

CONTENDING

FOR THE FAITH.

BY

LYMAN C. CHASE, A. M.

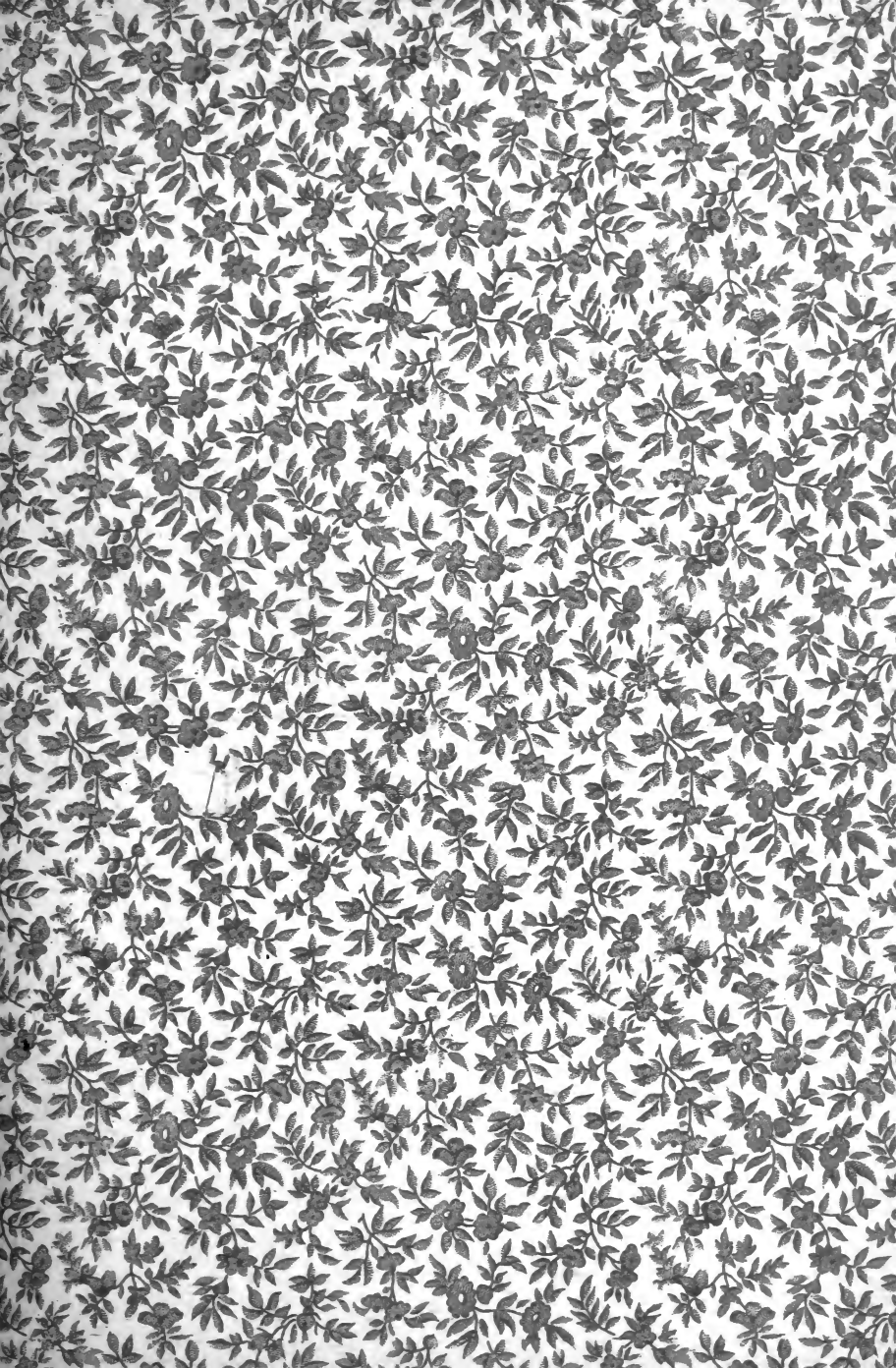
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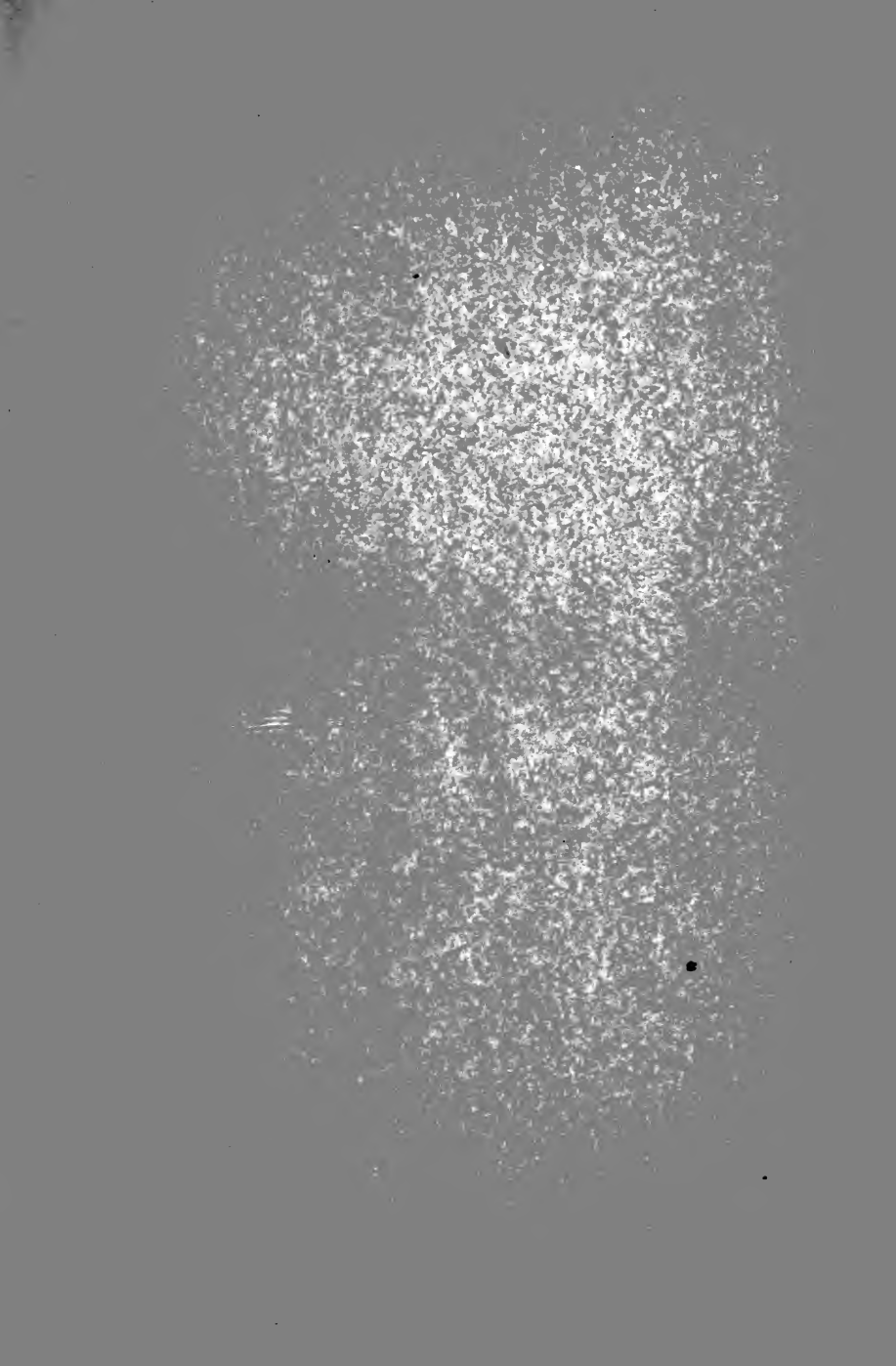
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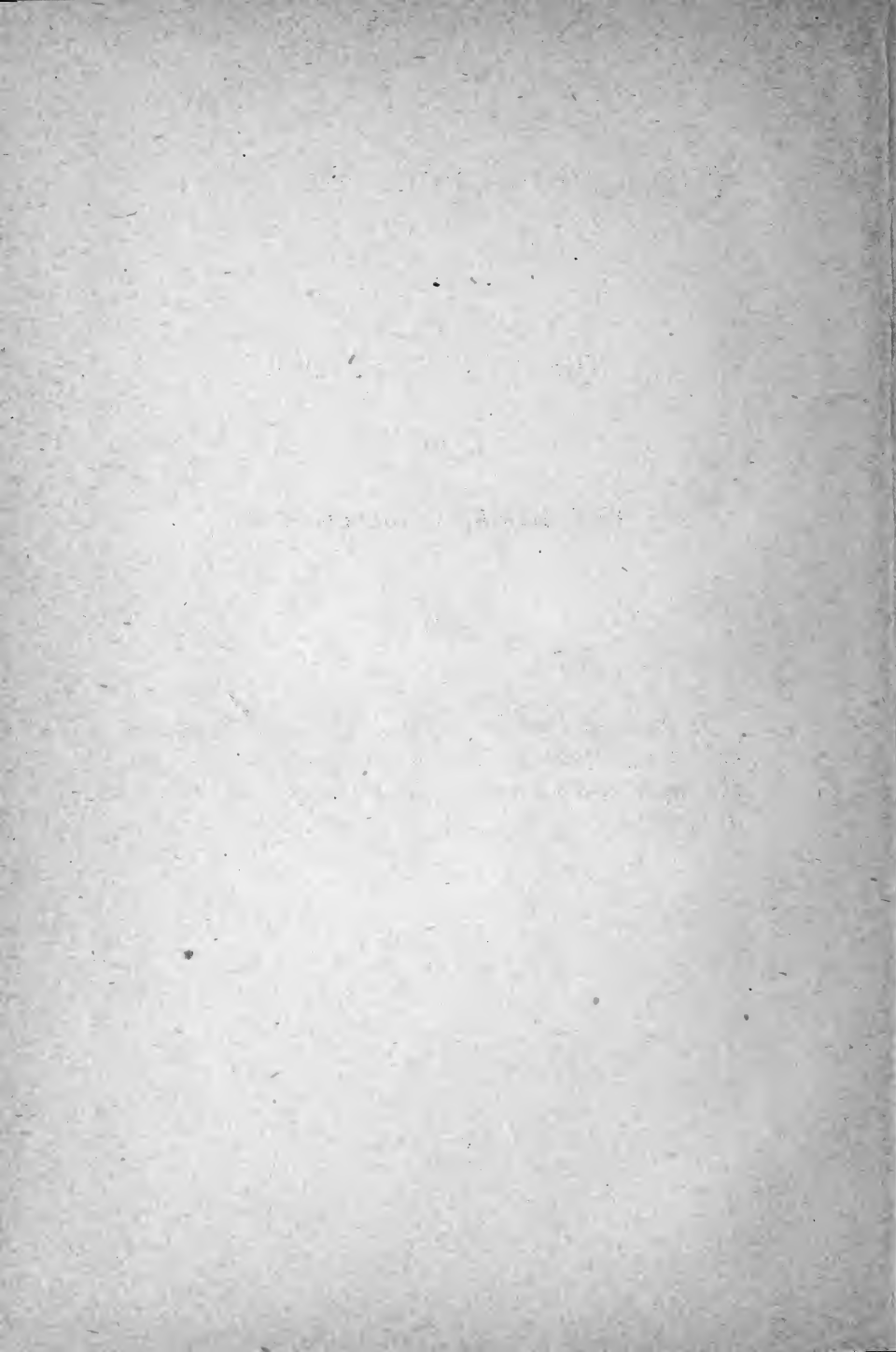
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# CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH,

OR

THE FOUNTAIN OF LOVE.

BY

REV. LYMAN C. CHASE, A. M.

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*It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, Jude 1: 3.*



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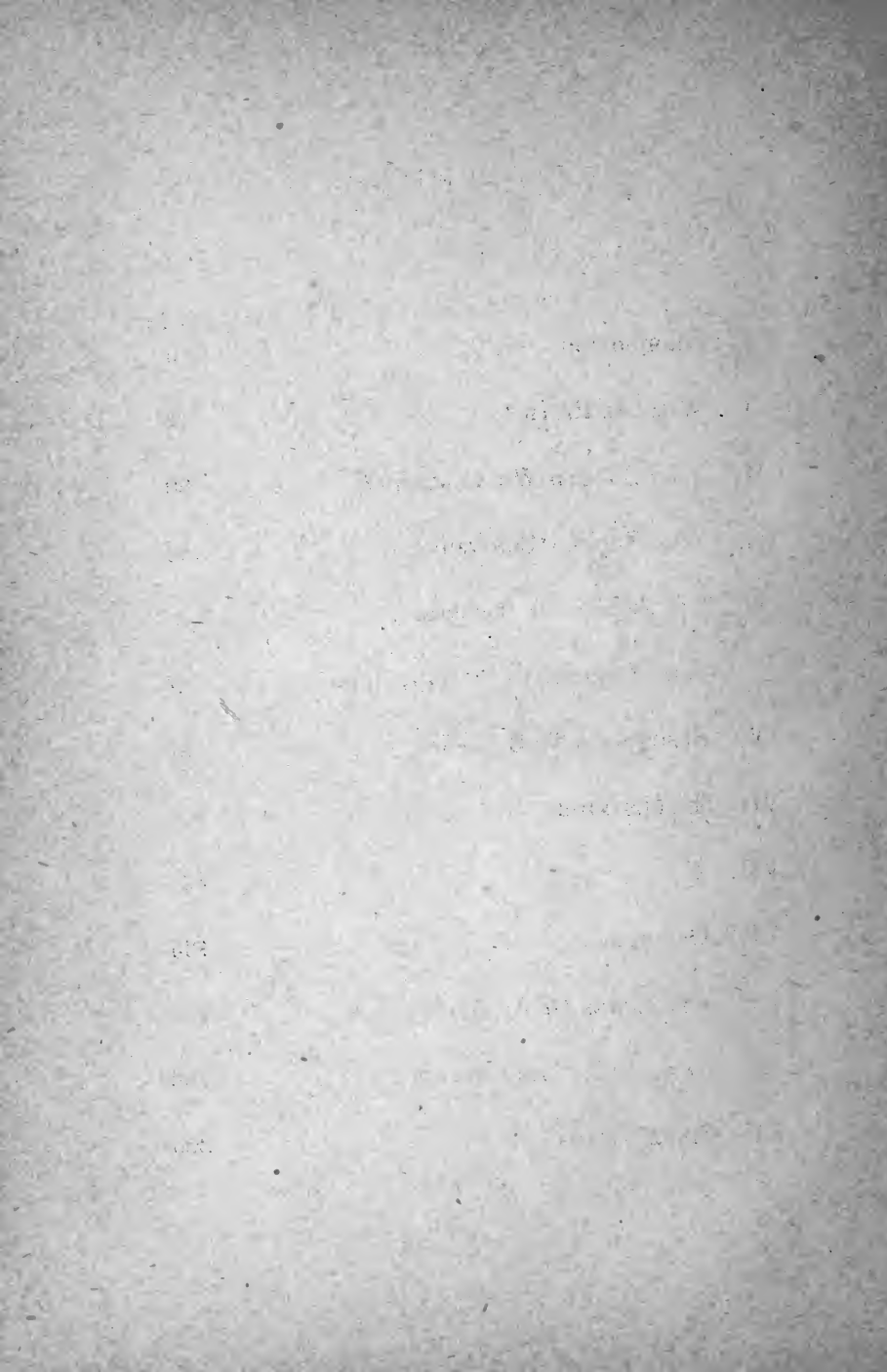
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TO  
THE DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH,  
AND  
TO ALL ACCEPTING THE BIBLE  
AS THE WORD OF GOD,  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.



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*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.—Rev. 20: 6.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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EARLY in the history of our race, Infinite Wisdom declared that, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" and thousands of years subsequent, we hear Paul declaring, with all the warmth of one speaking under the most positive convictions, "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) *dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*"

In this confession, Paul concedes not only the sinful tendency of humanity, but we may infer also the existence of certain obstacles in the way of the Apostle's development in spiritual things. In his great struggle to bring into subjection every thought, as well as in all his noble efforts against the sins of the age, he recognized a counteracting influence, the tendency of which was to weaken or destroy the effect of the glorious Gospel, which he preached. Such, we believe, is the testimony of universal experience, that, in this world we are in the midst of a moral conflict in which exists two opposing forces;—and that from these, we can infer the existence of two distinct agencies, or efficient causes, must be the conclusion of every person candidly considering the subject. The existence of these

hostile elements requires not the skill of great culture and genius to comprehend; but that they are prominent in the belief of the great mass of human intelligence, is a fact that none can consistently deny.

We perceive not only the existence of contending elements, as manifested in the condition of society, but we observe also, that we are wanting the strength necessary to overcome pernicious influences. Of this, Paul was evidently conscious when he said, "But how to perform that which is good (in my own strength) I find not."

He admits that man has neither the strength to overcome satanic influence, nor wisdom to devise a plan essential to such a victory; and being thus deficient, it is evident that a REMEDY for his vitiated condition, can be found only in an appeal to some superhuman agency. Evidently, no being inferior to the human, is sufficient to meet the demands of our fallen condition; and it only remains for man to obtain redemption through some means superior to himself.

If it had been in the power of humanity to originate a scheme by which man could have escaped the consequences of an evil heart, evidently such a plan would have been devised. For that man should have transgressed the law of God, must have been recognized a calamity in the earlier history of the world, as well as in modern times. However skeptical depraved humanity may become, he can not do otherwise than admit that the introduction of sin into the world, was a misfortune unsurpassed by any other event of all past history, and that the impressions regarding the deleteri-

ous nature of sin, were any less prominent, three or five thousand years ago, than at the present time, is by no means probable.

Amidst the depravity of former ages, there lived men renowned for genius,—men who, for intellectual strength and greatness, have not been excelled; but all their skill and mental force combined were not sufficient to suggest a plan by which a single soul could be saved. This work was left only for One, with a character and elements of power, infinitely above anything that human genius or skill could suggest. Jesus of Nazareth, once the babe of the manger, appearing in the manner He did, which, in a worldly point of view, was least attractive, came to accomplish a work for which human genius proved insufficient. That it is due to the faithful ministry of the truth which He preached, that the world, to-day, is so highly prosperous in a moral, mental, and social point of view, it seems hardly necessary to argue, seeing we have “so great a cloud of witnesses,”—so many testimonies, and forcible illustrations,—in its favor. It is through the power of His pure teachings that we are redeemed from sin, temporal and eternal. It is indeed God that “revealeth the deep and secret things;” and how appropriate, that Jesus, rejoicing in spirit, should say, “I thank Thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

Jesus came not with a display that the world could call grand or lofty—not with ostentatious show, in any respect. His supposed parentage was of humble

origin. Upon that morning in which He made His bed in the manger, all was quiet, with a few significant exceptions. His star appeared in the east, and there was an extraordinary commotion among the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem;—otherwise there was no unusual circumstance to excite the public mind. But notwithstanding the stillness of that hour, and the lowly manner in which He appeared, He was none the less, the remarkable Personage of whom the prophets of former ages had spoken,—the Holy One, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, our Redeemer, who was to come, and whose name was to be called JESUS; for it was He, that should “save His people from their sins.”

It was concerning our salvation through faith in that remarkable Personage, that the inspired penman was speaking, when he said, “It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Through these pages, we wish to show that it is still of vast importance, that Christians should contend for the faith, that it is worth contending for now, no less than in former ages, that the fruits of this contest have proven highly satisfactory, and that in all the past, there has not been so much to encourage Christians to activity and fervency, in the great work of the Master, as we now have. Our opportunities for doing good have never been surpassed. Never in the history of the world has the human heart been so well prepared to receive the Gospel. New fields are open-



ing for the introduction of Christianity, in every part of the great vineyard. A missionary spirit prevails in the churches, and the wonderful progress of Christian missions in India, China, Japan, and at many other points, is truly encouraging to every one that would do service for the Master. The voice, "Go work to-day in my vineyard," is sounding in every ear; and shall we not heed it, and go forward in the great work, with that fervency of spirit so necessary to the effectual efforts of every Christian?

Should these sentences come to the attention of unconverted men and women—as we expect they will—we most earnestly hope that you will not pass them heedlessly by; but that you may give due attention to these things, that directly concern your eternal interest. It is with special reference to your salvation, that these lines are written; and with prayerful anxiety, we ask you to read with care what we have to say, as we contend for the faith which has given salvation to untold millions, who are to-day praising God in Heaven.

"Lo! the day of God is breaking;  
See the gleaming from afar!  
Sons of earth from slumber waking,  
Hail the bright and Morning Star.

Trust in Him who is your Captain;  
Let no heart in terror quail;  
Jesus leads the gathering legions,  
In his name we shall prevail."

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

## I.

## WHAT IS FAITH?

The faith of which we speak has reference to that system of doctrines and principles, as given in the Scriptures. It is a loving trust or an affectionate confidence in the person and teaching of Christ, resulting in a radical change of character and life. In other words, it is the yielding of cheerful obedience to the will of God, as revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ, and confirmed by the apostles. It is all "the counsel of God," of which Paul once said, he had not shunned to declare; or it is that testimony, and authority most forcibly confirmed by the event described in the following: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

I. The law as received by Moses, midst the thunders, lightnings, and smoke of Mount Sinai, was of force, in the fact, that God revealed it, speaking through his servant, Moses, in a way, and under just such peculiar circumstances, that those who witnessed the events of that occasion, were satisfied that it was of Divine origin. They were forced, as it were, to

yield assent to the validity of the law, inasmuch as He who controlled the lightnings, or directed events in the natural universe, was manifestly its Author. To the Israelitish mind, the law, which came midst the fire and smoke of Mount Sinai, was as clearly the product of God, as it was evident, that the natural elements,—the winds, rains, lightnings &c., were subject to His direction. Being forcibly impressed, therefore, with the superhuman nature of that Revelation, they yielded obedience. The idea of the Divine origin of the Decalogue was so deeply inculcated in the hearts of their posterity, that the tenacity with which the Jews cling, to-day, “to the law and to the testimony,” as given under the Mosaic dispensation, is a subject of no little note.

But the extraordinary events accompanying the reception of the law, at Mount Sinai, were—if any difference—less adapted to give force to the Lord’s command, than the displays of His majesty as revealed under the Christian dispensation. Indeed, while the Israelites received the law as Divine in its origin, through significant arguments and definite considerations, is it not a fact worthy of our most candid and earnest thought, that under the Christian dispensation, in these modern times, we have greater reason for receiving the Gospel of the Son of God? It is true that God was graciously favorable to His Israel in that, He revealed to them His will, in a manner so forcible, and convincing; but while they were highly favored, we who live under the Christian dispensation, are more highly favored. The will of Heaven came so forcibly

to the consideration of the Israelite, that he could have no valid excuse for rejecting it; but under the Christian dispensation, God's will appears with more force, and, if possible, we have less reason for not believing. For, in addition to the evidence, as it appeared, on various occasions, in the early history of Israel, we have subsequent revelations, in which appear numerous and forcible testimonies, confirming the Divine Authority of the law, and establishing, beyond any possible doubt, the sanctity of the Christian faith. In the exact fulfillment of the prophecy as occurring in the advent of Christ to this world, we have an evidence of God's regard to humanity, that no rational mind can consistently overlook. The coming of Jesus was the accomplishment of a promise, which God made through the prophets, centuries before; and the character and influence of that remarkable Personage can only be understood, when considered in connection with the idea that He was Divine. That He held nature within His own mighty grasp, is evident from numerous illustrations. In response to His gentle word, the dead were raised, the sick were restored, the maimed were healed, the blind could see; and He not only held sway in the natural world, but that satan's kingdom was under His control, appears in the fact that He commanded devils,—of which we have numerous illustrations.

We believe too, that Jesus has no less power to-day, than He had as God incarnate; that he can establish His kingdom, in the human heart, against the powers of satan,—that He is not only willing, but that He is

anxious to do so; that He stands at the door of our hearts knocking—waiting—for admittance, that He may thus rule in our lives; and that the nations of the world may be redeemed from the pollutions of sin, it is only necessary, that they accept His coming, and surrender their hearts to His blessed control. As it was necessary, that God's ancient people should look on the brazen serpent, and be healed, so it is necessary, to-day, that we look to Jesus for salvation; and as it was no great, or hard thing the Lord required of His people, that they might live, on being bitten by the serpent, so it is no great thing, that He requires of us to-day, that we might have salvation. He demands only a surrender of our wills to His,—an obedience that is appropriate, a service that is reasonable. And if God spared not His ancient people, who were rebellious, but "cast them down to hell," can we expect that He will spare us, in disobedience, who have so much greater light, and live under circumstances so much more favorable?

We say then that the faith once delivered, or that system of doctrines and principles, as given in the Bible, is the Revelation of God; and so far as relates to the arguments favoring its Divinity, it has all in its favor. that intelligent beings can consistently ask. While it gives utterance to doctrines and principles, most perfectly and beautifully adapted to the demands of our fallen race, it is a most emphatic expression also of the sublime dignity of character possessed by the Author. Indeed, we can conceive of no plan by which the Creator of the universe can reveal Himself

in a way better adapted to overcome opposition than the method developed with such a display of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness in the Bible. He proposes in no instance, to force obedience; but throughout His holy teaching, the same principle is prominent,—“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

However much we may doubt the voice of God, as He speaks, in various ways, to our consciences, it is by no means probable, that He will do any more than He has done to make clear the path of duty. What more can He do? If the system of doctrines and principles, once so forcibly delivered, with all the accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit, is not sufficient to prompt obedience to the Author of our existence, then surely there is no agency that can produce such a result. If there was no other reason why we should yield obedience to God, except in the fact that it is DUE that we should serve Him, this would be sufficient. That God, as our Creator and preserver, has a just claim upon our affections, and that it is reasonable that we should obey His voice, can not, very well, be considered less than a self-evident truth. He is our sole dependence, and that “without Him, we can do nothing,” appears not only in the teachings of the Bible, but is declared by every expression, in nature and reason. To attribute the existence of all power, life, and knowledge to any source less than to an infinitely intelligent God, is absurd.

II. The faith once delivered, embraces those principles, that contribute so largely to our individual happiness, and general well-being. But while a life

of faith is so highly profitable to every Christian, it is not confined, in its benign influences, to his experience and advantage, exclusive of others. It is not possible for an individual to live a life, holy and acceptable before God, and not communicate largely a similar sentiment and feeling to others. The influence of true Christian life is as a city that is set on a hill, that can not be hid. It is elevating in its nature, lofty in its purposes, and pure in its aims. The true follower of Jesus would not conceal the light and power of Christian influence, if he could. In it he sees too much that is beautiful, to withhold a single ray, that is likely to aid in the least, in lighting up the path that leads to the great fountain of wisdom and purity. Instead of being restricted and selfish, it is the part of the true Christian to heed well the sentiment, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

There is no voice, that gives a more certain sound in favor of the faith, than that which speaks through good works. There is no light which penetrates the heart of an unbelieving world, more effectually, and with a more brilliant glow, than that which issues from acts declaring one's disposition to do good to others. In this is manifest the spirit and character of One, who died for man's redemption.

The nature of faith is forcibly and beautifully exhibited, in the sentiment of the "multitude of the heavenly host," who appeared praising God and saying, **GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH**



PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN." In that expression, "Good will to man," we find a sentiment, that is by no means unfavorable to the interests of humanity. It not only represents the feeling of God and angels toward mankind, but it is an expression of the good that should exist between man and man. "This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you." With this tenderness of devotion universally prevailing in human hearts, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for us to form any adequate conception of the happy state of affairs, emanating from such a source.

The happiness prevailing in many domestic circles is highly satisfactory; and the advantages arising from the mutual good will, kindness, and charity, in such relations, are varied and numerous. The days pass in toil, pleasant and profitable. Poverty seldom frowns upon such family circles, and prosperity often smiles upon them.

If such are the fruits of mutual good will, as existing in a limited degree, in the home circle, what may we expect, if pure love prevails, without bounds, between nations, people, and kindred throughout the world!

The doctrine and sentiment, inculcated by Jesus of Nazareth, are designed for high and noble results. Every word brought forward, in the development of the principles of faith, is with reference to the prevalence of that beauty and excellence of spirit, so happily preserved in the word LOVE. In the creation, God never designed that human beings should be

otherwise than mutually affectionate. That they are not so, in the high degree intended, and that hatred and envy prevail, is the result of disobedience. Through sin men are alienated from God, and in a like proportion, they become estranged from each other. But it is a precious thought, that in yielding to the principles and doctrine of the Gospel, the Fountain of Love may again be opened up;—nations become friendly, and “beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;”—righteousness which exalteth a nation is triumphant, man is saved, and God is glorified.

III. Again, the faith once delivered is not only an exhibition of tender devotion, and of the mutually friendly feeling, that should exist between human beings, and an unfolding of our responsibilities to our Maker, but, in it, is most glowingly exhibited, GOD’S LOVE TO MAN.

Of all the excellent things spoken by Jesus of Nazareth, what is there more beautifully significant than the following: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;”—and then at once, He gives expression to other important truths, leaving this,—what we would call a modest revelation of His love,—to the development of events, and for pens to describe at a time more favorable, or when that love could be illustrated in a way more forcible, than words, under different circumstances, could possibly express. After the Saviour’s death and resurrection, it was no remarkable thing, that His disciples should remember these words, and be im-

pressed with them in a way altogether more peculiar than when first uttered. While it was an act of the greatest friendship, that a man should be willing to sacrifice his life for his friends, it was an exhibition of friendship infinitely above this,—or superhuman only,—that would willingly die for His enemies. It is no wonder, midst the display of such sublime truth, that even his enemies should declare, “Never man spake like this man.” Where in all the history of the world, is there a teacher, who has inculcated such love as this,—“As I have loved you, so ye also ought to love one another.” Truly none but One infinite in love, wisdom, and goodness could give utterance to such a thought, and illustrate such sublimity of sentiment by a sacrifice of life in behalf of the eternal interest of humanity. What sinner can stand aloof midst the display of such love? Or what Christian can remain passive, or indifferent midst the glow of such an interest in human welfare?

The inspired Paul caught the noble thought, as he spoke so earnestly of the love of God, in the sixth chapter of Romans: “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” In his meditations, the great Apostle made brief reference to love, as it exists in humanity. He says in substance, there are few men, if any, that would give their lives, under any circumstances, for their FRIENDS. “Peradventure,” there may be some, who would be willing to sacrifice their lives, in behalf of those in whom they may have peculiar interest. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that,

while we were yet SINNERS (His enemies) Christ died for us."

Many have ideas as to the nature of God, entirely erroneous. Some seem to think of God, as of some dread sovereign,—stern, severe, and exacting;—instead of the loving, gentle, and gracious Saviour recognized by every devoted Christian; and this will not seem strange, when we remember, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." It is by no means wonderful, that persons who are not subject to the Government of God, should form erroneous ideas of His character.

That our conceptions of the Divine Being should be in harmony with our make-up,—or the tendency of our inclinations,—is no more than may be expected. The worldling, in many instances, can only think of the Divine Government, somewhat as he thinks of the human. He knows that in the execution of their laws, it is the policy of human governments to appeal to FORCE; and being unacquainted with God, as well as with the Divine plan of government, he is not conscious that God rules by LOVE.

As to the character of the Divine Sovereign, our knowledge depends upon our acquaintance with Him. Ideas of our fellow-men are often greatly changed, on more thorough acquaintance; and so our impressions regarding the Deity, are very different when we come to know Him as we ought. Would it not be wise in us to withhold an expression of our opinion in regard to individuals, until we can speak intelligently? Likewise in regard to the character of the Divine Being, would it not be the part of wisdom, for every uncon-

verted person to speak only after he has come to know the Lord?

Many, unacquainted with God, are declaring against the truths of the Gospel. Their conclusions have their origin in human theories only, and is it any wonder, that their creed should be unreliable and insufficient? Is it not better to heed the sayings of the Great Teacher, that our structure may be "founded on a rock?"

In the words of Jesus, we have something worthy of our confidence. Christianity has withstood the changes of time, and the opposing influences of the ages. "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not." Its prosperous existence, to-day, stands out as an evidence of its Divinity; and we believe, that Peter knew whereof he affirmed, when he said, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye witnesses* of His majesty."

IV. That so many in the different ages, have rejected Divine Revelation, can not be for want of more sufficient testimony in its favor. God has always accompanied His Word with all the evidence necessary to a clear comprehension of the truth. When He spoke unto Moses, He encouraged him by a display of power, which served to convince His servant, that the Message was from above. Aaron spoke unto the elders of Israel all the words, which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and the people believed, as certain "signs" were produced to confirm the testimony.

