

radiance of celestial glory, but is born of a woman, an actual man in actual life; he dwelt among men, and as our brother, comes home to our affections and sympathies. Thus also the scriptures come home to us as truth already woven into human thoughts and feelings. It must have ere it could be uttered in human language and addressed to our understandings. It would be as reasonable to object to the plenary inspiration of the scriptures, that they were written in Hebrew or Greek. If out of the languages of mankind that of a particular nation may be selected as the vehicle of divine truth, then why out of the various styles in which that language is used, may not that of one man be employed. In conclusion let the objector say what would have satisfied him; or tell us how a revelation is to be made in human language, without the employment of some existing tongue, and some individual style according to ordinary laws, and common usage.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION.

Had the work of Christ on earth, been completed and the accomplished facts been left to be used and disposed of by human intelligence, there is no doubt that they would at once have been cast into oblivion as mere foolishness. But they were entrusted to the advocacy of the Spirit, who in every age has made it an experienced reality, that the gospel is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. The word of God in which this advocacy is embodied, is distinguished not only by its unerring truth, but by this that its author is always living, and always present with it: "operating through it, and by it, and with it." With this assurance, we rejoice to think that whatever obstacles the truth may encounter in the world, the battle is not ours, but God's.

We also rejoice in the assurance thence derived, that the Spirit must be actually present in the heart of every believer, not transiently, but permanently. As in the operation of natural causes, we recognize a present God, so also in the operation of the means of grace we recognize a present Spirit, sanctifying us, filling us with joy, peace, and love, and bringing out the graces of the renewed character. In nature we behold God clothing with beauty the lillies of the field; so in grace we behold God clothing the soul with holiness. Only an infidel could conceive a blade of grass springing up independently of Him, and only an infidel could suppose a single holy desire springing up spontaneously in the arid waste of the human heart.

In the human heart there is no natural sense of spiritual want, and consequently no desire of spiritual blessings. Amidst all

their covetousness and rapacity, carnal men never hunger and thirst after righteousness, or seek to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. They have wants and appetites enough, and they may be clamorous enough for their supply. They lust and have not; they kill and desire to live, but cannot obtain. They fight and war, yet they have not because they ask not; they ask and receive not because they ask amiss, that they may consume it on their lusts. In short we know not what we should pray for as we ought. It remains for the Spirit who was sent into the world to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to awaken the sense of spiritual want and kindle the holy desire; and thus the Spirit maketh intercession for us.

It will be observed that whenever the Spirit is introduced as an agent in man's salvation, it is upon the man himself that His agency is executed. Our Lord's intercession is made personally at the Father's right hand; the Spirit's intercession is made through the heart in which He dwells, as is evident from the fact that it finds an utterance in the believer's groans. That intercession is of course according to the will of God; that is, the desires awakened are in strict harmony with God's gracious will. In point of fact these desires are enkindled by God himself.

An adequate sense of the evil of sin, the danger of condemnation, the excellence of salvation, and the preciousness of heavenly blessings, must exceed the capacity of human thought and feeling. The Spirit's intercession, therefore, being in accordance with the will of God, must consist in a sense of want too august, and in longings too ardent for human utterance. The Spirit maketh intercession for us in groans or sighs that cannot be expressed in words; this is true not only of babes in Christ, or of those who are less gifted in conception and utterance; Paul includes himself, he speaks of it as the common experience of believers.

The consolatory view of this truth, however, is not that the imperfect conception or utterance is a common infirmity, but that the want of expression does not hinder the reality of prayer, or the certainty of its answer. God needs not that any man should ask him, He knows all things. He searches the heart, its inmost recesses are unveiled before his eye. He knows what is going on there in the Spirit's intercession. He needs not the utterance of man's lips; nay, he can go back even of our dim conceptions. He knows the mind of the Spirit, and the prayer comes to him in all the fulness of the Spirit's meaning and desire. He stands pledged to the answer of prayer according to his will. He cannot be indifferent to desires awakened by Himself.

How precious to the believer this assurance of the Spirit to help our infirmities.

As in natural life God did not only breathe into man's nostrils the breath of life, but in Him we live and move and have our being, so in spiritual life, the entrance of the word gives life, and the Spirit dwells in the believer's heart. The throne of God becomes a mercy seat; our advocate appears there evermore to plead for us. The Spirit makes the believer's heart His abode, and his sanctification His care. "I taught them to go," He says, "taking them by the arm," like a tender Mother guiding and upholding her infant's tottering steps. Helping our infirmities; drawing forth our desires. What a place should a throne of grace be to us; a loving Father is seated on it; the Spirit is with us to make intercession through our hearts; Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us. Christians in the outset of their divine life, may find encouragement here. Mere fluency of speech is not grace. The answer of prayer does not depend upon the correctness of our conception, or the eloquence of our address. Not that we should be content with dim conceptions, or a stammering utterance; but it need not fill us with dismay, though we should not be able to grasp the mighty truth, and though the last big and burning desire of a mortal pilgrimage should issue in a groan or a sigh, He that searches the heart knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

THE UNGODLINESS OF MEN.

The disposition of the guilty soul to escape from close contact with the divine holiness, is manifested in the whole tendency of the unrenewed man's thoughts and actions. An examination of the mythologies and superstitions of the heathen world, would furnish an extended proof of this. There might be found at the root of them all, a knowledge of the one living and true God; and in all their extravagancies we see corrupt invention at work to wear a screen between this knowledge and the soul. God has revealed himself to the world, and men cannot get rid of the idea without ceasing to think. For an example of the manner in which the pressure of the terrible thought is escaped, we may cite the cumbrous system of the Brahmins. They acknowledge one God, although in that land where the monuments of superstition jostle one another, there is not a single temple to his honour. This one universal fountain of existence is styled *Brahm*, not *Brahma*; and they represent him as being in a state of habitual unconsciousness. At a period of time, myriads of ages ago, he woke up to a momentary energy, and produced from the substance of his own existence, three inferior deities known as the Hindoo Triad, by whose united efforts the