

abideth on him.* The more we live in the light and spirit of this conversation, searching it for ourselves and spreading it abroad to others, the more shall we have power with both God and man. How ample its range, and how rich its contents! Regeneration makes us alive; justification makes us securely bold; dying grace is our ample and everlasting foundation; self-devoting love is our new being's source and aim; faith in Christ opens every storehouse of redemptive wealth and blessing; while loving obedience is the scattered or clustered fruit of the living tree, to the glory and praise of God.

Christ's conversation with Nicodemus should serve as a *specimen* of his teaching generally; and the thorough study of the specimen should prepare us to explore the whole of so rich a divine mine. All Christ's words, like his words to Nicodemus, are distinguished by depth and wealth. They are all the wisdom of God, though not seldom in a mystery, and claim the most minute and thorough investigation. Many a nugget lies hid in them from the careless or hasty reader. Many a priceless gem is in their depths, to which scarcely any one goes down. Many a momentous implication is undiscerned, many an important use is unperceived. So simple and natural, so easy and unostentatious is the style, that every worshipper of appearances misses the hidden wealth, and goes after gaudy pictures and swelling words that cannot profit. But the words of Christ's mouth are all "plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge," that "seek her as

* John iii. 31-36 : Alford.