

HONESTY,

HUMILITY, and

CHARITY.

BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL.



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HONESTY.

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles” (1 Peter ii. 12).

THIS is a dishonest age. The world's political, commercial, and social life is poisoned with dishonesty, and few even of the children of God have thoroughly disentangled themselves from its principles and ways.

POLITICAL.

As to politics—when the Christian enters that domain he finds that he has drifted into a latitude so far from the course of the “children of light” that he searches in vain for Scripture words or principles to guide him. The waters he attempts to sail in are not in his heavenly chart, therefore instead of steering by the Word of God, enlightened and led by His Spirit, he is left to the direction of “his own understanding.”

The Christian's only relationship to "The powers that be," is subjection. Read carefully Rom. xiii. 1-8; Titus iii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13-17.

Of course if the world's power be so anti-christian as to command what God has forbidden, or to forbid what God has commanded, then subjection to God as the "higher power" may necessitate insubjection to the world's government. See an instance of this in Acts iv. 19, 20. But even here the principle that guides is subjection to authority, not self-will.

If this be so, let the Christian's subject relationship to the powers that be, be maintained in thorough honesty.

There are some whose conscience would not suffer them to defraud an individual, yet they scruple not at using crooked means to evade a government tax.

But he who is one of the "children of light" ought so to act in every detail of his life, that he is not afraid of the light. If he fills up his income tax return truthfully as under the eye of God, then he need not fear if the inspector challenges his return and examines his books. "Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good."

Moreover in paying tribute (or taxes)—whether imposed by the Imperial Government, like the income tax and receipt stamps,

or by the civil authorities, such as the police, school board, or poor rates—not only will he pay what is honestly due, but he ought to do so ungrudgingly. Many forget that they receive value for their money in paying taxes quite as really as in paying their baker's bill. The Christian ought above all others to pay cheerfully and thankfully for the inestimable privileges of peace, protection, and liberty, recognizing these to be peculiarly of the grace of God in an age when Satan is the world's prince and god.

To seek exemption upon some shuffling pretext which will not bear the light, whether it be the income tax, the dog tax, or a *receipt stamp*, is simply DISHONESTY.

COMMERCIAL.

As to business, much more must needs be touched upon, for here it is, beyond all other spheres, where the cancer of covetousness eats away the spiritual life, and dishonesty runs rampart under the guise of legitimate business practices.

In these days, beyond all precedent, young men are not contented to be servants, they want to be masters. To be under authority is irksome to pride and self-will. The exhortation, "Mind not high things but be contented with mean things" (Rom. xii. 16, see margin), finds a response in few hearts. To be "up"

in the social scale seems to be almost as much the desire of many Christians as of those who know not God. Hence the frequency with which one hears of young men beginning business "on their own account."

It is not for a moment to be supposed that such a course is *always* indicative of a low spiritual condition. It may be perfectly right and be gone into in the fear of the Lord and with His blessing. But such practical subjects are so seldom referred to by those who minister the Word of God, and young Christians are so often "like sheep without a shepherd," a prey to Satan through ignorance and inexperience, that we deem it necessary to write plainly on such matters.

In the first place, let any who think of "going into business on their own account" enquire at their own hearts the *motive*. Honesty in this would greatly conduce to honesty throughout.

If the motive be self-will, pride, or covetousness, how then can the blessing of God be hoped for? Will He not rather bring it to nought?

Further, let inquiry be made as to the nature of the business, and whether in carrying it on, the conscience can be maintained undefiled before God.

Again, all business (excepting a purely commission business) involves certain risks,

greater or less, according to the extent of the transactions. It may be the shilling risks of a smallware shop, or it may be the thousands of pounds of a wholesale business. But in each case there is risk of loss.

Many begin business, and incur risks, *without capital*, or upon borrowed money.

To *state* that borrowed money (the lender of which would rank with others as a creditor for the amount lent,) is capital is simply a lie. The world often makes a statement like this, and believes it is near enough the truth, but the Christian ought to be above it.

Whether the person beginning business be without capital, or be in possession only of borrowed money, in either case the risk of loss falls altogether upon others; the profit, if any, goes to the person himself. Plainly such a transaction is dishonest. If God has not given the capital, then God does not mean the person to be in business "on his own account."

Two godly persons might commence business together in partnership, the one having knowledge, the other having money, this might be carried out to the glory of God, provided both are Christians; but for one to begin without means, and to *risk* what is *not his own*, is not common morality.

