

whom He saves, their lost and helpless state as sinners, their entire dependence on the Spirit for life, and the fulness and sufficiency of Christ's finished work as the ground of acceptance before God. It is when we embrace these great central verities which Paul would have affirmed constantly, and they fill our hearts with a sense of their reality, that we enter consciously on the new life and become capable of doing good works. The record of the history of a sinner's conversion is the history of the way in which these truths have been brought home to his heart. These are the great verities which God ordinarily employs in giving spiritual life to those dead in sins. And it has always been in connection with their clear and earnest proclamation that great and permanent revivals of religion have occurred. These things, therefore, we must affirm constantly in order that there may be living souls which can serve God, not with dead works, but with the holy deeds of a new obedience.

2. They supply the strongest motives to good works.

The doctrines of grace exhibit our entire salvation as due to the unmerited favour of God. He begins in us the good work, and performs it unto the day of Christ Jesus. The Christian feels secure because he is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Those who cry out against the doctrines of grace as subversive of morality, usually seem to imagine that the Christian goes about his duty as the slave about his appointed task, with the lash of the taskmaster ready to descend upon him when his efforts are relaxed. Remove the dread of punishment, or the hope of some servile reward, and all work will cease. But we have not so learned Christ. We know how false and base this conception is.

We admit that in God's dealings with his own, the dread of the wrath to come often serves an important end. It rouses the slumbering believer out of his carnal security, but when he is aroused other and higher motives constrain him to holy obedience. It is the love of Christ which constrains him, and not the dread of wrath which drives him. And the more he perceives he owes to the grace which is in Christ Jesus, the stronger is the constraint which he feels. Love is the characteristic motive of new obedience. And when we see that much has been forgiven us, and much done for us, we will love much. And surely this view of salvation should give us a peculiarly impressive sense of the love of a Triune Jehovah. Utterly lost in our sins, our salvation comes entirely from God. We trace the whole plan of salvation up to the self-moved love of God. He had pity on us in our ruined state, and devised a way of escape worthy of God and adapted to man. He "so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him," etc. Surely the Father's unspeakable gift may well kindle our love in return.

Then we see the Son of God assume our nature and our liabilities, and suffer in our room and stead. He not only lives a matchless life among us, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps, but by his sacrificial work He lays the foundation for a righteous reconciliation to God of all who believe on his name. And now risen and ascended, his heart is filled with the same purpose of love to his redeemed, whether He pleads for them within the veil, or from the throne wields the sceptre of universal government.

Then we mark how the mission of the Holy Spirit is linked with the completion of Christ's work on earth. We see Him sent to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He touches the springs of thought and feeling in the careless, awakens them to a new life, and leads them to put their trust in Christ as a Saviour. Then throughout the believer's entire earthly career He is with him as his teacher, his comforter and his strength, working in him to will and to do what is pleasing to God.

When we know that salvation in its plan, its purchase and its application is all due to the unmerited favour of God, we have surely ample reason why we should love Him who first loved us.

The Christian is stimulated to obedience by the *hope of reward* to do good works. He knows that it is not by works of righteousness that he is saved, but he has learned from the Word that it is a law of the divine procedure that the rewards of heaven shall be in a measure proportioned to the holiness and usefulness of the saint on earth. Those that sow sparingly reap sparingly, and those that sow bountifully reap bountifully. Good works done here in faith and love

render more glorious the crown which the redeemed shall wear in the future life. But apart from the grace of God which for Christ's sake blots out the imperfections of our best works, all hope of reward lacks a foundation.

The doctrines of grace deepen our sense of obligation to obey. We do not refer to the fact that they represent the law as unchangeable, and shew that while grace has reached the guilty, no demand of law has been abated. We do not refer to the odiousness of sin as displayed in the cross of Christ. Nor do we refer merely to the fact that redemption has clearly enhanced the obligations under which we were placed by creation to love and obey our Creator. All these things are highly important in their bearing upon our sense of obligation to obey, but we have in our thoughts rather the general impression which the doctrines of grace make upon our minds, in leading us to entertain high views of the sovereignty, resources, majesty and unsearchableness of God. They represent God as very great, sitting on the throne of the universe, and doing according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

The whole tendency of the opposite system of teaching is to degrade God in our eyes, and to bring Him down so nearly to a footing of equality with ourselves that we feel at liberty to call Him to account for his dealings, and demand that all his ways and works shall be made plain to our understandings. When we are thus constantly calling the Almighty to our bar and sitting in judgment upon Him, it is impossible that we can feel either the true spirit of worshippers, or have any due sense of obligation to obey his will.

