

with these combinations that of the domestic constitution, how easily, sweetly, and economically the latter works in comparison with the other; the former more under rhasping forces, the latter under touches of affection, which not only generates pleasure but affords it in the very action. We are constrained to come under the yoke of the former, it is the concentrated wish of our heart to live under the latter: the former is allowed of God, but the product to a great extent by man, the latter is the appointment of God, and operates under the influence of love. Now it seems to be the plan of the blessed Saviour to bring individuals beyond the circle of kindredship into combination, and place them under the sway of this powerful moral element. We may, it is true, have our creeds, confessions of faith, and thirty-nine articles to produce and preserve ecclesiastical combination. And what then?—harsh discord. The church has tried them now for many centuries, and what is the result?—let the present state of the church give the answer. And if we are to infer the benevolence of our Lord's plan, from the divisions, strifes, and contentions which ecclesiastical bickerings produce, we shall find it greatly at fault. But as we do not go to an hospital to ascertain the health of the nation, or a lunatic asylum to find out the mental soundness of a community—we do not go to the creed of men, or the conduct of men, to ascertain the benevolence of our plan. We turn to his own record, and learn there, the criterion of discipleship which he lays down, and thence infer the benevolence of his plan. "By this shall all know, that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

Our creed may be as correct as inspiration, but that creed must heave with love, to constitute us the disciples of Jesus—the creed itself however important, (and no one acquainted with human character will question the importance of purity in doctrine) unless pervaded with brotherly love, cannot raise us to the dignity of discipleship. Now if the plan exacts this, and will be satisfied with nothing short of it—if it lays down as a maxim that all other attainments cannot elevate any one even to discipleship when this is lacking—if an intellect adorned with the acquisitions of all knowledge, and which had sounded the depths of all mysteries—an understanding wide as the system of prophecy, and speech lofty as an angel's utterance—and superadded a faith which could cope with any physical difficulty, cannot raise the individual in whom they concentrate to discipleship, without brotherly love,—with what intensity does the benevolence of this system glow: "the love of Christ constraineth."

A society based upon this holy reciprocal affection was something new in the earth, did attract attention, and exert an influence. It could exist under any political form

of government—would produce no bloody resolutions; its principle would intrude itself by gentle insinuations into every department of life, and in its own quiet way, purify the springs of society, prepare for and establish a new order of things. Thus the plan of Jesus takes hold of the individual, renovates his nature, introduces him into a society of brothers, and then, through this organization, whose very life consists in love, extends to every kindred people, nation, and tongue. It has in it all the force of individual affection, yet is ample in its range, as the family of man.

3. Its benevolence therefore becomes the more evident from the extent of its projection—it does not overlook personal friendship, but reaches further, it does not overlook family interests, but extends beyond—it is not indifferent to patriotism, but it revels in humanity: it is man as such in whom it takes interest: its range is confined to no nation, it waves its olive wand over all people: "peace on earth, good will to man." The ages of its protection extends to no one nation in particular, but to all nations of the earth; it ignores "sum Romanus" (I am a Roman) and substitutes "sum homo" I am a man. The plans of the sages of ancient times, seldom ranged beyond the circle of patriotism, human nature as such they did not recognize. The name Athenian, Roman, &c., was a passport, to favor and privileges, but to say "I am a man" had but little influence. The plan of Jesus is preeminently humane: It is kindness to man as such: it is the human race it would enfold in its embrace, it directs the attention of men to one God as their common Creator and Lord, teaches them to regard each other as the descendant of common parents: bound to love each other with fraternal affection: in their earthly habitation to recognize an outer court leading to the inner sanctuary, and, while occupants here, to become better prepared for transition from one to the other.

It teaches that the sword must cease its rage. The world which has hitherto been the theatre of oppression, is to become a place of order and repose, the earth which has hitherto drunk the blood of the slain, is to be no longer stained with human gore: that shy reserve and jealous mistrust must yield to openness and confidence, the iron dominion of power give place to the gentle reign of reason and love, and the contests of nations be decided by the voice of uprightness, that human nature may rise to the enjoyment of its unabridged professions. That love to God and man is to be the main spring of every action, by means therefore of one of the gentlest, holiest, firmest principles which can touch the human heart, are the human race to be united unto one family, devoted to the service of God and prompted to the attainment of every possible degree of perfection: "Preach the gos-

pel to every creature:" Ye are my witnesses to the utmost end of the earth: and I if I be lifted up shall draw all men unto me." "The heaven and in the measure of meal is to leaven the whole lump." Here is a plan which sounds the depths of human wrong and proffers to correct it, of human guilt and offers to remove it, of human woe and promises to relieve it. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain of God."

4. Farther, to estimate the mighty force of the Saviour's kindness and mark the novelty of the benevolence of his plan, notice the circumstances in which it originates and operated. There are minds that rise above their age and leave their impression on it: they are rare as the visit of an angel, and even in them we shall often witness the modifications of the age, which need afterwards to be cleared away—but if we look at the plan of Jesus, it is not only free from all the prejudices of the age, but attracts to it all the truth and purity that the age had. In projecting for the future generations of mankind, he does not overlook that generation in which he lived. With a mind so expansive, a heart so kind, and a conduct so holy, one would have thought Jesus would have hastened away from a people whose mind was narrowed to a point through prejudice, whose heart breathes hatred, and whose conduct was proverbial for its vileness even in that vile age—"can any good come out of Nazareth"—if he should prolong his stay he would not resist all the influences by which he was surrounded; and yet what is the fact—he was reared a Jew, and that in Nazareth, yet projected a plan radiant with love—full of intelligence, and wide in its range as all kindreds, nations, and people, and tongues. Nazareth, sunk in ignorance and vice, was the place of the Saviour's sojourn for the greater part of his abode in this world, and as far as we know he was never beyond the limits of the Holy Land. The Jews were his countrymen, and their conversation, &c., all that he enjoyed. Now what state of feeling did they entertain towards other people? A sullen dislike, a smothered aversion, a calm hatred. The idea of anything good being extended to the Gentiles, stung them into madness and produced the most fearful ebullitions of rage. The charm of the Hebrew tongue calmed their rage for a moment in the case of the apostle Paul, but when he dared to announce to them, that God had commanded to preach among the Gentiles, "They gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voice and said, away with such a fellow, he is not fit to live, and they rent their clothes and threw dust into the air." This same apostle said of them: "They are contrary unto all men." Now such were the people among whom Jesus was born, brought up, and educated. How original his plan, and how pregnant with