When God spoke to this world, through His Son Jesus Christ, the truth was "approved of God among them by miracles and wonders and signs," the validity of which, even His enemies admitted, when they declared, "That a notable miracle hath been done, by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it."

But multitudes have practically rejected the Word, although God clothed it with evidence such as compelled assent to its superhuman character. As a free agent, man may renounce the truth, and at the same time be mentally satisfied, not only of its Divine origin, but of his folly in its rejection. The judgment may be convinced, notwithstanding the will refuses to yield. In the Bible we have numerous illustrations of this condition of mind. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Nicodemus was of a sect among the Jews, known as a Pharisee, held a prominent position, and was a man of intelligence. Although he admitted that Jesus came from God as was manifest by the miracles He performed; yet it is evident, that Nicodemus was lacking the one thing needful. His *will* was not in subjection to the will of the Holy One. He had not come to that point, in experience, where he could say, "Thy will be done." He had not surrendered his affections to God, loving Him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Nicodemus mentally assented to the truth; but that he was practically opposing Revelation, is

implied in the response of our Saviour, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But that the power of God was in those gentle words appears in the fact, that this man was one of two, who took an interest in the disposition of the Lord's body (John 19: 39), after the crucifixion. Is it probable that any one but a true disciple would feel inclined to do what he did on that occasion?

In this "Ruler of the Jews," we have an illustration of a character, that is by no means an isolated case. Nicodemus represented a large class, that undoubtedly held opinions, with reference to Jesus, similar to his own. The manner in which he introduced the subject of conversation indicates this. He says: "We know &c,"—thus including others with himself. But although there were many in those days, that knew from "these miracles," that Jesus was from above—God manifest in the flesh—yet there were comparatively few that accepted Him. They not only feared the Jews, but they preferred to go with the multitude, and do evil, rather than with the few and do right.

In these modern times, we have a class of people with dispositions and preferences, similar to those living in the days of Nicodemus. They admit the Divine origin of Christianity, and accept the Bible as the Word of God; but while they assent to the views as generally held by Christians, they do not yield obedience to the will of Heaven. On being invited to acknowledge the Saviour, and to accept in practice what they admit in theory, they are prompted to respond, "I know that religion is a good thing, but I

am not ready just yet to become a Christian." Multitudes are waiting for the more favorable opportunity. Although the danger of procrastination is forcibly impressed upon their minds, instead of inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" They answer as Felix of old, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." We have seen an individual sit, tremblingly, under the sound of the Gospel. From his eyes the tears flowed freely. Kind neighbors visited him with reference to the salvation of his soul. Every possible influence was exerted in his behalf. The Holy Spirit was evidently striving with him; but notwithstanding he was at times almost ready to surrender his heart to God, yet intemperance did its work, and the poor man, in the prime of life, passed away to suffer the drunkard's doom.

There are multitudes, to-day, suffering the realities of that awful abyss, who in life, were almost persuaded to be Christians;—and what is there sadder than that bitter wail, "Almost—but lost!" He who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," is standing at the door and knocking. Shall we not heed His voice, and reciprocate His love? The door may be hard to open. The prince of this world may bring deceptive influences against our every effort; but however powerful these influences may be, let us not forget that in God, there is power infinitely beyond the satanic. That good old Apostle struck the thought, when he said, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them;



*because greater is He that is in you,* than he that is in the world." If we are on the Lord's side, we shall be victors, as sure as the elements around us are subject to His will. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that the Creator is greater than the creature,—or that the thing formed is inferior to the Hand that formed it?

True Christians, therefore, can say with all earnestness, "I know that through God's strength, we can overcome evil with good." True soldiers of Christ are not slow to understand from *experience*, that in God, there is supreme power; and in our consideration of the subject of faith, it is well that we should grasp this thought, that in God there is a power surpassing all other combined influences of the universe,—that in Him, we have a "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother;"—and besides all this, He is perfectly willing to bless poor, fallen humanity according to His great riches, and abundant mercy. He asks only that we confess and forsake our sins, that we acknowledge our weakness and dependence, and that we trust and believe Him, who died for our redemption.

When God has made every thing so plain, why should we trust longer in ourselves? Do we not know the uncertainty of human affairs, and the fallibility of human theories? Man is truly a poor frail creature. God is the source of our well-being spiritually, as sure as He is our dependence physically. Without His care and protection, how soon would the brittle thread of this physical existence be broken! And as it is necessary, that we should comply with certain laws to

sustain these bodies, so it is essential, that we should yield to certain obligations to insure our spiritual well-being. Our daily food is necessary for the strength and life of the physical, and we partake of the bread that cometh down from Heaven,—the truths of God, that we may be of real spiritual worth, and have life eternal.

To the unconverted, we would say as a closing thought, under this head, that Christians generally know how to sympathize with you, in all your unbelief. You may wonder why it is, if your souls are exposed to eternal death, that near friends of the church do not take more interest in your salvation;—and perhaps you also are waiting for God to manifest His regards for you, in some way more forcible. To which we would say, it is quite probable, that you do not know how much interest is really felt, by your friends who are members of the church. It is quite likely that they have great interest in your soul's welfare, and no doubt, they are often at a throne of grace, in your behalf, although you know it not. It is true they may say little to you about your soul, and may neglect to call your special attention to the importance of accepting Christ,—and for the absence of Christian activity in your behalf, we make no apology;—but after all, you should not forget that they are doing much, in a great multitude of instances, for your spiritual well-being. Every dollar contributed by God's people for the support of the cause, is an expression in behalf of your soul's salvation; and every sacrifice, on part of ministers of religion as well as others, for the estab-

lishment of righteousness, is so much in favor of the sinner's eternal interest.

That Jesus knows how to sympathize with us all, in our weakness, is evident from many considerations. The inspired penman declares that, "We have not a high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Even to the blessed Saviour, with His Divinity of nature, temptation came with a force, no less powerful, than to us, who have to mourn often the effectual influence of the tempter. But notwithstanding the strength of satanic influence there is in Jesus a power, that surpasses; and although He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. It is in the sinlessness of Jesus, as much as in any other one consideration, appears His Divinity: and may it be in all our hearts to "press toward the mark for the prize of the higher calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We have God's promises. Hitherto, He has been truly favorable to Israel; and whatever obstacles may be in the way of our success in drawing men to Him, or in accepting Jesus as our Saviour, let us endeavor, by God's assisting grace, to put away all our unbelief, remembering His words, when He said, "If ye have faith, as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

For the faith once delivered, and which effects impossibilities equal, in every human point of view, to

removing mountains, for such a faith let us not only contend most earnestly, but for it, let us pray most fervently.

“Come trembling sinner in whose breast,  
A thousand thoughts revolve;  
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,  
And make this last resolve;  
‘I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins  
Like mountains round me close;  
I know His courts, I’ll enter in,  
*Whatever may oppose.*’”

## II.

## WHY SHOULD WE CONTEND?

As to why we should yield obedience to the Divine Voice, and put forth every possible effort against the sins of the age, God, "at sundry times and in divers manners," has illustrated not only by many significant events, but by the revelation of many excellent precepts.

It is a query in the minds of many,—Why should we give so much attention to religion? Why all this toil, tug, and expense in behalf of our spiritual or eternal interest? Why not all make the most possible of the present life, without concern as to the future?

There are multitudes who are thus querying, by their actions, if not by their words. There are many professed Christians, as well as the worldly-wise, who are inclined, through satanic influence, to believe that there is altogether too much "stir" about religion, and that the contest against sin is, to a great extent, un-called-for. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."

The writer of these pages, being fully persuaded, that "God is able to perform what He has promised," proposes, through His blessing, to show that there is ample testimony in favor of a more complete conse-

eration of all Christians to the Master's service,—that instead of there being an uncalled-for effort for souls, there is a demand on the part of Christians generally, for an increase in religious interest, by a thousand fold. An event that produces "joy in the presence of the angels of God," should enlist our attention; and such, we learn, is the feeling awakened in Heaven, "over one sinner that repenteth."

God is calling for more earnest, and harmonious effort on part of the Church everywhere, against the sins of the age, and in behalf of the salvation of souls; and that the Church should put on the whole armour, and go out with unprecedented zeal for God and humanity, we urge from the following considerations:

I. We should contend for the faith,—in other words,—we should yield obedience to the Gospel, giving ourselves permanently, and without reserve to the work of the Master, inasmuch as "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE."

When as a race, we were weak in every point of view, being ignorant, unable to withstand satanic influence, socially degraded, indifferent, hostile, unhappy and hopeless, God saw fit to have mercy on our wretched condition, and commended His love, as He spoke unto us by His Son. That was a marvelous condescension, which prompted the giving of so precious a Gift from the eternal world. In it we can discern nothing less than infinite love, goodness, wisdom and power.

“When we were yet *without strength*, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.” His coming to the rescue of our fallen race appears the more notable, as we call to mind our utter helplessness. There was nothing we could do for our moral, mental, social, and political elevation. Such was our polluted condition, that we were as one dead. We were dead in sin, and were likely to remain, in this wretched condition, without the help essential to our redemption.

We have not the self-resuscitating power essential to the new life, which Christ is able to give. It is for Him only who has made all things, and created man in His own image, to make anew these perverted natures. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

We should love Him—yield obedience—not only because He first loved us; but in view of His being our only source of deliverance from that low estate to which we have been reduced by transgression. If all the faculties of the human mind were concentrated in one individual, even he, unaided by Divine power, would not be sufficient to withstand the deceitful entreaties of satan. But by the blessing of God, the precious influence of His Spirit, and trusting in Him as we ought, we shall be able to stand, in the evil day.

Our Lord is no less able to command devils to-day than when He walked and talked, incarnate, among men. In His nature and in all the powers of His wonderful being, He is unchangeable; and we should

love Him; not only because He has revealed to us, His mighty power to save, but that His promises are perfectly reliable: God has indeed "given us precious promises," and it is a blessed thought, that He has made these sure by many "infallible proofs."

Jesus manifested not only His unbounded interest in humanity, but He prevailed against all temptation, and returned to the Father, a blessed victor "without blemish and without spot," and is to-day "on the right hand of the Majesty on High." And is it sufficient to say, that He became equal with the angels? To be an angel in Heaven is a precious inheritance,—more by far than the purest of us deserve; but Jesus "being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

That our affections should go out toward such a Personage, and that we should yield obedience to Him, is indeed a reasonable service. Ought not the friendship which induced a disposition to die in behalf of One's enemies, be sufficient to abolish those hostile elements, and prompt to a zealous affection and hearty obedience on part of the transgressor?

God's love for the race appears also in the fact, that He made intercession for us, at a time, when human wisdom had proven absolutely insufficient. "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." But notwithstanding the test of man's ability to redeem himself from the consequences of sin, had been submitted



in vain for thousands of years previous to the coming of Christ, yet it is a fact that multitudes are yet inclined to walk in their own ways; and that satan should continue to exercise such an influence, over humanity, is marvelous, and we can only, in part, understand, it, as we consider the depraved condition of the human heart, and the deceptive influences of the devil. It was by a lie of "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," that sin was introduced into the world; and satan is still arrayed against the rule of God on earth, as surely as he thus committed himself against the Word of God, when he said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." From that day, it has been the work of the devil to deceive the nations, and the results of those satanic influences are seen in every neighborhood.

Through satanic deception, the murderer is persuaded to the perpetration of his most dreadful crime, as he stretches forth his hand against the dictates of the highest and purest judgment. The robber thrusts his hand into the pocket of his neighbor, only to suffer the most dreadful defeat and disappointment. The slanderer "deceiveth his own heart," bringing railing accusation against his brother. The drunkard, through the same deceptive influence, partakes first of the intoxicating cup, with not the slightest idea of self-ruin, but rather that good would come of it. And a vast multitude are engaged in sinful amusements, under the impression that such indulgences, in some way,

are going to contribute to their social well-being, happiness, health, or something else.

But in the Gospel of Christ, we find nothing that is deceptive,—nothing that is likely to impress with false ideas.

As man, in his limited sphere, failed after four thousand years to provide a remedy for his redemption, Christ, “in due time,”—or at a time in human history when men ought to know there was no other means of salvation,—came to our rescue. Here we have a sublime illustration of an instance in which man’s extremity was God’s opportunity. Human wisdom had utterly failed to provide the remedy for man’s redemption. Man had done all that he could for himself, but was still without the light essential to his temporal, and eternal well-being, and just at this epoch, the Voice of God comes in thrilling tones, a message from Heaven, “*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life;*” and this Voice has come down through more than eighteen centuries, constantly developing, and increasing in force, as years rolled on, and all this against the mighty tide of opposition, which appeared at every point in ecclesiastical history.

Is there not enough in such a Voice, as it has gone forth among the nations, with all its soothing, elevating, and enlightening influences, to inspire our hearts with the most active interest in the noble truths revealed? And is not the success of the Gospel, as it has moved on, prevailing against every opposition, conclusive testimony favoring the Divinity of its ori-

gin? Truly its success is a declaration of the truthfulness of "that Prophet that should come into the world," as He declared that "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs." Such indeed is a forcible illustration of the growth and development of the Church.

The prospect for success, with the primitive Church, was by no means flattering. Its membership were few, and generally poor, and illiterate; and so generally was this the case, that it became a subject attracting no little attention, by those outside, who did not fully comprehend God's plan in the establishment of His Church on earth. But Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, gives light on this subject, and very beautifully answers the opposing elements,—in a way that must have been very effectual, when he says, "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and the things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

In this statement, we see that God purposed to carry out His plans in the establishment of His kingdom, through feeble instrumentalities, as His enemies, of

whom there were many, in that proud and idolatrous age, might take advantage of a more prosperous state of affairs, and attribute the success of the good work to favorable circumstances. God did not see fit, therefore, to choose workers from those higher spheres,—the wealthy, the learned, the influential and the popular circles; but He called the day-laborer, the fisher, and mechanic, who were without the equipments which the world regarded essential to success. And with these, as humble agencies, He bore the good tidings of salvation to a lost world, sowing the seed, which before the close of the first century, sprang up, midst the most populous, and best cultured cities of the Roman Empire.

In the preaching of the glorious Gospel, the apostles had opposition to contend with, in its darkest forms. They were in the midst of an idolatrous nation, and had to contend with the prejudices of a great and proud people. But these humble servants went forth clothed with the wisdom and righteousness of God, and with their great love for souls, pushed out into the very heart of that despicable empire of sin; and as a result, and notwithstanding all the disadvantages, from a worldly point of view, under which they labored, the Gospel prevailed, and churches were raised up, at various points, which emitted rays of light, that, in subsequent ages, were borne to the "regions beyond," until to-day, as a result of the enlightening influences of God's Holy Spirit and Truth, the nations of the earth are rapidly coming to hear the Gospel; and we believe the dawn of a glorious age is at hand,

when righteousness will prevail, the powers of satan will be subdued, and a time when, it may be said of a truth, and more clearly comprehended that, "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

God is surely rallying His forces as never before; and a mighty work is being pushed forward, "to the pulling down of strongholds."

Is it not then, in every respect, appropriate that we should give God the praise for all the great, and essential advantages accruing to society, from the light and righteousness of the precious Word? What to-day would have been our condition as a race, had it not been for the light revealed by the Gift of the Son of God to this world? In Him we see not only the Fountain of Love and righteousness, but the source of true wisdom, and real happiness in the present life, and in that which is to come.

Is there a single valid excuse for not contending for the faith, which has "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight?"

II. We need contend with uninterrupted zeal, for the precious Gospel, as it is the POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION. A moment wasted, an opportunity lost, may be a soul ruined. It is for every Christian to see to it, not only that his own soul is safe in the arms of Jesus, but that he is ever pushing out in behalf of the salvation of others. To be without such a disposition is to be without the Spirit of Christ. It is not

possible for us to be purged "from dead works," and still manifest no concern for the salvation of others. The quickening Spirit prompts activity in behalf of the eternal well-being of our fellow-man, as naturally as the food we eat, stimulates, and strengthens the physical. The heart which comes to know, from experience, the power of that precious influence, shrinks not midst discouragements and opposing forces, but forgetting self, impulsively goes forth, in deep interest for the souls of men.

We have a beautiful illustration of one prompted by holy influence, in the case of Andrew, who had come to recognize the Saviour, and at once sought his brother Simon, and said unto him, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." At once Andrew brought his brother to Jesus, by whose burning words, Simon was soon satisfied that he was in the presence of no ordinary personage. Andrew had confidence in Jesus, and went forth fully determined to bring others to the Saviour. As a result of that fearless pushing out, we find in Peter, a bold soldier of the cross, who, in subsequent years, became a mighty power against sin. In Simon Peter, we behold that noble intrepidity of spirit which should characterize every follower of our Lord. Urged on by the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, he entered the enemy's camp. Fearless and aggressive, he preached the Gospel to a people blinded by pride and prejudice; and to-day, we recognize in that noble Apostle, an unprecedented example of faith and good works, worthy of careful note, and prayerful imitation.

III. We should contend for the Gospel in consideration of the evils which have "crept in unawares."

It is a lamentable fact that the Church has, to a great extent, become corrupt;—or, in other words, in our church organizations, we find many, who are altogether unworthy of a place among Christians. While we find millions of the purest, noblest, and most useful people on earth, in the churches,—such indeed as are destined to add largely to the glories of the eternal world,—we have also the very unwelcome thought, that the churches, in some instances, abound in wicked people who are not only unworthy, but are evidently unprepared to meet God. Although their names are inserted on a church-book, they are practically in the world, and have never come to know God, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

We often wonder how such and such members of the church can be Christians, "and do as they do." We see them doing things repeatedly, and unhesitatingly, that are inconsistent with Christian principles, and, as by their actions, they declare a sentiment in conflict with their profession, we are confused, as we consider what might be their spiritual condition. While we would exercise all needed charity for such, and would not judge them,—knowing that the judgment of God, in the Great Day, will be sufficient,—we can but call to mind the words of Jesus, when He said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

If the Church had sustained her purity, there would have been few, if any, left to serve the devil. With

a pure Church from the first, she would undoubtedly have gathered in the great host of satan's rule, and with such results, what a glorious heritage would we have to-day on earth! With the kingdom of darkness shut out,—the prince of this world subdued,—and all the nations of the earth arrayed against sin; with no saloons, no houses of bad repute, no hatred, envy, or evil speaking; with no murder, theft, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, revellings and such like, we should certainly be a power among men, which the allurements of satan could not withstand.

With the Church to the front, with all the purity, simplicity, and sublimity of her original self, with all those principles and doctrines which our Saviour so effectually promulgated;—or with the fruits of the spirit,—“love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,”—universally prevailing, the nations of the earth would soon be induced to accept the ways of God and salvation.

But alas! The Church has not thus prevailed against the kingdoms of this world. While as an agent in the hands of God, she has accomplished more against sin, and for the well-being of humanity, than all other organizations combined, yet we have to say, that she has not maintained the purity essential to her greatest prosperity.

As Sampson, on having his head shaven, found that the “Lord was departed from him,” and that he was deprived of his great strength, so the Church, as she became defiled, was also deprived of her strength, and became less efficient, as a power among men. And



as the Philistines took Sampson and bound him with fetters, on the departure of his strength, so the prince of this world—the powers of darkness—took hold upon the Church, and has, to a certain extent, absorbed the source of her real success and efficiency.

Instead of capturing the world for Jesus, and thus bringing all things subject to the mighty power of His Word, the world has well nigh captured the Church. At least the prince of this world lies, as it were, at the threshold, and is sucking the very life-blood, and would indeed absorb the good within, was it not for Him, “who provideth for the raven.” Among the last words of our Saviour, we have the promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

We believe that God is with His people, as they cling to the principles and doctrines revealed, and that the Church will renew her strength, as she becomes pure before Him, “the author and finisher of our faith.”

How vastly important it is then, that we should “take heed” unto ourselves, and unto the doctrine! If the efficiency of the Church, or her power to save men is in proportion to a strict observance of the principles and teachings of our Lord, we can not cling too rigidly to the doctrines as taught by Christ and the apostles. Each of these has a meaning, and deserves our most careful attention. They form so many links in the chain which binds earth to Heaven, and for every one that is left out, we shall be so far deficient in our efforts to bring the world to Jesus.

In union there is strength, and we believe that the Church of our Lord Jesus, to-day, would be, by far, a more mighty power, if only she would heed properly the injunction, "Teach no other doctrine." It is regarded by some of little importance, that the Church is not united more perfectly, in a doctrinal point of view. "It matters little," some say, "if we do not agree, in the minor points," but when we remember that, to a great extent, the disastrous divisions and factions of the Church had their origin in these "little differences," we can not think, that these divisions are in harmony with the will of Him, who prayed the Father, that the disciples may be "one," even as Christ and the Father are one.

It is for us to bring our minds free, unbiased, and *teachable* to learn our religion from the Word of God. We have, in the Church, many earnest and prayerful students of the Bible, but we need more of them, and such as will study the Word without prejudice. It is a fact that prejudice is a blind guide, and is never going to lead any of us to a clear comprehension of the Truth. Let us deal with the pure teachings of Christ, and warm by the eternal sunshine of the real, rather than be chilled by the darkness of the imaginary.

IV. As Christians we must contend for the faith, as it is pronounced by the apostle, "a good fight."

The contest is against sin. It is the kingdom of God against the powers of darkness. It is obedience to God, against disobedience. It is light against darkness. It is eternal life and happiness against eternal death and misery. And if such is the nature of the

contest, is there any reason why our efforts should not be attended with the greatest zeal? Can we, consistently, be indifferent midst the perishing multitudes?

If aboard a ship, in mid ocean, we were suddenly driven to a point, where we were surrounded, with a multitude of ship-wrecked mariners gasping for breath, as midst chill and storm, they were seen floating on the water, and clinging for life to the straws and rubbish, would we not put forth every possible effort to save them? He would be a despicable wretch indeed, who would not, under such circumstances, do all that he could in behalf of the perishing multitudes. There are few among nations so barbarous, as not to have sympathy sufficient to prompt earnest effort, in behalf of such a suffering and exposed multitude. But this is only a faint illustration of the attitude of the Church as surrounded by the perishing millions.

As Christians, we are aboard the old ship Zion. We have plenty of room for all that will come. We have also all the supplies necessary for their comfort and happiness. And in addition to these advantages, there are two things deserving special notice: First, all these rich blessings have been given without money and without price; and second, they are given for our eternal well-being.

But midst all the blessings God has seen fit to bestow, we see, all around us, the perishing millions. From far off India, Japan, and the islands of the ocean, comes the cry for help.

How can we, midst such pressing demands, with-

hold our support. How can we say, "Time enough yet—wait a little longer." Or why need we excuse ourselves, and say, "I am not adapted to work for the salvation of souls,—I have not powers of expression necessary for such work."

Surely, He, who has created these organs of speech, is able to bless them to His honor; and if as Christians, we are not adapted to the work of the Lord, it is well for us to adapt ourselves, as soon as possible, by full consecration to God,—seeking the powers and influences of the Holy Spirit. What are we to do in eternity, if it is not to go forth as messengers of God, in some good work! And how are we to be prepared for those angelic missions, without first learning the way in this life!

None need think, for a moment, that we can do nothing; for God has made all necessary provisions for our efficiency, in behalf of the perishing. He has clothed us with power from on high. He has provided all needed supplies against danger. We have only to launch out, and do all we can for poor souls, who, without our aid, will be forever lost; and let us, therefore, heed with diligence, that eloquent voice as it speaks in language so beautiful, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."

V. And finally, we urge constant activity and diligence against the powers of darkness in view of the fact, that SATAN IS ALWAYS BUSY. If there is any reference that can be made favorable to the devil, it is for his industry. He is never idle, and only at leisure

when he can find opportunity to perform the work of his fiendish nature. The Apostle Peter represents him, as a roaring lion walking about "seeking whom he may devour," and after thus revealing the mission of this arch-fiend, and as fully conscious of the importance of the injunction, the inspired penman adds, "Whom resist steadfast in the faith."

To resist successfully the allurements of the devil, requires not only constant watchfulness, but earnest effort. To be indifferent is to be criminal when it is conversant about objects which are so far from being of an indifferent nature, that they are of the highest importance. God not only requires an intense application of thought and energy to the work of the Master, but such warmth of devotion is absolutely requisite to the success of efforts against the powers of satan. The highly efficient servants of past ages were distinguished for their glowing, and uninterrupted zeal, as manifested against the prince of this world. Paul, in his address to the Church of God at Corinth, urged that they should be "steadfast, unmovable, *always abounding* in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." And this uninterrupted glow of religious feeling is largely characteristic of all truly successful Christian workers of modern times.

As a careful, constant, and earnest application to duty is essential to success in common business transactions, so is a watchful, uninterrupted, and fervent devotion necessary to the greatest usefulness in the

Lord's service. As Christian workers, we must be sure that our application is equal to the ability which God has given, and not only will the world be better off, as a result of our having lived in it, but such will be the impressions of our lives, that long years after our decease, the good influence will be seen and felt among men. We believe that it is for every Christian to live, in such a way, that his influence will not depart from the world, when he leaves it.

It was through the "more excellent sacrifice," that Abel "being dead yet speaketh;" and through the same precious influence, the host of good men of past ages are speaking to the present generation, as a result of their untiring zeal, and uninterrupted devotion to the Master.

Our Saviour gave the most forcible argument favoring constant warfare against satan's influence when He said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it *abide* in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

As the attachment of the branch to the vine is indispensable to its production, so our abiding in Christ is requisite to an effectual agency in the salvation of souls, and the establishment of pure religion. As the branch absorbs the nourishment from the vine, essential to its prosperous existence and life, so we are to drink of the inexhaustible Fountain, Christ Jesus, that we may be successful as workers in God's vineyard, and insure a life of eternal bliss in the world beyond. To accomplish well the great mission, we may have to encounter many difficulties and much op-

position. The branches attached to the vine are exposed to the frosts and cold winds of winter, and to the severe heat and storms of summer; but midst all, they continue to absorb nourishment from the vine, and yield fruit as regularly as if no blasts had been in the way of their growth.

We may have to endure great sacrifices, and should we find it necessary to continue "all night in prayer to God," let us not forget that Jesus also suffered. We may be subjects of gossip and bitter censure, but midst it all, if guilty, let us confess and forsake the wrong; and if innocent, let us give attention to the words of Jesus, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you FALSELY for my sake." We may be hated of the world, but let us not forget that the world hated Jesus, before it hated us. Our Saviour most certainly understood this world, or He would never have said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." We are glad that Jesus made so prominent this line of distinction between the world and the Church.

It is to be feared, that there are many "professors of religion," who are not possessors; many who have their names attached to the church-book, but whose hearts are not attached to Christ, by the cleansing influenies of the blessed Spirit. It is a fact worthy of note, that the branch may be attached to the vine, in such a way as to fail to draw the nourishment essen-

tial to life. It may not be entirely cut off, and so "cast forth as a branch, and withered;" but it may be clinging to the vine by some tendrils, or by an exterior covering, and thus so exposed, as not to absorb from the vine, the nourishment essential to growth and life. To insure the most perfect health and fruitfulness, it is necessary that the branch should be attached entire to the vine, and complete in all its parts. In like manner, entire consecration to God is essential to growth and life. It is by putting on the whole armour of God, that we shall be "able to stand against the wiles of the devil." No partial preparation is sufficient, and no spasmodic consecration is going to accomplish the work. "He that ABIDETH in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." A partial detachment from the vine often works great injury. As satan is always busy, we must "abide," or we shall bring reproach on the cause.

That was a sad time, in the history of Israel, represented by Nehemiah: "The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire."

The enemy had laid waste the city—once through the blessing of God so prosperous—had broken down the wall, burnt the gates thereof, and had taken captive apostate Israel. God had marvelously delivered His people on many occasions, had faithfully warned them against disobedience, and made every possible provision for their happiness and prosperity. But notwithstanding all, Israel became careless and exceedingly



refractory; and it was left only for God to assert His authority, by permitting the enemy to take captive the people.

Such indeed is a forcible illustration of God's dealings with His people, from the day of satan's first victory over humanity, to the present time. In all ages, by various significant events, and practical illustrations, God has declared His purpose to execute vengeance against the transgressor. "The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." And so clearly has God manifested Himself, that there is no excuse sufficient to exculpate those who refuse to believe. We have God's Word—the Holy Bible—with all its purity of sentiment and highly valuable instructions;—the great field of nature with its innumerable illustrations;—the history of the Church with its valuable lessons;—the influences of God's Holy Spirit, and the ever blessed impressions; vast quantities of religious literature and the ministry of God's Word; and withal the great host of friends to encourage an abiding acceptance of Jesus. "Wherefore seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doeth so easily beset, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

As it is a fact that satan is always busy, so it is also true that Jesus is ever willing to intercede in behalf of sinful humanity; and not only is He willing,

but He is also "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

We urge then **CONSTANCY** in the work of the Master, as we shall thus be more efficient, as followers of our Lord Jesus. Every failure we make is likely to counteract the impressions made through temporary consecration. We shall only be really efficient soldiers, as we go out in constant warfare against satan. No human government is satisfied with a soldier, that is only temporarily at his post; and an army composed of such men, however skilled the generalship at the head, is liable to a dreadful defeat, failure and disgrace.

To be really victorious, we must go out with unshaken purpose against satanic power; and we shall prevail, souls will be saved and God's name glorified.

As a concluding thought, we should contend steadfastly for the faith, as our Saviour urges upon us the constancy so productive of good results. The words of Him who spoke into existence the worlds, are to be heeded. Constancy is a quality which we all welcome midst our mutual friendships. We soon learn to regard, very lightly, the friendship that is likely to be brief or spasmodic. It is the reliable,—those that stand by us in adversity, that we esteem; and so the Lord Jesus seeks a friendship, that is not going to be severed by every opposing blow. Jesus is to-day appealing for that friendship which will sustain Him, and honor His name midst opposing forces. As of old, He is declaring, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye,

except ye abide in me."

"O for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though press'd by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink,  
Of any earthly woe;

That will not murmur or complain  
Beneath the chast'ning rod;  
But in the hour of grief or pain,  
Will lean upon its God;

A faith that shines more bright and clear  
When tempests rage without;  
That when in danger knows no fear,  
In darkness feels no doubt;

Lord, give us such a faith as this,  
And then, whate'er may come,  
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallow'd bliss  
Of an eternal home."

### III.

#### WHO SHOULD CONTEND?

The Apostle Jude, in his address to "them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ and called," urged that **THEY** should contend for the faith. The Lord commissions, as workers in His vineyard, only those, who present themselves "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." And is it not the privilege of the great host of unbelieving humanity, everywhere, to accept the Gospel and become earnest soldiers, and efficient laborers in the vineyard of the Lord?

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.  
And let him that heareth say, Come.  
And let him that is athirst come.  
AND WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water  
of life freely."

I. The first point important in the experience of every individual, is to see to it that his own heart and life is in harmony with the principles and teachings of Christ. It is for all to know that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation," as revealed through personal experience; and not until then, shall we relish the work of the Master, and feel the inclination we ought, to impart unto others, "some spiritual gift."

In proportion as we draw near to God, and so receive the cleansing, enlightening, and quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, in a like proportion, our hearts go out after the well-being of others, and we shall feel the burning within, so necessary to our highest efficiency as Christian workers.

That was an important experience with those two disciples, as, after the resurrection, they were journeying to Emmaus, when "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." They were thoroughly absorbed in the contemplation of "these things which had happened;" and it was only when "He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them," that their eyes were opened and they knew Him. Since that memorable day, many have had their eyes opened, as they have communed with Jesus, and many have been led to ask, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

Those disciples were permitted to look upon the person of a resurrected Saviour, in response to the deep interest they felt in His teachings. Previous to this, they had not come to comprehend fully, the high mission of our Lord. They knew little of the nature and extent of the atonement; but now in addition to much valuable experience, and with all the precious lessons which had, during previous years, fallen from His lips, they came to a more thorough acquaintance, and with it, a more exalted idea of Jesus. By numerous displays of His miraculous power, the Lord had manifested, that He held nature at his disposal;

and later, He reveals the important truth, that He "had power to lay down His life, and that He had power to take it again."

What more need we ask than this,—what more can we ask? The most skeptical were compelled to yield the point, as they looked upon His person, talked and ate with Him, &c; and when we remember that He was with His disciples, at various times, for forty days, and that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, we may readily conclude, that the idea of His resurrection is no delusion.

As the most skeptical among primitive Christians were compelled, from what their hearts felt, and their eyes beheld, to admit the resurrection of our Lord, so it is for every professed follower of Jesus to become established in the faith, and earnest for God in the salvation of souls. The great need of the hour is for ALL to come to that full consecration realized by the few. To a very great extent, the burdens of church work rest upon the comparatively few. Churches with fifty, or a hundred members, in many instances, are supported by less than half a dozen faithful ones; and we have noticed, that those who are usually prompt at the prayer meetings, and at other regular services of the church, are the ones to contribute most freely to the expenses.

