

aims towards which it should be directed. In Christ we see the ideal man. In Him we see reason and conscience supreme, while passion and appetite are kept in subordination. We believe that we have here the true starting point and the true centre of a harmonious life. If we begin otherwise, we find discord and confusion. If we assume that our nature is in right working order without Christ, we shall certainly go wrong. He alone can bring us into a right relation to God and to man. He alone can give us power to become and to live as children of God.

When we come to treat of the *features or elements* of character, we might make a beginning in different ways and from various standpoints. We might begin with Love, the root of all moral goodness, or we might begin with Courage, without which no moral principle could have any strength or permanence, or we might start from Truth, without which no other moral quality can have any real existence.

(1.) Let us begin with this fundamental quality of *Truthfulness*. As we have said it is the condition of all moral excellence; and perhaps for this very reason it is not generally numbered among the moral virtues. Yet perhaps it may have been comprehended under the virtue of wisdom or prudence, the first of the four leading virtues enumerated by Plato. However this may be, truth is fundamental. Of whatever quality we may think or speak, unless it is real, it is not good. And by this truthfulness, as indeed is already obvious, we do not mean mere veracity in speech, however valuable that may be, and although that must be a necessary accompaniment; but truthfulness of mind, that simplicity and sincerity which gives a value to all other characteristics, and the absence of which mars every other virtue and grace.

Few of us are able to understand the greatness of the demand which we make when we require of one another an absolute sincerity. "The heart is deceitful, above all things;" and, if all men are not liars, most men are not absolutely truthful. It is useless to dwell upon this. A thousand proofs might be given of the commonness of a certain amount of intellectual and moral falseness. It is sufficient to set down here, with all emphasis, that no one will ever succeed in forming a character of any greatness or nobility in himself or others, who does not strive, with all his might, to give to this quality a foremost place in all his thoughts.

(2.) Closely allied with truth is *Courage*. It is indeed its surest and most necessary bulwark and defence. It is a quality to which all men are agreed to do homage. There may be men who think lightly of truthfulness, who hold that untruthfulness of speech may sometimes be necessary, and who do not place sufficient value upon truthfulness of mind. But we have no reason to think that, in the whole history of the world, any one has thought well of cowardice, or failed to admire courage or bravery. There is no term which we should regard as more disgraceful when applied to ourselves than the name of coward. There are few words which considerate men will hesitate so long about applying to another. It would almost be worse than "Thou fool" of the Sermon on the Mount.

And yet our admiration of this quality does not always lead us to a true judgement of its nature. Many actions which we are at first inclined to put down to courage are really cowardly actions. Many which we deem cowardly are most brave and courageous. It is not always a mark of courage to return a blow. It is not always a sign of courage to give back the hot, angry retort, when you are reviled. Sometimes it may need