

The liberated man would feel more gratitude to one of his friends who had labored to get petitions before the governor for his release, than to the governor who released him. To vary the illustration—suppose that two persons, who are liable to be destroyed in the flames of a burning dwelling, are rescued by two separate individuals. The one is enabled to escape by an individual who, perceiving his danger, steps up to the door and opens it, without any effort or self-denial on his part. The other is rescued in a different manner. An individual, perceiving his danger and liability to death, ascends to him, and by a severe effort, and while he is himself suffering from the flames, holds open the door until the inmate escapes for his life. Now the one who opened the door without self-denial may have been merciful, and the individual relieved would recognise the act as a kindness done to one in peril; but no one would feel that *that* act proved that the man who delivered the other manifested any special mercy, because any man would have done the same act. But the one who ascended the ladder and rescued, by peril and by personal suffering, the individual liable to death, would manifest special mercy and all who observed it would acknowledge the claim; and the individual rescued would feel the mercy of the act, melting his heart into gratitude to his deliverer unless his heart was a moral petrification.

What are, in reality, the facts by which alone men may know that any being possesses a benevolent nature? Not, certainly, by that being conferring benefits upon others, which cost him neither personal labor nor self-denial; because we could not tell but those favors would cease the moment they involved the least degree of sacrifice, or the moment they interfered with his selfish interests. But when it requires a sacrifice, on the part of a benefactor, to bestow a favor and that sacrifice is made, then benevolence of heart is made evidently manifest. Now mark—any being who is prompted by benevolence of heart, to make sacrifices, may not lose happiness, in the aggregate, by so doing; for a benevolent nature finds happiness in performing benevolent acts. Self-denials are, therefore, not only the appropriate method of manifesting benevolence to men, but they are likewise the appropriate manifestations of a benevolent nature. Now, suppose God is perfectly benevolent; then, it follows in view of the foregoing deductions, in order to manifest his true nature to men, self-denials would be necessary, in order that men might see and feel that "God is love." It is clear, therefore, that those who reject the divinity of Christ, as connected with the atonement, cannot believe in God's benevolence; because, God is really as benevolent as the self-denials of Christ (believed in as divine) will lead men to feel that he is; nor can they believe in the mercy of God in any way that will produce an effect upon their hearts. To say that the human heart can be deeply affected by mercy that is not manifested by self-denial, is to show but little knowledge of the springs which move the inner life of the human soul. Man will feel a degree of love and gratitude for a benefactor who manifests an interest in his wants, and labors to supply them; but he will feel a greater degree of grateful love for the benefactor who manifests an interest in his wants, and makes self-denials to aid him. To deny, therefore, the divine and meritorious character of the atonement, is to shut out both the evidence and the effect of God's mercy from the soul.

In accordance with this view, is the teaching of the scriptures. There is but one thing which is charged against men, in the New Testament, as a fundamental and soul-destroying *heresy*, and that is, not denying the Lord, but "the Lord that *bought* them." It is rejecting the purchase of Christ by his self-denying atonement, which causes the destruction of the soul, because it rejects the truth which alone can produce love to the God of love.

But further: the facts have been fully proved, that God Jehovah, by taking a personal interest in the well-being of the Israelites, and laboring to secure their redemption, secured their affections to himself; and that His acts of mercy produced this effect was manifested by their song after their final deliverance at the Red Sea. "O sing unto Jehovah, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. Jehovah is my strength and song, and has become my salvation." In like manner, Jesus Christ secured to himself in a greater degree, the affections of Christians, by his self-denying life and death, to ransom them from *spiritual* bondage and misery. The Israelites in Egypt were under a *temporal* law so severe, that while they suffered in the greatest degree, they could not fulfil its requirements: they therefore loved Jehovah for *temporal* deliverance. The believer was under a *spiritual* law, the requirements of which he could not fulfil, and therefore he loved Christ for *spiritual* deliverance. This fact, that the supreme affection of believers was thus fixed upon Christ, and fixed upon him in view of his self-sacrificing love for them, is manifest throughout the whole New Testament—even more manifest than that the Jews loved Jehovah for temporal deliverance. "The love of Christ constrains me;" says one: thus manifesting that his very life was actuated by affection for Jesus. Says another—speaking of early Christians generally—"Whom (Christ) having not seen, *ye love*; and in whom, though now *ye see* him not, yet believing, *ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*." The Bible requires men to perform their religious duties, moved by love to Christ: "And whatsoever *ye do*, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord *ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance*: for *ye serve the Lord Christ*." Mark—these Christians were moved in what they *did*, what they *said*, and what they *felt*, by love to Christ: love to Jesus actuated their whole being, body and soul. It governed them.

Now, suppose that Jesus Christ was not God, nor a true manifestation of the Godhead in human nature, but a man, or angel, authorized by God to accomplish the redemption of the human race from sin and misery. In doing this, it appears from the nature of things, and from the Scriptures, that he did what was adapted to, and what *does* draw the heart of every true believer—as in the case of the apostle and the early Christians—unto himself, as the supreme or governing object of affection. Their will is governed by the will of Christ; and love to him moves their heart and hands. Now, if it be true that Jesus Christ is not God, then he has devised and executed a plan, by which the supreme affections of the human heart are drawn to himself, and alienated from God, the proper object of love and worship: and, God having authorized this plan, he has devised means to make man love Christ, the creature more than the Creator, who is God over all, blessed for evermore.

But, is it said that, Christ having taught and suffered by the will and authority of God, we are under obligation to love God for what Christ has done for us? It is answered that this is impossible. We cannot love one being for what another does or suffers in our behalf. We can love no being for labors and self-denials in our behalf, but that being who voluntarily labors and denies himself. It is the kindness and mercy exhibited in the self-denial that moves the affections; and the affections can move to no being but the one that makes the self-denials, because it is the self-denials that draw out the love of the heart.

Is it still said that Christ was sent by God, to do His will, and not his own; and therefore we ought to love God, as the being to whom gratitude and love is due, for what Christ said and suffered? Then it is answered:—if God willed that Christ, as a creature of his, should come, and by his sufferings and death redeem