Let all come up, and do their duty as true disciples of the Lord, and thousands would be brought to Jesus, where there are tens now.

It is a lamentable fact, that many church members are inactive, and inclined to excuse themselves for

want of diligence in the Master's service. They seem to forget that the entreaties of the Holy Writ are to all, and that a fundamental principle, in the appeals of Jesus, is to embrace the entire world.

There are many who seemingly recognize the power of Christian influence, and are at times, strongly impressed as to the worth of the soul; yet they manifest no disposition to launch out in the great mission. It may be that they expect sometime to be of more service; but for the present, they "have so much to do," that they cannot find time to give to spiritual interests. At "a convenient season," they propose to yield obedience; but with the multitudes, the good time never comes, and they die, with that dreadful lament, "O! that I had been more active in the Master's service."

It is thus that many pass out of the world, dissatisfied, and possibly without any bright hope to cheer. as midst those last struggles, they come to a vivid and awful contemplation of the future.

Let us prayerfully examine ourselves, that we may not only come to a clear comprehension of present demands, but let us with untiring zeal, go forth to perform well the duties of the hour. Real success, in Christian work, depends upon a diligent performance of the obligations of to-day.

II. It is a fact worthy the prayerful attention of every Christian, that the Lord demands our best thoughts, and most vigorous life in His service. It was the blood of a lamb "without blemish," that the Israelites were required to take, and "strike it on the

two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses," as the death angel was about to pass through the land of Egypt; and it was with the precious blood of Christ, "as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot," that we are redeemed. The Lord sent not an apostate to redeem us, but His only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

As God, in His great mercy, withheld not the most precious Gift of Heaven, in His interest for humanity, we surely ought to take some interest in ourselves. What better evidence need we ask, as to the value of the soul, than call to mind the interest which God has taken in its salvation? And if God has so loved us, is not this an important argument favoring the exercise of our love to Him? God loves with a love far out-reaching our capacity for the exercise of this heavenly emotion; and although we appropriate all our time and strength in His service, we shall still come short of the love, which He is wont to exercise in our behalf. If God is so good, and the soul is so valuable, why should we withhold the best of our years, thoughts and strength in His service? How can we be idlers in the Lord's vineyard, when we call to mind the great value of the soul, and the infinite love, purity, and wisdom of Him who died to save!

But some urge that they are too weak to be of any use in the Church. They say, "If I could talk like Bro. A., or Sister B., I would most gladly make greater effort for souls."

It is easy for some to yield points in harmony with



their own wills and ways, but not so easy to submit to the will of Him who doeth all things well. It is remarkable indeed that finite intelligence should refuse to yield obedience to the Infinite;—that human beings, with their self-recognized limitation of capacity, should attempt to oppose, in any respect, the wisdom or plans of the Infinite; yet it is a fact that some very remarkable characters, in past history, have hesitated to submit to the dictates of Infinite Wisdom.

Moses, called of God to a most wonderful work, in response said, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of slow tongue,” and had there been no remedy, in this case Moses would have been excused. But a remedy was suggested as the Lord in His answer to Moses, asked, “Who hath made man’s mouth?”

He who formed those organs of speech, is also able to perform, through them, a mighty work, however weak they may appear, from a human point of view. It was only for Moses to move at God’s call, unhesitatingly, and good results would follow as much as if possessed with superior endowments. As for the natural gifts, the Lord has furnished according to His pleasure and wisdom, and it now only remains for us to make the best possible use of what we have. It is for us to recognize God’s power to speak through the faculties which he has given, however weak; and let us not forget that it is the Lord’s pleasure to accomplish the most wonderful results, through the weakest instrumentalities.

We may be deficient (from a worldly point of view) for the work to which the Lord has called us; but this is no valid excuse for withholding our hand. If we have neither the natural, nor acquired qualification, it is not for us to put forth any less effort in the great work, than those who have the most extraordinary ability. All are deficient, in some respect, and is it not well that it is so? A more perfect use of our faculties might encourage more dependence on self, and less on God. Without these infringements upon our ability, it is very probable that we should become vain, and more inefficient. Paul said, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a *thorn in the flesh*." As to what this "thorn" was, it matters little. It is enough to know that he was, in some way, incapacitated. The point of special importance, in this case, is, to notice Paul's reference to the facts, and the results of the experience. He did not say, "I have to labor under severe natural disadvantages, and am therefore excusable, if I do not put forth much special effort for the Lord." Nothing of this kind appears in the reference. But first, he beseeches the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him; and the Lord answered the petition, but not just as Paul expected. Instead of removing the difficulty, He gently speaks, "My grace is sufficient for thee,"—with which Paul was satisfied; for we hear him saying, in connection with this thought, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

But let us not forget, that whether we, by nature, have gifts superior, or otherwise, it is our duty to do all we can to add to their strength by due cultivation. It is our duty to cultivate the mind,—to do all we can to add to our mental strength,—and to inform ourselves in regard to those things which God has revealed, whether he speaks through nature, or Revelation. We are not only to grow in grace, but in a knowledge of the truth; and so far as possible, it is for us to avoid everything that is likely to impair, in any way, our moral, intellectual, or physical well-being. To this end, we hardly need suggest the importance of having on our tables, only such literature as may be profitable for both mind and heart. Let us see to it also, that we guard against the excesses which are hurrying so many to the grave and eternal ruin. We cannot be too rigid in our adherence to the principles of temperance; and as we endeavor to “be temperate in all things,” let us not fail to inculcate similar inclinations in the hearts of others. As a result of such watchfulness and consecration, we shall have few weak and inefficient workers in the Church.

We ask then, can any Christian, or any one, who stands before the world as a believer in the truths of Revelation, consistently withhold the effort essential to his greatest efficiency in the Lord’s work? Surely no deficiency in natural capacity should discourage; for we have, in the Word, many illustrations, and much valuable instruction to urge us on against all the besetments of life.

We have these truths also illustrated, by eminent

modern examples. Some of the most efficient laborers for souls to-day, are men of no great brilliancy; but with numerous "thorns in the flesh," are going out to accomplish wonderful things for God and humanity.

III. Many are not pushing out in the great work of the Master, for want of faith—that confidence in God, so essential to their greatest success. As they are urged to put forth more special effort for souls, the quiet shake of the head, and the hopeless expression of countenance tell us at once, that they have no confidence in the success of the work. We urge upon them the importance of prayer and the certainty of God's promises; but all seem to be in vain, until they are induced through the Lord's blessings upon much earnest effort, to move, trusting only in the power and goodness of God to develop results.

It is when we come where we can see our absolute weakness, and God's strength, that we go out confident of success. It is when we surrender our hearts implicitly to God's control, and can say, "Lord here am I—use me as thou wilt,"—that we are fitted for the Master's service. When the Holy Spirit takes full possession of our hearts, and we are cleansed from all unbelief,—it is then, that we can go out to work for souls, and say, "I know that good results will follow." It is absolute and unwavering confidence in God and in His power to save, that gives success.

As David went out to fight with the Philistine, he said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of

Israel, whom thou hast defied." While the Philistine trusted in the sword, the spear and the shield, David put confidence in God, and was successful. Goliath went forth well equipped, so far as anything this world could furnish. David had in hand only his sling; but he had a mighty confidence in God, which was more than all the equipage of a thousand giants,—and we know he went not in vain. The Philistines seeing their champion was dead, fled, and the armies of Israel were victors; and thus rests the blessing of God upon those who confide in Him, rendering them "fruitful in every good work."

IV. But how are we to come in possession of that holy confidence, so necessary to successful effort in behalf of souls?

As in the plans of God, it becomes the duty of every individual to work for the propagation of Divine truth—for the salvation of the world—we have here a question deserving prayerful attention.

The Church is not merely an aristocratic body, from which all except a few privileged individuals of wealth, rank, station, or noble birth are excluded. It is a happy thought that neither one, nor all these enter in as a condition of actual membership. As righteousness is the standard by which all are to be admitted into the courts of Heaven, in the Great Day, so the like qualification is essential to a place in the Church of our Lord Jesus on earth. Actual membership of the Church militant,—or being saved by the "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,"—

is the initiatory step towards a membership of the Church triumphant.

That the poor as well as the rich, the black as well as the white, the ignorant as well as the learned, and the low as well as the high, can all have a place in this glorious warfare against sin, is evident from numerous lessons revealed in God's Holy Word. It is no uncommon thing for the Lord, through His precious truth, to give expression to appeals, in substance as follows: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price;" and are there not multitudes on earth to-day, who have accepted the precious invitation and are rejoicing in the love of Him who died for us? And are there not billions in Heaven, who tasted of the "waters," and are now messengers of love, in the Paradise above? But let us notice that these invitations are to "every one that thirsteth;"—from which we may infer, that the great host of saints, whether enjoying the blessing of the reward in Heaven, or fighting the good fight of faith on earth, have all thirsted—felt their NEED of a Saviour.

If, as followers of the Lord, we would be thoroughly efficient, we must come to recognize, first of all, the demand that is upon us. It is for us to come not only where we can see the dreadful condition of the wicked, but that we may feel the assurance also, that our efforts in their behalf, will result in many conversions. It is possible for us to exercise the faith by which we may know that the Lord is going to bless

our efforts in behalf of souls; and such great spiritual awakening can be brought about, only through earnest appeals *at a throne of grace*. We have no assurance of the blessing, without asking. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and the door shall be opened unto you." Success at a throne of grace, may require all the struggle indicated by this Scripture; but that we shall prevail, if persistent and earnest in prayer, none need have the slightest doubt. God has promised, and He is able to fulfill. "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" and we shall have that faith, by which nothing shall be impossible, as sure as the branch receives strength from the vine to which it is attached.

We say then, it is for all to accept the Life-giving power,—all may become successful workers in the Lord's vineyard. To the unconverted, as well as to the indifferent members of the Church, the voice of God comes, with a force, to-day, no less than in former times,—"**WHOSOEVER WILL;**" and while the Lord invites and urges an entire surrender of all to His service, He is not going to compel us to accept the precious Gospel. Coercion is no part of God's plan in bringing the world to Himself. He has given us the power to choose, and made the way so plain, that "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Multitudes, against the light of nature and revelation, are going the downward road; and how does it come with all the light we have, that so many

should persist in their indifference or in open rebellion against God.

Our blessed Jesus revealed an important truth, when He said, "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life." The unregenerate make many excuses for rejecting the teachings of Christ; but our Lord has here revealed the only real difficulty, in the way of salvation; "Ye WILL not come."

We have sometimes wondered how it is, that so large per cent of the unconverted should reject, persistently, the appeals and arguments in behalf of their spiritual well-being; but now it seems to us quite clear, that they have no valid excuse, and that obedience rests entirely upon a proper exercise of the WILL; and, it may be asked, "Have we not all the power of choice?" Is it possible for us to become so depraved—our moral sensibilities so benumbed—that we shall be deprived of the faculty or power of choosing? Is the nature of sin such as to lay waste our faculty for preferring, or selecting one of the two ways, so vividly prominent in the Word of God.?

We can not conceive how a soul can become so dreadfully polluted as utterly to blot out the power of choice in this respect. While it may be and usually is an exceedingly difficult struggle for the extremely wicked to forsake sin, and surrender to God, yet we believe that God is willing to accept to His service the most profligate of His intelligence.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the prayerful reader of these pages, may resolve to put on the whole armour, and fearlessly go forth against every opposi-



tion in interest of souls. None are excused. It is for every one to contend for the faith against the powers of darkness. It is for all to come "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the lord against the mighty." The voice of God, the lessons of our experience, and the demands of the age are urging us on, and shall we not heed these various influences, and move out in the Master's service, with that faith in Him, which becometh saints? Let us bear in mind that every act we perform, and every word we speak, is so much for eternity.

As sure as God is destined soon to call us *all* from the life that now is, to that which is eternal, so sure let it be, that, in His work, we all exercise the interest appropriate not only to a wise estimate of the soul's value, but to the just demands of Infinite Love.

"To the work! to the work! we are servants of God,  
Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;  
With the balm of His council our strength to renew,  
Let us do with our might, what our hands find to do.

To the work! to the work! there is labor for ALL,  
For the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall;  
And the name of Jehoyah exalted shall be  
In the loud swelling chorus, SALVATION IS FREE."

## IV.

## THE SECRET OF SUCCESS,—

OR

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SPIRIT.

Amidst the various considerations we have to offer, in regard to the mighty contest against the prince of this world, we can not very well forbear saying a few words, with reference to the secret of success. That the Church has been eminently successful in the great warfare, none can deny; and that she is destined finally to surmount all difficulties, and come off an honorable and complete victor, we have not the slightest hesitancy in affirming.

It is a fact worthy of note, that the great success of the Church lies not in vast armies or in great military skill and equipments. Human governments may find it necessary, sometimes, to resort to such expediences, in the execution of their laws; but God has a different way for the accomplishment of His designs. The Apostle has faithfully declared, that "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" and every step in ecclesiastic history is a proclamation of peace on earth and good will to man.

True servants of God have in all ages gone forth against sin, trusting only in Him for victory, who has

given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises.

It is a fact also that success lies not in great genius, culture, or in much wisdom. A good education is very desirable, and all should avail themselves of its advantages so far as possible; but it is not in mental superiority that the Gospel has had success. One of the most renowned, among apostolic divines, declared, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in *demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

Neither is the success of the Church due to great numbers, wealth, eloquence, social position, or political influence. The primitive Church was weak numerically, and was made up in the main, of persons of humble birth, and such as were without the advantages usually considered necessary to the success of worldly enterprises. And why, with such agencies, has God gone forth against satan's kingdom? Why has He not brought to bear the wealth, genius, culture, influence, and the military and political forces of past ages, in order to establish His kingdom among men? We have the answer summed up in a single sentence,—“That no flesh should glory in His presence.”

If then the secret of success, with the Church, is in none of these, to which brief reference has been made, we come to ask,—Upon what depends our success in the mighty struggle against the prince of this world?

I. As Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was about to return to the Father, we hear Him addressing the

disciples in these precious words: "Behold, I send the PROMISE OF THE FATHER upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

As to what "the promise of the Father" should mean, they doubtless were, for the most part, in the dark. They evidently understood that God was to reveal Himself, in some way peculiar; but it was for them to wait a more perfect Revelation.

It was on the day of Pentecost, that the disciples came, more fully, to realize all that was understood by the mission of Christ to this world. It was through the anointing effected by the display of God's Holy Spirit, on that blessed occasion, that the followers of our Lord came to know of a surety, that Jesus was the way, and the truth, and the life. It was then that they came to accept Christ, with a confidence never before experienced. It was then, that they came to love God, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind. It was then that they went forth in the contest against the powers of satan, with confidence of success, never known before. It was through the aid of God's Spirit, that the primitive Church yielded such a bountiful harvest, as she went out, in that proud age, against the strongholds of iniquity.

That the servants of God, from the first, attributed the success of the good work to the Holy Spirit, is evident from numerous references. The Lord declared through Zechariah, that it was "not by might, nor by power, BUT BY MY SPIRIT;" and nearly six hundred years later, the great Apostle, in his address to the

Corinthians, said, "I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

As our Saviour referred to the fact that He should send another Comforter, we are in possession of the consoling thought, that "He (the Spirit) would *abide* with them forever." And there is no great truth to which our attention can be called to-day, more important than this,—the "promise of the Father" was not alone for the primitive Church, and with reference merely to the necessities of Christians in those times; but it is for us also, the present generation, to live and wait the same precious promise.

The blessed Jesus is saying to-day to all, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." It is in a prayerful, and faithful recognition of this precious promise, that we find the source of our efficiency, in efforts for the salvation of souls. It is to the power of Spirit, that the most efficient of modern evangelists attribute their success in the Lord's vineyard. That most distinguished of modern workers, D. L. Moody, declares a precious truth, when he says, "The Gospel has not lost its power; it is just as powerful to-day as it ever has been. We don't want any new doctrine. It is still the old Gospel with the old power, the Holy Ghost power; and if the churches will but confess their sins, and put them away, and lift the standard instead of pulling it down, and pray to God to lift us all up into a higher and holier life,

then the fear of the Lord will come upon the people around us."

Let all dear aged Christians who are longing for the mighty displays of God's power, witnessed in their younger days, bear in mind that "the Gospel has not lost its power,"—that it is still the old Gospel with the Holy Ghost power of former times, and that it is for us all to partake of that heavenly anointing. But let us see to it that we seek it not with reference merely to our own enjoyment; but let us tarry "in the city of Jerusalem"—struggle at a throne of grace—until we can go out, with a longing to see others saved, and a mighty work will be accomplished.

It is truly a source of great joy, that we are thus highly privileged,—that we live in an age, abounding in peculiar blessings,—a time when God sees fit to make Himself known, by a fulfillment of the promise as spoken through the prophets,—"It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in these days will I pour out my Spirit." And what is peculiarly grand in this prophecy is the fact that it was and is to be "upon all flesh,"—that upon the old and the young, and upon the servants, and upon the handmaids "in these days will I pour out my Spirit." The mighty displays of God's power are not confined to any particular class, but the promise is to all flesh: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The poorest servant, the day laborer, the most ignorant debauchee, and the most benighted of heathern lands are all invited to accept the heavenly gift, and become "partakers of the Holy Ghost."

But in what way does the Holy Spirit aid in the great contest against the powers of the devil?

We have seen that true servants of God, in all ages, have attributed their success, in the good work, directly to the strength imparted by the Spirit; and the Apostle, in his address to the Romans, declares emphatically, that "The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, that He (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." From this and numerous other references, we find that the Holy Spirit is directly interested in our behalf, and holds a prominent position, as an agent, in the success of the Church

We come therefore to notice, more explicitly, the service of the Spirit, as rendered in all our struggles against the wiles of the devil. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

II. It is through the EFFECTUAL WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, that we are cleansed from all guilt, and saved with an everlasting salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are washed and made whiter than snow "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

As a plant needs moisture as an aid in its development and preservation, so we need the Spirit to

quicken, and make clean these vile bodies. We know, very well, the destitution that attends the absence of moisture in the vegetable world, and let us not forget that ruin to soul-life is no less positive in the absence of the Holy Spirit in the moral world.

We may not understand just how the Spirit of God accomplishes His regenerative power upon the human heart, nor comprehend a single principle relating to that subject; but it is for us to know that through His mighty power, a great work is accomplished.

Nicodemus did not comprehend the laws which had to do, with the change wrought by the Holy Ghost upon the lives and hearts of men; but it was not for him to reject the truth, because there were some things connected with it, beyond the reach of his comprehension. It is not for finite wisdom to comprehend all that enters into the doings of the Infinite. It was the work of our Saviour to show the ruler of the Jews, that there is much in the works of God, that is credible, although incomprehensible; and He illustrates by a most familiar fact in nature: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We hear the sound of the wind and behold the effects, but the laws which govern its motion are not fully understood; and "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The effects of the change are manifest, but the manner in which it is wrought, is inexplicable. But why need we concern ourselves as to the manner in which the change wrought by regeneration is produced? Is it not enough



for us to know, that by the grace of God, the work is accomplished, and we are made every whit whole?

The invilid, on being restored to health, attaches no particular importance to the laws which govern the use of medicine. He regards the healing of more value than infinite knowledge; and so with every one that is born of the Spirit; it is for him to esteem the deliverance wrought "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," as valuable beyond all other considerations.

That was a wise response which the blind man, on being restored, made in answer to pressing inquiries:—"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." As in that "one thing," the restored man was satisfied, and as he recognized the superhuman power which prevailed in the restoration of his sight, even so should human intelligence, everywhere, rest satisfied with the teachings of God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and cling to those doctrines and principles which come to us to-day, not in word only, "but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

III. It is a fact worthy of prayerful recognition, that the Holy Spirit is not only prominent as an agent in the cleansing of these hearts from all sin, but as a SUBE GUIDE. He aids in the comprehension of the Word of God, and through Him, also, the nations of the earth are being called from darkness to the blessed light of the glorious Gospel.

It was not many hours before the crucifixion, that our Saviour declared, "When He the Spirit of truth

is come, He will guide you into all truth;" and it is a blessed thought to-day, that vast multitudes have heeded the promptings of that infallible guide; but it is a lamentable fact, that millions are utterly disregarding the great source of light and salvation, and "are going about to establish their own righteousness." Through "science falsely so called," multitudes are to-day being led astray,—yielding to human theories, rather than submit "unto the righteousness of God." Many professed Christians, in their study of the Bible, are influenced largely by prejudice and other outside agencies, rather than by the Spirit and Word of God. They cling to the doctrines of their own church against the plain teachings of the Bible.

If as Christians and inquirers after Truth, we can succeed in overcoming the baneful influences of erroneous teaching and early prejudices, and go out in the study of the Word of God, led only by the Holy Spirit, we shall then be guided "into all truth."

It is when no other force has an influence over us, that we shall find in the Spirit a sufficiency, in every way complete and satisfactory. It is then that we "need not that any man teach" us, and then it is, that we shall know, that His Word "is truth, and is no lie." It was to such that John spoke when He said, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." In this the Apostle addresses a class of Christians exposed to trials, persecutions, and temptations common to all; but midst the various hindrances, they could declare, with all the earnestness of the great Apostle, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me."

It is by the anointing, or communication of gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, that we may come to understand all things essential to a life of godliness. It is through the Spirit of God, that we come to remember our sins, our obligations to God, and that it is "reasonable" in every respect, that we should give Him our affections, and dedicate our lives to His holy service. The blessed Saviour declared to His disciples, that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father would send in His name, would bring all things to their "remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" and through His power, the truths of God were most forcibly impressed upon the minds of the disciples, as subsequently they went out in behalf of the salvation of the world.

Every true minister of the Lord recognizes the Spirit as an aid in publishing the Gospel, and feels that his efforts would be in vain, without this mighty agency in the good work. It was not only the great Apostle who went forth preaching the good news, "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" but the efficient workers of all ages have been moved by the same noble impulse. By its rulers tremble, the Church is moved to earnest effort, the dead in sin are quickened, and Christians everywhere are made to rejoice. It is through the Holy Spirit, that God is calling the world to-day to His favor, and by Him the nations of the earth are, ere long, to be reminded that He only, who is the source and preserver of all things, is worthy of worship and God eternal. It is through that Holy Spirit, that Jesus is saying to-day to human intelli-

gence, "Son, remember;" and while multitudes in Christian lands are hearing the Gospel, and untold millions of the benighted are without excuse as "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things, that are made,—" it is the office of the Holy Spirit to preserve fresh in memory the precious truths, and impress them upon the human heart as no other agency can.

As then we recognize this holy intelligence working in our midst, let us go forth mindful of the fact, that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

IV. The Holy Spirit is not only prominent as agent in CALLING the nations of the earth from darkness to the light of the Gospel, but He is also powerful in the ESTABLISHMENT of the word among them.

Rev. W. Bacon Stevens, D. D. gave utterance to an important truth, under this head, as he said: "The Word of God derives all its power over the heart and life, because inspired by the Holy Ghost. He it is, who makes it quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword. Without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Bible would be no more effectual, in the work of the moral regeneration of the world, than the teachings of Confucius or the ethics of Aristotle." And the thought expressed by Dr. Stevens is only the rehearsal of a sentiment maintained extensively by Christian intelligence.

The Church is an organized body of Christian be-

lievers born of God, and kept through His power; and well may we rejoice to-day, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As a Church we are victors through our Lord Jesus, and destined to an everlasting triumph over sin, "because greater is He (the Holy Spirit,) that is in you, than he that is in the world." As Christians we go forth "more than conquerors through Him that loved us," because He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." As the powers of satan were limited by the incarnate Christ, even so are the influences of that wicked one restrained, to-day, through the power of God.

Let us then keep in blessed remembrance the fact, that in every genuine revival, in the quiet of the family altar, in the seclusion of secret devotion, and in a multitude of experiences in the various walks of life, God is speaking through the Holy Spirit; and may we see to it, that we turn not a deaf ear to that fraternal voice; "For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

V. As a concluding thought, we affirm that the BIBLE, and the HOLY SPIRIT are the two mighty weapons, in the hands of God, against the kingdom of darkness. It was of these that Paul spoke, when he said, "And above all, take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." In this Scripture we notice that the Spirit and the Word are closely connected. The Word (the precious Bible) is the Spirit's sword, and as such, they are inseparable, and indispensable in the mighty contest. They blend one with the other, as naturally as

one drop of water mixes with another. And as it is a fact that the Bible is the product of the Spirit, or that the truths of the sacred page were revealed, by Holy men of God, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"—even so it is for us to study those precious lessons, with prayerful zeal, and under guidance of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit had to do in the Revelation of God to man, even so, successful study of the sacred volume must be accompanied by the presence and power of the Spirit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

We urge, therefore, a prayerful study of the sacred page that above all, we may have the aid of the Spirit in our study of the lessons God has so graciously revealed to our fallen race.

In such a perusal of the Word, we shall not only be greatly interested, but in it, we shall find an infallible guide profitable for instruction in righteousness. "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

With the Bible as sole authority, none need be in error as to the truths God would make known among men. It is for all to drink of the fountain to the exclusion of all erroneous doctrine and unbelief. The "Church" is divided, but not for the want of a plainer revelation. God has so clearly pointed out the way, that "wayfaring men, yea fools shall not err therein." It is so clear that persons of limited opportunities for study and even such as have inferior mental capacity can comprehend the truth and will of God, if only

they make use of the means, which Infinite Wisdom has placed within their reach.

But with all the advantages of a clear revelation, it is a lamentable fact, that unbelief prevails and millions, with Bibles in hand, are to-day in darkness. The Church is burdened with erroneous doctrines, as well as corrupt practices, and as a result is, to a fearful extent, shorn of her strength. But "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Surely there is a remedy for this state of affairs, and we propose, in the next chapter, to point out some of the conditions upon which depend the presence and efficiency of the Spirit. With hearty recognition of the BIBLE as our standard of authority, and with firm trust in the promises, let us *tarry* at a throne of grace, until we be "endued with power from on high."

"Eternal Spirit, God of truth,  
Our contrite hearts inspire;  
Revive the flame of heavenly love,  
And feed the pure desire.

Subdue the power of every sin,  
Whate'er that sin may be,  
That we, with humble, holy heart,  
May worship only thee.

Then with our spirits witness bear,  
That we are sons of God,  
Redeemed from sin, from death and hell  
Through Christ's atoning blood."

## V.

## ESSENTIALS TO SUCCESS.

God's promises are conditional, and we need expect the aid of the Spirit, only in response to faithful submission to His will. The great question, therefore, of every true follower of Jesus is, By what means can I come in possession of the Spirit, and so go out most effectually, against Satan's strongholds? How can I accomplish the greatest possible for the Master?

I. As a leading consideration, in response, we suggest A FULL CONSECRATION OF ALL WE ARE AND HAVE TO THE SERVICE OF THE LORD. This is what the great Apostle means, when he appeals so earnestly to his Roman brethren, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." In view of all the precious teachings and promises of our Saviour, the Apostle urges entire consecration of heart and life to the author and finisher of our faith. In the first several chapters of the book of Romans, he treats of salvation by faith in Christ's righteousness alone, and not merely by works of the law. He brings out, in a most forcible manner, important truths relating to our temporal and eternal prosperity, and then follows the appeal to



which special attention is called. As through the body, the organ of the inner man, all the evil that is in the unrenewed heart comes forth into palpable manifestation and action, so it is through the body, that all the gracious principles and affections of believers reveal themselves in the outward life.

That entire consecration reaches the whole man, we may infer from Paul's petition when he said, "I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." A dedication which calls out every impulse of our being,—spiritual, mental, and physical, is holy, acceptable unto God. Such a dedication does not, as some suppose, encroach upon the time necessary to a livelihood. We can look after the things essential to the support of life, and be no less devoted to God, than if we had no such cares to "draw off" our thoughts. Honest regard for the necessities of life is a part of Christian duty, rather than an obstacle in the way of Christian growth. It is a regard for temporary interest beyond the actual demand,—an excessive desire to obtain worldly possessions,—that detracts so largely from our spiritual well-being. It was this disposition that our Lord condemned, when He said, "Beware of covetousness." We cannot consistently condemn honest effort to supply the necessities of life. Persons make a mistake who urge that they cannot apply themselves to the Lord's work, on account of the attention they must necessarily give to a support. All have peculiar trials, and more or less cares; but one is not surrounded by circumstances so

much less favorable to spiritual development than another, as to excuse him from the dedication of all he is and has to the Lord's service.

It is not merely for ministers to present themselves "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God;" but it is for all professing Christians to be devoted to the Master's service. The appeals of Christ are to all, without regard to nationality, color, sex, rank, or peculiarity of circumstances. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;"—and that none are excused, in the invitations of the Gospel, is one among the most precious thoughts in this grand system.

The great Apostle urged upon Timothy the importance of being "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." There is power in a life thus dedicated to the Lord. Timothy could perform the duties of his high calling, only by taking heed to his manner of life, and to the doctrine; and that it was for all professing Christianity to be thus fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, is evident from the fact that he was to make himself "an *example* of the believers,"—indicating that it was for him to be a pattern for imitation by others, in doctrine and practice. To be fully dedicated, is to delight in the law of God after the inner man. It is not merely to "make clean the outside of the cup and the platter." It is one thing to maintain a proper exterior, and practice outward duties so far as human inspection can reach; but it is more to be *saved* through the mercies of God, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

It is one thing to have the form of godliness, but it is more to have the power.

We have no sympathy for the teaching which encourages men, in the idea merely that to "do about right, live moral lives," is all that is necessary in our recognition of duty. We cannot do justice to God, the world, or ourselves, and render no higher service than this. The great need of the Church to-day is a complete renewal of heart, by which we become "new creatures" in Christ Jesus,—a work wrought by the regenerative power of the Spirit. The Church is only open for the reception of such as have thus effectually yielded to the teachings of the Gospel. The mere entering of a name on a church-book does not constitute membership in the true Church. Christ's Church embraces only those who are His by regenerative grace. Under apostolic management, "the Lord added to the Church only such as should be saved;" and who are such persons, if not those who have gladly received the Word, and become new creatures, in response to a surrender of heart to the Spirit's influence?

As to the fruits of entire consecration, we need add but a word. We have much in the New Testament on this subject, to which your prayerful attention is invited (Gal. 5: 22-24). (1) Entire yielding of ourselves to God manifests itself by a genuine revival influence, going out constantly, in a way that tends to move all, under whose influence it comes, to confess and forsake sin. It leads to an effectual consideration of the soul, and the importance of preparation for the future state. (2) Consecration to God produces deep interest in the

salvation of others. We cannot be indifferent as to the spiritual well-being of those around us. We partake of the heavenly spirit of Him, "who gave Himself a ransom for all." It was the power of that precious influence bursting upon the mind of the Apostle, and revealing the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation, that prompted Paul to declare, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls." (3) It incites sympathy in behalf of the needy in spiritual, or temporal things. It moves to action and fervency of spirit.

II. Another essential to our success in Christian life and work is a PROPER REGARD FOR THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH. No organized force for good can reasonably expect to be abundantly successful, except through unwavering devotion to principles of right. Due submission to God's righteousness is essential to our greatest success against satan's rule. It is the duty of the Church to cry aloud against the sins of the age and spare not; and if the Church tolerates wrong within, is she not as a house divided against itself? Why is it that the Church has not had greater success during these eighteen centuries? She had, in the outset, a Founder representing principles and doctrines infinitely in advance of anything hitherto known in history. As to purity and wisdom, the Lord Jesus never had a peer; and still only a very small per cent of this world is to-day on the Lord's side. More than ninety per cent, perhaps, of the world's population are at this time in rebellion against the kingdom of Christ. And the great question to

which the prayerful attention of every Christian is called, is, why is this? How is it that the nations of the earth are not to-day subject to the blessed appeals of Holy Writ? Is it not largely, if not wholly the result of certain who "crept in unawares," and so have corrupted the Church and wrecked her influence? Has there been the attention given to the preservation of purity in the Church, that the Scriptures demand? No more important questions can come before devoted officials than these.

If heretics or wicked men are found disturbing the prosperity of the church, let the Gospel rule be applied: "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump." If this is not done, it is nothing new nor strange, that the infection should take root, spread and destroy the church. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

We must not forget that the Church proper is an organized body of Christian believers, who have not only accepted the DOCTRINE, as taught by our Lord Jesus, and have renounced the love and practice of sin, but are such as have been SAVED, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is for us to receive baptized believers only, into the Church; but if we find some who have crept in "unawares," it is our duty to rid the Church of such as soon as possible.

