

here is to religious controversy, or disputations concerning the Gospel. A judicious Christian, while ready to give a reason for the hope he entertains, and in love to speak a word in season to the ignorant and the sorrow-stricken, will not be rash to reply to every accusation or imputation against himself or the truth, but will weigh well his words. Willingness to learn will lead to the implanting or cherishing the new life; haste to speak tends to heat the temper and excite wrath.

V. 20: "*Wrath of man.*" All intemperate zeal, undue excitement, quick resentment, or rash expression, even with regard to what we hold to be the truth—sometimes unpalatable truth—excite ill-will and inspire the language of uncharitableness or detraction; and unfounded statements provoke indignation, and suggest a bitter or unkind response. But all feeling of personal dignity, of vanity, or desire of controversy, must be subordinated to a love of truth and the spiritual benefit of all.

"*Righteousness of God.*" This phrase, as used by Paul, means the divine method of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It may also designate an attribute of the Deity; here, it denotes the righteousness which God approves, and which is produced in man by the word of truth. "The wrath of man works not that which is right before God." (Luther). "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." A true Christian spirit "suffereth long; is not easily provoked."

V. 21: "*Lay apart—and receive.*" The twofold injunction of this verse follows naturally and impressively upon the solemn statement which precedes. In order that the word of truth may have its designed effect on ourselves, or, through us, exert a happy influence on others, we must assiduously remove every obstacle arising from the wickedness and imperfection of our hearts, and give a hearty and docile reception to its teachings, since self-will and passion will exclude us alike from the love and the labor of God. The allusion is

to the processes of agriculture, and probably to the parable of the sower. The ground must be cleaned and cleared of all weeds and rank growth, so that the seed may take root and attain maturity. So the heart must be freed from all the wickedness and malice which is polluting and abundant in us by nature; every root of bitterness, and all the rank, luxuriant growth of malignity, must be extirpated, so that the seed of the Word may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in all holiness of heart and life.

The words filthiness and abundance are both to be joined with malice. So that it is the vileness and rankness of malignity which is to be laid aside. The word *naughtiness* has now lost the meaning it formerly had, of wickedness, or sin, and does not adequately convey the idea of the word in the original, which denotes wickedness, and specially malice, which is the idea intended here.

"*Receive the engrafted word.*" The word rendered engrafted occurs only here in the New Testament, and means *implanted*, or sown. It does not here mean *innate*, nor simply as planted or preached in the world. It is an attribute or characteristic of the word of truth, that it can be planted or sown in the soul of man. This word is to be patiently and attentively heard and eagerly taken hold of by the heart, *received* gladly "with joy of the Holy Ghost," with *meekness*. This, in striking contrast with the malice which is to be laid aside, denotes not simply with a docile mind or a modest disposition, but with a heart gentle, loving, and well-disposed toward our neighbor. Avoiding all unchristian tempers and practices, and gladly receiving the truth in the love of it, we will find it to be the power of God to save the soul. The reception of the truth is the best means of eradicating malice; and as the heart is freed from the dominion of evil propensities, the truth will gain and maintain the ascendancy. (See 1 Pet. ii: 1; Acts xx: 32; Heb. iv: 12; 1 Pet. i: 23-25.)

"*Your souls,*" *ψυχὰς*. "It is the