

soul with all the heart, is to lay hold of the power which overcomes the world.

If you have mastered this acquirement, all real difficulties are conquered. If you firmly and in your soul, believe that Jesus died and rose again by the express will of God, that the love of God might be shewn to you, a sinner, all the objections and trials of the Christian path will weigh as the small dust of the balance with you.

Just think on this, just apprehend it in all its wonderful issues, and you are possessors of the truth which overthrew old superstitions, and changed the face of the world. Just admit these with all your heart, and simple though they be, you have all the *mighty power* which brought such fame to the renowned Christian sufferers of old, and made them meet imprisonment and death with willingness.

Let not one of these truths be dropped, and you have everything that made Paul happy in his prison,—everything that made him and Silas sing songs in the night;—it was just this which gave cheerfulness to John in his lonely exile, and imparted to the early disciples joy unspeakable and full of glory.

My brethren, you sever yourselves from Christ's promises of strength and success just by your doubts and unbelief,—you are imperfect and tossed to and fro, just because you are incredulous,—you cut yourselves off from the communion of Christ and of the saints of early and later times, just because you fancy that in their case there was something peculiar which rendered their faith remarkable. It was just faith in Christ that constituted the sum and substance of their Christian character. Read their lives again, and you will find *that* to be the only solution of their astonishing self-denial, and heroic fortitude, and persevering zeal.

The greatness and strength of every child of God lay where you may find the same.

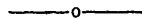
Look where you will, and examine what apostle and martyr you please, and you will find that their power lay in this, that they took hold by a simple faith of the facts of the Gospel, and made them the secret food of their souls.

Between you and them there is no difference, except in the strength of faith in Christ. Their faith was great, yours is small,—theirs was firm, yours is wavering,—theirs was warm and attached, yours is cold and superficial;—that is the difference; and they were complete—you are not. But all that they had, you may have. No saint at Colosse, no saint at Corinth, no saint at Ephesus, had more than you may acquire. They had some *gifts* which were given for a season; but all that made them truly great in God's sight—all that made them happy in their own minds—all that made them victorious in the kingdom of Christ, is equally open and accessible to you. Look at them and see.

What made Paul so courageous for the

truth? What made him endure bonds, and scorn, and death? What made him count all things but loss? Just this,—he believed, with all his soul, that Christ died for sinners, and rose again for their justification; this simple fact, and no other, explains his whole history. You think it was his inspiration that made him valiant for the truth; it was no such thing. You think it was the gift of healing, and of working miracles, and speaking with tongues, that made him endure the reproach of the Cross, and achieve such amazing results; not at all, brethren, it was no such thing. It was not the supernatural endowments of Paul, or of the other apostles that nerved them and animated them. All these gifts might have existed, and their possessors be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; but the secret of all their labours, the secret of their wonderful enthusiasm and diligence, was just this, that they took in, with unquestioning hearts, the message of God, that God was in Christ the friend of the sinner, and that Christ had suffered death for the redemption and recovery of fallen man. This made them complete,—by this you are complete in Christian influence and activity.

Seek, my brethren, to grow up into Him. Start with the conviction, that it is possible to do the will of God. Begin with the encouraging persuasion, that God is perfecting all His people in the Saviour. Continue in the assurance, that a union to Christ is attainable, and that daily intercourse with Him brings on a deep and strong steadfastness in the Christian life. Pray for yourself—pray for the Church—pray for the world—that Christ's will may be done, and that Christ's image may be complete in the hearts and lives of all His people.



THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

II.—THE PAROCHIAL SYSTEM.

SCOTLAND is divided into a number of parishes of various extent and population. A parish is a territorial subdivision of a county, as a township is in Nova Scotia, though rarely of so great size. Originally, as it is still chiefly, the parish was an ecclesiastical district, set apart for ecclesiastical purposes and convenience, and the men, women and children residing within its limits were constituted into a congregation or flock, and served in spiritual things by one or more of the regularly ordained pastors of the Church. When completely organized and equipped, the parish is a moiety of the Church, and its voice is heard and its demands attended to in the courts of the Church. A number of districts or allotments of this nature, as represented by their respective ministers and elders, constitutes a Presbytery; a number of Presbyteries constitutes a Provincial Synod; and a number of commissioners, two or more