

the discernment of the sovereignty as well as the freeness of grace pertain to a salutary humiliation of the sinner in order to his being exalted? I may, in putting this truth in abeyance, be contributing to nurse that natural pride of the heart which this is meant to subdue; may be fostering the presumption which turns the very freeness of grace to its own injury, delaying the acceptance of what it may fancy to be less precious, because so common, or flattering itself with some idea that the gift proffered flows from the very necessity of the divine nature, a thing so cheap that it may be got at any time—nay, as to which the human will possesses a final sovereignty, independent of the rulings of Heaven itself. What if to the realising of his real position as a debtor to grace, this be one constituent element wanting in your version of the message of mercy, which, if present, would only move to a more humble and grateful reception, but more earnest withal, of a boon seen to be precious as well as free? Do not seek, I would say to the preacher, to mend the Gospel, nor think it necessary, in order to conciliate human prejudice, that you should be apologists for the Spirit of Inspiration, or play the part of patron to Paul, discreetly hiding what is offensive in his version of the good tidings. And finally, let experience be fairly appealed to—no need to shun the appeal to history in this matter. What is the testimony bequeathed to us by men who were observant of the work of God, in times and amidst scenes of remarkable revival? How does an Edwards in the new world depon? How a Toplady in the old? These have deponed to the eminent blessing attending on a full exhibition of the doctrine of grace in the times of refreshing which they beheld; and from the continent of Europe a fact comes attested by a much honoured revivalist, one of the Haldane brothers, that nothing was more signally blessed to induce salutary reflection and searching of heart in studious academic minds, tinctured with the theology of German or Swiss schools, than the full exposition of the doctrine of Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, of the sovereignty as well as riches and fulness of divine mercy!* But, though we must blame the omission of a great truth, which is presented in the sacred page as belonging to the consolation and the building up of the saints, as well as the conversion of the sinner, we are no advocates of a disproportionate share of our ministration being given to it. The whole circle of truth should be traversed; and in this all are at one, that the central place should be given to the doctrine of "Christ crucified," as that round which the whole system of revelation revolves, and from which, as from the sun in the natural world, all light and heat radiate. But may I not suggest that even the most precious doctrine may fall comparatively stale on the ear, if set forth with insipid sameness, or in words sluggishly chosen? The high theme should have all the advantage which it may derive from being presented with the cognate themes of the majesty of the divine Lawgiver; His love; His truth; His faithfulness; the relation of the transactions of a past eternity to the developments of time; the parts

* The following beautifully ingenuous reflection of Dr. Chalmers on Rom. ix. occurs in his latest, or posthumous, publication:—"Hor. Bibl. Sabbaticæ."—"Ever blessed be Thy name that Thou hast enabled me to acquiesce in the profound mysteries of this chapter, and yet to hold inviolate all the duties and activities of the Christian life. I desire to receive all that is said of God's sovereignty without reserve, and without qualification. Perhaps I may have erred in overlaying the doctrine too much with the demonstrations that I have attempted of its perfect consistency with the calls of the gospel, and the obligations under which we lie to act upon its primary overtures. * * * I think I can now perceive not only the perfect innocency, but even salutary influence of these transcendental themes, as far as they are revealed in Scripture, on the young disciple—when called upon to 'make his calling and election sure.'"