But care should be observed that we do not censure the innocent; and care equally as great, that we fail not to censure properly the wrong: "For it is not good to accept the person of the wicked, or overthrow

the righteous in judgment." To do this work and act wisely in our decisions, there is danger sometimes of being too hasty or rash. In many cases, it may be a thousand times better to be too slow than too fast. We would suggest, on part of the church and its officers, a prayerful consideration of each case of discipline; and let every possible effort be put forth to reform the erring before any move is made for dismissal,—keeping distinctly before the mind that the object of church discipline is to reform the erring and protect the church; and a proper regard for either will require its enforcement. "In cases of offence not publicly known," says a speaker of some religious note, "it is the duty of the aggrieved party to pursue the directions given in Matt. 18: 15—17;" and we regard the reference worthy of careful consideration. But if after due effort has been made to bring back the erring one, he should still persist in his wrong doing,—there is only one way: "Withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly." To withdraw fellowship from one in whom we have placed even limited confidence, may be an exceedingly unpleasant duty, but due love for God, and a proper regard for the prosperity of the church, will sometimes prompt to just such a test of our Christian heroism. We have our personal attachments, and to sever them we may feel seriously indisposed; but midst all, we must not forget the words of our Lord in Matt. 10: 37.

But persons of ordinary moral and mental force are not apt to take offence, at any church, for doing its duty. Anger, particularly if violent, might indicate

a demoralized condition of the heart unfit for church membership. The real Christian spirit may take it calmly and patiently, although falsely censured or even if unjustly dismissed. Of the Lord Jesus it is said that "when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously;" and when He was about to be crucified, "being accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. . . . He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth,"—a glorious example of submission, and upon His enemies the severest rebuke. There is also the case of Stephen, who, after proclaiming the truth, with great power, the enemies of the cross "cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him," and he dies with the prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Are not some more intensely fearful of hurting somebody's feelings than of grieving the Holy Spirit? A proper regard for the feelings of others is commendable; but some fear men more than God; and such a disposition has given rise to a great deal of evil, and has had much to do in retarding the progress of the Church, and bringing the spiritual drouth now prevailing. Let the Church buckle on the armour, cry aloud and spare not, and go forward with true Christian patriotism against the sins so widely and lamentably tolerated, and very soon we would witness the good results. Prevailing sins brought upon the Church judgments suffered in gone-by ages. Our prosperity

is not going to be proportionate to our financial or numerical strength, but in proportion to the degree of purity existing in the Church. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Numbers have little to do with the success of the Church. For efficient work, we would prefer five zealous, consistent Christians,—“careful to maintain good works,” to five hundred careless, worldly-minded professors. The Church is suffering greatly from a disposition, on part of many, to build up numerically. Let us work more for spiritual, and less for numerical growth. It is more possessors of religion that we want, not more professors. A complete surrender to the Spirit and the doctrines and a thorough consecration of all Christians, is necessary to drive out the dross and for church renovation. By this we lay the ax at the root of the tree; but just so long as we tolerate in our churches, drunkenness, profanity, fighting, slander, dancing, Sabbath-breaking, &c., coldness and indifference is destined to prevail, and if allowed to go too long, will ruin the church; of this we have many lessons in Church history, and from the past we should not fail to profit. The wrath of God rests upon such; besides, the retaining of such inconsistencies unnoticed, flatters many with the idea that they are “good enough,” and thus perhaps, when unprepared to meet God, die deceived and lost to all eternity.

In some churches, the importance of discipline or of maintaining Gospel order, is wholly disregarded. Members become negligent, careless, worldly-minded



and grossly wicked without any reformatory action on part of the church; or if noticed at all, it is simply passed over with an acknowledgment of "wrong done," and the erring one is not required to make the restitution due, nor in many cases even to forsake the error of his way. This whitewashing process, not satisfying the demands of justice or of moral law, as it must be expected, will be attended with much evil. We are averse to anything like a rigid discipline in the churches, and favor the exercise of large charity, and insist upon due deliberation; but we shall ever strenuously oppose the ruinous omission of duty, prevailing so largely in the churches, as contrary to the advice of those speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance in the New Testament. May the Lord wake up the churches!

There are those, and prominent church members, that discard the idea of church discipline, as being unsafe and against the interests of the church. They would let the adulterer, the trickster, the billiard player, the tippler, gossip, &c., pass without notice for fear of getting up trouble, or causing division in the church; but we are inclined to think that conformity to apostolic teaching was never any detriment to the progress and success of the Church, but rather an advantage. Let us strictly adhere to the instructions of the good Book, even though our churches, by it, should be fewer and smaller. It is the *character* of the church that gives her strength, and not the numerical force.

"If we should be disciplinarians as the Gospel re-

quires," said a brother the other day, "excluding all unworthy members, our churches would run down numerically and we would not have means enough to support them." All may not be so frank and free in their vociferations as this brother was, and there are doubtless many holding the same position. But is it right? Would not the Church be a greater power if it were purer? Is it not the perversities of the Church that have detracted so largely from her success and usefulness? Well and prayerfully let us think, and then speak and act.

From careful and prolonged study of the Bible, we are forced to the conclusion, that the strength of the Church for good is in proportion to her purity; and that the efficiency of every Christian worker is in proportion to his unreserved surrender to God's will. Keep the Church pure, urging upon its members the importance of sustaining the innocence of true Christian life, and great indeed will be the advance. "We ought therefore to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at anytime we should let them slip." (Heb. 2: 1—8.)

III. Another demand of the age is **POSITIVENESS AGAINST SPECULATIVENESS**. As sure as the Bible is Divine in its origin, so sure is it that we should cling to its teachings to the exclusion of all vain theories. We need more earnest devotion to the pure teachings of the Lord Jesus, and less striving "about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." We have some modern divines who are wasting their energies, and consuming much precious time, in vain

speculation, on subjects concerning which nothing definite can be known.

As Christians we have no time nor strength to appropriate, except in a way that leads men to repentance and salvation. It becomes our duty to "meditate on these things," which have to do, directly, with the salvation of men,— "Casting down imaginations (reasonings) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

It is for us to be earnest students of the Bible, and receive it as our only rule of faith and practice. In many instances the Bible is condemned by the utter indifference of such as profess to receive it as a standard. Let us see to it that we cling to the truths of Revelation as our infallible guide. We shall then be exempt from liability to mistake, and having a sure foundation, we shall carry with us an earnestness which will make an impression, and win souls as nothing else can.

The positiveness of our Saviour, confirmed as it was by a display of His miraculous power, had much to do with His influence among men. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." As a result, even His enemies went away saying, "Never man spake like this man." There is a great difference between the mere expression of an opinion, and positive knowledge. John in his reference to the crucifixion says, "And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true." A similar positiveness characterizes Scriptural teaching throughout, and that such is the case is not remarka-

ble, for we know that the Infinite Power and Wisdom, which has spoken into existence the worlds, has not only revealed Himself in nature, but has declared His precious truth in these sacred pages. We accept the thought, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

As disciples of our Lord, we shall be a power in God's hands for good in proportion to our devotion to these sacred pages. As we can see objects more clearly as we draw nearer to them, so we shall have a clearer perception of these blessed teachings as we draw nearer the great Fountain, our Lord Jesus. It is nothing strange that those who are a great distance from the Lord, by wicked works, should discover no beauty in the revelation of God to man. Jesus said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." It is in entire submission of our wills to God that we shall be able to exercise the faith which declares the infallibility of God's promises, and the inerrableness of His teachings. It is not vain speculation that the dying sinner wants, but something tangible. It is no unauthorized medicine that is wanted for the healing of the soul. It is the pure teaching of the Great Physician that is needed most of all. Were we brought this day near death's door, what would we care for those uncertain sounds? At the threshold of the eternal world, we shall need the sympathizing Jesus, and then we may be happy and sing with the Spirit:

“His name dispels my guilt and fear,  
 No other name but Jesus;  
 Oh, how my soul delights to hear  
 The precious name of Jesus.”

IV. **CONSTANCY** is another essential to success in our Master's service. By this, we mean that *unshaken* determination to do the Lord's will, which knows no shrinking midst trial, suffering, and temptation. It is easy to serve the Lord when there is nothing to oppose or molest. When surrounded by a good revival influence, when all are inclined to be friendly, and the love of God prevails in community, we have all come to realize how much easier, it is, to do service for God, than at other times. It is when bitter temptation, and stern opposition come in our way, that we need watch and see to it, that our lives are unyielding in the blessed service.

It was in sympathy with the demands of Christian experience, that the Apostle spoke these memorable words: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” In these words we have in close connection an appeal for an abundant, as well as a constant service; and in the consideration of the importance of Christian stability, we can not well avoid allusion to that equally important essential, to which Paul referred in his expression, “in labors more abundant.”

Stability is indispensable to success in our Master's service. As the connection of the branch with the tree is necessary to the production of fruit, so let us be united with the Lord Jesus, by the powers of

the Holy Spirit, or our lives will be non-productive. "As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it ABIDE in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." While there is power in a life of uninterrupted devotion to God, we discover no particular advantage in a temporary surrender. The weakest may accomplish great things for God and the salvation of souls, by an uninterrupted consecration to the blessed Master; but the strongest among us may be a reproach to the cause by a mere temporary surrender. Indeed, the Church has hardly a greater enemy than a fickle, vacillating "professor." Such are prone to much evil, and in numerous instances, as criminals, bring great reproach upon the cause. It is thus that multitudes, no doubt with good intentions in the start, "are taken captive by satan at his will." Is it not, then, highly important that we watch and pray lest we enter into temptation? "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

To be abundantly useful in the Master's service, we must be so thoroughly in sympathy with His precious work as to partake, every day, of the mighty influences of the Spirit. There is nothing in Holy Writ, that goes to encourage a temporary surrender of our hearts to God. If sick we would seek a physician through whose skill we might find permanent relief;

and we would have little if any confidence in the remedies which promise to be only a temporary benefit. In spiritual things, we should be more inclined to permanent results, in proportion as the soul is more valuable than the body. The devotion which calls out uninterrupted fervency in the good work is what tells. The zeal which prompts constant effort for the salvation of souls, and stimulates a disposition to sacrifice largely in that direction, is acceptable in the sight of God.

As we know our efforts for the spiritual good of the world are not in vain, we should yield entire, constant obedience to the Master. We have much to encourage our zeal for souls;—indeed we can not ask more. To be an agent for the salvation of some soul is not merely productive of temporary enjoyment. “They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars, forever and ever.” We believe the reward in eternity will be far more satisfactory than any thing realized in the present life. (1 Cor. 2: 9.) As the reward is permanent, eternal, let us see to it, that our efforts are constant, unyielding.

V. Another point of vast importance, and which constitutes a part of our duty as Christians, is a  
PROPER REGARD FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF  
THE YOUNG.

In God's word, we find many appeals in behalf of the children. It is well to impress upon the minds of those very young in years, that our blessed Jesus, while on earth, gave much attention to children. We hear Him saying in language so beautiful, “Suffer

little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." That is a dreadful mistake which fails to encourage children, who are seriously disposed, to give their hearts to the Lord. Some ask, "Would you encourage children to become Christians before they are old enough to know what they are about?" No, I would not. We believe, by proper care and early instruction, that the children of our land may usually be brought to act understandingly in the direction of Christian life, before they are a dozen years old. To this end, parents should, through earnest prayer, clearly comprehend their responsibility. Let every mother see to it that her *example* impresses properly the child; and let the parents give due attention to religious training and instruction. While a well conducted Sabbath-school is an important factor in this work, yet we regard the home a more forcible influence. It is there you have your children every day, and you can sit before them as teachers, impressing them by example and precept. It is proper, however, to remark, right here, that the position taken is under the assumption, that the mother is competent to bring up children in the way they should go. It is a lamentable fact, that there are a multitude of mothers, who are utterly incompetent to train, properly, their offspring;—and it is to such children, that the Sunday-school comes as the important agent of culture and encouragement. And Oh, how vastly important, it is that the girls of our land should receive the highest possible mental, and moral training! Give us, everywhere, well cultured



mothers, and this world would soon attain the highest possible purity.

And next to the home life, in point of importance, are the regular services of the sanctuary. Be sure and see that the children are at church on Sunday, and encourage them to attend the prayer-meeting. If your boy cannot attend both church and Sunday-school, let him attend the church in preference to the school. Under a faithful and intelligent ministry, the lessons and impressions connected with the church service are productive of more good than the Sunday-school. While we would not be without the Sabbath-school, as an instrument in the hands of God, for the instruction and conversion of the young, we do not consider it of chief importance in our efforts for the salvation of the world. There is danger of parents neglecting the home culture of the child, in consideration of the instructions the little ones are supposed to receive at the Sabbath-school. Let us see to it that we do not assume too much for the Sunday instruction; and whatever that may be, it is by no means wise to fail giving careful instructions at home. The Sunday-school is particularly important as an influence over those children who are so unfortunate as to be under no religious culture at home; and we can render no higher service as Christians than to look out such, and persuade them to a permanent place in the school. In almost every community, children of this class are to be found. By giving attention to such, we shall be instrumental, in many cases, in the conversion of parents. If we would be efficient ser-

vants, we can not afford to neglect any boy or girl, however poor, or immoral. Let us "go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."

VI. As another important agent for good, we call attention to those special efforts which develop in a PRECIOUS REVIVAL INFLUENCE AND A GENERAL GATHERING OF SOULS.

A genuine revival influence brought about as it may be, by a series of meetings, consisting of preaching, and general social and prayer service, is a mighty power. A very large per cent of the membership of our churches were brought in, as a result of such meetings. While we encourage weekly services for prayer and preaching, so necessary to growth in grace, we would not dispense with special revival work. There is an influence in a general revival, that will reach some, where nothing else will.

But midst all our efforts for God, we must not suppose that our work is merely to enlighten the understanding, or even to induce pleasure, or devout contemplation; but our object should be, as Dr. Lyman Beecher used to say, "to make people set about a thorough change of heart and life." The sermon that prompts an examination of our hearts, with reference to subduing the evil within, is of more value than all the intellectual brilliancy of the age. It is the sermon that produces feeling, and calls out the inquiry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" that tells among men. A genuine revival is more than to bring people into the "vapory region of emotion." It is a sad mis-

take that thousands "feel" so much and do little. Let us labor for such a work of grace as calls out personal effort, and awakens individual responsibility.

But time will not admit of our speaking of other essentials to the success of the Church, and we trust that through the quickening influences of God's Spirit, we shall all seek to accomplish more in the behalf of the development of our own hearts, in spiritual things, as well as for the salvation of souls.

We shall cast the net on the right side of the ship, only as we have an ardent love for souls. If, therefore, we have the form of godliness, let us see to it that we are not without the power. If doubting, hesitating, having a desire to put our "finger into the print of the nails," as a condition of belief, let us draw nearer to God, asking an increase of faith. Let the entire Church come up earnestly and faithfully, and do what the *few* are doing, and the nations of the earth will soon accept the Gospel. That such results may be speedily achieved through the efforts that are now going forth, let us most faithfully pray.

## VI.

## EARNESTNESS.

Earnestness was a characteristic of all noble Christian heroes, who in past ages, have gone forth to bless the world. From the days of Abraham to the present, we have had forcible and numerous illustrations of its power. It is prominent among the essentials to success in the great warfare against sin; and under this head, therefore, we wish to mention, briefly, a few of the elements that accompany this quality, and so urge the importance of giving attention to its cultivation.

I. That we may be earnest for God, it is necessary, first of all, that we exercise a FIRM AND UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE IN THE PERSON, AND TEACHINGS OF OUR LORD JESUS. It is for us to comprehend clearly the importance of the truth, that in obedience to God, we shall realize the greatest blessing; but in disobedience, the most dreadful curse. With all possible sincerity, we must accept Jesus as our Saviour,—that “there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

If we believe with all the heart, the zeal necessary to success will accompany us, in the good work, as sure as heat accompanies fire. As “Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles

among the people," so we thus consecrated, shall be a power for good wherever we go.

On the other hand, if we are "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot," mischief will attend our influence, as sure as cold attends the formation of ice.

As Christians, we can not face the glorious, the grand and awful realities of eternity, and be indifferent. A contemplation of man's responsibility to his Maker, his immortality, and the worth of the soul, prompts not only to earnest thought, but to vigorous action. As we contrast God's infinite power and goodness, with our own weak and sinful condition; as we prayerfully consider His wonderful love, and that, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning;"—we are impressed with the words of Jesus, when He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." It was through entire surrender of heart, soul and mind, that David gave vent to his feelings, in words sublime, as he said, "Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and right; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength over all." It was this deep feeling, and

heart-felt surrender, that gave to the armies of the Lord the great success of former times. With firm confidence in God's power and willingness to deliver, they went forth effectually against heathen nations, exterminating them to such an extent, as to enable Israel to prevail against idolatry, and to set up the worship of the one true God. As a result of their great faith, they were permitted to construct a house of worship, on what was once heathen soil, and dedicate it to the honor of Him, who had so faithfully delivered them from Egyptian bondage. And, with their confidence in God, went the great earnestness that has so much to do with success in the Master's service. There is no real faith without earnestness. Faith and earnestness are inseparable and indispensable in Christian life and experience. To be without one is to be without both; and we might as well expect the steam-engine to run without the necessary propelling power, as to expect efficiency in Christian life, without faith in God, and earnest devotion to His blessed work.

As there can be no effect without a cause, so there can be no earnestness for God, without confidence in His Word; and that our earnestness will be increased in proportion to the increase of confidence in God, we need scarcely call in question. That firm and affectionate confidence, in the power and work of Christ, which affects character and life, must have its fruits, in deep earnestness going out in great power after the well-being of others. With such an emotion, we cannot be sluggish and inactive.

When the apostles said unto the Lord, "Increase our faith." the petition embraced all that display of power so necessary to their more perfect understanding of Christ's mission on earth, and His will concerning them. Their unbelief was removed, and many mysteries were solved, in subsequent displays of power. As the astonishing declaration fell from His lips, that He and the father were "one," and as He gave utterance to a sublimity of sentiment unlike any thing known before, the great truth was confirmed by numerous miracles wrought in their presence. By these it was manifest, that Jesus had at His disposal the natural elements. As midst the storm, He spoke the words, "Peace be still," and instantly the winds obeyed His voice, and there was a great calm, He manifested a power above the human, and that could only be explained, in the fact of His divinity. As Jesus was thus approved of God, "by miracles and wonders and signs," the faith of the disciples was increased. But with these infallible proofs, came also numerous other events, until the day in which, "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

With all these rich experiences, on part of the disciples, and lessons so necessary to the development of earnestness and activity in the Lord's vineyard, we can not wonder at the glorious results which followed their efforts in subsequent years.

But let us not forget that the efficiency of primitive Christians was the result of what their eyes had seen, and their hearts felt; and that a similar experi-

ence, with similar results, is for our modern Church, we have no hesitancy in affirming. To one of the most skeptical, Jesus said, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed."

It is not for us to look upon the person of Christ, and witness His miracles; but it is for us to come in contact with the same blessed Spirit, and witness displays of His power no less mighty, than those of apostolic times. Success in the Master's service is subject to the same conditions, that controlled results in the days when God incarnate, walked and talked among men. If Jesus, in audible tones, should speak to-day, He would give expression to the same noble sentiment of ancient times, "According to your faith be it unto you;"—and if we are to be a power for good, in proportion to our faith, is it not well that we should make use of every possible means for the removal of our unbelief, and for a display of the faith once delivered?

II. Earnestness implies the existence of **FIRMNESS AGAINST OPPOSITION**. It was the result of the earnest assurance, that what they preached was true, that gave the apostles such great encouragement midst opposing forces. Paul declares, "Even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Phillippi we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention." And had it not been for this firm confidence in the truths of the Gospel, on part of those who had a chance to know the facts, as made prominent



by our Saviour, success could never have attended the preaching of the gospel as it has.

It was in the midst of great persecution, that the Apostle,—fearing lest some might come short of the promise,—spoke as follows: “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.” From which we infer, that the persons addressed, were undergoing formidable opposition; and that there was danger of yielding to the tempter, and so giving up their religion, we are fully satisfied from words of advice and instruction as given by the inspired penman, in other parts of his discourse. In every sentence spoken in that noble letter to the Hebrews, the Apostle says something admirably adapted to incite Christians to more earnest and effective efforts against sin. He points out the nature of faith, its fruits, and gives some of the most forcible illustrations of its power; he reminds them of “the former days,”—the earlier Christian experience, and how, midst the glow of their religious zeal, they pushed out for God and Truth, regardless of opposition; gives the most important reasons why they should hold fast their profession of faith, “without wavering;” encourages them to take an interest in each other, “to provoke unto love and to good works;” and then among many other things, he entreats that they forsake not the assembling of themselves together, as some had done, but, “exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

All these things were necessary, that they might not only, "hold the beginning" of their confidence steadfast unto the end, but that they might be of real worth as they went out in the spiritual interest of others.

"We ought," he says, "to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time, we should let them slip;" and if earnestness, on part of the Church, was so necessary in apostolic times, it surely is important, that *we* should give "the more earnest heed." The Church of to-day has much to endure. Infidelity is rife; and while, as Christians, we are called upon to maintain, in practice and precept, the noble principles of our ancient brethren, we have also a similar opposition to face. Satan comes with all the deceitful entreaties of former times; and if Jesus was in our midst to-day, He would cry out, with an eloquence, no less than that which characterized His utterances more than eighteen centuries since, when He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Satan is here represented as coming with a garb very attractive, while inwardly, he is vicious and determined on our ruin. It is thus that sin comes in these days, robed in bright colors, and promising great things. In numerous instances, the good comes mingled with the evil, just enough to commend the latter to our favorable consideration. Falsehood comes clothed with an eloquent voice, and with words ex-

ceedingly attractive. The wrong is made to appear right, and the right wrong. In much of our literature, that is highly colored and exceedingly attractive, we find little that is valuable, and much that is destructive. And so we may go on tracing out the various channels through which satan has led the human mind throughout the centuries, and we find our investigations attended with about the same results;—while there is much that glitters like gold, and has all the appearance of that valuable metal, it is a fact that all is not gold that glitters. We need above all things to apply the test, “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” By this we shall know whether they are giving, “the more earnest heed” to the things which they have heard,—the Gospel of the Son of God.

In all ages many have been “carried about with divers and strange doctrines.” Many seem to forget that, “It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.” To establish “with grace” implies the acceptance of the Truths of God, as revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ; but to establish “with meat,” is to accept the “philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

That we may know what is Truth, we have only to consider the “fruits.” *What system of belief has been the greatest profit to the human family?*

We must admit the incompetency of Paganism to the elevation of our race. Her strength, in this direction, has been tested from a very early period, in the

history of the world, and in all these thousands of years, we find that idolatry has accomplished nothing worthy of mention, but her tendency has been to degrade, rather than elevate. And has there a single ray of light ever dawned upon the world, as a result of the religion of Mohammed?

As to the so-called "modern infidelity," the great issue in that field, is to make war on Christianity, — that noble system of doctrine and principles which has done more for the moral, mental, and social elevation of the human race, in a single year, than all that has been accomplished by the combined of human theories, in all the ages. An infidel is "one who disbelieves in Christ; or the Divine origin of Christianity;" and as such aims to make war upon Christian institutions, and to crush out so far as possible, every influence designed for the establishment of real Christian principle. Stimulated by such motives, what good can we expect to come from such a system? What good has infidelity ever done? Has it, in all the ages, saved a single soul from the pollutions of hell? By it, how many of the benighted have come from the thralldom of heathen darkness to the enjoyment of Christian civilization? How many drunkards have been lifted from the gutters, by infidel theories? How many missions have been established, throughout the ages, for the moral and mental well-being of humanity?

It is a fact well understood, that infidel theories are a curse to the world rather than a blessing; and we are led to wonder how it comes, that so many brilliant intellects, and men of fine judgment can be induced

to accept ideas so destructive to the well-being of society. But "that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan," which deceived our first parents, has deceived many. There are multitudes to-day, who are maintaining theories against their better judgment; and such too, as are stifling honest convictions, greatly against their present and eternal interests.

In all such we have illustrations of the importance of an earnest and candid devotion to Christian principle; and the importance also of an open confession of our Saviour, by every possible word and work. We are "sufficient for these things," only when through God's blessing, we are able to bring to bear every impulse of our beings, against the powers of Satan.

III. Again; earnestness is regulated largely by the dictates of conscience, ENLIGHTENED BY THE WORD AND SPIRIT OF GOD. The great Apostle declared the truth in Christ, his "conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Ghost;"—and being thus approved, he went out with great zeal for the Master.

Lexicographers tell us that conscience is "the faculty, power or principle which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our actions and affections and approves or condemns them;"—and while this definition is very good, so far as it goes, it suggests no standard by which we are to be governed, in our decisions, as to the right and the wrong. If we have no established authority to act from, we shall be as "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to de-

ceive." In our inquiries after truth, we suggest, therefore, the Holy Bible as our infallible guide, inasmuch as it comes, with claims, far outreaching all other sources of knowledge; and we find in it appeals to our conscience, such as we find in no other book.

We say then, that a conscience, "void of offence," is such as approves the right, as revealed from God, through the Lord Jesus, and condemns all forms of religious belief, that are "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ." It is no blind impulse, acting unintelligently, but it is a faculty prompted and guided by those noble principles and precepts handed down from Heaven.

A clear and practical recognition of the Heavenly Message awakens a deeper interest, in those precious Truths, and stirs the soul to renewed vigor in behalf of the salvation of the world. "If any man do His will," says the Great Teacher, "he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." It is a fact to which many can testify, from experience, that we come to understand the Truths of God, more clearly, as we reduce them to practice; and we know less, and care less about them, as we reject those sublime teachings.

To heed the gentle warnings of that inner voice rendered effective by the Word and Spirit of God, is to imbibe noble Christian excellences indispensable to the prosperity of society; and the eternal well-being of humanity. Paul, in his address to Timothy, hit upon several essentials to Christian usefulness, when he said, "The end of the commandment is charity out of

a pure heart, and of a good *conscience*, and of faith unfeigned." The importance of a good conscience is frequently mentioned, by inspired penmen, in connection with other essentials to real usefulness in Christian work, and that such is the case, is, by no means, remarkable. With a good conscience, we shall be more successful in our efforts to awaken in others a disposition to seek the inward washing, which purifies the heart and enlightens the mind. Those who assume the position of teachers of righteousness, and are without "a conscience void of offence," are liable to lead others astray, by wicked example and false doctrine. There is a mighty power in the impress we make on others, by word and action; and there is no reason why the Christian minister should not be the noblest and purest of earthly intelligence. He has peculiar and superior facilities for moral culture. His efforts to make others better, afford real opportunities for the development of his own spiritual well-being; and laymen, as well as ministers, have derived great advantage from efforts put forth in behalf of the reformation of this world, and its salvation from sin. We know a physician who, although possessed of many admirable qualities, yet he had, for more than fifty years, been the servant of sin, and inclined to dissolute habits. But notwithstanding his wicked inclinations, he became particularly interested, in the reform of his son, who became a victim of that dreadful monster, strong drink. The doctor's earnest, and prolonged efforts for the recovery of the wayward boy, had not a little to do in his own reform. His interest

in the son, the efforts in his behalf, and his recognition of the power of example as an aid in the reform of the prodigal, developed a new line of thought, and called out a disposition on his own part for reformation. In this circumstance, we have a forcible illustration of the importance of doing all we can for the recovery of others from the thralldom of sin. While by arguments, for the right, we impress others, our own hearts become imbued with the beauties of holiness, and we are impressed, more forcibly, with the excellences of that Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation.

We say then, that in our decisions for the right, it is not always safe to rely upon the dictates of conscience. This faculty may be considered a correct guide, only when subject to the standard of right as revealed from God, and prompted by the influences of the Holy Spirit. A conscience that is subject to human theories only, in its inquiries after Truth, is doomed to repeated failure. Man is fallible, and it is possible for him to be blinded by envy, prejudice, ignorance, or something else, to such an extent, as to prevent a comprehension of the right. Many unbelievers are so blinded by sin, that they fail to see any good in the purest of Christian workers.

Saul of Tarsus was thoroughly conscientious as he went forth "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." But notwithstanding he verily believed, that he was doing God's service, he was evidently wrong. Of this he was convinced, as on that memorable occasion, he drew



near Damascus, and heard the voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" It was this question coming as it did from the throne of God, that led Paul to consider his ways, and that produced the great change in his plans and life. Through the Voice and Spirit of God, his conscience became enlightened, and he was induced to turn with earnest and effectual efforts to build up, what he had so recently labored to tear down.

There are multitudes of people to-day, who are striving against honest convictions of conscience, as much as Paul would have done, had he persisted in his efforts against the Church, after receiving the Revelation, which came so forcibly on that memorable occasion. Multitudes know they are wrong, as positively as the Apostle knew his waywardness, when stricken down, on that noon-day, as he drew near Damascus. If they are not conscious of their wrong doings and position assumed against the Word, how can they censure, so earnestly, the imperfection of church-members? The unconverted admit their knowledge of the right, and condemn their own wicked ways, as they censure the wrongs of professed Christians; and we believe, that a proper exercise of conscience would bring the great mass of satan's kingdom, in a comparatively short time, to a throne of grace, crying for mercy.

But we are told, that "it matters little what we do, or believe, just so we are sincere;"—and what a mistake! It is a sentiment, satanic in its origin, and should be shunned as a false delusion, destined to do

much harm, and plunge multitudes into the gulf of eternal ruin. As Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, and thought it all right,—prompted by satanic influence,—so the great multitude are to-day going the downward road, all because they listen to their soul's worst enemy, rather than to the voice of God. They are blind leaders of the blind, and it was to such our Saviour referred; when He said, "Both shall fall into the ditch."

Let us see to it then, that we accept the infallible authority of Him, who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;" and let us "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope, with meekness and fear;—having a GOOD CONSCIENCE; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

IV. Earnestness is necessary to SUCCESS IN PRAYER. We may have the form without the power. The truly good have in all ages, been successful, at a throne of grace. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Many have learned from experience, that there is power in prayer. None need be without that power. The Lord is inviting all to come and partake. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is a drink that purifies, and refreshes at the same time. And what is particularly beautiful about it, Jesus says, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Can we ask anything more blessed than that? It renders the heart not only free from all guilt, but it is elevating and permanent in its effects, "springing up into everlasting life." Amidst such a glow, it is not possible for the heart to despond, and sink into that sluggish condition, which knows no satisfactory enjoyment, and to real usefulness is a stranger.

As Christians our efficiency lies in that great zeal for God, which brings us to a throne of grace, to the utter exclusion of worldly considerations. The Bible furnishes us with many illustrations of characters, who mightily prevailed with God, as a result of an unre-served consecration to His holy service.

We have the case of Elijah who "prayed *earnestly* that it might not rain; and it rained not upon the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." In this reference, we have remarkable answers to prayer which deserve our careful attention, inasmuch as they furnish lessons of the greatest value.

First, we notice that Elijah was moved to ask what he did, in view of existing jealousies against the one true God, and persecutions, on part of an idolatrous nation. Our greatest blessings may come in our greatest trials and severest misfortunes. \*A drouth of nearly four years, in the days of Elijah, was greatly against the general business interest of the community, and was by no means in harmony with the wishes of the people; but that it was a blessing, we conclude as we study the lessons developed in that event. In the

historical sketch of that great and good man, we see many things worthy of the most careful thought, on part of Christ's followers.

“And so Ahab went up to eat and drink; and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.” Ahab was a wicked ruler in Israel, and although he had recently sought the death of Elijah, it was now his pleasure to seek his friendship. He was inclined to be friendly toward the people of God, when friendship contributed to his enjoyment,—promising to lighten existing burdens; and has not the Church always had friends, such as Ahab? We find many that seem to be in favor of Christianity, only so far as it contributes to their present prosperity. They hold a pew in the church, and express satisfaction in the prosperity of the good work. But they fail in the one thing needful;—they have never openly confessed Christ, and are not inclined to take a decided stand against the sins of the world.

Ahab had recently witnessed the wonderful display, in answer to the prayer of Elijah, on Mt. Carmel, and was satisfied that a man, who could so prevail with his God, as to bring down the fire of the Lord, with such a great heat, as to “consume the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench,”—that such a man would also be heard in his petition for rain.

It had been dry for a long time. The earth was parched, and for years had not yielded the harvest,

so necessary for the happiness, and prosperity of the people. Ahab was therefore inclined to accompany Elijah up Mount Carmel, as the prophet had encouraged him with the idea, that he was about to go to God in behalf of the drouth, so seriously prevailing in the land.