When such a business fails, how greatly is the name of the Lord and His truth

blasphemed! How do the enemies triumph! How is the gospel hindered! Men say it is all humbug and cant, let us see HONESTY. And God means the world to see honesty in His saints.

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” “Let us walk honestly, as in the day.” “We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.”

In the conducting of the details of business, especially in buying and in selling, there is a continual temptation to dishonesty and untruthfulness. He who will be truthful and honest may make up his mind that it will cost him something. In the long run he may find that even the world's very low proverb is true, “Honesty is the best policy.” But in some lines of traffic it is increasingly difficult to live honestly, and the success of such a principle may not appear in this life, though it surely will at “the judgment seat of Christ.”

There be some who have wrong thoughts about “living by faith.” It is a great mistake to suppose that a Christian is incapable of living by faith, because he “buys in the cheapest market, and sells in the dearest.” It is his duty to do so, but to do

it honestly and truthfully requires faith in the living God. Only he who is trusting God, and who realizes that he has "a Master in heaven," is permanently above the boastful laudation of his own wares and disparagement of others, which is the coveted art of the world's "good salesman." Nor will any lower principle than faith in God save him from the sin of the proverb, "It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. xx 14).

The Christian business man ought above all things to be upright, straightforward, truthful, honest, so that his every word and act are above suspicion, and command the entire confidence of both buyer and seller. Thus will his life be a commendation, constant and influential, of the Gospel for which he testifies.

When God was legislating for Israel, His command was, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have" (Lev. xix. 35, 36). "A false balance is abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xi. 1). God's principles are the same still. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7). Surely the paltry gain obtained by injustice is dearly bought, at the expense of a good conscience and communion with God.

SOCIAL.

Christian servants not unfrequently forget that to their employers the loss of time is equivalent to the loss of money. They would scorn to take a penny from their employer's purse, they would neither beg it nor steal it; but they have no hesitation in wasting half-hours by the score of their employer's time. This is simply dishonest. Servants are exhorted "to show all good fidelity in all things." That means that they are to be thoroughly trustworthy, as much so in the absence as before the face of their master or mistress. "Eye-service" is a Scripture abomination, and signifies that God is not the One that is being served, but self. To be diligent before faces, and negligent behind backs, is another form of dishonesty.

Another exhortation to servants is, "not purloining." That means appropriating very little or trifling things that belong to another. Many a household servant would not steal a penny, but would use a hundred of her mistress's pins. Is this too small a matter to notice? Then let the servant answer, would the pins be systematically taken under the mistress's eye? Certainly not. They are taken behind backs, and this, which we adduce because it is the smallest conceivable

instance of the thing, is what Scripture calls "purloining."

The faithful discharge of duty is of incalculable weight in commending the truth to the conscience of employers and of fellow-servants. What an example of this was Daniel! No fault could be found in him, except concerning the law of his God.

The heads of households are exhorted to "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17). Again it is written, "If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. v. 8).

Hence many exhortations to "work with the hands," to "profess honest trades," and so on, in order that wives and children and other dependent relations might not want, or become a burden upon the liberality of the Church. If God gives prosperity, it is not faith but folly to suppose that such will always continue. The wisdom given to Joseph was to make the seven years of plenty avail for the seven years of famine that were to follow. Extravagance in the time of prosperity brings poverty in the time of adversity. He who preaches that it is not faith to lay by for a "rainy day," has to be debtor in the time of want *to the one who did lay by*. To "lay up for yourselves treasure on earth," condemned by the Lord is a very

different thing from godly foresight and provision for the necessities of one's own household. To be penniless, and cast upon the church's funds at every period of dull trade, or every time of sickness, generally evinces not faith in God, but a want of thorough honesty and independence of man. If money be *the treasure*, if *it* be trusted in rather than the living God, then sooner or later God will prepare the worm and blast the gourd.

Some Christians are sadly lacking in a sense of honour concerning getting into debt. The Scripture rule is, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8).

To purchase that which you have no prospect of being able to pay for, is glaring dishonesty.

Yet sad it is, that many times those who have made high profession as Christians, have been discovered to be in debt on all hands.

Trying circumstances, long continued want of work, or protracted sickness, may bring the most honest and honourable to want, from which he may see no escape, but to borrow. The exhortation to those who have this world's goods is, to "Do good and lend, not hoping to receive." To have fellowship in the need of such is a precious privilege.

But surely under such trying circumstances,

it would be better to ask counsel and help of some godly and experienced Christian, than to run hopelessly into debt to the ungodly. Such a course may be humbling to pride, but even so honoured a servant of God as Elijah had to ask a widow for a morsel of bread!

