

of constancy and fickleness ; He was one sustained, unfaltering harmony, an instrument never out of tune. He had been all along precisely the same brave, faithful, tender, patient, self-sacrificing soul that He showed Himself to be upon the cross. The spirit of His death was just the spirit of His life ; He died just as He had lived. Hence, in aspiring to be made conformable to His death, St. Paul has fastened upon what He was in dying, and has chosen to set that before him, not as being the best and noblest expression he could find in Him, but as representing concisely and vividly the entire, the habitual man, as displaying most succinctly and impressively all that He was and always had been. There, to his view, shone the very Christ gathered and concentrated to a bright blaze.

Thus, in saying " Let me be conformed to His death," the actual meaning would be, let me be conformed to *Him*, to that continuous spirit, to those continuous sympathies and aims of His which, in His death, I see so intensely expressed, so gloriously epitomized. The death of the Lord Jesus stood with St. Paul, as with other New Testament writers, for the whole life of holy and loving self-sacrifice that culminated there ; which is the explanation doubtless of their perpetual reference and recurrence to it. In it they saw framed and projected the whole reality of their Saviour ; it presented Him to them in a brief and brilliant summary. Upon the black background of Gethsemane and Calvary, with what peculiar clearness and distinctness came out each charm that characterized Him ! This was the great crisis, these the circumstances that caused Him to appear, that showed fervently and to the full what He was. He had not changed, had not become other and better than His former self ; but here you have Him most strikingly and profoundly revealed.

And what was the Christ-glory that blazed out, especially, in the Christ dying, and toward which the apostle craved to

be sublimed ?

There was the wonted calmness, self-possession, and dignity, more conspicuous than ever in the hour of arrest and in the judgment hall ; the wonted meek patience and fortitude under the trial of the scourge and the cruel taunts of the multitude, the wonted compassion and infinite consideration for others, more conspicuous than ever in the healing of the high-priest's servant, in the tender commending of His mother to the care of St. John, in the prayer for the blinded and ruthless mob, in the quick response to the appeal of the crucified robber, and in the words which, with the cross upon His shoulders, He stopped to speak to the crowd of women who followed Him bewailing and lamenting, " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your children ! " There was the wonted resignation and surrender of Himself, to perform the Father's work and fulfil the Father's Will, more conspicuous than ever in the ejaculation, " Thinkest thou that I could not ask and have granted me twelve legions of angels ? but thus it must be ; " and, again, in Gethsemane's sob, " Not my will, but Thine, be done." And the wonted trust and confidence in the Almighty, more conspicuous than ever in the cries, " My God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? " " Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." But all these things were comprehended in what may be termed the spirit of holy and loving self-sacrifice that ruled His life ; in other words, the abiding readiness to risk and suffer to the utmost in obeying God and serving man. *That was Christ.* He recognised His work, the work which the Father had given Him to do, and He must needs prosecute it at all cost, however dreadful. He panted to help and bless men, and He must needs pour himself out for them to the last drop. He foresaw that faithfulness and love were involving him in peril, were leading him to destruction ; yet he went resolutely on, and here he is at length in