“So Ahab went up to eat and drink,” but Elijah went up to *pray*. Ahab was very much interested in Elijah’s prayer for rain, but he did not forget to take along enough to eat and drink. His interest in the prophet’s prayer reached out only so far as was necessary for the relief of temporary necessities. He had no real abiding interest in the good work, to which Elijah had dedicated his life. He was “evil in the sight of the Lord;” and was absorbed in the things of this world, to the exclusion of interests connected with the future. In the demands of the body, he was interested more than in the necessities of the soul. With such a disposition, he was not disposed to undergo great hardships, and sacrifices, notwithstanding he felt very anxious, that Elijah’s prayer should prevail. He thought it unnecessary to go up to the top of Carmel, with Elijah. Exhausted, he stopped on the side of the mountain,—it was too much trouble to go further. While Elijah was in prayer on the *top* of Carmel, Ahab was feasting below. The king was anxious to reap the benefit of efforts put forth, by the man of God, but was not willing to sacrifice largely in behalf of the blessing sought. And how many there are to-day, who would be glad to see religion prosper, as it contributes so largely to the well-being of our fallen

world, but are not disposed to surrender heart and life to God, and so help on with the good work.

There are multitudes who might be at the *top* of Carmel, midst the eternal sun-shine of God's love,—faithful and abundantly useful,—were it not for the sluggishness, in spiritual things, which refuses to abound in the work of the Lord, but chooses a lower sphere, and seeks the gratification of the material, more than the spiritual.

It was Elijah's to go up to the *top* of Carmel. He could only be satisfied as he was on the highest point; and it was there, that God made Himself known to His servant, in sweet communion, as he prayed, not only with great earnestness, but with great perseverance. He first "cast himself down upon the earth,"—thus humbling himself before the Almighty; and when he had prayed, he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea;" and the servant went up, and looked, but soon returned to tell Elijah, "There is nothing,"—no sign of rain. And Elijah prayed again, and sent his servant up, but only to receive the same report as before. And again he prayed, and sent the servant who came back with no new report. A great many would have become discouraged by this time, but Elijah had great confidence in God, and knew that He would answer; and so he continued to pray, and to say to his servant, "Go again seven times." And now the servant came back with the good news,—“Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.” Elijah knew what this meant. Although the cloud was very small, yet he knew the

rain was coming, and instructs his servant, at once, to prepare for it.

Many localities are suffering drouth in spiritual things, and thus very unnecessarily. Let us remember that we have only to go to the top of the mountain, and ask earnestly and perseveringly, as did Elijah, and we shall have an out-pouring of God's Spirit, without which, we must expect great destruction. As rain is necessary for the life and preservation of the vegetable world, so the power of God's Spirit, in our midst, is necessary for the eternal well-being of souls. As the moisture is necessary for the growth and fruitfulness of the vegetable world, so the Spirit of God is indispensable to our growth in grace, and in a knowledge of the truth. We need the spirit to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" and we need Him as an aid in understanding the Word, that we "may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." It is by the good old way, which convinces of sin, and purifies the heart, that we would bring men to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

To insure the power of the Holy Spirit in our midst, to the quickening of the Church, and to the destruction of sin, we must come before God in faithful, earnest, persevering and humble prayer. The Lord is pleased with that devotion, in prayer, which shuts out the world. We are not to be as the hypocrites, who "love to pray standing in the synagogues, and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men;" but, "when thou prayest enter into thy closet.

and when thou hast shut thy door, *pray.*" From which, it is not for us to infer, that the Lord encourages secret prayer only. No matter how public our prayers are, if only we come in the right way, and with the right motives. We must "shut" the door of our hearts against every worldly interest, and allow not a single worldly thought to intrude upon those precious moments spent at a throne of grace. As with closed eyes, we come before God in prayer, let us be very sure, that from our hearts, we exclude every worldly thought. Is that not hypocrisy, which, before God, closes the external eye, while the inner vision is open to all sorts of worldly considerations?

We fear it is the misfortune of some to come before God, with thoughts given to almost every thing, except to their great spiritual necessities. Many have their thoughts so anchored, in the interest of this world, that even while upon their knees, in prayer, the mind wanders. They find it difficult to control their thoughts in behalf of blessings more valuable than earthly treasures;—and then express their surprise, that more is not accomplished in behalf of the spiritual interests of community. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

The effectual, fervent prayer which availeth much, is not the product of a wandering mind. Real fervency in prayer controls the thoughts, expresses itself in words, the most forcible, and asks with faithful earnestness, the blessings needed the most.

As a concluding thought, in this chapter, we re-



mark, that we shall never be deficient in *earnestness*, so long as we are in possession of the quickening power of God's Holy Spirit. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness;" and if we would be truly zealous, and efficient for the Master, we need only to seek that mighty power, which is for all. It is the Spirit that cleanses from sin, and imparts the energy, so necessary, in all our efforts for the salvation of the world, and the strengthening of the Church. As we have endeavored to show, in a previous chapter of this work, the Holy Spirit is the secret of success in the great contest against the powers of darkness. The theologians of all ages, and the most efficient among evangelists are witnesses of the precious truth declared by our Lord, when He said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

*“Create in me a clean heart, O, God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”*

## VII.

### COURAGE.

The subject occupies a prominent place in this work, and we can not very well refrain from giving it the attention it so naturally deserves.

Courage is one of many essentials indispensable in the mighty contest against the prince of this world; and while all may not possess it, in the same degree, it is for all, through the blessing of God, to exercise the quality to a degree, highly satisfactory.

I. At a very critical period, in the history of Israel, the Lord said unto Joshua: "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Moses, an earnest servant of God, and a mighty leader in Israel, had but a short time before, gone to his reward; and as it has always pleased the Lord to look after those nations that walk in His ways, so it was now pleasing to the Father to raise up in Israel a leader to take the place of Moses. The position was peculiarly difficult, inasmuch as Moses had become justly distinguished, and in him the people had the utmost confidence.

As a successor, therefore, Joshua was eminently fitted for the position by experience. The Lord had prepared the way, and was pleased to call His servant

to the peculiar and extraordinary work. He was not, as a successor of Moses, a mighty prophet and civil ruler, but his mission was that of a military leader, and as such was to go forth in a war of invasion and extermination.

The land to be occupied belonged to Israel by Divine grant; and a renewed confirmation of that grant, as Joshua, with the hosts of Israel, was about to enter the land, indicated not only a certain, but an easy victory. It is remarkable, however, that his hope of success was made to depend on a firm adherence to the will of God. It was required of Israel, not only that they should study with great care His Word, but that they should be diligent in teaching it to their children. Religion was to be a prominent consideration in the family circle. The Divine precepts were not only to be written "upon the door-posts of their houses, and upon the gates;" but by every possible means, they were to impress these truths upon the young minds, speaking to them of these things as they sat in their houses, as they walked by the way, as they retired at night, and as they rose in the morning. (Dent. 11: 18—21.)

In this was an intimation of a principle, which, in subsequent ages, was heralded abroad from the pen of Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The responsibility on part of those having the management and training of children is certainly very great;—and to enter successfully into this work requires *courage* as well as *patience*.

Joshua had the advantages of the early culture essential to success. Having been constantly employed, under Moses, in important services, he had witnessed a display of God's power and goodness, on many occasions. He was early initiated into the principles of government, and having for some years, under the dispensation of God, enjoyed so many advantages, he was well prepared for undertaking the leadership of Israel. But notwithstanding all these advantages, and his peculiar adaptation for the great work to which he had been called, God, in His providence, spoke words encouraging His servant to renewed diligence. To go out and take possession of the promised land, and to drive out the mighty people occupying it, was no small undertaking. But Joshua knew under whose banner he was enlisted, and he knew there was no occasion for fear or doubt as to the result of the pending conquest. He had heard Moses and Israel relate, over and over again, the glorious victories of the past; and his own experience had been such as to inspire him with a spirit of courage and firmness necessary to the great work. He knew that God's promises were "both sure and steadfast." When God said unto him, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee,"—he believed it.

And to-day, may the fact be forcibly impressed upon our minds, that it is our privilege to serve the same God that Joshua loved and honored; and that with a like confidence in God, we, too, may all be a

power in His hands, in the great struggle against sin.

As Christians we have a mighty work before us,—to drive out the enemy—the prince of darkness. Let us study with due diligence the spirit and character of Joshua, that this work under God, may go on effectually. Let the Church to-day receive God at his word, as Joshua received Him, and the hosts of the enemy would melt away as dew before the rising sun. As sure as Joshua under God, drove out the most mighty warriors, laying waste their strongholds, even so Christians can be victorious in their efforts, to-day, against the strongholds of iniquity.

Although the land belonged to Israel by Divine grant, yet they were to take possession of it, only under certain conditions. It was not for them to settle down, and enjoy all the advantages and luxuries of so valuable a possession, without work and sacrifice. Israel would not appreciate the inheritance, however valuable, if gained without some considerable expense. Our appreciation of a possession is largely in proportion to the cost. We believe that Heaven will be by far more glorious to those who have come up through much sacrifice and “great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

God in His wisdom determined that His people should take possession of the land, only after a struggle necessary to awaken appreciation. It is thus, indeed, that God plans in all His dealings with humanity. We would be a thankless people indeed, were it not for God's providence; but His dealings with us are

such as to call out our gratitude toward Him, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. But how often we fail to grasp the lessons He gives; and how easy it is for us to forget the impressions made by our richest experience.

In Joshua, we have an example of the courage essential to the efficiency of every Christian. To expect an engine to run up grade, without force to propel it, is no less reasonable than to expect efficiency in Christian work without courage. It is an element indispensable to success in ordinary business transactions; and to be without it, is to fail in every purpose in life. If, as Christian workers, we yield to discouragement, we not only do ourselves a great injustice, but we make an impression on others, that is by no means favorable to their growth in grace. We should remember that as Christians, we are simply agents in the great work of evangelization, and that God is the source of all real spiritual growth. When God spoke to Joshua, on that memorable occasion, He encouraged him in view of the fact, that He was with Joshua, in the accomplishment of His own blessed work.

Joshua had all confidence in God, who had brought Israel through so many trials and dangers, safely to the borders of the Promised Land;—and it was in view of this confidence that he had courage. Had his confidence been in human strength alone, he would have been disheartened, and no doubt would have led Israel back to the king of Egypt. But he had learned many valuable lessons, and his confidence in God was such

that we doubt, if all the powers of earth had been arrayed against him, that he would have changed his plans.

The men of the age are the fearless and the courageous. That successful Christian workers have all been of this stamp, is evident to every one that studies the lives and characters of such men as Moses, David, Elijah, Paul, and the long list of noble Christians of subsequent ages. Martin Luther was a man of undaunted energy, unhesitating confidence in God, and a chosen worker. When D. L. Moody first went to England, he went confident, that he was going to be an instrument in the hands of God for the conversion of thousands; and the results show that his confidence was well founded. He had courage, and went forth heroically to the work, because, as Joshua, he knew whom he trusted.

We say, then, that the cowardly and the slothful are not the men for these times. In Peter's attempt to walk on the water,—just as he began to fear, he began to sink. Had he kept his eye steadily on Jesus, he might have walked directly to the Saviour's side; but he allowed his attention to be called off, and as he looked around and saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid. There are many, to-day, in the Christian Church, who are trembling, fainting and sinking for the same reason. They see the wind boisterous,—they think of opposing forces, inconveniences, &c., in the way of successful work, and are afraid.

That all, as servants of God, may exercise the courage similar to those noble spirits referred to, we have



not the least doubt. By this we do not mean, that all can accomplish what many great evangelists have; for all have not the calling of an evangelist. But we believe that all can do a mighty work for God, and a work that will be just as satisfactory to us in eternity, as the work of those evangelists will be to them. Our success lies in a proper *use* of the opportunities, which God has placed within our reach, and not in something that we do not have, and can not obtain. The Lord demands nothing beyond what we are able to perform. His appeal is to all, "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart." Are we not safe in saying, therefore, that all Christians can possess a fearless, hopeful spirit, if they will,—however great may be the real, or apparent obstacles, in the way of success?

II. How are we to sustain the courage necessary in this mighty struggle against sin?

It is evident that there is great need of attentive and prayerful consideration of this question. There are multitudes, who would be a mighty power for good, if only, they possessed the quality of mind enabling them to encounter dangers, difficulties, and opposing forces with proper firmness. But the tendency to yield to apparent, as well as to real difficulties and obstacles, produces depression of spirit that weakens their influence, and detracts greatly from their usefulness.

To maintain the courage proper, in the Christian warfare, it is necessary, not only that we should recognize the work to be done, but that its accomplishment,

under God, is not beyond our capacity. To believe that we can be a power for good, is an important step,—or in other words, to remember that as Christians, we are agents through whom God designs eventually to bring the nations of the earth to Himself, and what is still better, to *know* that we are acceptable workers in His vineyard, is indeed to maintain true Christian courage. Joshua overcame the enemy, because, as God's servant, he knew that success would follow his efforts. As he went against that mighty people, he had not the least doubt as to the results. The secret of power with that eminent servant is due to the fact that he put confidence in God.

To-day, the Lord is with real Christian believers as truly as He was with Joshua; and to sustain the courage proper,—to believe that we can be effectual workers in his vineyard, we must recognize Jesus—God manifest in the flesh—as the source of our strength. To do this, we must accept the promises of Him who said, “Lo I am with thee always even unto the end of the world.” The God that promised to be with Joshua, promises to be with us;—and we have no less reason for expecting His presence and blessing, in our contest against sin, than Joshua had in battle against the enemy.

If we have not the faith in God that we ought to have, and are discouraged as a result, we have only to do as Joshua did, midst occasional defeat. When the Israelites were smitten at Ai, Joshua, overcome with sorrow, went immediately with wonderful earnestness, and prostrated himself before the Lord, inquiring

what he must do midst the grievous, and unexpected calamity.

The Lord was not slack concerning His promise, but immediately, Joshua's heart was encouraged, and the reason of the defeat was also made known. "The Lord said to Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face. Israel has SINNED, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them." Joshua not only discovers at once the cause of the late repulse, but he could not do less than admit the justice of it. God sent it as a rebuke for their transgression.

Very soon, however, the guilty party met his doom, and the old leaven having been cast out, Israel was soon pushing on again to victory.

That we may sustain courage in the contest, it is necessary that we should be PURE MINDED, giving ourselves without reserve, to the work of the Master.

As a concluding thought in this chapter, we remark, that as it was important that Joshua should have courage, as he went out against the Hittites, the Amorites, the Jebusites, &c., so it is important, that every Christian should be courageous in the mighty struggle against sin. As that eminent servant had a great work before him, in his efforts to overcome the enemy, and possess the Promised Land, so we have a great work before us to overcome satan, the prince of this world. To subdue the evil within, and bring into subjection every thought to the will of Heaven, is a mighty work. We can not do this without courage supported by the promises of Christ, and estab-

lished in our hearts, by the power that is in Him.

Courage is needed to invite sinners, successfully to the Saviour. With such a spirit burning in our hearts, we shall be effectual wherever we go.

When we see the wind boisterous,—when almost discouraged,—when we feel that we can scarcely do more, let us call to mind, with prayerful interest, what Jesus endured, taught, and promised.

Without true courage, we shall not hold out midst the disadvantages, and opposing forces, and as a result, we shall fail to do our part, in the great struggle against sin, and is it not true that many weaken at the slightest appearance of opposition? They discover some uneasy elements in community, or unfavorable condition of affairs, in some way, and are ready at once to give up the struggle.

In the Christian warfare, it must not be forgotten that the struggle is against the most terrible enemy of the human race; and that in our great contest against satan, we shall utterly fail, if without Heaven's blessing.

The fruits of Christian courage are manifest in every genuine revival. It is when Christians seek a special blessing in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that we witness the most glorious results. Every heart, at such times, becomes courageous, and goes out at once for the conversion of others; and as a consequence multitudes are added to the Church of "such as should be saved."

Let us consider well, therefore, our obligations to God, the world, and ourselves, and let us not fear to

launch out in the great work of the Master. We shall only let down our net on "the right side of the ship," when we can go forth with that intrepid spirit which characterized Joshua, and all real successful servants of God in all ages. And may we so live that God will bless us, and revive His work, that we may go forth against the enemy of all righteousness "nothing doubting," and so prevail against all opposition!

## VIII.

## OBSTACLES.

As the Holy Spirit is the agent through whom comes our success in the warfare against sin, we may readily conclude, that whatever tends to weaken or destroy the Spirit's influence is an obstacle in the way of our efficiency in Christian work.

It is our purpose, therefore, in this chapter, to call attention to some things which tend to quench and grieve the Spirit in His blessed mission in behalf of the salvation of the world, and illustrate as best we can, those insidious forces which tend to drag men down to sin and death. Paul's appeal to the brethren at Ephesus was, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil;" and let us seek to comprehend clearly all that is understood by the "whole armour;" for it is in such a consecration, that we find ourselves victors over every influence, tending to draw us away from God and His love.

I. Among the many obstacles in the way of success, in the mighty contest, we come to regard UNBELIEF, as most prominently disastrous.

It was midst the glow of the most holy emotion that the great Apostle declared: "*Without faith, it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of*

*them that diligently seek Him.*" And in the history of our Lord, Matthew tells us that he did not many mighty works, in a certain locality, "because of their unbelief." It is a fact familiar to every earnest servant of God, that unbelief is fatal to the success of efforts put forth in behalf of the salvation of souls. All consecrated followers of God have come to know from experience, as well as from Scriptural teaching, that, "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" and the faith required is not merely an assent of the mind to the truth of the Gospel. There are multitudes who believe the Scriptures and in the existence and perfections of God; and while such do well, it is by no means sufficient. It is said that, "The devils also believe and tremble." We may believe the Scriptures, and admit the character and doctrine of Christ, as therein presented, and have our part, finally, "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." The Lord requires not only an assent of mind to the truth of the Gospel, but entire confidence in the character and doctrines of Christ, "with an unreserved surrender of will, and hearty recognition of our dependence on His merits for salvation."

It is for us to exercise such confidence in God as will enable us to go out in His service with firm confidence, that He is with us to bless and encourage in every good work. It is for every follower of God to go out with a firm trust in God, such as will enable him to render efficient service wherever he goes. It is necessary, however, that we should cling with all diligence to the teaching of His Word, and submit

faithfully to the control of the Spirit. It is a lamentable fact that the Church has failed to accomplish her noble mission, as a result largely of multitudes, who have not heeded properly the words of inspiration. Naaman was wroth, when the prophet told him to go and wash in Jordan "seven times;" but had he washed a less number of times, or plunged into some other stream, it is by no means probable, that he would have been healed of his leprosy. Naaman could not understand why the rivers of Damascus would not do just as well, but the Lord had spoken, and it was for Naaman to yield obedience.

Early in the history of the Church, it pleased the Lord to have "respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and his offering, He had not respect;" for Abel was careful to bring the required offering, as any deviation from this would indicate an undue regard for the law, and as such displease the Holy One. But Cain, less scrupulous than his brother, and undoubtedly reckless as to the real demands and results, brought an offering with which the Lord was not well pleased. The two brothers had been reared under advantages, quite as favorable for one as the other, and there could be no valid excuse for Cain's indifference. His failure was for want of "more earnest heed" to the things which he had heard. Overlooking the Divine order, he assumes the right to offer the fruit of the ground, instead of the firstlings of the flock. He presumed as an offering, that some vegetable product would do as well, and at the same time not be so expensive; but in this, Cain was sadly



disappointed. The Lord respected not the offering. Cain, however, might have manifested his love to God and confidence, and so fared a great deal better, had he been more consistent. If, on finding his offering was not accepted, he had forsaken his presumptuous ways, and sought an offering in harmony with the Divine will, instead of becoming "very wroth," the Lord would have been pleased, and Cain's influence would have gone out even as Abel's, a mighty power for good. But as it was, Cain became very angry, and, urged on by the old serpent which beguiled his parents, he became also exceedingly jealous of Abel. "And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother; and slew him."

We have in this, a brief history of one that was not faithful and zealous in good works. His failure to cling properly to the scheme of redemption, as suggested by the Father, led him the downward road, and he was found guilty of the greatest crime.

We have here a lesson deserving careful attention. Cain was negligent. In his offering, he adhered not to the will of God, and was not willing to mend his ways, although gently rebuked by the Holy Spirit. Some may think Cain's disobedience a small thing, and not deserving the rebuke received; but it is a fact nevertheless, that God was not well pleased with the offering, and "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Cain found it more convenient, or more directly in harmony with his circumstances to bring a substitute

from the field, instead of the offering the Lord required, and in the fact that he was rejected, we have a lesson upon which depends largely the success of the Church.

It is not for us to exercise a presumptuous faith. It is unbelief in its most ruinous and destructive form. The faith once delivered, is to accept God at His word. Any variation from this is against the will of God, and as such, an obstacle in the way of success in the Master's service. God's will surpasses all other authority, and for it there can be no substitute. "For the prophecy came not in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

II. COVETOUSNESS or an excessive desire for the accumulation of property, we mention, as also prominent among the obstacles in the way of success in religious work. That is covetousness which leads one to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interests, disregarding that of others, and often to their disadvantage. It is that eagerness for the accumulation of the riches and honors of this world, which acts at a sacrifice of integrity, and is well defined, in part at least, by Shakespeare, in these words:

"When workmen strive to do better than well,  
They do confound their skill in covetousness."

It is our duty to be industrious, and provide things necessary to sustain life, and also for the good of those less fortunate—the poor—as well as for the Church. It is the duty of every Christian to contribute to the temporal and spiritual necessities of others,

and with reference to this, to avoid all extravagance so far as possible. God has manifested His regards for humanity, in the sacrifice of His Son in our behalf, and this ought to be sufficient to prompt a sacrifice, on our part, for each other.

There is no subject to which the Christian can give attention, more important than that suggested in the words of Jesus. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." It is through the absence of this love and union, that the Church has suffered immeasurably; and it is only when as a Church, we shall be restored to the unity which characterized our primitive history, that we shall be enabled to exercise the charity which becometh saints. Such love will not only drive out all covetousness and selfishness from the Church, but, before it, must go all divisions and church creeds.

The spirit of the Gospel is embraced in that beautiful expression, "Good will to man." Our good will should not only go out after all Christians, but it is for us to be no less interested also in those that know not the Lord. Jesus came not "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" and it is for us to recognize our fellow-men, everywhere, however wicked, and take an interest in their temporal and spiritual wants. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son;" and it is for the Christian to be interested in the same wicked humanity for which Jesus died.

We are glad to note the fact, that within a few

years, there has been a great awakening in the Church, in behalf of the poor and oppressed of the land. Missionary societies and charitable institutions are at work. Wealthy Christian men and women are making liberal appropriations for charitable purposes, amounting, in some instances, to millions of dollars; and it is a fact encouraging to every Christian, that these appropriations are becoming more numerous every year. It seems that God is getting hold the hearts of capitalists; as never before; and we surely have some reason to expect, that the time will come, when the riches of this world will largely be turned into channels, such as will be effective in helping the needy in both temporal and spiritual things.

As prince of this world, the devil induced our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit, and to believe that it "was good, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise;" and it is with influences no less deceptive and destructive, that satan is at work for souls, to-day. If he can gain them, he is satisfied, and there is no weapon that he uses more effectually, than the "care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches." The devil is still insisting, that this world is "good," that it is "pleasant to the eye," and something much "to be desired."

It is a blessed truth, however, that in God and His Word, there is a sufficiency against all the deceptive influences of satan and his hosts. In the blessed Spirit, we find an agency sufficient to bring into subjection every evil, and it is for every follower of

Christ,—for every rational creature of God,—to see that this world does not have dominion over him. Let us ponder well the words of the beloved Apostle: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

The things of this world are but for a moment, and what folly it is, to cling to them, when so destructive to our spiritual interests. “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever;” and how important it is, that all should comprehend clearly the force of these words. It is largely through an undue love of the world, that the Gospel has made such slow progress. It is through love for money, or an inordinate desire for this world’s goods, that the means have been withheld, so necessary for the establishment of the Gospel. Let the Church put away covetousness, and contribute to the prosperity of the spiritual interests of this world, as the Lord wills, and very soon, the fruits would be manifest in every land and nation on the globe. While we pray therefore “the Lord, that he will send forth laborers into His harvest,” let us not forget to ask God to give us that liberal spirit necessary to their support. It is when the Church shall come to that high standard of giving as described by the Apostle, when he says, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him,”—that we shall be successful against the prince of this world; and let us note just here, that the support of the Church, in her great

mission, is not the work of a small per cent merely of her membership. The words of inspiration are, let *every one* contribute as God has prospered him, and this regularly, at frequent intervals, and with a cheerful heart; "for God loveth a cheerful giver." With such a spirit characterizing all professed Christians, this world would soon be brought into the fold. Let us pray for an early return of the disposition prevailing in Apostolic times, when selfishness and worldly mindedness were all abolished through love to God and His Word.

As a warning to Christians, no more important truth was ever declared than Paul's address to Timothy: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish habits, which drown men in destruction and perdition." There are multitudes to-day, not only among Christ's followers, but of those who know not the Lord, who are ready to admit, from bitter experience, the truth of the Apostle. We doubt not that myriads are writhing with agony, in hell to-day, as a result of the "temptation," the "snare," and "hurtful lusts," and may it be in the heart of those that read these lines to "flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." With all prayerful diligence, let us heed the appeal of the Apostle, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Laying up in store for them-

selves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life."

III. Prominent among other obstacles in the way of success in Christian work is the FLESH—those animal propensities, or selfish passions which have to do with character.

It was in the great candor of his inspired being, that the Apostle declared: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." It is a fact deserving careful thought that we are subject to the laws of the flesh or of the Spirit. There is no neutral ground; and in recognition of this, Paul in his letter to the Corinthians says, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal even as unto babes in Christ." These brethren, notwithstanding their conversion, and the holy affections, which had been implanted in the heart, had not brought into subjection the carnal nature; and, that, they might, more fully understand what he meant in his reference to their carnal tendencies, Paul speaks specifically, "For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions are ye not carnal and walk as men?" They were evidently given to a great deal of *envy* and *strife*, and this was very much against their success in Christian work. It was these things that gave rise to divisions in the Church, and were the source of so much hard feeling and bitterness, that Paul declared them to be "enmity against God." Those brethren were practically against the interest, which professedly they labored to build up. They had suffered the de-

velopment of carnal tendencies to such an extent, as to cripple them, very greatly, in their noble mission. They had become, in a degree corrupt, notwithstanding the peculiar privileges enjoyed through an Apostolic ministry. There were a few that walked disorderly, and it was Paul's aim now to restore the Church to her original purity, or to root out the evil within. It is not at all probable that the disorder, in the Church, was very extensive, and still there was wrong existing, which, if not eradicated, was destined to effect the whole body. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" We have here implied the importance of entire purity on part of the Church; and with the next sentence, the Apostle says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump." Rid yourselves of the "little leaven," root out what little wrong there is in the Church as soon as possible, that ye may be a "new lump," as ye were when it was first said of you, "Old things have passed away; behold all things are become new."

It was Paul's to labor with all the energy of his being to maintain a pure Church; and had the Church heeded those zealous appeals which fell from the pen of inspiration, we doubt not but that the world would have accepted the Gospel, ere the close of the third century. It is a fact that the Church made her most mighty strides against sin, when as a result of inner purity, she went forth with garments exhibiting the greatest luster; and such being the case how vastly important, it is, that Christians of the present age should put forth every effort to rid the Church of all



wrong whether in doctrine or practice. With God's blessing, we believe it possible for the Church to recover her primitive sanctity; and not only so, but we are fully persuaded, that it is God's plan to restore the Church to her original purity. "For a small moment," saith the Lord, "have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." In deserved wrath, God may hide His face from us for a time; but that he will reveal Himself "with everlasting kindness," is evidently in harmony with Bible teaching.

How then may we overcome the wrong within, and bring into subjection every thought to the will of Christ?

It is remarkable indeed that the Church, after an experience of more than eighteen centuries, should still suffer as a result of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Sure enough, we are "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." And why sleep midst all the blessings of past ages? Is it because the Father has not revealed sufficiently his blessed will, or because He has not "given to us precious promises?"

Surely everything has been accomplished, that can be for our spiritual well-being; and it remains now for the children of God to go forth, in the "power of the Spirit," against satanic rule. The great trouble with the Church to-day is, in the fact, that she is not sufficiently spiritual. We come near forgetting the declaration of the great Apostle when he said, "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." We need to-day a work of grace,

such as will lay waste every root of bitterness, do away with all divisions, and restore the Church to her original self; and nothing can accomplish this grand work more effectually, than a precious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, throughout christendom; and such a revival, we can have, if we make use of the means essential to the result. Let the prayer of Habakkuk go up every-where, "O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy." Let such a prayer be accompanied with proper faith and works, and we would find, in a short time, the Church at work not only in behalf of her home interest, and for the conversion of every soul within her reach, but we would also find missionaries pushing out into the darkness of benighted lands, where hitherto, the Gospel has not been preached.

As a Church we shall be victors over all carnal affections, and we shall win; in this mighty contest, when as individual members, we shall present our "BODIES a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." We do this when the carnal nature is brought under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit. As the legal sacrifices, under the Mosaic dispensation, were required to be "without spot or blemish," so our bodies must be separated from the love and practice of sin. And let us remember, that a temporary surrender is not sufficient. It is for us to yield our bodies a "living"—PERMANENT sacrifice unto God. The sacrifice which is "holy, acceptable," is that which endures to the end. The truly efficient are such as are

“steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Among the many obstacles in the way of success in Christian life, there are none, against which, we should contend more earnestly, than against those having their origin in the lusts of the flesh. Against these, the inspired penmen have faithfully warned us. They, openly and repeatedly, give expression against carnal besetments, as they “knew what was in man.” They understood the depravity of the human heart, and earnestly labored to impart to others “the wisdom that is from above.” With all the glow of his inspired being, Paul declared, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye can not do the things that ye would;” and as it is not in us to contend successfully against the lusts of the flesh, it has pleased the Father to devise a plan by which all may overcome every obstacle in the way of growth in grace. “Wherefore,” He says, “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.” We yield obedience to the will and Spirit of God, only as we have on the “whole armour,” the meaning of which, we may comprehend, if we search diligently the things revealed. Many of us do not give “earnest heed to the things which we have heard.” While we study those obstacles in the way of success in Christian work, which have their origin in the works of the flesh,” (Gal. 5: 19—21), let us not forget the words of inspiration, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and

lusts." And just here, with prayerful earnestness, let us ask ourselves the question,—Have we completely subdued these carnal tendencies? Have we sought successfully the destruction of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the life?" If so, we may claim the promise;—if otherwise, let us heed the words, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

The voice of inspiration comes to-day to the Church, "Yield yourselves unto God, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." It is the Lord's to offer us, not only dominion over sin, but He is also offering inducements to righteousness according to the riches of His grace, and measured only by eternity. Oh, that we might all come to "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. . . . For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."

IV. Another obstacle, in the way of success in Christian work, are those unfortunate DIFFERENCES against which Paul spoke with such great earnestness, when he said, "Let there be no divisions among you." The blessed Jesus prayed the Father, not many hours previous to the crucifixion, that the disciples "may be ONE, even as we are one," And Paul to the Corinthians says, "And I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there *be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, one toward another.*"

There is no question of more importance, to-day, than this,—By what means can the Church come to be “perfectly joined together”—united in doctrine, practice, fellowship, etc.? The inspired penman answers: “Earnestly contend for the FAITH which was once delivered.” From this we must not admit the least digression; for whatever is contrary to the faith once delivered, is sin, and every violation detracts from the strength of the Church, rendering her less efficient.

It is ours to contend earnestly for the DOCTRINE as God has revealed it, and in our inquiries in this direction, we can not be too zealous. But while we contend for doctrinal faith, let us not forget, that *practical* faith—the life of God in the soul—is most of all important. Without this, all eloquence, culture, and genius are in vain; with it, the weakest saint may be a power in God’s hands for good. It is for all to partake of the Living Fountain which cleanses from sin, and thus go forward, complete victors against the powers of satan.

It is claimed by some, that the division of the Church into the various branches is all right, as it excites a spirit of emulation, and so leads to greater efforts, on part of the different branches, to build up and develop their respective interests. But is it not enough to know, that these divisions are most emphatically against the will of Him who so loved the world as to die for our redemption? It must appear evident to all, after careful thought, that this emulative spirit is productive of more evil than good. It is the source of many other evils. It results in efforts to build up

numerically, and the tendency has been to develop, in many instances, more interest in numerical strength, than in the salvation of souls.

