

clustering around the cross as their central luminary. All these should be exhibited according to their relative importance. We find Paul pursuing this practice in his epistles. In them a great variety of themes is discussed, and yet the cross is the centre of them all—the theme he glories in. He declared to the Ephesians, that he had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God. And the burden of his exhortations to Timothy and Titus,—young ministers to whom he writes,—is that they should, in this respect, follow his example. It was when Paul came to the Corinthians first of all, that he determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus and his cross. But he was accustomed to make known “wisdom,” “the deep things of God,” to those who were advanced in the divine life and matured in christian experience. He indeed complains, that the Corinthians were carnal, so that he could not feed them with “strong meat,” but had to speak to them “as unto babes in Christ,”—had still to feed them with milk. He desired Christians to advance in their knowledge of divine things.

This consideration enables us to understand what Paul means when he says, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 14. “The things of the spirit of God” are “the deep things of God,” the “wisdom” which he spoke among those who were perfect. The natural man cannot understand these things, because they are spiritually discerned. But this does not mean that the carnal or natural man cannot understand the gloriously simple gospel. Because the deep things of God can be understood only by spiritual men, Paul preached *the gospel* to sinners, which is so simple, that a child can understand it, and in which the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err, and by the faith of which the carnal man becomes a spiritual man. The Corinthians, though they had received the gospel, exhibited sad evidences of carnality, and Paul still needed to feed them with milk,—the simple truth about Jesus.

4. This determination implies in the apostle himself a knowledge of Christ and his cross, submission to him as Lord, and experience of the humbling and purifying influences which that knowledge yields. Since it was the grand object of the apostle's life to magnify Christ in the estimation of his fellow-men, he himself must have known Christ, must have been devoted to his cause, must have enjoyed his grace; otherwise he could not have performed the duties of an ambassador of Christ. Paul did