

5. Glorious truth. For it exhibits the riches of God's grace, the exceeding greatness of His love towards us in Christ Jesus; and casts a halo of glory around His character which shall never be dimmed; while it exalts forlorn, debased, accursed creatures to the dignity of sons of God, and to endless life with God in the world to come.

Such being the nature of the truth as in Jesus, and such the benevolent intentions of God in revealing it, we might naturally suppose that wherever, or by whomsoever opposed, it would not be on earth, nor by man. To this world it comes as the Day-spring from on high, as the Harbinger of peace, to tell of God and sinners reconciled, to publish peace on earth, and goodwill to men. And yet it is here—and by men poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked," before whose wondering gaze it has opened the portals of heaven, that Christ's truth has been slighted, marred, reviled, and spurned.

The truth as in Jesus is opposed by men, by reason of the insidious infidelity of the heart. This infidelity—quite compatible with an abhorrence of avowed speculative unbelief—which is as common and prevalent as sin, evincing itself in every impenitent sinner by indifference to the revealed will of God, and to everything real in religion, makes the truth of none effect, so far as their welfare is concerned, who thus treat it.

But besides the opposition it encounters from those who make no pretension to religion, and from the openly ungodly classes, the truth as in Jesus is repelled and vitiated by people professing to be Christians and followers of Jesus and champions of the truth, by mixing with it or substituting for it the commandments and traditions of men. To a certain extent this is done at times, and frequently, by those who are truly Christ's. Yet by whomsoever done, no plan that has been devised, no course

that has been pursued, by weak men, or designing men, has had a more disastrous effect in obscuring, or excluding altogether, Christ's truth from the eyes of perishing sinners.

In adopting a system of religious belief, all men to some extent, most men entirely, permit themselves to be controlled by circumstances. The child born into a Turkish family grows up a Mussulman, and cries, "Allah is God, the one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." The child coming into the world in Austria, Italy, or Connaught, imbibes Romanism as a matter of course, calls the Virgin the mother of God, has legions of angels and saints to befriend him, and submits his intellect and reason, in matters of faith, to the church, i. e. to the priestly class. In like manner the child beginning life in a Protestant land is a Protestant, and very generally just such a Protestant as his trainers happen to be. And it is natural, however sad in its consequences sometimes. Man is imitative and plastic. The child thinks his teachers for the time the wisest of men, and their teaching, whatever it may be, becomes part as it were of the mental and moral nature of the future man.

Thus an accident, so far as we are concerned, a happening, entirely away from our control, makes the difference between one and another in these matters. And human opinion has made the salvation or damnation of an immortal dependent on that accident! And worse still, the mere expression of faith and hope, in the language of a creed, in certain circumstances, is made the ground of belief in the safety or ruin of an individual, irrespective of the life and character of the man,—as witness the recent priestly struggle by the death-bed of Sir Allan Macnab, where both the Protestant clergyman and the Romish bishop seemed to think that the utterance by a half-unconscious, dying man, of one confession rather than another, was to make