HUMILITY.

“Be clothed with humility” (1 Peter v. 5).

WHEN the Lord Jesus was setting Himself forth as the believer's Example, that feature of His character to which He called special attention was, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” When the Apostle in like manner is setting Him before the saints at Philippi, he writes, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” and then describes the marvellous path of humiliation which He trod, from the bosom of God to the Cross (Phil. ii. 5-9).

So, also, after describing to the Ephesians the glory of the church's calling, the grandeur of the position that grace has raised the believer to in union with the risen Christ, he

begins to exhort them to walk worthy of such a vocation, "with all lowliness and meekness" (Eph. iv. 1, 2).

This is, as it were, the foundation grace in the character of the Lord Jesus : and, unless it be reproduced in the believer as the very basis of his Christian character, resemblance to Christ is but a delusion and an impossibility.

The exaltation of self is the very essence of the carnal mind. Therefore it is "enmity against God ;" "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," (Rom. viii. 7. The poison that Satan first injected into the mind of man was, "Ye shall be as gods." This thought of foolishness was sin, (Prov. xxiv. 9. It was harboured in the mind and soon bore fruit in the life, the fruit of disobedience to God. Self had usurped the place of God. Pride had dethroned humility. This deadly poison of pride, vain-glory, self-exaltation, has, ever since the fall, circulated in the life-blood of every child of Adam. In early childhood, self asserts its rights and pushes itself in before everything else. In boyhood, whether at play or at work, self is uppermost, self is asserted and glorified ; any other consideration is felt to be an intrusion. In after life, whatever the nature of the pursuit, to make a position and a name for self is the universal object. Everything is judged according as it will affect the supposed

honour and interests of self. It may seriously affect others and be little regarded, it may dishonour God and yet be even approved; but if it detract from self, then is it resented with zeal and energy.

Such is the history of man; but "pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. xvi. 18). So was it at Babel. The men who said, "Let us build us a tower, let us make us a name," were soon put to confusion and scattered. So was it with Nebuchadnezzar, as he said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" The same hour, "he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven." So will it be with Antichrist, who is yet to come, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God;" but "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 4, 8). And such is the present spirit of the mystic Babylon around us, which bears the holy name of Christ, but hath "glorified herself, and lived deliciously; - - she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no

widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev. xviii. 7, 8).

One of God's seven abominations is, "a proud look," (Prov. vi. 17). "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand he shall not be unpunished," (Prov. xvi. 5).

Very many more Scriptures might be adduced to show God's estimate of the sin of pride, and God's estimate of the grace of lowliness; but the reader can search them out, and will find profit in so doing.

It is greatly to be feared that many who profess conversion were never really humbled before God. The gospel of God's grace announces full provision both for the pardon of sin and for deliverance from its power; but God's method of salvation is first to break down the pride of the heart by conviction of sin; and then, by the gospel, "to bind up the broken heart." The "stout hearted" are "far from righteousness," (Isa. xlvi. 12); "The proud He knoweth afar off," (Psalm cxxxviii. 6).

There is such a thing as applying the healing balm where wounding is the thing required, and binding up in its pride and

self-complacency the heart that has never been broken.

The salvation of God is a humbling process. It reduces all to one low level before it lifts any up. "Guilty before God" is the verdict upon all. "No difference, for all have sinned." The rich is brought down to the level of the poor—the Pharisee to the level of the publican—the resolute moralist to the level of the profligate—there, as lost, defiled, diseased, leprous, blind, dead, ungodly, sinners, enemies, stripped of every rag of self-righteousness and respectability—there, sunk low in trespasses and sins— *there* it is that God's salvation meets the sinner.

It was one of the statutes concerning the great day of atonement in Israel, that on that day every man should "afflict his soul," (Lev. xvi. 29-31). The Hebrew word there rendered "afflict," is the same that elsewhere is rendered "humble," and it might better convey the Divine idea so to render it.*

It was a day upon which "remembrance again was made of sins every year," (Heb. x. 3), and the great atoning work foreshadowed, by which sin was to be expiated. Therefore were they to rest, for grace could not admit of human labour; and they were

* See same word so rendered, Exod. x. 3; Deut. viii. 2, 3, 16.

to be humbled before God, for grace could not admit of human pride.

Thus God begins His saving work in the soul, which being once begun by Him, "He will perform until the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 6).