If it is right for the Church to be divided as she is into so many branches, why did Paul cry out against the differences which resulted in these divisions? Why did he appeal so earnestly, that they should teach "no other doctrine," that they should speak the things that "become sound doctrine," and that they "be not carried about with divers and strange doctrine?" Why did he appeal to all "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" Is there not more strength, and hence efficiency, in UNION, than in separation or division?

It was a prominent thought in the Gethsemane prayer, that the disciples might be "one" as Christ and the Father are one; and what union could be more complete? It was a prayer for the permanent combination of the armies of the Lord, in doctrine, affections, mind, will, spirit and work; and it is a fact that the Church was never so efficient as when she could assemble "all with one accord," against the prince of this world. It was in this union that the Church was so sublimely prosperous: but through erroneous doctrine, and certain wicked men, who "crept in unawares," she was robbed of her great efficiency. For the good of humanity, and the moral renovation of this world, the Church, within three years from the time our Saviour offered that Gethsemane prayer, accomplished more than all other combined forces of earth. And if against all the intrusions of satan,

the Church had maintained her primitive purity, she would, in point of influence, have surpassed her past history by a thousand fold. But unfortunately, wicked men and erroneous teachings have interrupted the progress of the most precious agent against the kingdom of darkness.

It is now for the Church to cast out the old leaven, and thus recover her primitive strength and efficiency. As early as possible, let us rid the Church of all her unbelief, as it exists in wicked members and false theories; for upon such an advance depends her efficiency for the future. Give us a church as PURE as the original, and we shall go out as effectual against sin; and as much more so, as our numerical strength may be greater than that of the primitive Church. With a Church "perfectly joined together," in faith, in works, in practice, in charity, and in spirit, this world would soon be taken for God.

And how vastly important it is, that we should "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" It is not for us to press for a prize "after the commandments and doctrines of men. . . . For we have a more sure Word of prophecy, which came not in old time by the will of men; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." We believe that it is within reach of the Church, to-day, to regain her former self, by proper consecration to the work, and due devotion to the "prophecy," as delivered by men of God, "moved by the Holy Spirit." And is it not a fact that the signs of the times indicate a fulfillment

of all that is expressed in the words, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ?"

V. We come next to speak of the POWER OF PREJUDICE as an obstacle in the way of success, in this mighty contest against satanic rule.

Lexicographers tell us that prejudice is an "unreasonable predilection, or prepossession for or against any thing; especially, an opinion or learning adverse to any thing, formed without proper grounds, or before suitable knowledge." We consider therefore that prejudice is at variance with sound reason, or a respectable degree of intelligence; and at the same time, we do not believe that any degree of intellectual culture is an absolute preventative against one's being misled by this agency. While ignorance is more liable to abuse itself, through the controlling power of prejudice,—as its facilities for forming opinions from other sources are less efficient,—it is a fact that the greatest genius, and the finest intellects of the ages, have gone astray, through the power of prejudice. And few of us, to-day, realize what a mighty influence this quality has upon our lives and ideas. It is to be feared, in some instances, that professed Christians are controlled more by this mighty power, than by the word and Spirit of God. It is a terrible obstacle in the way of success in Christian work. It is largely the result of prejudice, that multitudes are, to-day, standing out of the Church, and persist in the ways of the ungodly. It is an evil, not only in the world, but it is, in the Church, a mighty power against that union



of effort so necessary to our greatest possible success as a Church. It is in the way of a clear comprehension of the Bible. Through prejudice many are clinging to church creeds more than to the pure doctrines of inspiration. It is in the way of union on part of religious denominations, that might and ought to be united as one in the mighty contest.

Great efforts are being put forth, all over the land, to-day, against Christianity. Organized forces are going out, with every possible influence, against the Christian religion. While tons of literature are being sent out to excite prejudice against the Church, its work and its workers, the lecture platform is also doing a service dreadful to contemplate. Satan's agents are at work in every locality, and many young people are being blinded by prejudices excited against the Christian religion. And midst all this opposition, how important it is, that we should see to it, that our prejudices, through God's blessing, are subject to our control rather than that we should be victims crushed by such an evil.

As a remedy against the follies of prejudice, we suggest a full surrender of heart and life to the will and Spirit of God. While the highest degree of intellectual culture is an insufficient remedy against the evil, we are satisfied that there is a remedy in a practical surrender to infallible authority.

As Philip said to Nathanael, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph;" impulsively Nathanael asks, "Can there any good thing come out

of Nazareth?" Philip answers, "Come and see;" and he came and was satisfied.

Nathanael's subsequent experience subdued his prejudice, and doubtless awakened an interest even in favor of the locality against which he formerly entertained so much feeling. It was when he brought into subjection every thought to the obedience of Christ, that his prejudices were overcome.

If, then, we have lingering within, a prejudice, to any extent, affecting our prosperity in Christian duty, it is for us to overcome through the power which led Nathanael to victory. We shall never overcome the difficulties in the way of our efficiency as Christians, by any other agency. Jesus is saying to-day to all, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Many are enduring burdens, the tendency of which is to destroy the power of God's Word and Spirit, in the heart. It is for us to subdue the evil, through a full surrender of heart and life to God.

The most sublime exhibition of greatness, that this world knows anything about, is witnessed in him, who, by earnest effort goes out a victor over those evil tendencies that drag men down to ruin and eternal death. Alexander achieved great victories, and won a reputation in military ranks, unprecedented; but he who conquers *self*, and brings his *will* into subjection to the will of Heaven, has won a victory more glorious.

It is in the power of every individual, with God's blessing, to subdue these depraved natures. Whether,

therefore, our besetment be a natural tendency to unbelief, love of the world, prejudice, or something else, let us see to it, that the will and power of God rules within, to the exclusion of every obstacle, and the destruction of every sin, which doth so easily beset.

It is in such an experience, that we shall come, not only to contend successfully for doctrinal faith, but we shall come into possession of practical faith—the life of God in the soul—more than all the possessions in the universe.

And O, that we may all come to realize the importance of cultivating that high moral purity taught by the inspired penman, when he said, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

VI. Finally, however much we may be disposed to attribute failure in the good work to the variety of causes as mentioned, or to others, it is well that the idea should be thoroughly impressed on our minds that, “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world,” is the great source of evil, and is to-day THE obstacle in the way of success in the Christian warfare. Satan is represented in Divine revelation, as going forth “to deceive the nations;” and while many experienced Christians know something of the cunning trickery of that wicked Spirit, we are fully aware that there are many who consider not the powers of the devil, and the liability of being drawn into that awful whirlpool of sin and

misery. Many have come to the sad intelligence by experience.

It was midst the primeval innocence of our first parents, that satan appears at issue with the will and wisdom of God. In his appeals to Eve, he boldly answers, "Ye shall not surely die." And it is not only through a lie of the devil, that man fell from his heavenly position, but it is through satan's deceitful entreaties, that about ninety per cent of this world's intelligence are to-day groping their way in ignorance and moral degradation.

The devil has always been the opposing element, in every great work undertaken by the Father since the world began. Job, whose writings are the oldest perhaps extant, refers to a time "when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and *satan* came also among them." As Jesus was about to go forth in His great mission, "The *devil* taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." When the enemy sought opportunity to put Jesus to death, "then entered *satan* into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them." When Ananias sold a possession, it was *satan* that filled his heart to lie, and keep back part of the price. And Paul says, when he and his companions had it in mind to visit brethren at Thessalonica, that "satan hindered" them.

It is thus the devil is found intruding upon the work of the Lord at every point. He finds a place not only among the unconverted, but through his agency, young converts, very early in their experience, find their peace most sadly disturbed. The experienced Christian is severely tried and perplexed, with scarcely a thought that the devil has anything to do with it. And the Gospel minister, through the same agency, is called to the severest trials.

The devil is the source of all contention in this mighty warfare against the kingdom of darkness. He is the source of all war and commotion among nations. He is the agent through whom comes all bitterness and broils in neighborhoods. And he is the origin of all misfortune in the domestic circle, or in social life.

It is true, as James says, that "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed;" but that satan is the fountain from which springs this demoralization, is evidently in harmony with Scriptural teaching. God has clearly defined the character and mission of the devil, and the fruits of his works are most forcibly pointed out in the Word.

But it is a thought deserving our most grateful recognition, that God, in His great mercy, has provided us a remedy against the powers of the wicked one. The inspired penman recognized the great fact, when he said, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." With firm trust in God,

and with the Holy Spirit to aid, the Christian may overcome every obstacle that the devil may put in his way; "because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." God holds the universe at His control, and, with us, is more than all combined forces that may be brought against us.

As a concluding thought in this chapter, let it be duly impressed upon our hearts, that the victory is conditional. We shall be victors over satan's rule, only in *entire surrender* of ourselves to God. It is through the efficiency of the "whole armour," that we shall be able to stand. There is no certain victory in any other. It is for want of entire consecration,—complete separation from the world,—that so many fall out by the way and become discouraged. We are only sufficient in this mighty contest against the wiles of the devil, when we shall have succeeded in appropriating all the energies and powers of our being to the service of God. We combat successfully satanic power, only when aided by the Spirit. It is the Spirit that "helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which can not be uttered. . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

## IX.

## EVIDENCES OF AN ACCEPTANCE.

It is a fact with which all ought to be familiar, that God rejects none, that choose to enlist in His service; and it is for us, therefore, to know that He accepts us, when we know that we accept Him.

There are multitudes of Christians, that exercise faith, to such an extent as may be necessary to their salvation. They come to recognize, from experience, the blessed truth, that "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And while these precious souls thus yield obedience to the Gospel, and by example as well as precept, are daily declaring their loyalty to the faith, is it not for all of Christ's followers, to go forward in the Master's work, "nothing doubting?" Is not the faith which dispenses with all doubt, in substance, positive knowledge?

We believe it is for every individual to come to a point in experience, where he can clearly recognize the power of God within, urging him to certain victory against the prince of this world. It is in such submission to the will of God, that we find developed that spirit of consecration characteristic of all those noble heroes, who have gone out, in all the ages, so effectually against sin.

In the faith once delivered, we have a foundation worthy of our confidence. It is not the result of imperfect human reason. It has not for its source the boasted so-called "advanced thought" of modern times. From its infancy, Christianity has had infidel theories to contend with; and against all, with the humblest instrumentalities, it has been successful. The faith mentioned is something more authoritative than the brilliant guesses of science so often revised, and always uncertain of its next conclusions.

The Apostle Peter, who, witnessed the Divine power of the Lord Jesus as displayed on many occasions, tells us that they followed not "cunningly devised" fables, when they made known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus, but were "eye-witnesses" of His majesty. As is well known, an intelligent court will receive the eye-witness as the most reliable testimony. For the establishment of the faith as presented in the Bible, there were thousands of eye-witnesses ready to declare, with all confidence, what they had seen and heard.

There are millions in our land to-day, who from an experimental knowledge, declare there is power in "the faith once delivered." It is vain to attempt to convince a true Christian, that what he experiences is not real, and that his prospects for eternity are visionary. That God's Spirit has an efficacious influence upon the heart and life, is as evident to a real believer, as it is positive, that the food he eats, gives life and vigor to the body.

It is important, however, that we should give atten-



tion to this question,—How are we to know, that as soldiers in this contest, we are accepted of God,—that we have received “the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father?” All the other absorbing topics of a life-time are not equal to this,—Are we prepared to meet God? Have we chosen Christ as ours, and do we know that He has chosen us?

I. We recognize our acceptance of God, in our **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHRIST HIS SON.** “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

Amidst all the “profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called,” Christ declares, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life;” and such as seek to climb up some other way, are declared to be thieves and robbers. It is a question, therefore, demanding the most candid attention,—Do I believe in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, submit to His appeals, and yield my heart to the control of His Spirit? If so, then may I know that He accepts me; for we know the Lord has said, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” I know that I am a child of God, as I recognize Christ the Son. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”

To BELIEVE, in a Gospel sense, is not only an intellectual PERCEPTION, but a voluntary RECEPTION of the truth. It is not merely a private expression of our confidence,—an experience known only to ourselves. It is a declaration of confidence in the person and work of Christ, which affects character and life,—

“known and read of all men.” The Apostle brings out our duty in few words, when he says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Faith and confession are here brought in the closest possible connection. A *saving faith* can not conceal itself from the world, but must reveal itself through words and deeds. Our faith is known by our works, and from these, we may draw conclusions, whether we be in the faith; and we say this, not that, as a means of salvation, we attach great importance to our works. “For by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” Works are the spontaneous production, or outgrowth of an inward conviction; and they are acceptable to God, only so far as they have their source in an unwavering confidence in Christ as our Redeemer. Our acceptance with God depends upon an affectionate confidence in the person, and work of Christ, which induces practical surrender to His will, and hearty recognition of His grace as our only sufficiency. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;”—and is it not altogether probable, that His sufferings were not so much from the nails that were driven through His hands and feet, as from the agony of soul which He endured for a world lost in sin? As He cried in the Garden, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” He doubtless would have expired, right then and there,

had it not been for the angels, which appeared "strengthening Him." But it was not according to the wisdom of God, that Jesus should perish in Gethsemane. It was in harmony with the plan of God from the fall, that man should be redeemed, through the death of Christ, as it occurred on the cross. The blessed God, on that occasion, might have summoned "more than twelve legions of angels" to His rescue, yet He did not see fit to do so, as a wiser scheme was in the plan of Infinite Wisdom. Jesus illustrated to the world, that He had power to "lay down His life, and power to take it again;" and His Divine nature is asserted in the fact, that He had power to return, and reanimate that blessed body, which had been taken by cruel hands and slain. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." That we should believe that God raised Him from the dead is imperative; for in this great truth, is manifest the Divine origin of the Christian religion. Good men as agents in God's hands, have accomplished wonderful things, at various times, in the history of the world; but none have ever exercised the power as manifested by our Lord Jesus, when at His own will, He returned with renewed life to that blessed body. "That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," we have abundant evidence, as He was seen, after His resurrection, at various times, for forty days, by the Apostles and others; and at one time, at least, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once."

None can therefore refuse to believe for want of evidence; for as "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son," it was a part of His plan also to furnish sufficient evidence of His Divinity,—approving Him "by miracles, and wonders and signs."

And while we remember that the blessed "Christ hath suffered for us *in the flesh*," let us not be unmindful of the agony of soul—not unlike that He experienced in the Garden—that the Lord Jesus endured, as He hung on the cross. We have no idea that His great agony in Gethsemane, was merely the result of anticipated physical suffering. We believe that the Lord Jesus suffered in deep anguish of soul, and as no mere human being can suffer, as in sympathetic relation, He was brought forcibly to face the great depravity of a wicked world in open rebellion against the appeals of a loving Father. And is it too much to suppose, that it was the deep anguish of heart, and great mental pain that killed Him, rather than the wounds of the nails driven through His hands and feet? Evidently, amidst His great sorrow on the cross, no deputation of angels appeared to "strengthen" Him, as in Gethsemane;—and from this, we may have some idea what He meant, when He cried, from the great depths of His soul, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Is it not very probable, that He was "sorrowful even unto death," as the second time, He cried, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Was it not just then, that He "yielded up the ghost?"

We are inclined to the idea, that Jesus died from

His great sorrow, as he passed away much sooner than was usual,—sooner than those crucified with Him, (John 19: 31—34), and so much sooner that “Pilate marveled if He were already dead,” (Mark 15: 44). As then we remember and believe truly, that the blessed Jesus “suffered for us in the flesh,” let us not forget that He suffered as no man can suffer, as, on the cross, He was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;” and that just then and there, the Father might have sent the angels to “strengthen,” as well as rescue Him, from that ignominious death, but it was the Father’s good pleasure to give His Son, that the world through Him might be saved.

II. As evidence of our acceptance with God, we have also the WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT. “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” As he who is in open rebellion against God, knows that he is disobedient, and not subject to God’s will, so it is for every one who has renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, to know that he is a child of God, and an heir to the blessed inheritance, through faith in the Lord Jesus. He that believeth on the Son,—recognizing His authority as a teacher, and confiding in Him as a Saviour,—has “the witness,” whose testimony can not be discredited; and that this witness is the voice of God speaking through the Holy Spirit, appears in the fact, that as such, the Bible refers to it. Paul says “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” And John declares, “Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.”

Let the fact be impressed upon our minds, that the Holy Spirit was not given temporarily, or merely for the good of those living in Apostolic times, and as an aid in the introductory work only of the Church. It is evident that Jesus recognized the great truth, that as a Church, we should need Him, in all time, in this mighty struggle against the prince of this world. As the disciples were grieving over the Lord's expected departure,—that "yet a little while" only, He was to be with them,—it was then that the blessed Master spoke words, adapted not only to the comfort of noble workers of primitive times, but He gave expression to a truth, that should, none the less, give comfort to all His followers in subsequent ages. It was the Lord's pleasure to declare, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may *abide with you forever*;—even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him," (John 14: 16—17). And that this "Comforter" is the Spirit of God, none need doubt, as we have a more perfect revelation of the same thought, in another verse in the same chapter: "But the Comforter, *which is the Holy Ghost*, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." That these words were addressed to the Church, and not alone to the disciples as assembled, in the presence of the Lord on that occasion, appears in the fact, that they express nothing less than the "promise" as fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

We learn that after the resurrection of our Lord, as He was assembled with the disciples, He “commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for “THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER, which, saith He, ye have heard of me,” (Acts 1: 4,) to which reference is evidently made to the promise as given in the 14th chapter of John.

When the Day of Pentecost “was fully come;” and as, on that wonderful occasion, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples in such great abundance, they had no difficulty in understanding what the Lord meant in His allusion to the “Comforter” whom the Father was to send in his name.

While it is not at all probable, that God's Spirit is to remain with the Church, in the *miraculous* power of primitive times,—as it was evidently not in accordance with the wisdom of the Father, thus to continue His approval of the Son, “by miracles and wonders and signs,” beyond a certain limit;—yet it is in harmony with Scriptural teaching, that the Spirit is to remain with the Church, to purify, enlighten, strengthen, invigorate and encourage the disciples of the Lord, everywhere, and for all time. This is in harmony with the parting words of the Lord as about to ascend on high: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

In what sense is the blessed Lord to be with us “alway,” if not by His Spirit to aid in all His blessed work among men? That this is the idea, which He intends to convey, we may readily infer from these words, “I will not leave you comfortless; I will come

to you." He came in mighty power as on the Day of Pentecost, He bestowed upon the Church the Holy Spirit,—the Comforter, "that He may abide with you *forever*;"—in all the great mission of the Church, "even unto the end of the world."

We say then; that the Lord is speaking, to-day, in tones no less forcible than in any former age: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." The Spirit is seeking that complete admittance, to-day, into our hearts, which takes away all our guilt, and utterly eradicates every evil propensity. Let every professed follower of the Lord Jesus put on the whole armour of God,—thus laying "aside *every* weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset," and we shall not only come to a clear recognition of our acceptance with God, but we shall have a mind to work, and shall go out among men, a mighty power for good. It is a clear conscience,—entire consecration to the work of the Master, and submission to the control of the Holy Spirit,—that calls out earnest effort in behalf of souls. The Psalmist had the right idea, when he prayed, "Uphold me with thy free Spirit: then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

III. We know we have passed from death unto life, if we have LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.

It is a fact that not only are all susceptible of such an emotion, but it is for all readily to detect its existence, or non-existence in the heart. And as sure



as all are thus susceptible, we may also be sure, not only that God is inviting us all to His favor, but it is for us also to accept His invitation, and recognize clearly our acceptance of the Father, in the forgiveness of sins.

Inasmuch as a love of the Father implies a love for our brother, the inspired penman declares truly, "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" A liar is one who knowingly utters a falsehood. The man who says he loves God, and, at the same time, knows that hatred prevails in his heart against his brother, says what he knows to be false, and is hence a liar; and such must readily recognize the fact, that they are not children of God.

It has pleased the Lord, through the Apostle John, to reveal the great principle, in the fewest possible words: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." It was love that prompted the Father to open up the way of salvation; and as God is love, we may readily perceive how His every act must be accompanied with love. When in response to our faith, (Eph. 1: 13—14,) the Lord declares our sins forgiven, at this instant, love prevails as first and prominent among the "fruits of the spirit." It is thus that the heavenly emotion takes possession of hearts, which once were "living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works

of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit imparts love to the human heart as naturally and positively, as fire produces heat; and as darkness recedes before the rising sun, so hatred goes out before the Holy Spirit.

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to cultivate good will to all, and hatred toward none. When the angels were about to announce the coming of our Lord, their first salute was, "On earth peace, good will toward man,"—in which is expressed the sum and substance of the Christian religion. It was interest in His *enemies*, that brought the Lord Jesus from Heaven, to suffer and die, that they might be saved. It was God's plan to reconcile the world unto Himself; and we can only be His followers, as we submit to the control of the Spirit, which moved our incarnate Lord.

It is for every individual to consecrate himself to the Lord, in a way that will lay waste every "root of bitterness;" and "This is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith."

It is for the Christian to go out not only with good will to all, but he is to go out with such fervency of spirit, as will render his appeals truly effectual. To maintain merely friendly relations toward others, is not enough. It is our duty to contribute to the temporal and spiritual well-being of others, so far as we have ability. We have enemies to contend with, and in our treatment of these, we have, in words of in-

spiration, the wisest counsel: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." Our enemies will feel the warming influence of such treatment, and our influence over them for good will be of more force. In so doing, we may come to a practical recognition of those precious words, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

In love for our enemies, we shall not only have evidence of the love of God in our hearts, but as the Lord has said, "By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Let us heed, therefore, the promptings of the Spirit, as expressed by the Apostle, when he said, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. . . . For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them."

IV. We know that we are children of God, when we know and can say truly, that we renounce all sin, and indulge in no WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE.

One of the great errors of the age is in the idea, that God tolerates the practice of known sin and the neglect of known duty, in his followers,—that the

grace of God is *favor* toward professed Christians, through which He delivers them from the consequences of sin, by excusing their willful disobedience. In this idea, multitudes of professed Christians have become a reproach to the cause, seemingly forgetting that "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." The best cultured Christians of our times are, to a great extent, agreed in this: "That no man can believe with the heart unto righteousness, while living in the practice of known sin, or in the neglect of known duty." All voluntary transgressors of the law are sinners, and must repent of their wrong-doing, or suffer the consequences of disobedience. If we repent, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness;" but let us not forget that sorrow for sin, and relinquishment of it, from conviction, that it has offended God, is required in the Gospel,—that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." The doctrine of salvation by grace does not sanction continued willful disobedience. We must present ourselves a living sacrifice unto God, or be subject to the awful, and eternal misfortunes of the disobedient.

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And later it was for that disciple whom Jesus loved to declare, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." And that the Lord has not required any unreasonable service, we may readily infer from numerous references in Holy Writ. Our Saviour declares, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Paul affirms that entire consecration

to God is a reasonable service;" and John says, "His commandments are not grievous."

We regard it, therefore, of the utmost importance, that we should study well the blessed will of God, as revealed in the Bible, that we may not only comprehend clearly His will, but that we may do it, even as He has commanded. And while we recognize the Word of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, as the Will, to which it becomes our duty to submit, we call special attention to lessons received, "at sundry times, and in divers manners," as God spoke "in times past unto the fathers by the prophets," as well as to the things spoken, in these last days, "unto us by His Son."

We regard those noble precepts, (Ex. 20:1—17,) as given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, as important. As Jesus declared that, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail,"—even so we are inclined to cling to the Old Testament Scriptures as occupying a prominent place, to-day, in God's plans for the salvation of the world. It is a fact that should be thoroughly impressed upon our minds, that the principles of God as revealed in His Word, are as unchangeable as the laws existing in the natural universe. The law that has to do with the growth of plants, to-day, is precisely the same as that which existed in the development of the first plant that ever burst into life; and the law which regulates our conduct, and has to do with our obligations to God, is the same precisely, as on that day when God first placed man in Eden. The faith once delivered, is to-

day, in all its essential points, precisely the same as that which moved Abraham to act, when God said unto him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering." As God is eternal and unchangeable, so are the great truths and principles revealed by Him without beginning or end.

Those principles that were to govern Israel nearly four thousand years ago, as given in the 19th chapter of Leviticus, are largely in harmony with the Divine order of to-day. While it is not for us to bring a similar "trespass offering," it is for us to seek reconciliation for sin, through Jesus who died for us, and of whom the offerings, under the Mosiac dispensation, are typical. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, . . . Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

It was not for the Lord Jesus to annul the noble principles, which from the beginning, He saw fit to reveal through the prophets. It was His rather to ratify those sublime precepts; and He only has authority to suggest additional rules of conduct, and for Him only, it is possible to establish the same, by displays of power, such as were never witnessed before. "He taught them as one having authority;" and among the many sublime declarations which fell from his lips, we hear Him saying, "All things whatsoever ye would

that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." At another time, in answer to the question, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment; and the second is like, namely, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In all these, He shows not only His authority, but He manifests wisdom surpassing the human by far. The thought expressed is in condensed form, and highly in harmony with the demands of our fallen race.

That sin is not a necessity existing in the depraved condition of our natures, is in accordance with the Word of God. Paul declares that God through the Son, "condemned sin in the flesh." He not only opened up a way whereby sin can not have dominion over us, but as our "example," He was in all points "tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

In the coming of the Lord Jesus, we have the strongest testimony as to the possibility of victory over our fallen natures. In this connection, the Apostles have revealed much that is valuable. Those were loving words, and a blessed revelation as spoken by John: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because *greater is He* that is in you, than He that is in the world." Those addressed, withstood successfully the false prophets, with all their corrupt

doctrines. Through faith in Christ, they had overcome the world, as they were kept through a power infinitely surpassing the prince of this world. They were "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," inasmuch as they trusted Him in whom, if we also trust, we, too, shall overcome, even as they.

Let us not then indulge in the thought for a moment, that sin must necessarily prevail in these poor hearts of ours. We are "justified fully by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and while we recognize this blessed work of grace, we are also constrained to declare, that the work is no partial display of God's power. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." When he spoke our sins forgiven, we were made "every whit whole." It is for us, through God's blessing, "to lay aside *every* weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset." And not only so, but "We know that whosoever is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (John 5: 18.) The inspired penman declares emphatically, he "that is born of God," is free from sin, and keepeth himself, that the wicked one toucheth him not. And the same great truth is brought out more forcibly and clearly, perhaps, in 1st. John 3: 9,— "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for His seed (the seed of the new life within us, implanted by the Holy Spirit) remaineth in us, because he is born of God." In this, it is not said, that he can never afterwards sin, because he is born of God; but so long as he abides in the vine, the "seed remaineth in him," and he cannot sin.



When Joseph was in the midst of temptation, we hear Him saying, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39—9.) The principle within, was utterly at variance with the wrong, and he could surrender only against the purest expressions of his being. Regeneration is a change "by which the unholy will in man and the enmity to God and His law are subdued, and a principle of supreme love to God, or holy affections are implanted in the heart." And how can an unholy will, and enmity to God exist in the heart with supreme love? The existence of the unholy implies the absence of the holy. It is for us "Either to make the tree good, and its fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit." As we can not "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles,"—even so love cannot exist in the heart with willful disobedience.

The regenerate recognize the evil tendencies within, and the necessity of constant warfare against these; but "mere inclination to a thing," as some writer has said, "is not properly a willing of that thing." Many good Christians are greatly troubled sometimes, and come almost to doubt their acceptance of God, on account of their wicked inclinations, against which they find it necessary to watch always. The great Apostle was moved to declare, "I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;" but in close connection with this thought, he declares, that he has "a will to perform that which is good," and while he recognizes the utter weakness within, he thanks God

for deliverance through Jesus Christ.

We recognize our acceptance of God, when we know that our wills are in subjection to His will, and when all our preferences go out after those things that are pleasing to the Father. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." The true Christian seeks to lay aside prejudice, and every other obstacle that may be in the way of his comprehending clearly the will of the Lord, that he may not only be a hearer, but a doer. In his heart, he renounces the "works of the flesh," has no relish for wicked society, the card-table, the ball-room, and corrupt literature, but chooses to be a "door-keeper"—occupy any position in the house of God—rather than "dwell in the tents of wickedness." He prefers the association of Christians to any other; relishes the study of the Bible and religious literature; endeavors to make good use of his time; loves the house of God, and the prayer meeting; is watchful over his words and feelings; and is anxious for the salvation of souls and the prosperity of the Church. (2 Cor. 7—11).

Amidst all, we do not, and can not deny that devoted followers of the Lord Jesus commit sin,—that none are without sin. John says. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and we doubt not but that there were many, in primitive, as well as in modern times, that were thus deceived. And is it not to such, that Paul speaks, when he says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall?" We "have sin,"

not through willful disobedience, but through failure "to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard." In many instances, Christians have been guilty of gross violations of the Divine law as a result of a failure to "watch," and heed as they ought, the warnings of inspiration. The new life principle being for a time suffered to lie dormant, against their own judgment they have been "taken captive" by satan at his will,—all because they were found sleeping, instead of "fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." And just here let us give prayerful attention to those blessed words of our Lord, when He said, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, . . . lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping." How vastly important it is, that proper efforts be made to awaken and reclaim such as have been "overtaken in a fault." In some instances our best workers have been guilty of great transgressions:—indeed such are more exposed than others. It has pleased satan, in all the ages, to make special effort for the capture of our strongest forces.

It is claimed, very truly, by men of excellent culture, that "the *normal* direction of the believer's energies is against sin; the law of God after the inward man is the *ruling* principle of his true self, though the old nature, not yet *fully* deadened, rebels and sins." Paul explains in these words: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

We conclude then that our success in this warfare, and hence a knowledge of our acceptance in this grand army of the Lord, depends upon our maintaining this "life-principle" implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is when this becomes dormant, that we sink into spiritual stupor, which so seriously impairs our usefulness, and has for its fruits the "many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

V. We recognize our acceptance of God from what we FEEL. It is claimed by some that our feelings have nothing to do with an acceptance,—that pardon of sin, and the works of regeneration, as wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, produces no inward impression, or unusual emotion whatever. Others claim that while there is no change of feeling, as wrought directly through the agency of the Spirit, that our recognition of an acceptance gives rise to a change, and is the source of pleasant emotions, on precisely the same principle and only this, that changes are effected, and pleasurable feelings are produced by other means.

We claim, however, and shall endeavor to show, from infallible authority, that as an evidence of our acceptance with God, and of His mercy in the forgiveness of sins, that our *feelings* may be received as testimony, and that the Holy Spirit is productive of pleasurable emotions, such as are not experienced through any other agency.

Owing to difference in temperament, the feeling produced may differ in intensity, but not in nature. As

certain agencies, in every day life, produce various degrees of emotion in different individuals, even so the intensity of feeling, as produced by the Spirit of God, may vary, for similar reasons. If some, therefore, do not feel all that others do, it is not for them to accept this, as an evidence of their non-acceptance. We reach conclusions more from the nature of the feelings, than from their intensity. We believe that the fruits of the Spirit as manifested in the nature of the feelings, have been precisely the same in all ages, and in all individuals. The emotions which move the Christian of to-day to action and sacrifice, in the mighty contest against satanic rule, are precisely similar to those, that moved the Apostles to work, and all other Christians of gone-by ages, who have accomplished so much for God.

1. In the work of regeneration we recognize a change of such a nature and of such magnitude, as could not possibly occur without a change of feelings.

It is a change wrought upon the heart, the seat of our affections, or sensibilities; and as such, a change of feelings is inevitable. The change is radical:—it reaches the center; it severs the main root, the ultimate source of all evil. And the feeling produced by this work of God, on the inward man, is so absolutely unlike any sensation experienced through other causes, that the convert cannot fail to recognize its source. He is convinced from its fruits, that it is of Divine origin. It is a change of affections, by which he perceives that the unholy will, and all enmity to God are subdued. He recognizes clearly, that what he

once loved, he now hates, and what was once a source of joy is now a source of grief.

The beloved Apostle gave utterance to a noble truth, when he said, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." If our "heart" (used here in the sense of conscience) does not condemn us, we may know that God does not condemn, and that we are accepted of Him. And just here, we may recognize the importance of the Scripture, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." We doubt not but that many good Christians often feel self-condemned; and to such the Apostle addresses these words: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." In our self-condemnation, or while we may be in doubt as to our acceptance, we have this consoling thought, that God's knowledge is more than ours, and He knows our hearts—whether we truly love Him.

We are not to understand from what John says, that *conscience* is always a correct guide; or that all whose hearts do not condemn them, are safe before God; for many have their conscience *seared* "who being past *feeling* have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness," Others are not only ignorant of the truth, but seemingly care but little about it. God requires not only *sincerity*, but *sincerity in the truth*,—absolute renouncement of "the commandments and doctrines of men," and unreserved surrender to the righteousness which is of God.

