

cause of decay. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Guard, then, the expressions of your gratitude. Let it be sacred to the Most High God. Never attribute to human instrumentality, in whole or in part, what is due only to divine agency. "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord;" and penetrated with a strong sense of what the Father of mercies has wrought in our behalf, let us all cry, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

Yet again, the testimonies of our gratitude ought to be entirely free from the restraints of a blind and partial prejudice, and from a disposition to disparage or "despise others." The genuine spirit of Methodism is not sectarian. It rejoices in all that is good, wherever that good may exist, and by whatever means it may be promoted. In proportion as it may confine its views, and regard its own operations alone, it will lose its peculiar character and force. The catholic charity of our revered Founder is still the theme of our recollections and praise: let it also be the object of imitation. Great good exists, by the bounty of our common Father, in other communities of the vast Christian family, as well as in our own; and it is rapidly increasing. We rejoice in what is bestowed upon us. Shall we not also rejoice, with most unaffected satisfaction, in what is bestowed upon others? Shall we not cordially say, even in circumstances which may, in other respects, be less gratifying, "Notwithstanding every way—Christ is preached; and we therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice?" The prosperity of others shall animate our best hopes, and constrain us to seek a larger participation of the unconfined benefits of our God. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.—Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh," tribes of the same Israel whose blessings we would celebrate and share, not envy or deny, "stir up thy strength and come and save us. Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine: and we shall be saved." Assailed we may be, even among the followers of our Divine Master, with misconception and unkindness; but these things shall serve only to re-waken and enhance our fraternal charity; nor shall any thing be permitted, as we humbly hope, to abate the prayer, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Along with the expression of your gratitude we would strenuously and affectionately urge you to a diligent use of the manifold advantages with which you are favoured. On this topic we have only to remind you, of what forms the more usual theme of our administrations among you. We aim not at novelty, but at profit; and we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity which our present circumstances more especially supply, to enforce what is, in our hearts' just esteem, of the most vital importance to your spiritual interests.

Suffer us, particularly, to press the necessity of a personal and abiding sense of acceptance with God through faith in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a source of most devout thanksgiving to God, that a distinct prominence has been given, in the ministry of our body, to this unspeakable blessing, and that "so great a cloud of witnesses" has arisen, in every part of our history, to attest its happy enjoyment. At this moment, how many thousands in our Societies, both at home and abroad, are rejoicing in the divine reality of the Holy Spirit's testimony to the fact of their adoption into the family of God! They believe, and therefore they speak. "Because they are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into their hearts, crying, 'Abba Father.'" But is there not a danger lest, in other instances, this prime attainment should be neglected,

or not sought with sufficient earnestness and faith? Is it universally enjoyed even by those who have, perhaps, for a series of years, been members of our Societies, and partakers of our ordinances? Are there not several now associated with us, who never gained the possession of this "pearl of great price?" They are amiable, respectful, observant of our interests, and attentive to our instructions; and why should they stop short of that which would open a spring of peace in their own hearts, and give them a calm evidence of their personal salvation and safety? Are there not others who have lost the sensible enjoyment of this benefit, and whose light is become dim? Yet, apart from its habitual possession, what joyous religion can be felt?—what true consistency can be maintained? "The joy of the Lord is our strength."—"When he giveth quietness, who, then, can make trouble? and when he hideth his face who can behold him?" When the heart knows not the "quiet" which springs from a manifestation of divine favour, what is there that will not cause it trouble? But when it "rests on the Lord," its true centre and home, it has a tranquil repose which all the storms of life shall not be permitted to destroy. Seek, then, the real and abiding enjoyment of this "reconciliation with God;" seek it in self-renouncing faith, and guard it with holy diligence. It is the liberty which the jubilee trumpet of the Lord's "acceptable year," proclaims to all prisoners and captives. "Blessed is the people that know" its "joyful sound: they shall walk O, Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength."

Nor would we neglect to mention the indispensable duty of cultivating all spiritual attainments. You are fully aware that there is a close and inseparable connexion between that sense of acceptance with God of which we have already spoken, and a real change of heart. He who is accepted is, at the same time, regenerated and renewed,—"renewed," as St. Paul speaks, "in the spirit of his mind." A new fountain is opened in his inmost soul,—a fountain of purity and peace; a new pulse beats, and new life flows. He feels that it is at once his highest privilege and most sacred obligation to make continual progress in all that is divine and heavenly. We entreat you, beloved brethren; to attend more and more to this inward change, and its blessed fruits. Cultivate the Christian's interior life, and advance daily towards its promised maturity. Disregard not the scriptural admonitions which we would faithfully impress on your hearts and on our own. "Live in the Spirit." Have ye indeed "tasted that the Lord is gracious?" We persuade ourselves that most of you have, and that we may "exhort and testify, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." "Lay aside," then, "all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking. As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." But whatever self-delusion may suggest, and whatever reliance may be fondly placed on past experience, "he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

While you walk in the enjoyment of God's favour, and maintain the virtues of the inward Christian life, you will be prepared to observe exemplary circum-