There is a conceited, self-willed, high-minded, stiff-necked, brood of so-called "converts," who make a glib, light-hearted profession, often counted and boasted of as the fruit of sensational gospel preaching. Is it to be wondered at that soon they go back to the world, which in heart they had never left; and to the sins which, before God, they had never mourned?

Let those who deal with souls beware, lest they dignify with the title of "conversion," what is merely a passing emotion; lest they "heal the hurt slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace," (Jer. vi. 14); lest, whilst they imagine they are congratulating a new-born soul, they are fastening upon an unbroken heart the fetters of a fatal satanic delusion.

But Divine life ever springs from a broken and contrite heart. It is like the fruitful seed that is rooted in the deep-ploughed soil. Cast upon the hard and stony ground of the unbroken heart, the seed is soon devoured; but kept in the heart that grace has ploughed and broken, it springs up and bears fruit unto

eternal life. Thus conversion to God produces at the outset a spirit of humility before God, and, closely allied to this, a spirit of meekness before men.

He who abides where grace puts him at the first—who grows in personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, and who meditates upon His character as revealed in the Scriptures, who judges himself by comparison with Christ, and not with fellow-mortals, and so keeps ever in conscious nearness to His pierced side—such an one will imbibe the very spirit of Christ—"the meekness and gentleness of Christ" will be seen upon him—he will "put on, as the elect of God, humbleness of mind"—he will "be clothed with humility."

The carnal mind is wont to adorn self in such raiment and ornaments as will be admired and estimated at a high value by man. Not so the mind of Christ. Like the tabernacle of old, the exterior of which was of "badgers' skins," and might be said to be "without form or comeliness," whilst it was all glorious within, as befitted the dwelling place of God, so was the Lord Jesus. Outwardly, there was no beauty which the carnal eye could desire; but within, how lovely! How richly ornamented in the sight of God the "hidden man" of that meek and lowly heart! God knew what it cost to

maintain under all the testings He endured, that meek and quiet spirit, and in His sight it was most precious. And such is the adorning which every child of God should seek to possess. Not what men will most admire—the goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold; not the gold, and pearls, and costly array with which the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth is seen to attract earth's monarchs; not the proud and haughty mien which the world respects, and which will be fully developed in him whom all the world will wonder after and worship—but “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. iii. 4).

There be some who are highly gifted and able to take a leading place among brethren; but they never were known to confess that they were wrong. There are others who cannot bear to be told their faults; if convicted, they will probably seek to prove that others are as bad as they. Some, if slighted by another, will immediately take offence, and after all, how often the offence is taken at what was only imaginary.

Where is the spirit now of the apostle, “being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat”?

Many are puffed up by knowledge. They have clear heads and retentive memories;

they have learned rapidly, and knowledge has given them influence, *and they know it*. They cannot bear to be opposed. He who questions their dogmatic assertions is accounted no longer their friend. Humbleness of mind is lacking.

And how often does the ordinary conversation of Christians betray lamentably the absence of this spirit! Where true humility exists, each will "esteem other better than himself." But how often is heard the story of the faults of one, the follies of another, the ignorance of a third, the errors of a fourth, the pride of a fifth, the low condition of one assembly, the divisions of another, the badness and wrongness of every one but self—not a word against self—self is held sacred, free from complicity in folly or sin, all that are named are condemned in the most unconcerned and sweeping style, whilst self is left exalted on a pinnacle of conscious perfection, a little antichrist—stuffed full of spiritual conceit.

Is it to be wondered at that edification is low, that roots of bitterness spring up, that backslidings and divisions appear, if such be the conversation often indulged in by those who ought to be "ensamples to the flock?"

Even when one has been overtaken in a fault, and the spiritual seek to effect his restoration, this is to be done "in the spirit

of meekness" (Gal. vi. 1). The spiritual one is not to despise or severely judge the other, but to "consider himself lest he also be tempted." True humility will ever keep in view the frailty of self, and that grace alone makes the restorer to differ from the erring one.

And when restoration has been effected, nothing will more surely characterize the restored one than "the spirit of meekness." How evident this is in Psalm li. No justifying of self there. If Shimei curse the Lord's anointed, the spirit of meekness replies, "God hath bid him curse." The truly restored soul will not be unwilling to take the low place till such time as restoration is evident to all.

"Only by pride cometh contention," (Prov. xiii. 10). This is a solemn Scripture; it touches, as with a needle's point, the secret source of sorrow, division, and alienation among brethren.

