

the accomplishment of salvation, in ourselves and in others, be the labour of man most congenial to God, and its success the highest joy which He can have in the human race. We believe, indeed, on the clearest evidence, that the Lord rejoices in all his works, that the very operation of the laws of mechanism which holds unpeopled planets in their orbits is acceptable to their Author, and that not a blade of grass springs, or insect stirs in this globe of ours, but is overshadowed with something of God's first Sabbath rest in it, as one of his own handiworks. So, too, the original warp and texture of the rational creation, in so far as it retains God's name on it, is an object of his complacency; and the researches of knowledge, the struggles of liberty, the long and toilsome efforts of political and social philanthropy, appeal, and not in vain, to God as marching at their head. The relics of virtue, the reactions of conscience, the glimmerings of religious truth amid the world's deepest corruption and darkness, utterly helpless as they are to redeem the earth, or counterweigh the stern displeasure of God against every soul of man that doeth evil, have Divine sympathies on their side; and their self-gained victory, were it conceivable, over all hostile forces, would minister the purest delight and triumph to the Supreme Witness of the combat. Yes, could the human race, with one mighty impulse, rise up against the tremendous powers of evil within and without, drive Satan into his own abyss, and hurl after him the demolished wrecks of those systems of error and wickedness by which he has so long deceived the nations, could they, by some great sacrifice to justice, obliterate the terrible debt of the past, and present themselves in the beauties of a new-born loyalty and purity, wrung out by Nature's own strife and agony, who would so hail and exult over this deliverance as their Father and their God, who had formed them to be happy, and who thus saw them re-ascend from a bottomless depth to the level of their pristine glory! But how immeasurably is this passive delight, in a race self-arrested, and self-restored to their orbit in the great system of the universe, enhanced, when God becomes the prime and sole mover in the miracle of the recovery, at once the author of the remedy, and of the will to use it and when to complacency in the result is added complacency in the truly Godlike activities that have secured it! Here the words apply, "It is more blessed to give than to receive!" and this sense of self-moved love, which is the highest delight of creation, must be the still higher delight of redemption in proportion to the vaster out-flowing of the fulness of God! It is this greatness of God's gift which imprints a stamp of infinitude on the whole enterprise, and, consequently, on God's delight in its success. The offering up of the Gentiles is acceptable not only in the ratio of God's love to human souls that escape disaster and receive benefit—nor in the ratio of God's love to higher beings, that profit indefinitely by the display—but in the ratio of God's love to his own co-equal Son, whom he spared not, but delivered up for all! Infinite blessedness must be the result of infinite bounty; and the delight of God in the saving of each sinner, when each is saved by an unspeakable gift, must be itself unspeakable. The very forming of Christ in the saved—the very sanctifying of them by the Holy Ghost as His spirit—the very giving of them to Him as His everlasting reward, connects them indissolubly with the memory of this sacrifice; and thus the Divine fulness has issued forth upon them in an infinite tide, to return upon itself in equal reflux, and has provided itself with an infinite and eternal mirror, wherein it may see its own travail, and be satisfied! Of what work of man, of what other work of God, can anything like this be said? This must be the centre of God's plans, for this alone has a result that is infinite, like Himself; and hence, in advancing the missionary enterprise, we stand in the sun of the universal system, we look out from eternity upon eternity, and link the peace and joy of human souls in this dark and distant corner of creation, with the vital blessedness of Him who filleth all in all! Here, however, we tremble as on a giddy height. Let it be enough for us to see as through a glass darkly, that God's last ends are all associated with man's labours and prayers for man, and that the mystery of God, for which ages have waited and are waiting, shall only be finished when the fragments of this ruined earth, shattered into wreck, and driven almost into darkness, shall have been built up into the pre-