

thanks to God, who put the same *earnest care* into the heart of Titus for you." Was Paul afraid Titus would be too urgent on this topic? or that he might devote too much attention to it? Did Paul think it required only a passing remark to originate, regulate, and complete this grace? His own words answer all these questions:—"We desired Titus that as he had *begun*, so he would also *finish* in you the same grace also." Thus then, dear brother, whilst it is the grace of God bestowed on the churches, it is granted in the order of means, which it becomes the servants of Christ wisely, affectionately, and seriously to apply. We may now briefly advert to some of those arguments and suggestions which Paul employs. And, *first*, he guards them against the deception of all resolutions which fall short of action:—"Now, therefore, perform the doing of it, that as there was a *readiness to will*, so there may be a performance also out of that which you have." To resolve is one thing; to perform another; and "Better is it that a man should not 'resolve' at all than 'resolve' and not perform." To resolve has the shew of virtue, and may therefore blind conscience in the moment of serious review, and so prevent it from reflecting that salutary pain which might issue in reform, on the recollection of having omitted duty. Again; to resolve and not perform, subverts one purpose for which (what are called) our passive affections are placed in our bosom. It is possible for the emotion of pity, which tends and is intended to produce the active habit of relieving distress, to degenerate under frequent excitement, unaccompanied with action, into the sickly sensibility of the romance reader. He weeps over the fancied ills of his hero, but regards the real miseries of life without an effort to relieve. Now such appears the tendency of resolv-

ing to do good without doing it. The vigour of the emotion is wasted, without inducing the habits of which it was to be the originator. It follows, therefore, in attempting to produce a healthy scriptural liberality, we must guard against a readiness to will when unaccompanied with a performance thereof:—"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: perform that which thou hast vowed."

A *second* argument which Paul employs is, the proportion and completeness which this virtue would give to their character. "Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." A Christian may exhibit much of the image of God, and yet if the lineament of character be wanting, how defectively he reflects the praises of him who is good, and doth good, and who, when he became a man, went about continually doing good. Does beauty consist in lovely proportion? Surely not less so in completion of parts. How often it occurs in the instructions of Moses—"A lamb without blemish." In this he forewrote the perfect character of our blessed Lord, of whom we are to be imitators, as dear children: possessing richly the other gifts of the Spirit, this grace affords the completeness of a whole, the glow of a finish—"see that ye abound in this grace also."

A *third* suggestion of Paul is the air of sincerity which it would give to our expressions of love: "And to *prove the sincerity* of your love." An appeal to our own consciousness may often satisfy us that we love God, his people, and creatures; and yet a degree of doubt as to the supremacy of spiritual affection may obtain, from a well known fact of our nature, viz., that sensibility is prominent in