

THE CULTIVATION OF SCRIPTURE LIBERALITY.

"See that ye abound in this grace also."—2 Cor. viii. 7.

(Concluded from page 508.)

3. Let us attend to *the cultivation of this grace*. Although this grace is communicated by the Holy Spirit, it is, like every other grace, brought into operation and improved by the use of proper means. You may fortify your mind against every argument, and your heart against every appeal respecting the duty, by listening to the reasoning of the mass who are living to themselves; or to the pleadings of that selfishness which is natural to us. And on the other hand, you may resist all such unfavourable influences, and deepen what impressions may be made upon your mind by employing the means which God has appointed, and promised to bless, for furthering the work of grace in the soul. This may be done—

(1.) By attending to the mind of God, as given in His Word, respecting this duty. The opinions of many are formed from influences which come from the world, not from the Word of God; and hence there may be a very great difference between some of our views and the teachings of Scripture. We have been accustomed, perhaps, to consider our opinions to be right, or we have been accustomed to esteem those who have endorsed our opinions as good examples of the Christian character, and we feel as if this fully authorized us to set aside those declarations of the Word of God, which are opposed to our views, as not applying to us. Now, would we carefully attend to the reasons which lead us to yield to this influence, it would often be found, that it was because our feelings were opposed to entire submission to those representations which require us to deny ourselves, or to make a sacrifice.

But we ought to bear in mind, that it is written and it has never been cancelled; that it is "to the law and to the testimony to which we are to look, that if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us;" so that according to the difference of opinion existing among men, even among those who are supposed to be good men, from what is taught in the Scriptures of truth, there exists that darkness which comprehends not the light. If, then, you would carefully read the Word of God, none can mistake his mind upon the subject—if you would study the character of those whose history is given in the sacred page, and who are exhibited as having enjoyed the favour of God, reflect on the uniform resemblance of all in this—if you would attend to the injunctions given and the reasons assigned for obedience, the impression would be made, not only that God has a right to require obedience, but that to refuse to act in accordance with his mind so fully and clearly expressed, will most assuredly expose us to his displeasure, and thus must hazard our exclusion from the kingdom of the blessed. Convictions would thus be increased respecting the reality and importance of the duty and the necessity of obedience.

(2.) This grace may be cultivated by reflecting on the love displayed in the work of redemption. This is the most important, as well as the most wonderful, of all the subjects that can be presented to our mind. And if you would reflect on the extent of the love displayed through Christ; on the astonishing manner in which it has been manifested; and on its important results in time and eternity on all who enjoy