There are some Christians who seem to live in an atmosphere of contention. They are the stormy petrels of spiritual life. They are always on "the opposition bench," and seldom off the judgment seat. A kindly suggestion they cannot make; everything is done in a spirit of fault-finding. Such are a mighty hindrance to the growth in grace of the unestablished with whom they are

associated. Pride, unjudged, unbroken, unsubdued, is at the root of this. "Liberty" is their favourite cry, but all the while they are in bondage to the pride of their own hearts. Oh, that their eyes were opened to see their hideous deformity!

The Lord Jesus set an ever-memorable example of service in washing the feet of His disciples. The law of His kingdom is, that the greatest shall be servant of all. But this involves "humbleness of mind." None can effectually serve another until he can stoop down to the lowliest service that his necessities demand. The lack of true humility is the cause of the scarcity of ministry in its more lowly and unseen paths. It is the natural pride of the human heart that makes it easier to speak to a congregation than to an individual. Self commonly loves to be seen and heard. The individual dealing, the fireside exhortation, have not the attractions of the platform, and are not so much sought after.

But He who stooped to purge in His own blood the filth of sin is now rewarded. Crowned with glory and honour, exalted to the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, God has set His seal to that lowly life and lowlier death. He that humbled Himself has been exalted; and blessed are they who follow in His steps.

CHARITY.*

“ And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness ” (Col. iii. 14).

THE merely natural human emotion called “love” and the benevolence known as “charity” are both as different from Divine love, or charity, as darkness is from light.

The fountainhead of love, in its highest and truest and Scriptural sense, is God Himself. “God is love!”

In heathen lands nearly all idolators recognize the existence of a Supreme Being. For such a Being many are the names they have coined; and most of their idols are in some way or other supposed to represent some aspect of His character. The altar at Athens to “The Unknown God,” is an instance of this belief.

But in all the names and representations of Deity that have been invented, and they are legion, no such thought is found as that which it is our holy and blessed privilege to know—“God is love.”

* The Greek word rendered “charity” is, in the majority of passages where it occurs, translated “love.” This promiscuous use of two English words to express one word in the original has possibly tended to obscure the sense.

The highest approach to truth in heathen ideas is such a name for the unseen God as Wisdom or Power ; but by far the majority of names and representations of Deity embody prominently and unmistakably the idea of CRUELTY. Deceit, pride, revenge, licentiousness, are common attributes of heathen deities, but combined with all, and almost invariably, is CRUELTY.

Is not this the developed and intensified poison of Satan's lie? It is the deepest thought of the carnal mind, and yet the most utterly false. It is the same as in the parable : "I feared Thee, because thou art an austere man." How different the thought of God : "There is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared" (Ps. cxxx. 4).

The manifestation of this love, by which God would commend Himself to all mankind, is the gift of His Son. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9-10).

God has thus proved that His love is no mere sentiment. It has found its way, at infinite cost, down to the depths of guilt and misery into which sin has plunged humanity, nor will it rest till it has brought its objects

up to the fulness of joy that is in His presence, and made them partakers of His own blessedness.

And this is one of the essential characteristics of Divine love—it is pre-eminently operative. It cannot rest; it must work. It cannot be pent up; it must find outflow. It cannot be content unless it finds an object upon which to bestow itself. Hence it is written, "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in Him?" He may have the profession of love; he may have love to those that love him; he may not be destitute of natural affection; but the *love of God* dwelleth not in him.

Again, Divine love always seeks the blessing of its object. Human love is commonly indifferent as to this. It seeks rather to please, to gratify, and to enjoy its object.

But the love of God cannot be content with pleasing, or gratifying, or indulging; it looks deeper, and desires to bless.

This is beautifully illustrated in Lev. xix. 17, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Such was the rebuke of Christ to Peter : "Get thee behind Me, Satan." His was the "smiting" that was a "kindness" and the "reproof" that is like an "excellent oil" (Ps. cxli. 5). How He bound their hearts around Himself whilst He dealt in faithfulness with their faults! His was indeed "the love of God." To bless was His purpose rather than to please. And still such is His way in dealing with His people. The time will come when He will gratify every desire of His saints as well as enjoy them Himself; but meantime other ends have to be served, blessing is to be bestowed in a different form, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "Nourish and cherish" He does, "sanctify and cleanse" He must, though the golden girdle bound about the breasts tells how in so doing meanwhile the tender affections of His heart are kept in" (see Rev. i. 13; iii. 19).

It is one of the world's sayings that "love is blind." Not so Divine love. It is quick and jealous in discerning a stain, but it sets itself to cleanse, and to hide the evil, and not to expose it. "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv. 8). Ham looked upon his father's shame and spake of it, and the curse of Noah is upon his offspring for ever; but love "went backward" and covered the old man's nakedness" (Gen. ix. 20-23).

