

most verge of self-sacrifice in ransoming our souls, should be wanting to us in what will cost Him no sacrifice, but yet is necessary to complete our salvation? If the soul has the least scintillation of a desire to be holy; much more, if it is bent on being holy, as far as its power goes; still more, if it is striving and struggling to be holy, and beating against the cage of its corruptions in a great longing for spiritual freedom, as a poor imprisoned bird beats, who sees outside the bright sun and the green trees, and other birds flitting to and fro in the blue ether,—is it conceivable that the Incarnate Love, the Love which bled, and agonized, and poured itself out in death for the objects on which it had fastened, should not meet that desire, that longing, that striving, and visit the soul with power? As without holiness no man shall (or can) see the Lord, must not Christ be much more earnestly anxious to make us holy, than we can be to be made so? If we do not believe in this earnest anxiety of His, do we believe in His love at all? Have we ever really apprehended it; or has it been merely a tale recited to our ears, which we do not care indeed to contradict, but which has never at all taken hold of, or touched our hearts?

Ah! what if these struggles to be holy should themselves be in a certain sense a token of unbelief? What if the poor bird imprisoned in the cage should be thinking that, if it is ever to gain its liberty, it must be by its own exertions, and by vigorous and frequent strokes of its wings against the bars? If it did so, it would ere long fall back breathless and exhausted, faint and sore, and despairing. And the soul will have a similar experience, which thinks that Christ has indeed won pardon and acceptance for her, but that Sanctification she must win for herself, and under this delusion beats herself sore in vain efforts to correct the propensities of a heart which the Word of God pronounces to be "desperately" wicked. That heart,—you can make nothing of it yourself;—leave it to Christ, in quiet dependence upon His grace. Suffer Him to open the prison-doors for you, and then you shall fly out and hide yourself in your Lord's bosom, and there find rest. Yield up the soul to Him, and place it in His hands; and you shall at once begin to have the delightful experience of his power in sanctifying.

"Yield up the soul," we say. And in saying so, we of course imply (though it needs to be expressed, as well as implied)

that you yield up your will without reserve. There is no such thing as yielding up the soul, without yielding up the will; for the will is the chief power of the soul. Christ Himself cannot sanctify a moral agent, whose will holds persistently to his corruptions. Even a man cannot liberate a bird from its cage, which likes to stay there, refuses to move when the door is opened, and flies back when it is taken out. God has given us a free will, the exercise of which cannot indeed change our hearts or renew our moral nature, but which *can* say "Nay" to the world, to the flesh and to the devil; which shows that it can say "Nay" by saying it sometimes, when worldly interests are concerned. And this "Nay" it must say, if the soul is to be sanctified, and bring forth fruit.

II. But our blessed LORD said not only "Abide in Me," but also "Let Me, or take heed that I abide in you." He thus teaches us that Ordinance, as well as Faith, forms part of the system of His religion, and especially that Ordinance, in which indeed all others are included, by which He communicates Himself to the faithful soul. In order to the fruitfulness of the vine-branch, two conditions have to be fulfilled; the first, that the branch shall adhere closely to the stem, and offer an open tube for the passage of the sap,—this is the abiding of the branch in the vine; the second, that the sap shall rise ever and anon from the vine-stock, and pass into the branch,—this is the abiding of the vine in the branch. Similarly in the case of the Christian. The first condition of his spiritual fruitfulness is, that he shall adhere by a close trust to Christ, and keep open towards Him the avenues of faith, hope, and expectation. This is, "Abide in Me." The second is, that Christ shall continually send up into his heart a current of holy inspirations, new loves, good impulses, devout hopes. Or, more accurately, that He shall communicate Himself to the soul by the continual influx of the Holy Ghost. This is, "And I in you." And this communication of Himself is made specially (where that Sacrament may be had) in the Supper of the Lord; He comes at those seasons into the opened avenue of the faithful communicant's soul, comes to cement by His own passage into the inner man the union in which our faith cleaves to Him; and the result is "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine."

Thus a devout and frequent use of the