But the doctrines of grace give us a very different conception of God. He is a great God whom we cannot by searching find out unto perfection, but whom we know to be righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works. His sway is absolute, and his kingdom ruleth over all; yet He is not an Almighty fate which rules everything blindly by a physical necessity. He is a person, endowed with infinite wisdom and power, and clothed with all moral excellencies. The plan of his government which his wisdom devised and his efficiency carries out, and which has for its central object the redemption achieved on Calvary, is larger than human reason can take in. It unites the past with the present and the present with the future. It reaches to the confines of creation, and embraces all orders of creatures, and governs each according to its nature. Within the range of his control come the planet which rolls through immensity and the atom which dances on a sunbeam, the destiny of empires and the falling of a sparrow, the angel that adores before the throne and the demon that rages round the sides of the pit. And all the movements or acts of the myriads of beings which people his vast empire, He makes in some way subsidiary to his purpose of redeeming love, and He binds them all together in the unity of his all-comprehending plan. Before such a great God we feel instinctively we can bow down and worship. And when his majesty and sovereignty are truly seen, his authority cannot be unfelt. We instinctively feel that such a God demands the homage of our hearts and lives.

3. They secure us conscious liberty to do good works.

While guilt lies on the conscience and we have no assurance of the Divine favour, we have no inward freedom to engage in God's service. There are those who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage, and there are many who never feel any heart for the service of God, because they know that God is angry with the wicked every day. How then can we get deliverance from these harassing fears? There is but one royal road to peace and joy. We must probe the seat of the disease and apply the remedy. Having discovered the plague of our hearts, we must go in the simplicity of faith to Christ for that vital power which can quicken our hearts, and that meritorious work which can reinstate us in the Divine favour. Then as we look at the cross, the burden will roll from our shoulders into the open sepulchre and disappear, and we shall emerge consciously into the light and liberty of the children of God, and be able to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life. We never give ourselves, if I may so speak, fair play in the matter of doing good works, until the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Then the mental and moral machinery moves smoothly, and we feel that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

4. A survey of the history of the Church of Christ abundantly vindicates the connection which the apostle declares to subsist between the constant preaching of the doctrines of grace and the practice of morality. In Geneva, in Holland, in Scotland, in England and in America, where these doctrines have been preached, morality has flourished. It has indeed often been made a reproach that those who embrace these doctrines are somewhat stern and severe in their moral requirements, but no one who does not draw his facts from imagination, can pretend that those who embrace them fall behind any other class of the community in good works. Of the many millions who constitute the noble army of the martyrs, nearly all have affirmed these doctrines constantly. To them we owe our civil and religious liberties on both sides of the Atlantic. Even authors most hostile to the doctrines of grace have been compelled to recognize the fact that not only have good works accompanied the proclamation of the truths, but a rich harvest of temporal blessings has sprung from them.

Fathers and brethren, there are two practical thoughts with which we may close. We may learn from this text not to be afraid to proclaim from the pulpit what God has taught in his Holy Word. We shall ever find that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. But we should learn also to preach with a practical aim. When we are constantly affirming from Sabbath to Sabbath the doctrines of grace, we should seek to bring them to bear practically on the hearts and lives of our hearers. In our discussions of doctrine we are never to overlook morality. Our doctrine should lead to good works, and the good works which we preach should be rooted in the doctrine which we teach. There are those who try to separate morality even from the idea of a personal God. When trees which have no roots grow and bear fruit this morality may flourish. There are also those among us who reject an inspired Bible, cast away everything supernatural in the Scriptures, scout all the distinctive doctrines of the Bible and especially the doctrines of grace, and then talk of "a moral interregnum" as almost already upon us. And truly if such teaching were universal "the moral interregnum" would not be far away. But happily for the Church and for the world, the doctrines of grace which so many of our literary and scientific men dislike, are still believed and preached, and morality is not yet effete. And if there is any lesson which these mutterings about "a moral interregnum" should impress upon our minds, it is that we should see to it that we are making full proof of the apostolic method of making men moral, and that we are affirming constantly the doctrines of grace, in order that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ORDINATION.

MR. EDITOR,—As "Erigena" has done me the honour, after two months' silence, of replying to my letter, I hope you will kindly permit me to make a rejoinder. He says "that the true Church was to a great extent within the Church of Rome previous to the Reformation." I suppose he means from this, that the ordination received by the Reformers may have been valid, though the ordination of Rome is not so now. As he does not say so we are still left in ignorance as to whether he believes the Reformers got any valid ordination or not. But, supposing that "Erigena" means that the ordination of Rome was then valid, on the ground that the true Church was to a great extent within her pale, *i.e.*, that there were many good people in her, it becomes him to shew why it should not be valid now, seeing that he admits that, "God has to-day His people in that Church in spite of her damnable doctrines and practices." If some good people in her, prior to the Reformation, could give her the right to ordain, why may not some good people in her now give her the same right? If, however, she had no right in the time to which we have referred, then, the Reformers received neither ordination nor baptism, and such ordination as they transmitted is very little better, if any, than that of Rome to-day. Now, the true Church was only partially in the Church of Rome at the time Luther was ordained; for there were the followers of Wickliffe and Huss, the Waldenses, and many of God's people in the Greek Church, all outside of the pale of Rome. The true Church was only partially in Rome even then, and the true Church, according to "Erigena," is partially in Rome still. If the partial element could