

no gospel—no good tidings of great joy. The proclamation of God's holiness might have been heard, or the denunciation of the sinner's doom, but no word to tell us of a gracious and merciful Father who waits to receive His erring children back to favour. Now the Scriptures contain all that we need to know in order to find the way of life, and to render, while here, an acceptable service to God. The Scriptures teach us the evil and danger of sin, and the depth and power of human depravity. They shew the opposition of sin to God; the necessity that under His just and holy administration it should meet with condign punishment; and the utter inability of the sinner to save himself, his inability to make amends to the law which he has violated, or to free himself from the defilement and tyranny of evil. And then while the divine justice and holiness are represented with awful clearness, there is the sure discovery of grace and mercy. God is seen pitying the sinner—yearning over him even when farthest from his Father's house. The purpose of redemption is announced, and our help is laid upon One who is mighty. The coming of this glorious deliverer is, by type and prophecy, presignified. At length His advent is declared. He renders perfect obedience to the law; He endures the penalty. In Him mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other: in Him God is just and the justifier of them who believe. Nor is the teaching of Scripture regarding the duties of a believing man less explicit and satisfactory. We cannot here attempt, even in the briefest way, to summarise this teaching. In the experience of God's people it has always been found adequate. The Word has been "a lamp to their feet and a light to their path;" nor have they ever, when looking to God for direction, failed to see the way of duty indicated.

There are many questions touching religious truths and interests which we might wish to put, to which Scripture will supply no answer. Scripture will not resolve for us the metaphysical difficulties which will be sure to present themselves to the speculative mind in connection with many doctrines of the Bible. It will not enable us to comprehend the origin of evil, nor to harmonize the Sovereignty of God with the freedom of the creature, nor to see how soul and body are united in the one human personality, or the human and the divine natures in the person of our Lord, nor to comprehend the relations of man and his history to the universe at large. And then how many enquiries regarding death and the world which lies beyond it, curiosity—nay earnest human affection—would prompt us to make, but still there would be no response. What is the mode of existence of those we loved but who are not with us now? What precise relations shall we occupy towards them when we rejoin them there? What shall be the form of the resurrection body, and what its principle of identity with the present body? Where is that place in which the redeemed shall have their everlasting home? What shall be the economy of their daily life—if days may be spoken of when time shall be no more? There is no end to the questions we should long to have answered; but no answer will be given. In vain we scrutinize with intensest interest every verse, every word that might seem to point towards a reply. An unbroken silence will be preserved; for it is not God's will that, in the present life, this knowledge should be ours. But, brethren, we shall not on this account impugn the perfection of Scripture. Keep steadily in view the purpose for which it is given. Remember that the Bible is the disclosure of God's method of grace—that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The Old Testament speaks of Him who should come, the New of Him who has come and "died and rose and revived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." This is the theme of the book, in the light of which our estimate of it must be formed. Most clearly the completed Canon possesses this perfection. But our text, if we rightly develop its meaning, ascribes such perfection to Scripture even when it embraced little if anything more than the books of Moses. Even then (though with fainter light) it revealed the gracious purpose of God: even then it presented the object of saving faith: even then it taught the pious how to live as God's children and