

the atoning sacrifice of his death; justification by faith in his blood; the necessity of renewal and sanctification by the influences of the Holy Spirit; and whatever else is usually designated by the term evangelical. These great truths constitute what the inspired writers of the New Testament in other places denominate "the gospel"—"the common salvation"—"the faith once delivered to the saints." In every summary of Christian doctrine which the New Testament contains, they are more or less distinctly recognized. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we may be saved, but the name Christ Jesus."

If words have any determinate meaning, these doctrines constitute what the apostle here so emphatically denominates "the truth"—"the truth as it is in Jesus"—that truth, by the full and cordial reception of which every Christian was identified; and by the rejection of which every man, whatever might be his conduct or his profession, sealed his own condemnation, and made it manifest that he had "neither part nor lot in the matter;" for "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life."

Hence the importance which the apostle attached to "the truth." He reminds the Ephesians that it was to be *maintained*; every insinuation against it was to be met, every attack upon it was to be resisted. While with regard to subordinate and doubtful points, a considerable diversity of opinion might

exist; while in all those cases respecting which there was any question, they were to cherish a mutual and forbearing indulgence; yet with regard to "the truth,"—that truth which was so plainly revealed that none could innocently doubt it—no such latitude was permitted. Here they were to be firm, and steadfast, and unyielding. Instead of compromising its claims, or unworthily attempting to accommodate it to the prejudices and passions of mankind, they were to contend for it earnestly, to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." Regarding it as their richest treasure, their most valuable possession, they were not even "to count their lives dear unto themselves," so that "the truth" might be maintained inviolate, and transmitted unimpaired to succeeding generations.

But the injunction of the apostle was also intended to remind the Ephesians of the *manner* in which this duty should be performed. Not only was the truth to be maintained, but maintained "in love." Having been revealed by Him who "is love;" replete as were all its facts, and all its doctrines, with manifestations of love; intended as it was to "make perfect in love" every guilty transgressor who should receive it into his heart by faith, it was to be maintained in a manner worthy of its celestial origin, its holy character, and its professed design.

Though to the Jew it was a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness, yet every objection was to be met, and every calumny refuted, in such a spirit of meekness, and kindness, and benevolence, as would soften prejudice, subdue hostility, and cause even the most embittered and malignant foe to think favourably of that *truth* which, though so humbling to his pride, and so opposed to his sensual inclinations, breathed only "peace on earth and good-will towards men."

And these duties are still binding upon all who sustain the Christian character; every professed follower of the Redeemer is just as imperatively called upon to maintain the truth in love as were those primitive believers to whom the injunction was originally addressed. Apart from "the truth," there is no foundation of hope, no motive to obedi-