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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON,

*Preached on Sabbath the 3rd December, 1865,
at Edinburgh, by the Rev. William Muir,
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"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."—2 TIMOTHY i. 13.

"SOUND WORDS" are here descriptive of truths conveyed through language clearly expressing the subjects of the Gospel-revelation.

These "words" are "sound." They come forth on the serious hearer of them with a spiritual and moral influence that is healthful, nourishing, and invigorating. Agitations of conscience are stilled and removed by them. They serve to purify, to comfort, and to gladden the troubled heart.

Wherever these truths, infused by the Holy Spirit, are savingly known and felt, they nourish the soul up in the divine life towards the portion of happiness that is heavenly and everlasting.

Such were the truths which the Apostle Paul delivered in the hearing of every one to whom he preached.

And the same truths were taught by him with unceasing earnestness and prayerful diligence for preparing Timothy and others as evangelists to carry on the work of the Christian ministry. Therefore he has added—

"which thou hast heard of me." Thou hast been taught by me the doctrines, the faith of which is necessary to thy own salvation. And these in thy turn thou wilt devoutly and zealously communicate to thy fellow-sinners, for the salvation of their souls—"The sound words which thou hast heard of me."

Yet, again, and more particularly, observe that "the sound words" or Gospel-doctrines are here mentioned under a special characteristic: "the form of sound words;" or an outline, or a sketch, as if a copy to be filled up, a pattern, or a concise representation.

And thus, while the revealed messages of God's will in the Scriptures at large contain the doctrines necessary to salvation, and are, in all matters of religious faith, the supreme authority and guide; yet, of these doctrines, there may be most usefully drawn up a summary. Such an abridgment of essential truths becomes a directory of clear and easy reference to these truths. It offers, likewise, a test for more quickly trying men's opinions upon the Christian system. It holds up, besides, publicly a token of sentiment by which the world may be apprised of what the peculiarities of evangelical views are; and, also, on the part of Christ's disciples, there is, thence, gained a mode quite unmistakable of expressing their belief. In short, the very matter which is here alluded to, is just what we name "A Confession of Faith."

The Apostle Paul (it seems to be suggested here), had provided Timothy with a summation of Gospel truths, "the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me." This he calls on the young evangelist to "hold fast," to make a decided profession of it, and to maintain it in its integrity against the greatest opposition, and with unflinching perseverance; and all to be done "in faith," not in merely the knowledge, however distinct, of Gospel truths, but in the conviction of a soul experiencing their preciousness, and realising their practical and heavenly design.