

what they had looked upon as unworthy, common and low. The cross repeated the declaration, "My Kingdom is not of this world." The cross reaffirmed the whole former position of its victim, and proclaimed to the world that there was a majesty in virtue which no outward ignominy could sully or degrade, but which would shine forth with redoubled lustre by the contrast. The cross thus reversed the received principles, nay it turned aside the common estimate of life. Jesus, nailed to the cross, was more kingly than he by whom the mandate was given for his limbs to be pierced. The lesson here taught was at once received by the disciples. They prayed no longer for fire to consume their foes—they looked no longer for the material signs of the coming of their Lord; the beauty of princely courts had no attractive interest now. Imbued with the spirit of the Crucified, leaning upon his cross, they went out to rear the institutions of no earthly kingdom, to seek for no earthly crown. And this lesson, which wrought so powerfully upon the minds of the early believers and inspired a new faith, hope and life, the cross is enforcing upon us now. Its language still is that the princely reign of the Master is not earthly but spiritual. It would put to flight all earthly aspirations for temporal aggrandisement and power as the chief end of life. It would create a heavenly ambition for advancement in spiritual courts. It tells us that it is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. In the mind of a Jew the cross was associated only with images of degradation and shame. To him, Christ crucified was a stumbling block, to the Greeks, foolishness; but to us who believe, it has become the power of God and the wisdom of God. At the foot of