

soul, but they are only forms; they have no substance—they do not flourish—they will not last. Man must be lifted from his misery; the sinner must be raised from the degrading bondage of fear, before he can be a true man, created in the image of God.

The soul will not be satisfied with a religion that does not soothe its agonies—the doubts of a broken-hearted penitent will not be removed till assurance is made that sin is remitted, and that God justifies the ungodly.

And nothing more is needed to quiet all the tumults of such a mind, than the relief, that Christ has once suffered, the just for the unjust. It is enough for a soul seeking God to learn, that in Christ God is reconciling the world to Himself.

The heart is not, and can never be perfectly satisfied with its own thoughts, and its own doings; it is satisfied with nothing of its own it looks forth like a despairing invalid for deliverance from above,—it cries for help from God,—with nothing short of His redemption will it be content. To this completeness the Apostle refers below, in the 11th verse.—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” This forgiveness is complete deliverance. The humbled soul renounces all other righteousness but this; it will have nothing to do with the merits of penances—of fastings—of prayers—of alms—of sacrifices—of creeds—of sects—of sufferings—of works. One and all it casts away as utterly unfit to procure peace and salvation; and, with resigned and trembling faith, it throws itself down, weary and contented, at the foot of Christ's cross, to which the hand-writing of ordinances hath been nailed, and where sins have been blotted out.

II. Ye are complete in Him, needing no addition to His doctrine. Nothing is necessary to our faith which is not derived from His authority.

At that period this admonition was greatly needed, for there had crept into the churches of Asia, a class of men who wished to add to the precepts of the Gospel, commandments which were contrary to its spirit. It seems to be to this that he especially refers; and it is in close connexion with this, that he writes these words,—“Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him,” (ii. 7. 10.) Completeness in Christ is contrasted with dependence on human authorities,—their faith was not to stand on the wisdom of men,—they were to be rooted and built up in Him. It is from Christ that their teaching is to come; what was inconsistent with His works of redemption, they were to reject.

Paul is not condemning knowledge. He

is not trying to prejudice their minds against the study of any of God's works. All he says bears upon one point,—it all goes to mark out the Gospel as the exclusive truth upon subjects of religious faith.

Some teachers wished to make the Gospel an entirely Jewish dispensation,—they desired to make all the ordinances of the Mosaic ritual binding upon the consciences of the Gentiles. Others wished to render the doctrine of the cross more acceptable to the tastes and prejudices of the world,—they borrowed from the philosophy then in repute, maxims which might modify the peculiar features of the Gospel. This was the philosophy and vain deceit mentioned by Paul. He was anxious to keep the truths of Christianity simple and uncorrupted; he was afraid that theories and dogmas would be grafted in upon the doctrines of Christ, and that the plain fact of the propitiation would be hid and mutilated by human speculation.

The Apostle tells them they had no need of these. The mysteries of the Gospel were not to be cleared up by vain and self-sufficient men. The wisdom of the world could not supplement the wisdom of Christ. No spiritual truth of Christianity was to be displaced for a tradition taught by man. There was no new discovery or pretended revelation which could in any way explain the grand truths of the Christian faith, and save the pride of human nature too. The doctrines he had taught could not be superseded or disproved;—“in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Let us not be misunderstood here. We do not mean to assert that human helps are unnecessary. We do not mean to say that no light is to be derived from the page of nature, or from the volume of history, or from the researches of the human intellect, to bring forth a more distinct meaning from the Word of God; far from it. Helps are essential on many points. Such is the character of revelation, and so distant is the period of time since it was first announced, that some acquaintance with the circumstances, and habits, and people, among whom it first appeared, is necessary, in order to give us a full and enlarged idea of its grand design.

But all knowledge that keeps away the mind from Christ, is to be suspected as spurious; all investigations are to be avoided, which, in their natural consequences, unfit the mind for appreciating Scripture truth. If the plain and obvious effect of any pursuit be to set trifles above realities, small and profitless questions above heavenly truth, they are to be considered dangerous and delusive.

Such were the minute and frivolous points which were thrust upon the Church of Colosse by vain wranglers,—such, we venture to say it, are many of those topics which, in our own day, swell to such a size in the narrow view of many who can see nothing compre-