

the heart and conscience of these men are utterly uninfluenced by the power of the gospel?

But I can conceive individuals belonging to this class, carrying their religion both into the world and into the family, and yet failing in their closets to furnish the necessary evidence that the gospel has really obtained a hold of their heart. You may find the strictest integrity marking their public transactions; a high toned benevolence, and a proverbial generosity, distinguishing their public character. And you may find them in the family, dispensing no inconsiderable share of the happiness, and diffusing around them many of the blessings, that encircle an affectionate husband and a tender parent; and discharging, too, with some measure of regularity, the duties of domestic religion; and yet you may have abundant reason to conclude that their hearts are utterly destitute of vital Christianity. The integrity of their public character, and their attention to the forms of religion, may be purely mechanical; the result of certain habits, formed during the course of a strictly religious education, which they owed to a pious parent or guardian. All the gentleness they discover in the domestic relations of life, may be accounted for on the principle of constitutional sweetness, possessed often in a higher degree by natural men, than by the subjects of divine grace. For follow these men into the secrecy of the closet, or into the sanctuary of their own thoughts; and how is it that you discover no longer that regard for religion that marked their public and domestic character? How is it that you find the duties of secret religion, such as prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, either totally neglected, or practised with a formality and listlessness, worse perhaps, than neglect itself? How is it that you find envy, impurity, resentment, swaying, without restraint or resistance, their sceptre over the heart? Simply because they are strangers to the first principle of all true religion, the love of Christ, which, in its influence and operation, is limited to no time or place, but like the principle of vitality in the animal system, lives throughout the whole, and extends its quickening and invigorating

energy to the minutest fibre of the frame.

R. L.

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## "SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE,"

BY THE REV. GEORGE STONEHOUSE.

The theme of the apostle in the verse preceding that in which this phrase occurs,\* is the exaltation and enthronement of Christ, and the diversified offices and gifts bestowed upon the church as the result of that memorable event. He then adverts to the end for which this various agency had been provided, namely, the spiritual improvement and edification of its members, that they might be preserved from error, led into all truth, and by that truth be so united to Christ and to each other, as ultimately to exhibit the Christian character in all its loveliness, proportion, and maturity. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The apostle then reminds those to whom he is writing, of the importance of "speaking the truth in love," as one means by which this most desirable end might be promoted: "but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

The phrase "speaking the truth in love," may be more correctly rendered, "maintaining the truth in love." By "the truth," we are undoubtedly to understand the grand and distinguishing doctrines of the Christian system: such as, the divinity of our Lord's person;

\* Eph. iv. 15.