

are still studied with deep interest, and the narratives contain the most extraordinary accounts of the work of grace in the heart which the history of the church records. Luther, in particular, passed through a course of moral training intensely painful, but which was manifestly adapted to the formation of such a character as the duties to which he was subsequently called required. His inward struggles and temptations, inexplicable to those who are unacquainted with experimental Christianity, were evidently, as Richard Cecil said of his afflictions, "a more expensive education for the ministry." He and his illustrious coadjutors were designed by Providence for a peculiar work, for which an appropriate preparation was necessary. They were "led by a way they knew not." They felt the terrors of the law. They strove to obtain relief under a sense of guilt by mortification of the flesh and works of obedience, but strove in vain. It was not till they saw that "the just shall live by faith," that they obtained peace and comfort. Then, fleeing to Christ, and submitting to the "righteousness of God," they entered into life, and love, and joy. In each of them, the gospel was "the power of God unto salvation." They did not preach an unknown Christ. They did not discourse on unfelt truth. They could say, "Having therefore this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not:"—"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts."

It was an astonishing transformation. These men had been the bond-slaves of Rome. Some of them had been enthusiastic devotees, even among those who were "wholly given to idolatry." Wonderful was it to see how soon and how completely they were emancipated, and with what ease they assumed the habits of primitive Christianity. Quarles's quaint panegyric on Bishop Jewel

was applicable to many more in those eventful times:—

"Holy learning, sacred arts;  
 Gifts of nature, strength of parts;  
 Fluent grace, an humble mind;  
 Worth reformed, and wit refined;  
 Sweetness both in tongue and pen;  
 Insight both in books and men;  
 Hopes in woe, and fears in weal;  
 Humble knowledge, sprightly zeal;  
 A liberal heart, and free from gall;  
 Close to friends, and true to all;  
 Height of courage in truth's duel—  
 Are the stones that made this Jewel.  
 Let him that would be truly blest,  
 Wear this jewel in his breast."

One important particular must not be overlooked. Most of the Reformers were instructive and forcible preachers of the gospel. They powerfully aided the cause with their pens, and their writings deserve to be carefully studied even now, teeming, as they do, with lively truth. But the living voice was everywhere employed. Many a Boanerges thundered out the terrors of the Lord, till the people trembled as the leaves of the forest, when shaken by the wind. Many a Barnabas poured into the wounded spirit the consolations of Christ, and said to the heart-stricken sinner, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." By the preaching of the gospel, the Saviour's own ordinance, and by which he is specially magnified, the servants of God enlightened and convinced their fellow-men, in great numbers, in every part of Europe.

Thus qualified, endowed, and prepared, they went forth to their work—not to gain adherents to a system, or raise a party, but to save souls. If they upheld the authority of the word of God, and called upon men to receive its truths, obey it dictates, and trust its promises, it was that they might find it "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," and thus become "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If they asserted Christian liberty, and invited their hearers to "try the spirits, whether they were of God,"—vindicating the right of private