

THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

"As the truth is in Jesus."—Eph. iv. 21.

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In order that we may understand the full import and bearing of the text, it will be necessary to consider its connection with the preceding and following context.

With this chapter the apostle commences the practical part of his epistle, with which he proceeds to the conclusion. It consists of various exhortations, applying and enforcing the doctrines stated in the earlier portion of the epistle, and earnestly urging the Ephesian Christians to a constant, consistent, and cordial fulfilment of the whole range of Christian duty.

In a general *resumé* of these practical exhortations, we may notice the following particularly:—

1. A very affectionate call to Christian love and unity. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation," &c.; chap. iv. 1-6.

2. He affirms that God had made ample provision for His people, that they might be instructed in the faith,—guided, and edified in truth and love,—and preserved from the danger arising from conflicting and erring statements of doctrine; chap. iv. 7-18.

3. After having shown them their advantages, he warns them solemnly in the name of the Lord against a worldly, vain, and godless life—such as prevailed among the heathen around them—from which they had been themselves delivered by the grace of God. They had learned what was the guilt, and what the consequences of such a life, by being taught "as the truth is in Jesus;" chap. iv. 17-21.

4. Then he goes on to the end of the chapter—to the end of the epistle indeed—enumerating and enjoining the various

requirements of the law of Christ;—such as honesty, truthfulness, meekness, industry, purity of life, tenderness of conscience, spirituality of mind, mercifulness, and brotherly-kindness for the Lord's sake. To sum up—an adorning of the gospel of God their Saviour in all circumstances, and in every relation of life.

Such were the lessons they were taught when they heard Christ and learned of Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

The truth—as it is in Jesus—is,

1. Humbling truth—abasing our self-esteem—hiding pride from man. For it tells of the universal darkness, guilt, and death of the human family; chap. ii. 1-5; v. 8.

2. Gracious truth to every penitent, every contrite one. For it tells of Christ coming to seek and save the lost,—of His suffering for us to redeem us to God;—of His victory over sin and death;—of His ascension to be a Prince and a Saviour;—of gifts of grace which He bestows—adapted to all, sufficient for all, and offered to all; chap. iv. 7-10; v. 14.

3. Purifying, sanctifying truth. For it calls us to holiness,—from malevolence and wicked doing, from ungodliness and aversion to the holy,—to glory, and honour, and virtue—to whatever is lovely, true, and of good report—and to Christ-likeness; supplying also the means and agencies for the attainment; chap. ii. 10, &c.

4. Useful truth:—with a substantial everyday worth in it. For it constrains its recipients to live and act as Christ did, makes them followers of God as dear children, and causes them to be upright, faithful, kind, and brotherly to their fellow-men.