

the sinner. A kind of partnership was supposed to exist between him and the Saviour, whose merits, when superadded to his own, and not otherwise, secured his acceptance before God. The good works of a Christian were also represented as actually deserving eternal life.

This unscriptural and dangerous notion of human merit had long prevailed, but it was reserved for the Council of Trent to constitute it by a solemn decree the doctrine of the Church of Rome. That it is utterly subversive of the grace of the gospel must be obvious to the most cursory observer. This was clearly seen by the Reformers. Their mightiest efforts were directed against the doctrine of merit, as the giant error of the age—the parent and nurse of all the rest. They were assured that if they could restore to the Church the true doctrine of salvation by grace, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, apprehended and received by faith, salutary reforms must follow, including the renunciation of the entire system of will-worship. Encouraging success attended them wherever their efforts were freely exerted. Interested motives, we know, induced the ruling powers to retain a large portion of the hierarchical splendour and pompous ceremonies by which men had been awed and beguiled, and so to neutralise, to some extent, the effects of the truth. Yet it is a delightful fact, that many thousands were rescued from bondage, and brought into the liberty of the gospel. They learned, as Zuingle taught the listening multitudes in the monastery of Einsidlen, that “Jesus Christ alone saves, and that he saves everywhere.” Forsaking the foolish and unprofitable services by which they had formerly hoped to acquire the favour of God, they illustrated their faith by works of righteousness, benevolence, and zeal. The good cause has continued to advance. Justification by

faith will not again be driven from the earth. Its fruits are discovered in the developments of Christian character, and the results of missionary enterprise.

The Reformation was the victory of *piety*. The remarks that might have been made under this head have been in part anticipated: but little, therefore, remains to be said. Romanism, it may be observed, is unfavourable to godliness. The creature is interposed between the Most High and his worshippers: they are taught dependence upon the priest on earth, upon the saints in heaven. They may not draw nigh to God, and commune with him in the spirit of adoption, as children with their father. There is no spirit of adoption in the Popish system. The elements of free, generous, ardent piety, are wholly wanting.

The recovery of the truth was followed by the restoration of spiritual-mindedness. Faith wrought by love. Believers rejoiced in being a “holy priesthood,” and in having the privilege of direct access to the mercy-seat. Manly piety was the result. The Reformers were not merely learned men, and profound theologians; they were men of God, and “dwelt in the secret place of the Most High.” Faith in Christ gave peace and produced purity.—Throughout Europe, wherever the gospel was preached, was to be seen the noble spectacle of new-born souls, “desiring the sincere milk of the word,” and growing up to be young men and fathers in Christ. The great change accomplished in the sixteenth century was something more than a reformation of abuses—a redress of grievances—a disentangling of truth from error. It was a glorious revival of true religion; the substitution of pure worship for idolatry,—of freedom for bondage,—of dignified spirituality for dry and lifeless forms,—of active holiness and benevolence