

salvation, a pledge and antepast of glory everlasting. And the few remaining years of this spiritual minority have only to run, in order to bring him into actual possession of his enfolding inheritance.

II. If the *Privileges* of all who "are come unto Mount Zion" are thus precious and ennobling, their *Duties* are proportionate. And these, too, are threefold.

Correspondent to the first-named privilege, here is the duty of *Loyalty to Christ*.

The first duty of the members of a family is to their father; the first duty of subjects to their sovereign; and, in like manner, the first duty of the Christian commonwealth is to Christ its Head. Nor can there be any doubt, that what Christ demands and deserves at the hands of His people, is Loyalty—loyalty of heart and life. Even were Christ the Head of the Church in the sense merely of being its Lord. His claim to our affectionate submission would be irresistible. But, oh! how much more is He than this! He is the Head of influence no less than of authority; He is the Founder, and the Guardian, and the Redeemer of the Church; He bought us at the cost of His most precious blood; He dispenses the Spirit to work faith in us, and thereby unite us to himself; He dwells in us by His Spirit; He prepares and garnishes the heavenly mansions for us, and us for the heavenly mansions; and He, in a word, it is, to whom we owe it, that we "are come unto Mount Zion," instead of being left amid the blackness, and darkness, and tempests of the mount that burned with fire. In Him are thus combined all the claims of a rightful Lord, and a munificent Benefactor. And daring rebellion therefore, were it—nay, black ingratitude—to withhold from Him our allegiance and fealty, or even to content ourselves with any love to Him but the highest, any reverence but the profoundest, any submission but the most devoted. There may be differences among His people as to what His law or will is in particular instances; but there can be no diversity of opinion as to His supreme and paramount claim to their allegiance. As regards His law they may be at issue; but in loyalty to himself they must ever be at one.

Correspondent to the second privilege, there is the duty of *Love to the brethren*.

As men, our Christian brethren are entitled to our love. But their relation to us as members of the same great spiritual society, gives them an additional claim to our love. Just as children of the same family have a peculiar claim on each other from community of parentage; or as mariners in the same vessel have a peculiar claim on each other from being shipmates; or as soldiers who have mounted together the same deadly breach have a peculiar claim on each other from having shared a common danger; so Christians have a peculiar claim on each other, in virtue of their common relation to Christ and the

Church. Professing to be all alike objects of the same redeeming mercy, and servants of the same Divine Master,—professing to be all alike afloat in the one ark of Christ's Church, and steering towards the same haven of heavenly rest, it is manifestly their duty to cherish and display, one toward another, a warm and peculiar attachment, answerable to their kindred ties and common hopes.

Nor ought this social affection to be restricted to any one class or section of Christians. It ought to extend to the whole household of faith. It ought to rise in holy love to all the redeemed in heaven, and to flow forth in brotherly offices upon all the redeemed on earth. Love, it is true, is a thing of degrees; nor are we required by either reason or Scripture, to love all our brethren equally. Yet, though the law of love in the moral world, like the law of attraction in the physical world admits of degrees of intensity, and acts more powerfully upon near than upon remote objects; still, like the same physical attraction, it is diffusive and universal, inasmuch that there is no individual within the limits of Christ's Church, whom it ought not to reach. The members of our own communion may have the first claim on our love; but they cannot be entitled to engross it. Our special relation to them does not annul our general relation to the Church Universal. And hence, let our brother differ from us as he may, still this difference, so long as it does not exclude him from the pale of the Universal Church, should not be allowed to exclude him from our Christian regard. The law of Christ, which enjoins His followers to love one another, respects not this or that particular Church, but the whole Church Catholic; and as it is, besides, the most formally promulgated of all His laws, so it is the law which ought first of all and always to be obeyed. Whatever be the grounds on which the denominational peculiarities of Christians rest, none of these can possibly rest on any law of Christ so express and absolute as that which enjoins universal brother-love. And those persons, therefore, have reason to suspect the genuineness of their loyalty to Christ, who refuse to love and benefit a Christian brother, merely because he does not follow with them. No easy task indeed is it to keep the heart clear of religious bigotry; no easy task is it to combine zeal for our communion with love to the whole household of faith. But is Christ's royal law to be set at naught, because it is hard of performance? A time is coming when the divisions of Ephraim shall cease; a time is coming—"roll round, ye circling years, and haste it on!"—when the rent robe of the Redeemer shall again be seamless and of one entire piece from the top throughout. Why should not that promised time be antedated even now? Why, despite the present system of separate denominations, should not individual Christians learn that "to differ, is not of necessity to disagree?"