

very truth, by the faith of which they formerly stood, and by the unbelief of which they fall.

The whole design of what has been said, is to inculcate the great necessity of glorying, first and last, entirely and exclusively, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is freely admitted, that it is highly proper for professors of the faith to examine themselves by their fruits, but then of what are these fruits the evidence? Of their faith in Christ, and hope in him alone for salvation; and therefore no works can afford any evidences of those that perform them being the people of God, unless they are conscious that these works flow from the faith and love of the gospel, as the sole ground of their confidence. It is of the last importance for professors of the faith to be fully convinced, that when they backslide from God and his ways, they can only be recovered by that truth which first quickened them, and that the free and sovereign grace of God can alone renew their hope and joy.

To this purpose we have many examples in the word of God: and particularly the case of the Churches in Asia is exactly in point, recorded in Rev. chapters ii. and iii. The Ephesians, having left their first love, are called on "to remember from whence they had fallen, and to repent." The Church in Sardis, having departed from their liveliness in God's ways, is exhorted "to remember how they had received and heard, and to hold fast, and repent." And the Laodiceans, having fallen into a self-righteous and lukewarm state, highly offensive to Christ, are counselled by him "to buy of him gold tried in the fire that they might be rich, and white raiment that they might be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness might not appear, and to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they might see."

It is then a comfortable and safe doctrine, that Christians, in all their defections and sins, must have immediate recourse to the blood of Jesus for pardon and peace of conscience. They may perhaps have, at times, reason to doubt if they ever knew the truth, and this may be a state of mind salutary to their souls in certain circumstances, but they ought at all times to be convinced, that the gospel is true, and suited to their case, although they themselves

should have been self-deceivers, and thus to be encouraged, while it is called to-day, to draw near to God, and call on his Almighty name, who has assured us that none shall ever do so in vain. Rom. x. 13.

PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

Preach Christ crucified! Turn not aside from this, under the temptation of meeting some question of the day, or some bearing of the public mind. There is much mystic verbiage, which some esteem to be of transcendental depth. There is much pantheism which some regard as original and sublime. Your versatility will often be urged to follow after these conceits. You will be told of their amazing influence. They really are nothing. They are the bubbles of the hour. They cannot boast even a novelty. I conjure you, care little for them. Yours is not a discretionary theme. It is unchanging. Keep to it. Abide by it. It is one, but it is an infinite one! It is the word of Christ, divinely true! Its rigidness can never hamper your thought. Its reiteration can never weary your inquiry. At no point can it restrict you. It is a large place. It is a boundless range. It is a mine of wealth. It is a firmament of power. Whither would ye go from it? It is the unwinding of all the great principles. It is the expansion of all glorious thoughts. It is the capacity of all blessed emotions.

O Calvary, we turn to thee! Our nature, a wreck, a chaos, only canst thou adjust! We have an aching void which thou canst only fill! We have pantings and longings which only thou canst satisfy! Be thou the strength and the charm of our inward life! Be thou the earnestness of our deepest interest! Be thou inspiration, impulsion, divinity, and all! Our tears never relieved us until thou taughtest us to weep! Our smiles only mocked us until thou badest us rejoice! We knew no way of peace until we found our way to thee! Hope was banished from us until its dove flew downwards from thee upon our heart! All was dormant until thou didst stir; all was dull until thou didst excite us! Our eyes are still lifted to thee, O to the hill from which cometh our help! Our feet shall stand upon thee, O high mountain! and thou shalt make them beautiful while we publish the glad tidings of "Christ crucified."—Rev. W. R. Hamilton, D.D.