

to arouse the attention of a sleeping world—to break upon the dull ear of humanity with the startling yet joyous cry, “The Lord reigneth—God indeed lives among men.” True, the same God always reigned there; he might be seen in the constant change of seasons—the growth and decays of nature—the rising and setting of every sun—the order and harmony prevailing His whole creation. His voice might be heard not only in the hoarse thunder and the sweeping tempest, but in every gentle gale that rustled among the branches or rippled the calm sea; every sound of harmony throughout the universe, just as it was heard when the dead man obeyed the summons, “Lazarus, come forth.” Yet we know that when darkness covers the face of nature—when the senses are steeped in the forgetfulness of sleep, that there may be sights and sounds abroad which pass away unnoticed and unknown—that it is only under the broad light of day, with all the senses awake, that we can see and understand objects around us aright. So was it with a slumbering world till the Sun of Righteousness arose—chased away the shadows of the night, and revealed to mankind an omnipotent Father ever present among his own children on earth. But not only did the miracles of Jesus testify to a *present God*—they also pointed to Him as a *God of love and compassion*—they expressed not power simply, but power guided by *compassion and love*. See yonder crowd assembled in expectation around the calm holy teacher of heaven. The lame are there—yonder the blind man stands with melancholy visage turned upwards towards “the light of the world”—the lepers are there, pined and wasted with the force of an awful disease—the deaf man gazes upon the calm countenance of the teacher, although he cannot hear the words which fall from his Divine lips. Yet one and all depart from His presence feeling (oh, how intensely!) that the Teacher and the Divine One who sent Him to work miracles are possessed not only of Almighty power, but of *wondrous love*. Might not such acts inspire them with holy boldness to come to Him with all their *spiritual* maladies and distempers—to bring their *diseases of the soul*—their sins more awful than leprosy—more dismal than blindness, to the same powerful and loving Saviour and friend, with the assurance that from Him they might expect sympathy and forgiveness. Yes, in every act and in every word which contained a revelation of God, there was something to encourage the earnest and enquiring soul—something to cheer the weary and heavy laden—something to afford rest and comfort to the trusting, confiding spirit. Endeavor to realize something of that unspeakably sublime life of the God-man—of that loving, gentle, meek and forgiving spirit—of that ever-active, never-wearing life of well-doing and deeds of charity and love, and then think that all this was in obedience

to the will of His Father, and you may in some measure realize the new light thrown by Jesus upon the essential *fatherhood* of God. But, lastly, consider Christ Jesus as the light of the world in revealing the conditions of the sonship of Christians and its consequent blessedness.

Apart from revelation, we need only appeal to history, or, in other words, to experience, to have the conviction forced upon us that man is by nature in a state of *estrangement* from God. His actions, when in that state, are not those of a son, but of a slave; instead of rejoicing to call God his father, he desires to treat Him as an enemy, and, so far from seeking nearness or communion with Him, his desire has always been to flee from His presence and hide from His holy eye. It is the crouching, trembling *slave* fearing the presence of his master, and not the joyous *child* happy in the consciousness of a parent's presence, whom we see acting his dark deeds in history. Account for it as you may (ye who would deny the scriptural account of the Fall and its consequences), the consciousness of humanity presents us with two facts clear as a sunbeam—a dim consciousness of a pristine state of holiness of which it can no longer boast, and a feeling that its present state is one of misery and unrest. What else mean those feverish tossings of the great world in history? How otherwise can we construe the giants which have risen upwards from the great heart of the world than by believing the declaration of Divine truth that mankind has fallen—that by nature man is at enmity with his God, and not only so, but at strange variance with himself? There is within him “a small voice” which would fain lead him Godward, but the consciousness of guilt drives him away from this holy presence. Conscience tells him that he himself is the author of that guilt which caused his estrangement; hence his offerings to appease Deity—his self-torture under such varied forms—his fasts—his prayers—his almsdeeds intended to ward off Divine anger and to render Deity placable. We need not say that all such have failed in procuring rest to the sin-burdened conscience—they never did and never can give true peace to the anxious spirit. No; the condition of Sonship could not be bought back at any such a price; a greater ransom—a more perfect sacrifice, must be offered to offended justice before the prodigal could return to his Father's house. This was done by the Lord of glory. He revealed to man that if he would have true rest he must seek it *out of himself*; instead of reposing in his own righteousness, he must cling to that of *another*; and instead of attempting to appease divine anger by any works of *his own*, he must come, like a little child, and accept of the righteousness of *another*; in short, that justification is *by faith*, and not of *works*. But “the light of the world” was Himself the sacrifice—the substitute—infinite God and