

it is a progressive disintegrating of the false, and a restoring of the true, in the human heart. The christian graces can find a substantive existence only in the heart that is permeated with saving truth. Truth is not arbitrary in this disintegrating and reorganizing process; received into the heart it commends itself to the renewed reason and judgment, and becoming part of the consciousness, conscience itself is clarified, and the whole man becomes so to speak, an incarnation of truth. Such an one needs not to publish to the world that he is a Christian, he is a living "epistle known and read of all men," and in whatever sphere of life he moves, he is ever, like Scripture, a standing reproof and confutation of error in every form.

But as imperfection is written on every footprint of humanity, the christian is ever prone to fall into sin, and to wander from the way of holiness, so the Apostle adds another word "*correction*." There, in general, the idea is, amendment, improvement, setting right again. As in sanctification we are co-workers with God; so here Scripture is presented as the means by which we may find the way when lost, and progress onwards and upwards until at last we stand accepted in His presence in glory. The Bible is ever to be the man of our counsel; its precepts, warnings and exhortations are ever to be as "lights shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts."

Another word completes the enumeration, viz.: "*instruction*." Here the word used in the original has reference to the training of a child, and signifies development as well as instruction. In warfare, soldiers are instructed, developed, educated in the movements and practice of arms; so the Christian life being a warfare, the church is the camp or training ground, the Bible the great storehouse from which we have our armor, and by the reception of Scripture truth and prayerful meditation thereon we become developed and trained for the conquest of evil within us, or around about us. Ignorance of Bible truth is not, perhaps, the great fault of the church to day, and yet, in a sense it is, for no man can be said to know truth properly until he has yielded heart and life to its power. The Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;" now such in part would seem to be the force of the word "*instruction*" in the text. It means education in the broadest and most comprehensive sense of the term. And then as if to unify and concentrate this quadruple use of Scripture, Paul adds "*in righteousness*." This is the sphere in which this multiform process is carried on, the circle in which all is embraced, the point to which all converges: and as "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," so apart from Christ, or outside of this sphere of righteousness, Scripture truth can have neither saving or sanctifying power. Hence regeneration is always the first necessity; after that holiness in heart and life. "*In righteousness*," these words unmistakably consign all jesuistic casuistry to the devil where it belongs. No motive however pure can justify a wrong act in the sight of God; the man, the motive, and the act must all be in the sphere of righteousness, in order to obtain the divine favor and the promised blessing. This principle is very broad, and yet it is intensely practical even among christians.