

the Lord Jesus, and servants of the living God. To what was this transformation to be ascribed? Paul is as careful to disclaim all power and merit in it, as Peter and John were in the former case. We preached unto you this gospel. *They had received the message not as Paul's, but as it was in truth the Word of God.* It was not to Paul's authority they bowed, nor was it to Paul's power they looked, nor was it in Paul's faithfulness they trusted. They recognised God speaking to them by Paul, and they believed God. Upon that sure warrant they trusted in Christ, and the Word of God worked effectually in them. Divine power was as directly exercised in their transformation, as it had been in the restoration of the cripple.

We all experience the efficacy of divine truth, only in so far as we receive it as the Word of God. It is not enough that we receive it as truth, we must receive it as the Word of God. If a man receive the doctrines of the Bible on human authority, such a reception may make him a Theologian, but it cannot make him a Christian. If he receive any truth as a conclusion of human reason, as an ingenious speculation, or as a wise counsel which commends itself to his judgment or interest, it may exercise his intellect, gratify his taste, or promote his temporal welfare; but it cannot renew or save him. *In a single sentence, the word of man cannot carry an influence beyond the power of man.*

Here we must be on our guard upon another point. We might receive some tradition or invention of men as the Word of God; and in that case the effects of error or falsehood would be most disastrous, for they would carry increased weight and authority on account of the delusion. In the history of mankind, we find nothing so thoroughly debasing and darkening to the mind, as the reception of the word of man as the Word of God. Divine truth works effectually in them that believe, not simply because they receive it as the Word of God, but because it is in truth the Word of God. Divine truth is efficacious only when it is received on divine authority; and at the same time it is efficacious only because it is the Word of God, not merely because it is believed to be so. Hence it is of vital importance to know precisely what is the Word of God, to know if God has spoken to man, and what he has spoken, to know not only that God has made a revelation of truth, but also that we have that revelation in the very Word of God. We may have the truth and yet not have that truth as the Word of God. We may have merely a human statement of the doctrines and institutions of the gospel; and that would be a very different thing from having these doctrines and institutions with a "Thus saith the Lord." It would manifestly be a very different thing, to hear a man speak about the will of God, and to hear God himself declare his will—to receive the testimony of man on any truth, and to receive the testimony of God on the same truth—to listen to the plainest testimony on the most conclusive argument of man, that Jesus is the Son of God, and to listen to the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him."

We have thus, we think, clearly shown that the question of inspiration is an essential one, in so far as the experience of the efficacy of the Scriptures is concerned. Our enquiry embraces another important question. We hold in our hand a book which we call the Word of God, on what grounds do we receive the various writings contained in it as of divine authority? This important enquiry we reserve for another number.

THE REALIZATION OF SPIRITUAL THINGS.

Fallen man could never have regained the capacity for, or been admitted to fellowship with the holy, had not a new and living way been opened up in the blood of Jesus. Blessed be God, this has been done; and we, even while on earth, may have a place among the heavenly, and enjoy with joy unspeakable and full of glory, those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the