

originally designed, and which remain as an invaluable storehouse to the visible church of God.

In the words of the text, we have the "summing up" of the whole. Sweet are the accents of heaven-inspired love issuing from the lips of a holy messenger of the cross. The spirit of his Master breathed in him. A holy love to their immortal souls; a tender anxiety for their spiritual progress; a noble-minded zeal for the purity of the church; a jealousy for the honor of Christ;—these are the elements which here centre as in one: And "these things are written for our learning," that as individual members of christian societies, and as a branch of the Church of the living God which he hath purchased with his own blood, we may truly abound "in all holy conversation and godliness."

I. When the Apostle exhorts the Corinthian brethren to "*be perfect*," he just repeats in other words the sentiment which he had uttered at the ninth verse of this chapter: "This also we wish, even your perfection." In his ardent wishes for the spiritual benefit of the believing Hebrews, the Apostle proposes "to leave the principles" or first elements "of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection," in order that each of them may be established in the doctrines of grace, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, and "that every one of them may show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope."* In his epistle to the churches of Colosse, the Apostle thus expresses himself: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may be perfect and complete in all the will of God."† This was the object of his prayers, and these prayers are described in language that beautifully indicates their energetic earnestness. The man wrestled with God; and, like Jacob, he wrestled not for an unattainable blessing. It is true, perfection, in the literal sense of the term, can be affirmed of Him only in whom all excellence centres in the highest possible degree. But there is a

* Heb. vi. 1, 11, 12. † Col. iv. 12.