wrought miracles in His name, acknowledges, on the other hand, as His own, those who had done truly in His name, with a feeling directed to Him alone, the most apparently insignificant offices, in that spirit which regards all the good performed by it as not its own, and in the fervour of a love which so renounces everything pertaining to self, that the left hand knows not what the right hand does, (Matt. vi. 3; Luke ix. 48.) From this feeling the mightiest deeds have at all times been wrought for the kingdom of God, even as Luther began the great work which the Lord gave him to do, without the design of doing anything great, without himself foreboding the result of his labours, rejoicing only in the certainty which had been imparted to him, that his name was written in the Book of Life, and constrained to proclaim what filled his heart, without considering the effect to be produced by it. Whereas many were seduced to rejoice in what God had wrought through them, or in the gifts He imparted to them, that they might be the instruments of His will; hence they became strangers to that lowly direction of the heart to Him from whom alone every good and perfect work proceeds, and thus from the communion of His Spirit; and the consequence at length was, that they substituted the work of their own spirit for the work of the Lord.

This false, self-seeking zeal, intermixes itself, as in labouring, so also in suffering, for the cause of the Lord, when we seek our own glory and pride ourselves in bearing odium for the Lord's sake. If, instead of avoiding, with Christian self-command, everything which might, through our fault, give occasion that the name of the Lord be evil spoken of by those who know Him not,—if, instead of condescending, in the spirit of love

which becomes "all things to all men," to the infirmities of those whom we are called to gain for the Gospel,—if, instead of so regulating our life, and accommodating ourselves with Christian wisdom and prudence to the times, in order that as much as lies in us, we do what is acceptable even in the eyes of men, (1 Cor. x. 32),—if, instead of thus continually bearing our cross, in a manner less visible indeed to man, and known only to the Lord who seeth the secrets of the heart, we surrender ourselves to all the movements of a vehement self-seeking zeal, and to everything, to which our feelings and passions, not purified and constrained by the spirit of love, hurry us along,—and if, then, we glory, when the cause of the Lord which we serve, incurs an ignominy which we might have avoided by watching over ourselves in the lowly and sober spirit of love, then we glory in an odium which we do not properly bear for the Lord, but for our own selves, who have marred and debased the work of the Lord. In this manner, even in the first ages of the Church, as we have above hinted, much prejudice was done to the cause of the Gospel by those, who, carried away not by the fire of love, but by the frenzy of natural feeling and passion, and the fanaticism generated therefrom, sought out every occasion to excite the rage of the heathen and cause them offence, everything which must expose the cause which they professed to their hatred and mockery. But if they met with the suffering which they courted, in order to glory in it, whether before men, their brethren in the faith, or before the Lord, it was not a martyrdom in His name, but one of which Paul speaks in these words, "And if I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," (1 Cor. xiii. 3.)

This infusion of self-seeking zeal always hinders the realisation of that unity, which the coming of Christ, where it is not impeded by human idiosyncrasy, necessarily brings with it,—the unity of the kingdom of God, whose essence is, that all become one flock under one shepherd. This unity attests its Divine character in this, viz., that all minds in their manifold variety are not forced from without under the yoke of one dominant form, or necessitated to sacrifice their individuality;



but that, according to the laws of Divine, and, at the same time, natural development,\* according to the laws, which God Himself, who is at once the Creator and the Renewer of nature, has deposited in it, the higher unity unfold itself spontaneously out of this very multifariousness, through the might of the Spirit of Christ, who is One, and of the One communion of life, which proceeds from Him and is rooted in Him. Nothing which is grounded in the essence of Nature as it is created by God, shall be destroyed; like the seed-corn which falls on the earth, everything dies only to arise in a higher form of life. But as the Spirit of Christ, where He begins to reveal Himself anew, can only gradually purify the life of a corrupt age, and gradually evoke, from the individual characters of those whom He has purified and transformed, the Unity which He designs, so, therefore, the very manifestations of manifold antagonisms proceeding from the various and different tendencies of those, who have been apprehended and appropriated by Christ, and who can gradually only be led by Him into perfect obedience, and gradually only be altogether pervaded by His Spirit, are signs of the commencement of new life in the Church. But self-seeking zeal will not recognise this. Heated by any impatient and precipitate fervour which comes not from the Spirit, but from the flesh, it cannot wait until Unity, thus gradually overcoming and reconciling differences, develop and reveal itself from within. It will see instead of believe. And what is the result of this impatient zeal, thus forestalling the work of the Lord? Instead of all uniting on the one foundation, which is Christ,—instead of each seeking only faithfully to perfect the form, which Christ has assumed in him according to the peculiarities of his nature, and that special course of training prepared for him by the Lord,—instead of each walking only according to the measure given to him,—and instead of committing it to the Lord, who alone is able to further and supplement and consummate everything, and conduct it more and more to the

\* For the antagonism between the Divine and the natural is throughout the work of sin, and it is the aim and end of redemption from sin to abolish this antithesis.

unity of maturity in Christ; instead of this, each desires to assert that form, in which Christ has appeared to him, and which he has assumed in himself, as that in which Christ can alone reveal Himself. Hence, therefore, he fails to recognise the one Christ, where He appears in another fashion, and in impugning this diverse manifestation, assails Christ Himself; and thus through self-will he scatters, where he should gather with Christ in love,—divides where Christ would unite,—hinders, as far as it is in his power, the realisation of the spiritual unity, which He aims to effect, and in which alone Christ can come; and labours not toward the coming of Christ, but that of human spirits, who have made their own but one member of the one indivisible Christ, (1 Cor. i. 13), that they themselves may have the pre-eminence where only Christ shall be all in all.

That this last result may be attained, and everything averted and banished which opposes this great end, to this should the dissemination of the Word of God contribute. Then only does it effect the purpose for which it was destined, when Christ himself more and more gains the dominion in all, and becomes all in all through the might of His Word and Spirit, subjecting and transforming all to Himself. To labour for this, is, therefore, the great and holy vocation of the Society,\* the anniversary of whose foundation we are assembled to celebrate. Thus may we join in fervent prayer to the Lord, that He, through the power of His Word, will subordinate to Himself everything human, which aspires to acquire authority against Him, without Him, collaterally with Him, or even under Him, and bring all to the obedience which true liberty bestows,—that He himself may come in the Spirit to overthrow the dominion of every human spirit, which opposes itself to Him, or seeks to make itself independent of Him, and which, under the garb of freedom, brings only bondage, and to establish His kingdom alone, to impart true peace amid controversy, and to produce Unity, where men, in seeking to assert their own, divide.

\* The Prussian Bible Society.



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