

reverence for the Scriptures, which convicted them of error, which yet they would not renounce.

I. Paul was regarded as a heretic by the Jews. He walked in the way which they called *heresy*. The word *heresy* is just the original word. It is translated *sect* in some other parts of the New Testament. In the charge brought against Paul, to which he in this passage replies, it is said that he was "a ringleader of the *sect* of the Nazarenes." Paul says, respecting his life prior to his conversion, "after the most straitest *sect* of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." When Paul arrived in Rome, the Jews asked him, what he thought of the Christians; "for," said they, "as for this *sect* we know that it is everywhere spoken against." The word *sect* in these passages is the word translated *heresy*. It comes from a word, which signifies to choose, to prefer. Paul was a heretic, in the estimation of the Jews, because he chose Christ and his truth. It was because Paul's conduct condemned them that they called him a heretic, and the system of truth, which he believed and advocated, *heresy*. So it is with many in the present day. They cannot bear to have it hinted in any way that the religious opinions in which they have been brought up are erroneous, and hence they cry *heresy* to those who differ from them, and who prefer to be guided by the unerring word of God. The best reason that many can give for the truth of the sentiments they entertain is that they have been held by good men of past ages. But unless we have reason to believe that the good men of past ages were infallible, this is no evidence that what we hold is true. Says Mr. McLean in his *Tri-centenary of the Scottish Reformation*, "it is the duty of the descendants of the Reformers to maintain the great principles and masculine theology of the Reformation, and hand them down to our children entire and unimpaired, as we received them." Now this is our duty only on the hypothesis that all that the Reformers held was the very truth of God, and that they were men who could not err. We believe in the Reformers; we honour their memory. But we do not believe wholly in them; and we do not think it indicates any disrespect of them to say so. We desire to believe wholly only in Jesus Christ, and, though we be branded as heretics for not believing what the majority believe, we are willing to pay that price for the truth. We maintain, in opposition to the limitarianism of Calvinism, the universality of the love of the Divine Father, the universal atonement of the Divine Son, and the universal, and consequently moral and resistible,