

hensive—nothing great and catholic, is the religion of Christ.

Beware of it, my brethren, for it creeps into every sect and denomination in Christendom. It wins its way into honest, as well as insincere hearts. Suspect it when it appears, and put it away. Learn to look at Christ and His Church as a great community, where no jarring nor jealousy should reign. Think not that all truth lies in one remote nook of the Christian temple.

Believe not that ye are complete in holding on by any one Church, or any one class of people on earth. Ye are not complete in the family dear and hallowed as that little circle is; ye are not complete in the Church, sacred as its associations to you are, and time-honoured as its institutions may be; ye are not complete in any single confession, nor in any simple creed, accurate and systematic though ye prove them;—ye are complete in Christ.

III. In regard to *personal godliness*, ye are complete in your union to Him.

To have a sound creed is well; but it is not all. Religion must be somewhere else than in the head. Knowledge is not religion. Orthodoxy does not constitute a Christian. Strict adherence to forms, and a valiant advocacy of our opinions, do not suffice. These may all exist, and the Christian may be very imperfect. He may adhere to the dogmas which he believes,—he may argue with antagonists and confute them; but though he has all knowledge, and all understanding, he may be a very incomplete disciple of Christ. The apostle says in the 6th verse, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

A complete Christian is a *living* Christian. There must be life in Christ; a close intimacy with Him; a daily habit of resorting to Him; a holy pleasure in communing with Him, or there is no life, no completeness.

It is not one act of faith that makes us Christians. "We grow up into Him." We are not moulded all at once into the image of Christ; we must be renewed day by day. It were comparatively easy to gain the Christian reward if one vigorous effort completed us, and one season of contact with Christ's word and throne perfected us for ever. But we have a daily death to die, and a daily cross to lift, and a daily life to be strengthened; and we must *abide in Christ*, and be complete in an unbroken union to Him. The divine life of the soul is a breathing life, and its breath is drawn from fellowship with Christ. Christ is needed every moment, as He is the first hour of conscious believing on Him. We need Him every night, and morning, and labouring day, as much as when, at the beginning of our spiritual history, He makes the sense of His grace and truth drawn upon the soul.

A soul left to itself has no power. Even a

soul of the purest and holiest cast would feel the weakness of its own nature.

Good feelings, happy moods, serene emotions, are soon lost. The sense of God's goodness, the love of God's character, and the earnest will for God, are transient things in the best of men, if not ever and again lighted at the holy altar.

A soul left to itself will droop and die. It may, for a little, maintain the appearance of life; but the essence of life is gone if disunited from Christ. As the flower that you nip from the stalk lives a few hours after it is torn away, it continues for a little to emit its fragrance, and to keep its fresh colour: but one ray of the sun, and one touch of the hand, dries up its moisture, and it withers away. So, except ye abide in Christ, as the flower to the stalk, ye cannot live, ye will die. Ye are complete when closely bound to Him. Lowly plants in your Father's garden you may be,—humble branches, creeping unseen, by your Father's dwelling; but *in Christ* you are alive,—abiding firm in Him, and by faith and prayer, drawing forth from His secret storehouse your spiritual life;—ye are complete in Him.

IV. In regard to the *Christian's influence and power*, he is complete in nothing else but simple faith in Christ.

It was this which made the early Christians such faithful models of Christian eminence. There were great, just because they were in Christ; they were complete, not because they had greater originality, or greater intellects than we, but because they were rooted and grounded in Him.

In our own day, when so much requires to be done by the Church, and by every member of the Church, it is well to bear in mind, that all things are possible to him that believeth. In Christ, and by Christ strengthening us, we can do all things.

Our completeness is as much a duty as it was to the Colossians; and it is as possible to us as to them; and it is attainable in the same way.

In the early ages, the belief in Christ was substantially the same with ours, but different in this,—that *then* it was universally admitted that Jesus had died,—the event was so well known, that it was received as an undeniable fact; and faith in Him was to acknowledge, that this Jesus who died on the cross was the Son of God. Such was the manner in which the Ethiopian treasurer manifested his faith, and such the manner in which the faith of the three thousand was manifested on the day of Pentecost. These men had witnessed the crucifixion of our Lord; it did not require faith to believe that He died, but it required faith to confess that He was the Son of God; and it required faith to receive the truth regarding the purpose of His death. This was their strength, and it is ours; to admit these truths into the