We call special attention to the fact that John appeals to the testimony of the "heart," as evidence of an acceptance with God. It is evident, therefore, that he considers the *heart* an agent capable of imparting knowledge in aid of a decision of the great question—"Am I a soldier of the cross?" The heart as John doubtless would define it, is the seat of our moral nature, having the exclusive privilege of knowing itself; and having a knowledge also of what is due to itself, accompanied with a *feeling* of constraint, or obligation known as *duty*. And not only in the definition of the word, do we have inseparably connected the idea of feeling, but it is so intimately associated with this idea, that we can scarcely refer to the one, without thinking of the other. It is through the heart as the seat of our sensibilities, that we have capacity to feel, or perceive; and in consideration of the change produced by the washing of regeneration, we conclude, therefore, that the convert must undergo a perceptible change in his feelings. It is not at all probable, that a change so radical, and reaching the ultimate source of our moral nature, could be effected without a knowledge of the individual. And that the feelings aid in our conclusions regarding the change,—is it not a fact largely in harmony with the experience of Christians as expressed everywhere and in all ages?

We are satisfied, not only from the Word of God, but from the experience of millions of Christians, that the source of happiness lies in an unreserved submission to the will and wisdom of God. It is only for us, therefore, as Christians to seek and possess holiness;

and real happiness will follow as naturally as warmth follows the dispensation of the rays of the sun. HE WHO IS HOLY MUST BE HAPPY. A real, solid and delightful peace stands out as prominent among the fruits of the Spirit. Paul declares just what has been, in all ages, in harmony with Christian experience; when he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE;" and who can exercise these inner excellences, and not experience all that is understood, in a proper definition of the word feeling? It is a precious thought, also, that the consolation experienced through entire consecration to God, may be permanent. The loss of friends, the frowns of the world, and the calamities of life are not going to blot out the peace experienced in the blessed service. The Lord Jesus declares, "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

2. It is reasonable that a change of *belief*, so thorough and complete in every particular, should be accompanied with a change of feeling.

It is a fact familiar to all, that our feelings are regulated largely by our belief. If amidst poverty, we believed that we were soon to come into possession of good homes and means sufficient to support us in declining years, we certainly would experience feelings entirely unlike those that follow conviction, that having homes and plenty, we are soon to be deprived of them, and of the means of subsistence. It is a fact also, that our feelings toward those in whom we have confidence, are entirely unlike those experienced towards some, in whom we have less confidence. The



good news from friends produce feelings entirely unlike those produced by sad intelligence.

Our belief has to do with our actions, as well as feelings. The farmer prepares his ground and sows his seed, in hopes of the reward. Against wintry blasts, and exposed to the burning sun, he toils in behalf of things necessary to support life.

All these various impressions and experiences are typical of the life of those devoted to the service of the Lord. We believe the Gospel, and through practical acquaintance with the good news once delivered, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement."

We might as well expect fire to exist without heat, as an experimental knowledge of Christ without feeling.

We believe that through a proper exercise of the faith once delivered, it is for the Christian to "rejoice in the Lord alway." We may surround him with devils, or shut him out from the world, the light of sun, and everything beautiful in nature, and still there will linger the blessed peace to which the world is a stranger. We doubt not but that Paul and Silas rejoiced, while in prison they "prayed, and sang praises unto God." And who can doubt but that the beloved Apostle, while an exile, "in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," enjoyed the consoling influences of the Holy Spirit, as the Lord Jesus revealed Himself with such mighty power and spoke words, which only He, who declared Himself the Alpha and Omega, could utter.

We would not, however, have it understood in this connection, that the Christian is never sorrowful. Mental pain or uneasiness is universal in human experience. Even the Lord Jesus was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and Paul with reference to his own experience and that of others, says, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." While those blessed disciples were at peace with God, their "conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Ghost," it was in accordance with the nature of their faith, that they should suffer mentally. Their anxiety for the salvation of others amounted to real sorrow of heart. The great Apostle declares emphatically, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I would wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh."

And now as a concluding thought, in this chapter, let the idea be thoroughly impressed upon our minds, that no mere profession is to be taken as evidence of our acceptance. Jesus declared that it is "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father which is in heaven." We may have our names enrolled upon a church-book, and finally have our "part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." We may believe in the Divinity of Christianity, and that religion is "a good thing;" but let us not forget, that, "Devils also believe, and tremble." Or we may take the position of the moralist, and be very correct, in our deportment and dealings with our fellow-creatures,— "Having a form of godliness, but

denying the power thereof;" but let us remember the great truth, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." . . . .

Even so faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone."

While there is a great deal more, that might be said, bearing on the subject introduced in this chapter, we trust, that what has been offered, may receive the prayerful attention of those who read. "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God."

## X.

## DANGERS IN THE CONTEST.

It is true, perhaps, that the Church has never had so little to fear as at the present time. She is stronger numerically, and has more consecrated and intelligent workers to-day than ever before. But amidst unparalleled success, it must be said that she is not out of danger. There was never a time when the Church needed Divine guidance more than now. She is exposed to many dangers, to a few of which we call attention; with firm confidence that the Church, in the end, will be victor over all opposition through Him who said, "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me."

I. Prominent among the dangers connected with our work, is a spirit of SECTARIANISM, or that excess of partisan or denominational zeal, which has so largely detracted from the prosperity of the Church. While we would urge upon every Christian the importance of giving due attention to the interests of his own church, seeking to build it up through earnest effort for the conversion of souls, we deem it our duty to cry out against that blind attachment to a particular creed, which seeks prominence to the disadvantage of others no less worthy, or possibly, more deserving. We may welcome the notoriety that comes through

successful efforts for the salvation of the world; but it is for us to resist those chilling influences which have their origin in a disposition merely to become popular. The great question with all engaged in this mighty struggle should be—"What saith the Scriptures?" If in our inquiries after Truth, we resort to the Bible as the great source of information, and this to the exclusion of all prejudices and other outside influences, we shall soon come, as a Church, to be a unit in the faith once delivered.

While it is a fact that the Church is divided, and while she is not going out with the united effort against sin for which Christ prayed, it is lamentably true, that there is a failure on part of those differing, in many instances, to exercise due charity one for another. Strife, hatred and emulations exist greatly against the prosperity of Zion.

We are happy in the idea, however, that bigotry and sectarianism do not prevail in the Church, as in former times. We believe that those evils are rapidly giving way before the advance of an enlightened Christianity; but we deem it essential, that as Christians, we put forth every effort to subdue those evil tendencies, and bring into subjection these carnal natures. "For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

As when physically infirm, we seek restoration through medical skill, even so amidst spiritual infirmity, let us go to the Great Physician, seeking the relief so essential to efficiency in the Master's service.

As a remedy against sectarianism, we urge *thorough consecration to the Master* on part of all those professing faith in Christ. The chief difficulty lies in the fact, that we fail largely as a Church, to submit ourselves unreservedly to the control of the Word and Spirit of God. First of all we need a consecrated ministry, seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"—having as the uppermost thought, the salvation of souls, and as the last consideration, the superiority of some particular sect. As ministers of our Lord Jesus, we must rid ourselves of all selfishness, and worldly ambition, and see to it that a love for souls is the highest consideration. Deeply imbued with motives—pure and holy—we shall make a favorable impression upon the world, and shall not only win souls to Christ, but shall move professed Christians to greater earnestness in the Lord.

There is no work to-day more important than that which tends to awaken, in all members of Christ's Church, a disposition to make the best possible use of their opportunities. It is in that thorough consecration which presents our "bodies holy, and acceptable unto the Lord," that we shall go out truly efficient in the Master's service, and free from the sectarianism so much against our prosperity.

It is natural for us to feel strongly attached to that branch of the Church which has been more directly instrumental in our conversion; but midst all, let us consider well the words of Christ, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Whether members of the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, or of any

other evangelical Church, let us be firmly impressed with the great truth, that these are branches of the same vine, from which comes all our strength, and through which we expect to reach the same Heaven.

We should consider the origin of these divisions, and their bearing upon a godless world. Under this head, at a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, recently held in Boston, Mr. Wm. E. Dodge spoke to the point, when he said:

“The divisions which separate the various bodies of the Protestant Church, arose largely from political causes and local conditions, in times and countries where social usages and forces were absolutely different from those ruling in our country. They were largely protests against state interference or action. They were often molded by distinctions of race, or grew out of persecution or prejudice. They have been kept alive by association and hereditary influences, and often by accidental surroundings. Most of these divisions would not have arisen under the freedom of worship and kindly charity of these better days. They should not stand in the way of the heartiest co-operation in Christian work, and social reforms. The action of the convention of the Episcopal Church three years ago, in extending the hand of Christian fellowship to other bodies, and proposing terms of Christian union, was a large advance and a most hopeful sign of the times. The response has been most cordial, and many causes of disagreement and misunderstanding will certainly be removed. We are not living in the world of two centuries or even of fifty years ago.

Events are moving with an accelerated pace that startles us. Conditions are rapidly forming, that may change our civilization, and leave our children to confront dangers that may not have seemed possible to us. We cannot afford to spend time on differences which do not affect our vital belief, or our loyal service for Christ and our brothers about us, who are in suffering and ignorance. We hope soon to be in our Father's presence, where everything that divides us now, will seem unworthy of a thought. Why should we not agree to reduce these differences to the smallest point now, while we are doing the Father's work on earth, gladly emphasizing the living points of agreement which unite us to each other and to Him? We shall never have the respect or confidence of a godless world about us, until we do this."

There has never been a time in the history of the world, when the Church has had such grand opportunities as she has to-day; and we are happy in the thought, that, to so very great an extent, she is improving them. But the work is just commenced; and to accomplish well and speedily the great mission committed to our trust, we must take above all things, "the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The Church needs Divine wisdom, that she may not magnify existing differences. We are not so widely apart as some have tried to make out. It is a fact worthy of note, that the Protestant Church agree largely, in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; and we see no reason why Christians of all denominations should not



be practically united in the great work against the kingdom of satan.

Our greatest danger is not in the fact, that we differ in a few points of doctrine, and to some extent in church government. The danger is more in how we regard these differences, and in the influence we allow them to have over us. While we recognize the fact, that as a Church, we differ slightly in our ideas as to what God has revealed in His blessed word, and as we struggle to comprehend clearly those precious teachings by earnest and prayerful study, it is important that we should watch, lest he who beguiled Eve, should take advantage of us, and we come to attach undue importance to existing differences, or wholly disregard them. There is danger in either extreme. To excite divisions, and create disturbances among Christians, has always been one of many schemes on part of satan to thwart the plans of the Almighty in His efforts for the conversion of the world. We find in the Church of to-day, a degree of bigotry expressing itself with a zeal in favor of particular religious creeds, such as are by no means in harmony with the charity which "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." The great danger is not in the differences themselves, but in the prejudice and bitterness which they are liable to excite. Is it not a fact, that through undue attachment to some particular creed, many are to-day standing out against the plainest truths of inspiration? We fear that some attach more importance to their church creed, than to

the blessed teachings of Holy Writ. In conversation not long since with a brother somewhat sectarianly inclined, we were surprised to hear him say, "My position, I know, is not according to the Bible; but such is the doctrine of our church, and I feel it my duty to defend it." These words came from a man of more than average intelligence, and illustrates the power of prejudice even against no small degree of culture, as well as against the teachings of the Bible. And is it not a fact, that erroneous doctrines find a lurking place with many ministers whose opinions are not the product of unprejudiced Bible study, but are largely the result of doctrinal publications sent out at a time when the Church was by no means as pure as she is to-day? Is it not true that not a few of our theological seminaries are training schools, in behalf of certain church creeds, not sanctioned by the Bible, but having their origin largely in those less enlightened ages when men were controlled more by prejudice than by sound reason?

The Reformation, under the leadership of Luther and Melancthon, was truly a blessed advance in the good work, and to which is due largely the doctrinal purity of the Church of to-day. Those noble men, moved by the Spirit and power of God, protested faithfully against the corruptions under Popish rule; but while a grand work was accomplished, in those times, in behalf of doctrinal purity, there remains a work for the Christian heroism of modern times; which we would not have overlooked; and such as must contribute largely to the prosperity of the cause so nobly

defended by former adherents to the faith. It is for the Church of these times to make complete the work commenced under Luther. It is for us to rid ourselves of all false doctrine,—to purge out the “old leaven,” that we may be a new lump—as we were when “unleavened,” or when Christ first gave the Church as an agent for the salvation of the world. It is our duty to study well the teaching of our Lord, that every remnant of unbelief may be driven out. Let us be satisfied only as we accept Him in precept as well as in practice, and the Church will go forth with the renewed power of Apostolic times. In our efforts in behalf of truth, it is for us to be guided by words of inspiration; and withal we cannot consistently disregard the “minor points” of difference. “Know ye not,”—said our Saviour, “that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” One of the great dangers in the Church to-day, lies in the fact, that so many professed Christians manifest no particular anxiety about the “little leaven.” As we remember that the disastrous corruptions of the Church had their origin in small beginnings, so we should be earnest to-day to correct doctrinal errors—the least as well as the greatest. As corrupt doctrine was the source of discord in the primitive Church, even so we may expect that entire purity will restore union. It is in a removal of the cause, that we shall find the remedy for Church commotions. While we admonish the Church against attaching too much importance to existing differences, we must not pass them by as unworthy of our attention. We must not treat with indifference, the least

of these commandments. It is our duty to adhere strictly to every word of inspiration. The blessed truth is within our reach, and we have only to make a proper use of our opportunities, that as a Church we may "be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

In this great work, we must rid ourselves of all prejudice, and accept the pure teachings of Jesus to the exclusion of all tradition and human theories. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for *reproof*; for *correction*, for *instruction in righteousness*." We varily believe, if the Church would cling, with due fervency to that great Fountain of Light, and through that seek as she ought, a "correction" of her doctrinal errors, instead of depending so much upon other agencies for her "instruction," that she would in a comparatively short time, come into that unity of the faith, in which we would "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

The Church of to-day is asking as of old, "What is Truth?" Our blessed Lord, in His mission to this world, answered most effectually this great question, when he said, "MY WORD IS TRUTH." As a Church we shall be united, and a power in the world against all unrighteousness, in proportion to our devotion to the Fountain of Light as revealed through Christ. Our Lord is inviting poor, deluded man to that Fountain to-day: "Whosoever will, let him take the water

of life freely." Shall we not hear His voice and receive the reward?

II. Another danger in the way of permanent prosperity on part of the Church lies in what we would term an UNLAWFUL MEMBERSHIP.

The Church proper, or as constituted under Apostolic management, is a body of Christian believers, "observing the same rites, and acknowledging the same ecclesiastical authority;"—or it is a body composed of such persons as acknowledge Christ as the Saviour of the World, and whose inward and outward life, through the change wrought by the Holy Spirit, conform to His teachings. And is it not a fact with which every reader of this volume is familiar, that local church organizations of to-day are exceedingly remiss in their reception of persons to membership? Is it not true, in many instances; that names of persons are found within church-books, who frankly admit that they have never experienced that change of heart essential to a membership with the people of God, and even stand out against important truths clearly revealed in the blessed Word? Are there not many who have professed a "change," and although they are to-day openly unworthy, yet they hold a place in the Church against no particular opposition? And the question for us to consider is,—Have we any right to receive and hold unbelievers in the Church? Does not the Gospel sanction such as have been SAVED "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?"

1. It is clearly in harmony with inspired teaching,

that "*regenerate*" persons only, were received into the Apostolic Church.

The faith once delivered is something more than a mere assent of the mind to the truths of the Gospel. It is an exercise of confidence in God, which leads to the renouncement of sin, secures pardon, and renders the convert a "new creature" in Christ Jesus; and as such, he becomes a child of God, and is received as one among the heritage of the Lord. It is through faith and repentance, that we come to be received as members of this family. God recognizes as members of His household, only those who have "received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father." No unbeliever is entitled to a place in the Church; for God declares, "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me." The members of this heritage are unlike any other people, as the Lord proclaimed at an early day in the history of Israel: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." There exists no affinity between the believer and the unbeliever; and in recognition of this, the inspired penman asks, "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean." It is our duty to come out from the world and be separate. We are not to exclude ourselves from the society of unbelievers, as

by contact with them, we shall be more efficient in their conversion; and we must not forget, that it was for such that Jesus died. But we have no right to join them in their unholy deeds, or invite them to join us,—to enter, with all their sins, the “heritage of the servants of the Lord.” The Scriptures represent God’s servants as a holy people, and Christ as having given “Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” We rob the Church at once of her purity, and largely of her efficiency, when we tolerate among our members willful disobedience, or receive to membership unbelievers; and for this reason God has said, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate;” and we certainly are not “separate,” so long as we receive the ungodly into this heritage.

The Church of our Lord Jesus, on the day of Pentecost, went out PURE, “not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;” and it was declared, that the Lord added to the Church daily *such as should be saved*. We have no record of others being added to the Church except such, and who are they if not the regenerate? “All that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Were not all these baptized believers, and who else can be of the heritage which is of the Lord?

Those that claim that baptism is “non-essential,” are making a mistake which can be very easily corrected by reference to the example and precept of the apostles. We have no right to reject any part of the *counsel of*

God, all of which Paul affirmed that he had not "shunned to declare;" and that baptism is a part of this counsel, appears not only in the fact that our Saviour, shortly before his ascension, commissioned the disciples to go and "teach all nations, *baptizing* them;" but Luke tells us also, (Luke 7: 34,) speaking in reference to the baptism of John, that, "The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Have we any right more than they to refuse the holy ordinance, —thus rejecting the counsel of God? We certainly are under obligations to surrender to God's righteousness, the same as others. It is to be feared that we have among us in these days, some such as Jesus addressed, when he said, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

It was concerning members of His kingdom that the Lord said, "Their righteousness is of me," and evidently, all those who are ignorant of God's righteousness are excluded. To be of the Lord's heritage requires something more than a mere insertion of a name in a church-book; and we fear that there are multitudes whose names are found with the records of the Church to whom it will be said in the Great Day, "Depart from me."

It is unfortunate, that, in so many instances we should have to go to the church records, in these days, to find out who are "professors of religion." Is it not a fact that we have multitudes holding a membership, with local church organizations who fail utterly by ex-



ample and precept, to express any relationship with the called of God?

The only danger, therefore, in an improper membership in the church, is not in the fact merely, that such detract so largely from her efficiency. An unworthy membership not only keeps out many who otherwise would receive the Word, but it encourages some who have been received to membership, in the idea that they are *saved*, when they have never come to experience the change essential to salvation.

Let us see to it, that as a Church, and as Christians, we are not "blind leaders of the blind;" let us struggle as never before, that with God's blessing, we may go out against satan, "without spot and blemish."

2. And now the question comes, How are we to remedy the evil arising from corruptions which have "crept in unawares?" Certainly not by a rash exclusion of the great host of unbelieving church members. Such a course would doubtless result in much evil, and in some instances, might root out the wheat also.

As a remedy for ecclesiastical imperfections, whether in doctrine or practice, we have it to suggest, that the people of God, everywhere, go out as one in earnest and faithful efforts in behalf of a revival of His work in every city, hamlet and rural district in all the land. We need a work of grace in the Church, such as will lead all to comprehend clearly the truths of God, and prompt to an unreserved surrender to these truths, such as will lay waste all impurities, "imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." We claim there is no necessity

of so much misunderstanding, as now exists, as to what God has revealed. We speak in harmony with the teachings of the Word, when we say that these misconceptions are directly the fruits of wrong doing, and sinful practices, on part of those professing faith in Christ; and one among other great demands upon us now as a Church is, a complete surrender of all our sins. As our perceptions of the truth have been benumbed by willful transgression, so we shall receive the enlightening influences of God's Spirit by proper submission to His will; and shall come to comprehend more clearly, the glorious truths which God, in his mercy, has seen fit to reveal to a world lost in sin. Our blessed Saviour never spoke a more precious truth than when He said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." While sound mental culture is important, in all the relations of life, it is not directly essential to our understanding of God's Word. In the revelation of His will, it pleased the Lord to speak words, such as may be comprehended by ordinary minds; and in regard to the way of holiness, He declares that "Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." We believe that Dr. Mosheim, prominent among church historians, speaks words in harmony with divine wisdom when he says: "The Scriptures are the only source from which we are to draw our religious sentiments, whether they relate to faith or to practice; and that these inspired writings are, in all matters that are essential to salvation, so plain and easy to be thoroughly understood, that their

signification may be learned without the aid of an expositor, by every person of *common sense*, who has a competent knowledge of the language in which they are composed."

While a work of grace, and Church purity rests largely, as some may claim, with those called of God to preach the Gospel, it becomes our duty to urge upon the laity, everywhere, the importance of immediate submission to the Gospel call. We believe that the Lord is calling all His people to go forth at once, as laborers in His vineyard; and we cannot think that it is for the masses of God's people to wait for a more thorough consecration on part of the ministry. In no way can the ministry be called out, in their grand work more effectually than by a complete consecration of the millions in this land to God. Let the prayer of God's people go up all over the land, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy." And very soon the ministry would go out clothed with power, such as prompts adherence to the Words of Christ, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

We do not claim that all of God's people are to go forth as expounders and preachers of the Gospel; but we firmly believe that it is for all to go out in earnest effort in behalf of the salvation of this world. We believe that God is calling all to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness;" and when all come thus to put on Christ, and not till then, we

shall have a Church pure in doctrine and practice, and of such as shall "WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS."

While we have firm confidence in God, in the promises and in His power to save to the uttermost, we doubt not the liability of the Church to serious disadvantage through corrupt practices, and erroneous doctrines; and as a preventative against a repetition of her former decline and corruptions we need "to give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time, we should let them slip." May it be in all our hearts to heed, with due diligence, the words of the prophet, who said, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city."

III. Another danger in the way of success on part of the Church lies in the great amount of vain and CORRUPT LITERATURE afloat in the land.

When we consider that millions of dollars are invested every year, in tons of foul literature sent out from different publishing houses in the United States, and when we call to mind its demoralizing influence upon society, and that it is having an increased circulation; and as we remember how slow the Church is in its comprehension of the danger, we shudder in contemplation of the possible consequences. It is a fact recognized, as it ought to be, by only a few, that the circulation of impure or irreligious reading, in this country is greatly against the prosperity of the Church, and is destined to become more exceedingly injurious, if not checked by proper means;—and through what

agency is this great work to be accomplished, if not by those professing faith in Christ? Laws have been enacted in about all the states against the circulation of filthy literature, but these are largely disregarded; and to insure their enforcement, and the enactment of laws more stringent, it is necessary that the Church should recognize the importance of the work, and use her influence, as far as possible, in behalf of good laws and sound literature. To do this, and wield the influence essential against the circulation of vain and trashy reading, it is important that we should come to consider the magnitude of the evil; otherwise we are not likely to put forth the exertion necessary to meet the demands that are upon us. The evil appears in various forms, and in some instances, as we shall see, with a false garb, rendering careful investigation necessary to detect the wrong.

1. Among the evils under this head, with which we have to contend, we would mention first, the immense number of infidel publications. As is well known, these are formidable enemies to Christianity, and are having a destructive influence against religious interests. As a main issue, infidelity, with all possible bitterness, and by all the sophistry that it is possible for the devil to suggest, makes war upon the Christian system. It comes out against every noble enterprise suggested by the Church; and it labors incessantly to weaken Christian influence, by all possible ridicule and misrepresentation. Infidels labor to circulate their false theories among men, and the youths of our country have largely been brought under their

teachings. As a result, thousands of noble minds have been poisoned by infidel trash; and multitudes are kept out of the Church, and thousands die every year without hope in Christ.

It becomes, therefore, the duty of the Church to stem the tide of evil; as brought to bear through these various skeptical sources. We have infidel theories to contend with from the lecture platform, as well as through books and papers. Our influence must go out as far as possible against all these and against the circulation of wicked literature in whatever form. We must discourage the reading of infidel publications, and so far as possible, keep impious literature out of the reach of, especially the youths of our country. We have multitudes of young people in our midst, whose minds are liable to be corrupted by the reading of a single page from some pernicious book, or of a single column from some infidel paper. Eternal vigilance only is the price of success, in our efforts against these intrusions; and it is deplorable that multitudes of Christian parents are to a great extent, indifferent as to the results of these mischievous publications.

While it becomes our duty to watch with all diligence against the disastrous consequences of infidel teachings, we must not fail to put forth every effort possible in behalf of the circulation of sound religious reading. In this direction, there is not half the effort made that should be. We find many Christian families that are utterly negligent in this respect. We find some that have secular literature on their tables in abundance, but who claim that they are not able to

take a religious paper. Many are without religious literature as a result of negligence, and for want of interest in the religious prosperity and salvation of the world.

Now, my brethren, such things ought not so to be. Sound religious papers and books should be within the reach of every family. No parent should think of being without, at least, one religious paper; and every family should, if possible, have access to a carefully selected library. Every pastor, Sunday-school superintendent, teacher and all others interested, should do all they can to encourage the reading of the same. The older members of society should be examples for the young, and should know the contents of every book, and be able to place such as are needed in hands where they would do the most good. Give our boys and girls the chance they ought to have, to read good books and no other, and when they grow up, they are not liable to have much, if any, taste for irreligious publications.

It is fitting that Christians should contribute in every way to the circulation of the greatest possible amount of religious reading; and we refer with pleasure, just here, to the noble efforts made by the American Tract Society, the American Sunday School Union, the Methodist Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and Baptist publications, with many others which for many years have been instruments in the hands of God, in the conversion of millions who to-day are praising God in heaven; and may it be in the hearts of the Lord's people everywhere to encourage the

reading of sound religious literature, such as will contribute to the prosperity of Zion and the salvation of the world.

2. Besides the evil influences which go out extensively through infidel teaching, in various forms, we have to mention others which are scarcely less deleterious to the religious interests of the world. Among these, we call attention to the large amount of *obscene literature* which is scattered over our country in vast quantities, and which is most thoroughly offensive to the chastity and delicacy of every pure-minded individual. These consist not only of printed matter, and of literature highly against the moral and intellectual interests of all, but we find pictures drawn in colors, and often very attractive, and particularly demoralizing to the young. These present to the mind or view, something which purity and decency forbid to be expressed. They are filthy in every particular, and parents and teachers will find it sometimes exceedingly difficult to detect the evil. Usually the circulation of these disgusting books and drawings is concealed as far as possible, from older members of society, and from all who are likely to be inclined to divulge the evil; and so in many instances, we shall find it exceedingly difficult to detect the wrong without careful investigation.

We find also a large amount of improper literature in cards and pictures, as they appear sometimes in places of public resort, particularly in saloons, and occasionally in billiard halls, and not infrequently on cigar boxes, &c. Against all these it is highly im-



portant that Christians should watch. They are among the "wiles of the devil," against which we shall not be able to stand without the preparation as suggested by Paul in the sixth chapter of the Ephesians. The devil's agents are at work to ensnare the youths of our country, and they are accomplishing their work in many localities, to a fearful extent. Their sly and deceptive efforts are doing an indescribable amount of mischief, and it is for us all to be very careful lest the enemy come and sow "tares" to the eternal ruin of those committed to our trust.

3. As a Church we find also a formidable enemy in the large amount of FICTITIOUS LITERATURE sent out every year, from numerous publishing houses in this and other countries. We would not, however, be understood as aiming to condemn all literary productions that are of a fictitious character. There are many works of fiction which abound in pure thought, expressed by an excellent selection of words, such as are no detriment to the reforms of the age, in any particular. We notice, for instance, that excellent work, "BEN-HUR, A TALE OF THE CHRIST," and "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN," with many similar productions, which have been issued with special reference to the good that might be accomplished. They are the productions of able writers, and have been written with the purest aims; and we take pleasure in commending such to the perusal of old and young, as we regard them valuable contributions to the literary world.

On the other hand, we find that a very large per-

cent of the fictitious works afloat in our country; consists in trifling novels, such as are most emphatically against the interests of those who read. They abound in impure ideas, and silly expressions utterly against all refinement and good morals; and as such should be shunned by those aspiring to any considerable excellence in mind or heart.

The novels of our day abound in fictitious stories with lively descriptions, and designs, adapted in every respect to attract attention, that, by these means, they may acquire the greatest possible popularity, and secure to the publishers a nice profit. Millions of dollars are thus contributed every year, for literature that is not only useless, but thoroughly offensive to all refinement and good taste. The persistent reader of such works comes, soon to take an interest only in those highly colored productions, the chief design of which is to allure the mind; and prominent among the results, in thousands of instances, he is enticed into evil, making impressions which are the beginning of a course of wickedness, ending in his final and eternal ruin.

The confirmed novel reader can see no beauty in that solid literature, the chief aim of which is to elevate the mind, and make pure the heart. And besides this, his time is so absorbed in the useless novel, that he has not much time left for the reading of valuable books, even if he had interest enough to confine himself to their perusal. Consequently, the novel reader is usually a superficial scholar, and knows but little about history, and other solid reading, which contributes so largely to the good of society. Withal it

is a fact familiar to every casual observer, that a novelist is never an efficient Christian. In the perusal of vain literature, there is nothing that awakens in us ideas of our responsibility to God, or that tends to increase interest in the moral and social well-being of humanity; but, in it we find much that tends to subdue an interest in the eternal well-being of our fellow-men, and we cannot, therefore, be too particular in our selection of reading matter; for upon it depends, to a great extent, our success in temporal things, as well as our efficiency in Christian life.

With these hints and suggestions regarding the baneful influences of impure or irreligious literature, it is to be hoped that our friendly readers will come to recognize, to some extent at least, the evil, that all may not only take the steps necessary to the suppression, so far as possible, of this great source of danger in the Protestant Church, but that we may also put forth the efforts necessary to a more general circulation of those books and periodicals which contribute so largely to the establishment of sound mental culture, and great moral excellence. And just here, we would make special reference to the importance of an earnest and persevering study of the Bible. Of all the books that have found a place in the interests of humanity, none are so valuable as the Bible. Indeed all other books, all other literature of the ages combined, has not contributed so much to the well-being of the world as that in which we find revealed MAN'S DUTY TO HIS MAKER.

“Bible, let me clasp thee; Chronicle divine

Of world's redemption, of Saviour mine;  
Wisdom for the simple, riches for the poor,  
Hope for the desponding, for the sick a cure;  
Rest for all the weary, reason for the slave,  
Courage for the fearful, life beyond the grave."

IV. Another danger in the way of permanent success in the mighty contest against satanic rule, lies in a possible failure to GIVE DUE ATTENTION TO THE CHILDREN.

Our success in the control of those about entering a state of maturity, depends largely upon the training they have received in early life. The sturdy oak, however ill-shaped, might have been straight and attractive, had proper attention been given to it at the right time, and the reckless young man might have been cultured and useful, had he received the training essential to such development. If we would have cultured and refined society, we must begin our work with the children before they are out of the cradle. We have come to regard the first six years as the most important part of one's life. Upon it depends largely the purity of youth, and the prosperity of mature years.

But prominent in this connection, we would suggest the importance of a good *example* on part of those having the care of the young. Just here we may come to see the value of Christian culture in those who have the oversight of young hearts, and the responsibilities attending such a work. We have great confidence in that wise suggestion of Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is true that many let their

children "run as they will," making no effort to guard them against improper literature, or wicked associations. It is claimed that there is danger of keeping the child too much under the control of certain fixed rules, that have to do with his moral interests. But we claim that the greater danger is in a failure to bring the boy under proper restrictions; and this can be done without the exercise of those rigid means which so often render duty, on his part, an irksome task, and not unfrequently produces a disposition to resist wise authority.

We regard the chances of the child by far more favorable, who receives proper attention and cultivation, in his earlier years. But it is very important that the parent, in his efforts to train up a child should seek constantly Divine wisdom in the great work.

The good judgment acquired through sound mental culture, is an important aid in the great work of child training; and this mingled with sound piety will seldom fail to make favorable impressions upon the minds of the young. For this reason, every mother, to say the least, should have a good education, with active piety. Parents should take special pains to educate their girls, and see that they have the training essential to an early conversion and real Christian activity. No greater mistake is made, than that which seeks to educate the boys for a legal, medical, or some other worldly profession, to the neglect of the girls, anxious to acquire the ability so necessary to the prosperity of the Church, and the future greatness of our country. Give us, everywhere, well-cultured Christian

mothers, and the time will soon come, when our country will abound in many noble principles. A well-cultured Christian mother is one of the greatest powers for good on earth, and the world might be blessed with a multitude of such mothers where there is one now, by giving due attention to the training and culture of the girls. No efforts in behalf of the moral well-being of humanity are attended with more favorable results, than those which have to do with the culture and management of girls from childhood. It is found that they are more easily managed than boys, and that they yield far more readily to the invitations of the Gospel. While we give all possible attention, therefore, to the moral and mental well-being of the boys, let us see to it that the girls are brought to Christ at the earliest possible date, and that they have the advantages of good schools and refined society, as far as possible.

