

an insult—one who is little affected by an injury that is done to him, and, therefore, appears mild, forbearing, and without resentment. But the man who has Christian meekness, is one who, however sensitive he may be naturally—however keenly he may feel an insult or an injury he has received, yet represses his resentment, forbears and forgives. He may be naturally quick and passionate, but, through the grace of God, he has learnt to restrain his anger, is ready to return good for evil, and shews a calm unruffled spirit. Under affronts, revilings and wrongs, which he receives from his fellow-creatures, he maintains a just composure of mind,—considering that though man is the immediate agent of such sufferings, it is through the permission of God they have power to afflict him. He considers that God has a hand in what he suffers, and therefore humbly and quietly, without desire of revenge, submits to the will of God. Under all afflictions from God, he is patient, calm and resigned,—for conscience towards God, enduring grief. He does not break out in a spirit of resistance: he does not speak the language of passion, uttering repining complaints and discontented murmurings; he does not fly in the face of the dispensation; he reverently complies with God's disposal;—shewing all meekness.

You see, then, the distinction between Christian meekness and constitutional meekness. Mark, now, the effect of grace on the naturally meek man, and on the naturally passionate man. He who is naturally meek and gentle, is, for the most part, naturally timid and irresolute; he is pliant and yielding, easily deterred from good, and easily persuaded to evil: but when he is converted—when he receives the grace of God into his heart, while he retains his mildness and gentleness, he acquires firmness and boldness, and when under temptation, he is unwavering from the line of rectitude. On the other hand, the naturally passionate man,—after having been renewed by the Holy Ghost,—will still be vehement, but his natural vehemence will be softened into patience, and give place to calm determination, joined with a readiness to forgive, and a zealous earnestness to conciliate. Grace removes what is in excess, and imparts what is wanting. Thus, the naturally timid man, through grace, will be bold and vehement in a righteous cause; and the naturally vehement man, while still vehement in the cause of God, will be meek and forbearing in his own cause.

Having thus described to you the nature of Christian meekness, I would, in a sentence, guard you against that misrepresentation and mistake so common among the men of the world in regard to it. The men of the world are ready to confound the meekness of the believer with meanness of spirit, and to denounce it as inconsistent with the dignity of human nature,—while, in truth, the believer's

meekness shows a soul elevated above sordid and angry passions—a soul self-possessed—a soul gaining a double victory, a victory over self, and victory over those who oppose themselves—the soft word, and loving look, melting, subduing, and bringing about reconciliation and peace.

The men of the world are ready to mistake this meekness of the believer for timidity and irresolution, while, in truth, the meek man is he who forms his principles with the utmost decision, and adheres to them with the utmost firmness and inflexibility.

Let me refer you to examples of meekness recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Moses, we are told, was the meekest man on the face of the whole earth. Yet Moses was remarkable for his firmness, boldness and intrepidity. Witness his disregard of the wrath and power of Pharaoh—his approaching the tyrant's presence—his denouncing, with unaverted eye and with unfaltering tongue, the judgments of God on the king, his house, and his people; and as one who bade defiance to the rage and menace of the mighty monarch, marching out of Egypt at the divine commandment. Witness his opposing himself to the whole body of the people of Israel, when they made for themselves a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the work of their own hands. How vehement he was in the cause of God! Yet this was he who was dead to affronts, deaf to reproaches, and most patient under injuries. Notwithstanding the extraordinary honors put on him, he was humble, unassuming, forbearing and ready to forgive:—an example of singular meekness.

David was a great warrior. When he was yet a youth, he went out against Goliath of Gath, who defied the armies of the living God, and slew him. But a man of war as he was, and at a season when he was chafed in his mind, on his being grievously cursed by Shemei, his own subject, he meekly replied: "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." He felt that the Lord had appointed the chastisement, and he did not desire to resist it. What an example of that meekness which is not of nature, but of grace!

The intrepid Paul, who stood forth and declared the grand principles of true religion, before proud and scoffing philosophers on Mars Hill at Athens, and for the defence of the gospel fought with wild beasts at Ephesus—in all his contendings, with Gentiles and with Jews, was remarkable for his meekness. Hear the account which he gives of the way in which he exercised his ministry, God being his witness: "I was gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."

Above all, let me refer you to the great exemplar, the Lord Jesus himself. In all things He has the pre-eminence. He was the perfection of meekness. How strongly marked was this feature of His character! We read of the meekness and gentleness of