

the way for its introduction was prepared, would be such manifestations of God to men as would produce love in the human heart for the object of worship and obedience. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart"—is the first great law of the universe; and God cannot be honored, nor man made happy, unless his obedience be actuated by love to the object of obedience. Now, the manifestations of mercy, under the old dispensation, were mainly temporal in their character, and limited in their application to the Jews. But God's special goodness to them could not produce love in the hearts of the Gentiles. The manifestations in Egypt were, therefore, neither adapted in their character, nor in the extent of their design, to the spiritual and universal religion of Jesus Christ. But one part of the Mosaic economy was universal and immutable in its character. The moral law is the same forever in its application to all intelligent beings in the universe. It is plain to reason, that whatever means may be adopted to bring men to rectitude of conduct, or to pardon them for offences, the rule of right itself, founded upon the justice and holiness, and sustained by the conscience, of the Eternal, must be immutable and eternal as its author; and the means, manifestations, and influences, under the different dispensations, are expedients of mercy, designed and adapted to bring men to act in conformity with its requirements.

How, then, under the new dispensation, and in conformity with its spiritual and universal character, could love for God be produced in the human heart?

We will here, again, as the subject in hand is most important, notice some of the conditions upon which affection for an object may be produced in the heart.

The will is influenced by motives and by affection; and all acts of will produced entirely by pure affection are disinterested acts. There is, probably, no one living, who has attained to maturity of years, but has, at some period of life, felt affection for another, so that it was more gratifying to please the object of his affection than to please himself. Love for another always influences the will to do those things which please the object loved; and the acts which proceed from affection are disinterested, not being done with any selfish end in view, but to conform to the will and meet the desires of another. The moment the affections are fixed upon an object, the will is drawn into union with the will of the object loved; and if that object be regarded as superior in proportion as he rises above us in the scale of being, to obey his will and secure his regard becomes a spontaneous volition of the soul; and the pleasure that arises from affectionate compliance with the will of a worthy and loved object, does not arise because it is sought for, but from the constitution the Maker has given to the human soul; it is the result of its activity, produced in accordance with the law of love.

All happy obedience must arise from affection, exercised towards the object obeyed. Obedience which arises from affection blesses the spirit which yields it, if the conscience approved of the object obeyed. While, on the contrary, no being can be happy in obeying one whom he does not love. To obey a parent, or to obey God, from interested motives, would be sin. The devil might be obeyed for the same reasons. All enlightened minds agree to what the Bible confirms, and what reason can clearly perceive, without argument, that love for God is essential to every act of religious duty. To tender obedience or homage to God, while we had no love for him in our hearts, would be dishonorable to the Maker, and doing violence to our own nature.

When an object presents itself to the attention, whose character engages the heart, then the affections flow out, and the soul acts sweetly in this new relation. There is a bond of sympathy between the hearts of the two beings, and those things which affect the one affect the other, in proportion to the strength of the cherished

affection. One meets the desire and conforms to the will of the other, not from a sense of obligation merely, but from choice. And in thus giving and receiving affection, the soul experiences its highest enjoyment, its greatest good; and when the understanding perceives in the object loved, perfections of the highest character, and affection of the purest kind for those that love him, the conscience sanctions the action of the heart and the obedience of the will, and all the moral powers of the soul unite in happy and harmonious action.

We return now, to the problem—Under the spiritual dispensation of Christ, how could the affections of the soul be awakened by faith, and fixed upon God, their proper object?

The principle has been stated, which every one will recognize as true in his own experience, that the more we feel the want of a benefactor, temporal or spiritual, and the more we feel our inability to rescue ourselves from existing difficulties and impending dangers, the more grateful love will the heart feel for the being, who, moved by kindness, and in despite of personal sacrifices, interposes to assist and save us.

Under the Old Testament dispensation the affections of the Israelites were educed and fixed upon God in accordance with this law of the soul. They were placed in circumstances of abject need; and, from this condition of suffering and sorrow, God delivered them, and thus drew their hearts to himself. Now the Jews, as has been noticed, supposed that the Messiah would appear and again confer upon them similar favors, by delivering them from the state of dependence and subjection as a nation. But a temporal deliverance of this kind, as has been shown, was not consistent with the design of Christ's perfect and spiritual dispensation, which was designed to save men from sin and spiritual bondage, and restore them to spiritual happiness by restoring them to affectionate obedience to the only living and true God.

The inquiry then presents itself, as a feeling of want was necessary, in order that the soul might love the being that supplied that want—and as Jesus came to bestow spiritual mercies upon mankind—How could men be brought to feel the want of a spiritual Benefactor and Saviour?

Allow the thought to be repeated again—According to the constitution which God has given the soul, it must feel the want of spiritual mercies before it can feel love for the giver of those mercies; and just in proportion as the soul feels its lost, guilty, and dangerous condition, in the same proportion will it exercise love to the being who grants spiritual favor and salvation. How, then, could the spiritual want be produced in the souls of men, in order that they might love the spiritual benefactor?

Not by temporal bondage and temporal suffering, because these would lead men to desire temporal deliverance. The only possible way by which man could be made to hope for and appreciate spiritual mercies, and to love a spiritual deliverer, would be to produce a conviction in the soul itself of its evil condition, its danger as a spiritual being, and its inability, unaided, to satisfy the requirements of a *spiritual law*, or to escape its just and spiritual penalty. If man could be made to perceive that he was guilty and needy; that his soul was under the condemnation of the holy law of a holy God, he would then, necessarily, feel the need of a deliverance from sin and its consequences; and in this way only could the soul of man be led to appreciate spiritual mercies, or love a spiritual benefactor.

Mark another fact, in connection with the foregoing, which is to be especially noticed, and which will be developed fully in subsequent pages—The greater the kindness and self-denial of a benefactor manifested in our behalf, the warmer and the stronger will be the