Whilst "God is love," it is also written that "God is light." In Him holiness and love are inseparably united. Consistently with this, the character of God, the love which He bears to a rebel world, is manifested through Christ Jesus, and on the ground of His death, or blood-shedding, as the adequate satisfaction of every claim that law and justice could bring against the sinner. Herein He hath abounded toward us "in all *wisdom* and prudence" (Eph. i. 8). Whilst pouring out upon rebel sinners the riches of His grace, every interest involved has been duly considered — righteousness has been established at the same time that love has been gratified.

So also in the life and ways of the Man Christ Jesus. Every step, every word, every look, every thought, was love, and only love; yet never at any time was love allowed to compromise truth and righteousness. It was love that detected and denounced the hypocrisy, and rebuked the pride and vanity of the world. And it was love that chided the disciples for their "little faith," and upbraided them for their hardness of heart, and humbled them by setting a little child in their midst.

And such is ever the character of Divine love, whether it be traced in the ways of God, or in the life of Christ, or reflected

again in the saints. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John v. 3).

The danger to which the believer is ever exposed is to regard truth and love as opposed to each other rather than as the two sides of the arch of grace. Instead of "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. iv. 15), and loving only "in the truth" and "for the truth's sake" (2 John i. 2), one regards TRUTH as his mission, and he will speak it regardless of the way and the spirit in which he speaks it, regardless as to whether it edifies or irritates, indifferent as to whether it attracts or repels; forgetting that the very same truth, mingled with grace and spoken in tones of love, might win its way and insinuate itself into the heart, that otherwise rebels against it. Let those who glory in themselves as martyrs for truth beware lest they be only martyrs for lack of the love of God and the grace of Christ!

Another regards himself as the apostle of love. He would not touch upon a subject of controversy in case he should hurt the feelings of his brethren. He will consent to be tongue-tied on truths and doctrines precious to his own soul, lest it should seem to be a breach of love to proclaim them and contend for them amongst those who are blind to them. He will suffer wrong without rebuking

it, will tolerate evil doctrine in the assembly without judging it, will thus contravene the explicit instructions of the Word of God because he has never apprehended that truth and obedience are essentials of Divine love.

“Charity suffereth long and is kind;” nevertheless, charity “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor. xiii. 6). There is a thing called “charity” which is preparing the way for Antichrist. It is that which tolerates all doctrines and all opinions, if only the authority of the Lord Jesus be set aside and His Word ignored.

Antichrist will find room in his theology for both Infidelity and Christianity. It will be inclusive of every sect, but it will exclude the “Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus;” “charity” will be the cry, but infidel despotism will be the issue.

It is in immediate connection with the exhortation, “love one another with a pure heart fervently,” that the injunction is found as to “laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Peter i. 22, and ii. 1).

What a contrast there is between the bold, honest, straightforward faithfulness of Divine love, and the dissimulation that is sweet and pleasant before faces, but scruples not to speak evil behind backs. Oh, if there be envy and

evil-speaking indulged, call not the smooth exterior *love* but *hatred*. The severe judgment, the bitter reproach, the scornful laugh, the imputation of the worst conceivable motive, so often indulged in by those who glory in their orthodoxy and knowledge of truth—these are the things that alienate and divide, and by which many are defiled.

But let the truth be held in love and acted on in love; let love be without dissimulation; let fervent charity, as the bond of perfectness, be above and around all thoughts, all words, all actions; let the intercourse be in love, and the ministry in love, and the testimony in love; then will such a spectacle be seen as shall win the saints from error, and attract both saints and sinners to Christ.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” So spake the Lord. But what have all men seen? Sectarian bitterness, personal animosities, the biting and devouring, the judging and setting at nought one of another, and the very contention for liberality, toleration, and charity, often the most bitter, intolerant, and uncharitable of all!

Reformation cannot be accomplished otherwise than as individuals. Individual self-judgment, for the lack of this the cardinal grace of Christianity, the first of the Spirit's fruits, the self-proving evidence of disciple-

ship, and the bond of perfectness, will be the beginning of better things.

“Love is of God” (1 John iv. 7). There is no other source of supply but God Himself. It is not a plant of nature’s soil; by the grace of God alone, and by the Holy Spirit’s power can it be produced in the soul.

Knowledge is to be desired, gifts are to be coveted, but nothing is so like to God Himself, or possesses such value in His sight, as **LOVE.**



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