

The truth is the instrument in the hands of the Spirit in our conversion, our sanctification, and our most effective equipment for our Christian warfare. It is given to us to be the perfect rule, both of our faith and practice. The faith that works by love and purifies the heart is always connected with a serious and settled judgment in such matters. Thus it is that our religion to a great extent is regulated by the state of our judgment in divine things. If the judgment is weak and feeble, there is little effect "comparatively" produced. If it is strong, and the truth of God form the continual basis of our judgment, there will be a delusion of mind, which operates as a principle, and soon becomes a powerful habit. The Apostle therefore in another place prays that their "love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." Phil. i. 9. A want of a wise discriminating judgment is a great defect in Christian character and influence: many good people err for want of judgment. Their unaffected piety, their good intentions and zealous efforts, are almost without effect for want of discretion—or not doing right things in a right way. Several painful instances of this we have in Peter. This very important qualification is only once mentioned in the writings of the Apostles. It is carefully chosen to signify the exercise of spiritual discernment. The sanctified mind being so sensitive that it is quick to perceive the good and the evil in every doctrine, in every practice, in every conflict with coming duty, and all the contingencies of daily life. Now, as knowledge is truth stored up in the mind, so judgment is the application of that knowledge for the endless occasions which may arise for distinguishing between what is good and what is evil, what is real and what is fictitious; between what is sound and reliable, and what is rotten and treacherous. Not that our love shall be a sentimental emotion, but a strong, clear insight, exercising its tact, distinguishing always what is more excellent, what is true and pure and just and good, from all possible counterfeits of these qualities. A warm heart, and strong affections, and even sound enthusiasm, may sometimes, yea, often does, lead astray; but not so the well-instructed principle of love to God and man—1 Cor. 13th chapter contains the most striking illustration of this to be found in the Bible. Almost all that can be imagined to look like religion, without being religion, is there condemned by the marvellous discrimination and sure division of pure charity. It should be our daily prayer and study that we through the power of Divine grace, might be able to bring an intelligent and thoughtful love so to bear upon the whole economy and order of life, that it may be to us an internal monitor, instructing us always what to believe and what to reject, what to do and what to avoid, what to leave behind as unworthy, and what to make the objects of our supreme pursuit.

The next thought for consideration is a practical conformity to the Divine will. Having attained a perfect knowledge of that will, a right appreciation requires an unreserved compliance with it. This is the highest standard of perfection attainable in this life; a perfect acquiescence in all the will of God. To walk worthy of the Lord, implies that we do nothing derogatory to his exalted dignity and character: it being his settled purpose to confer on us a dignity and blessedness that shall redound to His glory.