But at what age can we expect a child to yield intelligently to the Gospel call? This has been a question of interest to many; and in reply, we affirm, in brief, that the boy or girl capable of indulging in any unholy conduct, has capacity sufficient to engage in the holy. We need not hesitate, therefore, to put forth efforts in behalf of erring childhood for fear it is not sufficiently developed to enter understandingly on Christian life. The dependent child that can ask a loving mother for a piece of bread, and express gratitude for the same, can ask God for spiritual food, and praise Him for the blessing; and as the bread is necessary to strengthen the child physically, so he may come to

know that the bread from Heaven is essential to his strength, and efficiency against angry feelings and naughty words.

It is among the greatest mistakes of the age, and one most disastrous to their moral well-being, to assume that the boys and girls of the land must grow up without Christ, and spend years in sin before any successful effort can be made to bring them to an intelligent submission to God. This idea has sent millions to ruin and death, and if not soon corrected, is destined to send many more.

It is in behalf of those children that are without religious training at home, that the *Sunday-school* is accomplishing such a noble work; and we believe that God is calling upon His people to-day to contribute more abundantly to that enterprise. As Christians, in response to the demands that are upon us, let us put on the "whole armour," that we may not fail to perform wisely the work whereunto we are called. It has been well said, that "what we do for children, we do for the world; and what we do for the world we do for God." As a Church, LET US SEEK WITH ALL THE FORCE AND ENERGY OF OUR BEING TO CAPTURE THE CHILDREN FOR GOD. It is Satan's plan to begin work with the young, very early; and it is for us to be so thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of God, and with Divine wisdom, that we may be enabled to reach the child with holy impressions in advance of all other influences; and this can be done by that diligence in the discharge of our obligations so necessary to real efficiency in Christian life.

If the children go astray after we have done all we can to save them, we shall, to say the least, have the consoling thought, that we have done *what we could*. And is this not better, by far, than indulgence in bitter reflections that we have failed, by practice and precept, to do our duty?

But midst all the suggestions that might be made in regard to the dangers in the way of success in the mighty struggle against the prince of this world, we suggest as a concluding thought, that we study well the REMEDY. There is a "balm in Gilead;" and as we recognize God as the great source of success, and while with firm confidence in His willingness to bless, we go forward in the great contest, mindful of the importance of being "in behaviour as becometh saints," let the thought be deeply impressed upon our minds that we shall perform well our mission, only in the exercise of genuine affection. We shall treat the masses with the kindly regard that is due, only in proportion as we feel the friendly emotion that is within; and that we may become really successful in efforts against the dangers, we must not tolerate hatred toward any. "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God;" and against all, we may be assured that God will provide, if only we are His true and faithful servants.

"Though troubles assail, and dangers affright,  
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite,  
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,  
The promise assures us, "The Lord will provide"

The birds, without barn or store-house, are fed;  
From them let us learn to trust for our bread:



His saints what is fitting shall ne'er be denied,  
So long as 't is written, "The Lord will provide."

When life sinks apace, and death is in view,  
The word of his grace shall comfort us through:  
Not fearing or doubting, with Christ on our side,  
We hope to die shouting, "The Lord will provide."

*And in the days of these Kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.—  
Dan. 2: 44.*

## XI.

### FINAL VICTORY.

It is in harmony with the eternal fitness of things, that God, through His Son, as the Blessed and only Potentate and Prince of Peace, should conquer every foe, and go forth gloriously triumphant in the mighty contest. He who has spoken into existence the worlds, and holds subject to His control the natural universe, must be sufficient against the obstacles in the moral domain.

In a discussion of this topic, however, as in former great subjects of this work, we have only to appeal to Divine Revelation,—“What saith the Scriptures?” Is it in accordance with the plan of the Father to bring into subjection the Prince of this world? Is it probable that the time will come when all shall know Him “from the least to the greatest;”—when the masses of this world shall be subject to the will of God? Is it probable that Christ through the agency of His Church is going to redeem this world from sin? What are God’s plans as regards the great issues now before the people? Is it His purpose to conquer every foe, or does He design for a series of years, to bring to bear His agencies in this great warfare only to be outdone in

the end by the hosts of satan? These are questions that interest every Christian, and few indeed that would not naturally resist the chilling influences of prospective defeat.

We affirm unhesitatingly that God designs the final triumph of His people, and proposes to bring into subjection the masses through a love for the world as manifested in the Gift of His Son; and in support of this proposition, we submit the following to the prayerful attention of our readers:

I. Holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, in the ages past proclaimed the success of the Church against all opposition.

The prophet was addressing the Church when he said, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Wicked men have in all ages put forth vigorous efforts against the prosperity of the Church, and have predicted its early downfall; but the Lord's anointed affirm that this in the "heritage of the servants of the Lord;" and Christ the Son declares, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It is well that Christians should heed with diligence the fact that God has always regarded, very tenderly, the interests of His Zion. He has remembered his "vineyard and hedged it round about,"—made use of every possible means consistent with his wisdom, for its protection. As he had regard for his servants of

old so He has always regarded the interests of the Church. The interests of His people are to Him as dear "as the apple of His eye."

As God has sustained the Church against the violence of wicked men, and against all the prejudices and wicked influences in the ages past, so we believe He is destined to maintain her interests in favor of the more complete victory which awaits the faithful, in a surrender of the masses to His Word, and in the entire overthrow of satan's strongholds.

In this great struggle we have confidence in the sufficiency of God. As the Lord went with Israel triumphantly against the giants and walled cities of the Promised Land, even so He is accompanying the Church to-day in the mighty struggle against the strongholds of iniquity; and as the mighty men of old were driven out and subdued before the armies of the Lord, even so the powers of satan are destined to crumble before that more powerful agency, the Christian Church.

The history of the children of Israel, embracing their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, their forty years experience in the wilderness, their entrance into the Promised Land, and their final victory over the idolatrous nations, furnishes us with many valuable lessons. It constitutes a series of events, all under God terminating successfully. Very forcibly and beautifully it typifies the Church, in her history from the first to the second coming of Christ. The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, through Moses, appears a beautiful emblem of the

deliverance of the world from sin through Jesus. Their trials and hardships for forty years in the wilderness, represent the Church in her sad experience during the persecutions and the dark ages; and their entrance into the Promised Land, and triumph over idolatry bespeaks the coming of our Lord and the millennial period, with the final triumph of the Church over all opposition.

In that remarkable history, we have many valuable lessons, forcibly illustrating the importance of faith.

As to the final triumph of the Church, many are in doubt, and some claim that it is not in harmony with the instructions of inspired writers. It is affirmed that at Christ's second coming, satan is to hold sway, and that vice will prevail in all the domain of a sin-cursed world.

Prominent among the references, our attention is called to 2nd. Thess. 2: 3, as evidence under this head: "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." We are told that this falling away has reference to a universal apostasy which is to prevail in "that day" or "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him;" and while we admit that allusion is here made to the departure of the Church from the faith once delivered, we confess our inability to understand how it can be made to appear that such apostasy has any reference to the spiritual condition of the world at Christ's second coming. We see nothing in this, that tends, in

the least, to reveal the moral attitude of the world when Christ shall appear in the glory of the Father; but on the contrary we see some things in the chapter to which reference is made, that goes to show that God's plan is to bring about the conversion of the world in His own good time. In 2nd. Thess. 2: 8, He declares, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." The salvation of the Church requires the destruction of her foe, whom God declared he would "consume with the spirit of His mouth;" and as He declares His purpose to consume and destroy, who can doubt that God is sufficient for these things? "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of" God's ancient people, "how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" As there was power in those "offerings" under the Mosaic dispensation to the purifying of a great people, even so, much more may we expect power in the blood of One who comes a Messenger from Heaven and offers Himself "without spot to God." As the Lord Jesus "condemned sin in the flesh," and as He burst asunder the bands of death, went forth from the tomb and ascended on high, so we believe that in Him there is power that must prove permanently effectual against satanic rule among men. As God incarnate held sway over devils, permitting

them to enter the herd of swine, which "ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters," even so we believe that He, through the eternal Spirit, is destined in His own good time to usurp authority over satan to the utter exclusion of his power among men.

But how lamentably true it is that many are "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." As Israel under the Mosaic dispensation had no great confidence in their final triumph over the idolators of the Promised Land, even so it seems that men are doubting to-day, the final victory of the Church in her struggle against satanic rule; and is it not vastly important that we should exercise confidence in the disposition and efficiency of the Lord Jesus to take this world for God? It will be remembered that as a preliminary to an entrance, God directed Moses to send twelve men to "search out the land of Canaan," and report, that Israel might know something as to the condition of the country, and have some idea as to the difficulties in the way of its occupancy, (Num. 13: 1—33). The twelve went forth on their mission, and among them was Caleb, a man "wholly" given to the Lord. After a hasty review of the Promised Land, they returned with a report that was by no means favorable, and which tended very greatly to discourage the hosts of Israel. They represented it as a splendid country, and very productive; but regarded the walled cities, the giants and the superior numerical strength of the enemy, as insurmountable difficulties in the way of successful entrance. This resulted in much



confusion among the people, and in more severe censure of Moses and Aaron; but amidst the tumult, "Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it." Such an expression of confidence evidently had an influence on many; but against all the lessons as illustrated by numerous events connected with their experience as appeared in the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, &c., the eleven that went up with Caleb said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they be stronger than we." But the faith and energy on part of the few prevailed, and the people were encouraged to go forward. Caleb and Joshua had full confidence in God (who had brought them through so many tribulations,) that He would give success to the armies of Israel; and Moses, in recognition of this confidence, declared to Caleb, "Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God."

Not long after, Moses died, and as leader in Israel, he was succeeded by Joshua, whom God approved with the hosts of Israel, as midst a display of His power, they passed over Jordan.

The victories that followed, are evidence of God's regards for the pleadings of His people.

Through the faithfulness of a few, the masses went forward and beheld the glory of the Lord, in many successful battles. Israel subdued the enemy, and

took possession of the land; and in this, have we not only a lesson forcibly illustrating the importance of faith, but a beautiful emblem of the coming of the Lord, and the millennial period? Is not the entrance of Israel into Canaan, and their success in subduing the idolatrous nations typical of the more blessed victory which awaits the Church in her mighty struggle against the kingdom of darkness?

Moses, Joshua and Caleb, had full confidence in God, that He would grant unto Israel complete and permanent possession of Canaan. God had promised it, and they believed that His promises were precious, and for success they could not depend on any superiority of numbers or equipments. Their forces were comparatively few and weak. It was no small thing for Israel to face the giants, the walled cities and the hosts of the enemy; those blessed servants had long since learned that there is "no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." With firm confidence in God, they went forth to battle, and the victories were decidedly in harmony with the promises as made unto the fathers.

As a Church we are to-day engaged in a great moral contest, similar in all its essentials to that which interested Moses, Joshua and Caleb; and as we have in the lives of those noble spirits, numerous illustrations of the importance of faith, so let us see to it that we exercise that confidence in God which becometh saints. The motives and emotions which prompted God's ancient Israel to obedience, are precisely in harmony with the faith as delivered under the Christian dispensation.

sation, and with those as experienced with Christ's true followers in subsequent ages. Paul and Abraham greet each other in Heaven to-day in holy sanction of their united adherence to the pure doctrines, and principles which prompted them to action and sacrifice while on earth;—and so may we all “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

11. We believe that God in His own good time, will bring into subjection the powers of satan, and that holiness will become triumphant throughout the world.

Many are indeed slow to believe that it is the plan of the Father to turn the masses of this world to Himself. We admit that there are many obstacles in the way of success, and that satan is very deceitful as well as persistent in his efforts to rule this world; but we remember that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;” and why should He suggest such a prayer, if it is not His purpose to heed and answer by a triumphant reign as described in those precious words?

John in his apocalyptic vision declares, that he saw “an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he (the angel) laid hold on the dragon. that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” Whatever else this Scripture may teach, it goes to show that God holds satan subject to His own wise control, and that it is His plan to exercise that controlling influence in His own good time.

We have the "key" representing God's promise to shut or open—to withhold a secret or reveal a mystery at His pleasure, and the "great chain" representing God's power to bind, or control that "old serpent."

The contest in the ages past has been a mighty one. It is God against satan; right against wrong; truth against falsehood; good against evil, and light against darkness. The first terrible conflict was in Eden, when satan took issue with the Word of God, as he declared to the woman, that for disobedience "ye shall not surely die." She yielded to the tempter, and experienced the curse even as God had spoken (Gen. 3: 23), in which is manifest at once the fidelity of the Father, and the infidelity or vileness of the serpent. It was then God's to declare that "it"—the seed of the woman, the Messiah, through the agency of His Church, should "bruise" the head of the serpent; and this He did when He gave His Son "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As a bruise on the head of the serpent is fatal, so the stroke which satan receives from Christ is fatal. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus that this world is to be finally redeemed from the thralldom of sin and from the power of the wicked one.

We next witness a mighty contest in the wilderness into which Jesus was led by the Spirit, "being forty days tempted of the devil." Satan with all his vile deceit presents himself before the Saviour. As prince of this world, he offers all, and the glory of the same, if only the Lord would fall down and worship him.

but against all the pleadings of that wicked one, Jesus prevailed, and "angels came and ministered unto Him." And is it too much to suppose that He who as God incarnate prevailed against satanic power, is not able also to conquer, as now He sits upon His throne, "being made so much better than the angels as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they?" And then on Calvary, we witness a mighty contest. From the temptation in the wilderness, satan had waged perpetual war against the character and doctrines of Christ. He had done all he could to stir up feeling and prejudice against that noble Personage; and withal he led Judas to betray his Master, who soon after was falsely accused and condemned to be crucified. And here as Jesus hung on the cross, the devil imagined that he had overcome Christ, and that his power was secure; but Jesus burst asunder the bands of death, and was afterwards found mingling with His disciples to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs—being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. No victory could be more complete and glorious than that on the morning of the resurrection when our Lord went forth with renewed vigor, confirming His Divinity by many infallible proofs.

But satan, bent on doing all the mischief in his power, and unwilling that any should believe in the resurrection of the Lord, suggested to the officers that they pay large money to the soldiers if they would report that "His disciples came by night, and stole Him

away while they slept;" and so it was commonly reported among the Jews, and no doubt multitudes believed the report, and so were disbelievers in the resurrection of Christ. But the Lord had provided against the mischief liable to follow the unholy misrepresentation. It was on the day of Pentecost, and "they were all with one accord in one place," when the Lord appeared with mighty power in their midst, and all "were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." As this was noised abroad, multitudes came together and were confounded, as they witnessed the mighty display of power; and while many were in doubt, or about ready to accept the Gospel, others declared that "These men are full of new wine." But Peter, standing up in their midst with the eleven, declared that they were not drunken, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;" and so clear were his declarations in regard to Christ, and so forcible was the evidence as brought out through what the prophets had spoken, that multitudes were convinced, and three thousand souls were added to the Church in a single day.

It was a complete refutation of the reports as made, and position as taken by the enemies of our Lord, and another glorious victory for the right against wrong. In this was manifest the mighty power of God, and His sufficiency against the prince of this world.

Many glorious victories have attended God's faithful followers since that Pentecostal display, and many more await the efforts of such as go forth trusting in the same "precious promises."

It is with much pleasure that we dwell on these events, as we come to regard them as nothing less than forerunners of that more magnificent display of Divine power that shall appear in the day when the angel of God shall lay hold "on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," and shall bind him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and set a seal upon him that he "should deceive the nations no more for a season." We regard every revival as indicating the approach of that glorious era in the world's history when Christ shall come in the glory of the Father and with the Holy angels. As it is for us as individuals, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, even so, under God, as nations, we shall overcome satanic influence, and the masses will be induced to turn from their evil ways, and accept Christ's rule in their hearts.

It is true, in all this mighty struggle against evil, that satan stands in the way. It is he that "taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts." He is represented as being transformed into an "angel of light," and under such influence, it may be sometimes difficult for us to discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong. But amidst all the evil, and the many opposing forces, we shall find the remedy in practical recognition of the words, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

In the establishment and history of the Inquisition as given by many historians, we have numerous illus-

trations of the power of satan to deceive, and his disposition against the faith once delivered. It is well known that thousands were put to death by the lords of that "Holy Order," and that innocent parties were often condemned to the flames; and in how many ways the devil, as a messenger of light, is going out to deceive the nations, we may well pause and consider.

But against all the evil and mischief as suggested by the prince of this world, the Church is bound to prevail, and the Lord Jesus is destined to come again, complete victor over all opposition. The mighty God will "set a seal," and the ways of the godly shall prosper in the land.

Concerning the millennial era, a writer of some note thus speaks:

"A mighty purification of the air will be effected by Christ's coming. Though sin will not be absolutely abolished—for men will still be in the flesh (Is. 65: 20), sin will no longer be a universal power, for the flesh is not any longer seduced by satan. Satan will not be as now the 'god and prince of this world.' Christ will reign with His transfigured saints over men in the flesh. . . . The glorious events attending Christ's appearing, the destruction of Antichrist, the transfiguration of the Church and the binding of satan, will prepare the nations for embracing the Gospel. As individual regeneration goes on now, so there shall be a regeneration of nations then. Israel, as a nation, shall be born at once—in one day. As the Church began at Christ's ascension, so the Kingdom shall begin at His second advent."



It is pleasing to reflect just here, that to a certain extent, the Lord has already bound satan. It has pleased the Father to impart unto His children the strength essential to their complete victory over that wicked one. He says, "Ye have overcome; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world;" and, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." We believe that the victory is for all that will accept the terms of the Gospel; and as individuals hear the voice, and open the door of their hearts now to the entreaties of the Holy Spirit, so we believe at our Lord's second coming, nations will hear and live. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."

III. The SIGNS OF THE TIMES indicate complete victory.

We remember that God spoke through Moses to His ancient Israel by "signs," and His appeals went out before Pharaoh in "signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt." But midst all, the Egyptians refused to heed the Voice of God, and rebelled until, as a result, Pharaoh and his hosts were swallowed up beneath the waves of the Red Sea. It seems that the events connected with the history of Abraham and his seed for thousands of years, should have been ample testimony, and effectual against the prevailing unbelief of the nations; but against all the light that God saw fit to reveal, the people sinned, until through the person of His dear Son, we hear that eloquent voice, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but

can you not discern the signs of the times?" In how many instances we come to conclusions, and anticipate events in what we may behold through our natural vision, and at the same time reject the strongest testimony as revealed through the prophets in favor of the final victory. As we review the history of the Church and consider the dealings of God with His people, we may well cry out in the language of a distinguished king, Dan. 4: 3—"How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation."

There is perhaps no great truth attracting the attention of the religious world to-day more prominent than this,—That events are rapidly developing which must, ere long, result in a more general purity of the Church, and very largely in an increase of her strength among the nations.

It is a fact with which all should be most thoroughly impressed, that the Church was the most efficient, in those early days when she was the purest and most thoroughly united, and that she was shorn of her strength, became less efficient, as she became corrupt in doctrine and practice. And as the defilement of the Church is the great source of her comparative inefficiency, there is no question that can engage our attention, more important than this, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Is there no remedy for the evils that have "crept in unawares?"

We believe there is a remedy, and that it lies in the restoration of the Church to her primitive purity,—in

her renovation of all false doctrine, and erroneous practices. We shall be "sufficient for these things," only in a surrender to the faith once delivered, to the exclusion of all "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ;" and that the events of the times are not merely tending to promote the purity of the Church, but are destined, ere long, to give her success in efforts for the establishment of the pure principles of Christianity in heathen lands, we have not the slightest hesitancy in affirming.

God's appeal to the Church to-day is, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments. O Jerusalem;" and is it not true that Zion is responding by many faithful efforts and noble deeds?

Numerous events connected with her history, bespeak the purity of the Church and a re-union of God's forces. Many Christians, to the exclusion of church creeds and prejudices, are inquiring, "What is truth,—What saith the Scriptures?" The Church is seeking to comprehend the Word as never before, and we are fully satisfied that all the prayers and struggles in behalf of the right, are not going to be in vain.

Gradually the great religious denominations of the world are coming to accept the truth. Doctrinal distinctions and other sources of division in ecclesiastical bodies are on the decline. The great mass of Christian intelligence is tending toward a common center. We are all coming to heed more generally the Script-

ure, "Teach no other doctrine;" and very soon, we may expect that the various branches will come to seek nourishment from the same Vine. It is in an unreserved surrender to the "faith once delivered," that the Church will go forward "conquering and to conquer." Fierce and long has been the battle in behalf of "sound doctrine;" and we shall certainly act the part of "wise servants," when as a Church, we shall drink of the Fountain pure—to the exclusion of unbelief in all its forms.

The darkness is rapidly receding before the Light of the glorious Gospel. Every dollar contributed to the support of the Church at home, or for the establishment of missions abroad, is so far a record in favor of the victory awaiting the Church in her mighty struggle against the reign of satan. When that great religious body in New York, a few days ago, declared against its long existing doctrinal errors, it was not only an expression of honest purpose, but it was also a step toward the victory for which our Lord taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

And the Church referred to, is not an exception in modern history. The religious denominations of the world are inquirers at a throne of grace in behalf of doctrinal purity as never before. With unparalleled diligence they are giving attention to the words of Paul to Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

As a Church, we are coming to comprehend the

Word more clearly than ever before.

Improved facilities for Bible study are contributing largely to the success of multitudes in understanding the Gospel. A more thorough knowledge of ancient history and literature, as it is being developed through excavations and other means, in the old world, is aiding greatly. Our Sunday-school system is a mighty agent and a growing power in the hands of God for the overthrow of false doctrine. There is a mighty power in that interchange of thought, not only as exhibited in the thousands of Sunday-schools as they assemble every Sabbath, all over the land, but in those great gatherings of representative men and women who assemble so frequently from different states and nations for Bible study. These vast throngs come together, not in the interest of some particular creed or denomination, but in the interest of souls, and of those pure teachings and principles as inculcated by our Lord Jesus. They are accomplishing a mighty work in behalf of an early evangelization of the world. Also the Evangelical Alliance, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations; the Christian Endeavor and numerous other religious organizations are going out directly in behalf of souls, and the faith once delivered. Through these agencies God is accomplishing a mighty work. Before them false theories are rapidly crumbling; and to them sectarianism and other formidable obstacles in the way of Gospel success, are destined, ere long, to yield. We believe the time is coming when the strongholds of idolatry, now prominent in the old world, Mohammed-

anism, Roman Catholicism and unbelief in all its forms will surrender to that more excellent doctrine and practice embraced in the faith once delivered.

And do not the signs of the times indicate also that all the great national evils are destined, soon, to surrender to those wholesome influences as put forth by the Church of our Lord Jesus? It is evidently the plan of the Father to bring to naught great national wrongs through the agency of the Church. It is through her influence that the seeds of virtue and Christian civilization are being implanted among the nations. The great sins of the age are rapidly yielding to the mighty power of the Gospel. Was it not through this influence that American Slavery was overthrown? And is it not through this, that intemperance and other great sins are likely to surrender at no late day? The Christian world is destined to continue hostilities against the strongholds, until the nations of the earth shall come to know the Lord.

Among all the sins with which the Church has to grapple, none are more formidable than the traffic in intoxicating drinks. Intemperance is among the appalling evils of the age. As an agent in the hands of satan, it is the most dreadful adversary with which we have to contend; but we believe the time is coming, when as an evil it is destined to succumb to the mighty influences brought to bear through the Christian religion. The Church has come to see that the evil can be controlled only through the power of the Gospel; and in recognition of this fact, we have to-day many noble Christian men and women who are going out as

apostles of temperance, and are accomplishing a mighty work. The interest is manifesting itself in many great organizations having for their object not only legislation restricting the sale of intoxicants, but also acting in the interest of a proper execution of laws that may be enacted in behalf of temperance principles. We believe that national prohibition can and ought to be established at the earliest possible date, in the interest of temperance; and we believe that efforts are now going on which will, ere long, not only result in the enactment of such laws, but in their enforcement. Influences are rapidly developing which must, ere long, result in the enactment of prohibitory laws in about all the states, and with these we believe a sentiment is being developed such as will aid largely in their enforcement.

The World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which held its first convention in Boston as late as November, '91, is among the mighty influences which are now being brought to bear against satan's strongholds as manifested in the whisky traffic. The great Boston convention was probably the most influential gathering ever held in the interest of temperance. Prominent in this meeting was Lady Henry Somerset, president of the British Woman's Christian Association, and our own Miss Frances E. Willard, president of the National Union. In this great meeting, we find, among others, five hundred delegates in attendance, and Tremont Temple was frequently crowded to overflowing, and "overflow meetings" were held in various churches.

The reports of various committees were heard; and we read from a Boston paper that "Miss Willard called the attention of the convention to the famous petition bearing over a million names of men and women of all countries, who asked for the prohibition of the opium trade and the liquor traffic. This petition will in a year or so have attained two million signatures, and will then be carried to all governments by a commission of White Ribbon women, with Lady Henry Somerset, Miss Willard and other leaders at its head. The petition is a veritable polyglot, having been signed in forty languages, in every part of the world. Nothing like it has been known in history, both as to numbers and geographical extent."

Among the good things on that important occasion, John G. Whittier addressed an excellent letter to the convention, from which we copy the following:

"You have carried the temperance banner around the world, and your signal has called out answering echoes in all lands. You are conquering Old World masculine prejudices, and proving the efficiency and necessity of the work of womanhood in the world's progress. You have awakened that enthusiasm of humanity which, wisely directed, is irresistible. If the gigantic evil is still strong and defiant, you have saved many of its victims, and the blessing of thousands of afflicted families is with you."

Such is only a faint description of the great temperance convention and the work that is now going on in behalf of those unfortunates led captive by appetites for strong drink. The work is being pushed in



every nation, and we may well consider it among the agencies which contribute largely to an early and more complete triumph of the Christian Church. Let the good work go on and let Christian men and women everywhere go forth with faith, prayers and money, to the rescue of the unborn millions destined to break faithful hearts and fill drunkards' graves unless the evil is retrained speedily.

IV. We believe in the final triumph of the Church, not only in view of the fact that God gave His Son, that the world "through His blood," might be redeemed, but in consideration also, that ANGELS ARE INTERESTED in this great work. Jesus declared, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Evidently the hosts of heaven are busily interesting themselves in the redemption of this world; and it is a precious thought, that we have the messengers of glory to co-operate with us in the mighty contest.

Amidst all the demands that are upon us, angels cannot be and never have been indifferent. We remember that an angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven as he was about to slay his son, as a test of obedience; an angel first proclaimed the coming of the Saviour, and was first to declare His resurrection. . . . The nature and mission of angels as brought out in the Bible, is a source of great interest to every Bible student, and deserves our careful attention. We notice that those blessed angels are on the right side of every question, and go out in defense of vital issues in connection with the will of the Father.

As to how much influence they may have over us in all the great work undertaken in behalf of right and humanity, we cannot say; but that angels are interested in the spiritual well-being of our race, in modern as well as in ancient times, is certainly in harmony with the eternal Truth as God has revealed it. God is immutable, angels have the same noble mission, and the demands of our fallen race are similar, and with all the promises as made unto the fathers, and with the various illustrations we have of God's good will to man, as manifested in times past through these heavenly messengers, we cannot doubt their efficiency as agents in our midst to-day. They may not enter the jails, nor open the prison doors that innocent persons may go free; and God may not always send His angels to shut the lion's mouths against the prospects of wicked men; but we believe that their mission embraces the same broad sphere as when the inspired pen declared they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation."

They join hands with earthly messengers in the same great redemption, and as such we believe are destined to wield an influence that must finally prove effectual against the powers of darkness. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

**CONCLUSION:** Finally, we suggest that as God is rapidly preparing the world for Christ's second advent, that we study well "the Book of this prophecy," (Rev. 22: 19).

While we recognize the Bible as none other than the word of God, and that as such we should study it with all prayerful diligence, we most earnestly urge a devoted and more thorough study of the Apocalypse as peculiarly important to Bible students and Christians of this age. It is here that God has indeed revealed "things that must shortly come to pass." It was when the seventh angel sounded that great voices were heard in Heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." It is God's plan to bring into subjection the nations of the world. He has declared it, and the great work is to be accomplished. It was with reference to the redemption of this world from sin, that God sent His Son; and He who had power to lay down His life and power to take it again, has power to take this world for God. It is ours to pray to-day, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven." God is going to answer this prayer. If it were not so, He never would have taught us thus to pray.

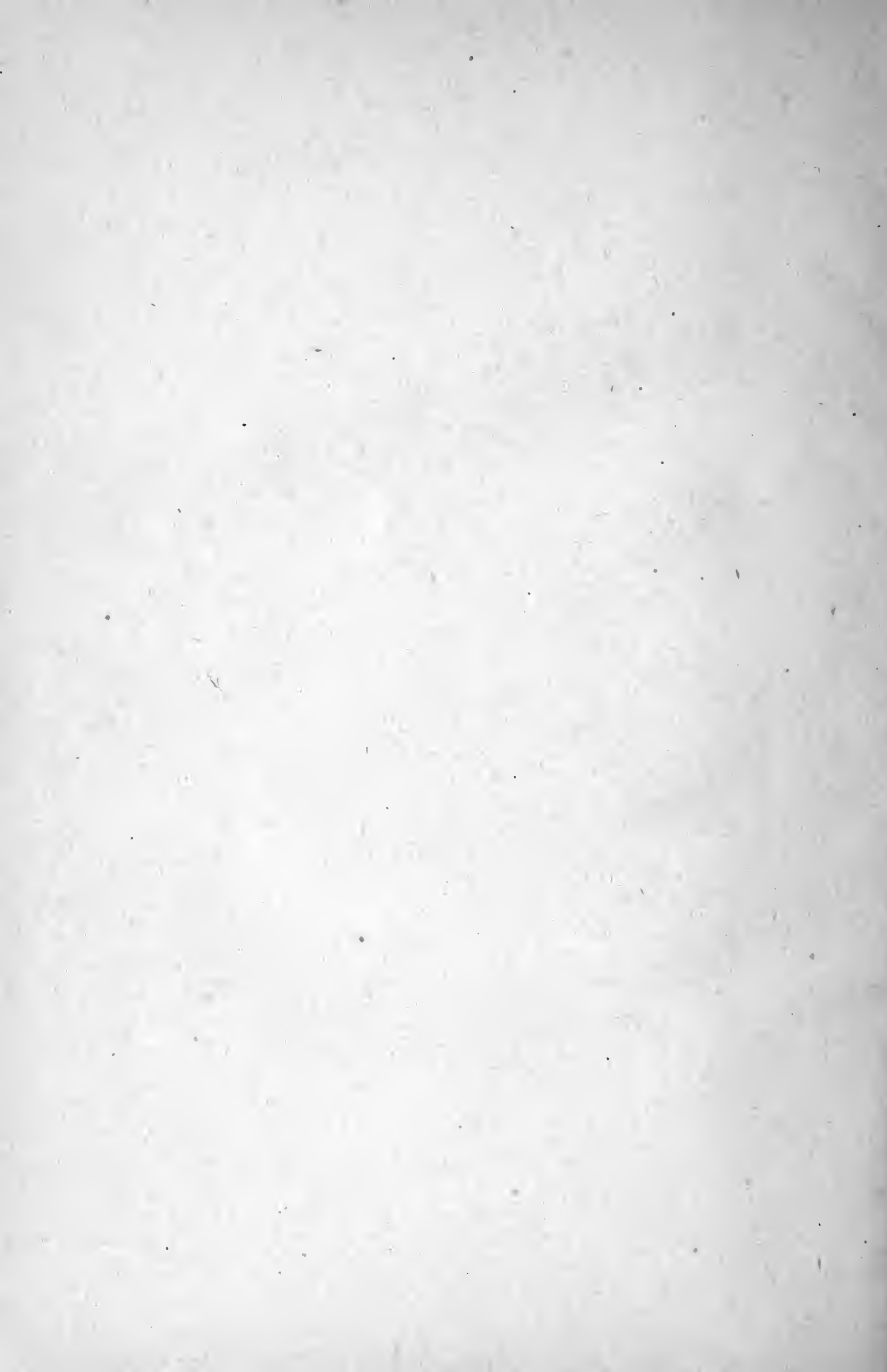
And who can describe the splendor of that triumphant "reign!" No pen can fully portray the glories of a world redeemed from sin. Satan has ever been the great source of misery and wretchedness in the world; and with his power vanquished—the great source of our sufferings removed, the calm peace of Eden will be restored, and the Paradise lost through serpent will be regained through Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Then "the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares,

and their spears into pruning hooks. . . . The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." With such results awaiting our toils, we ask, Christian, is not the faith once delivered worth contending for?

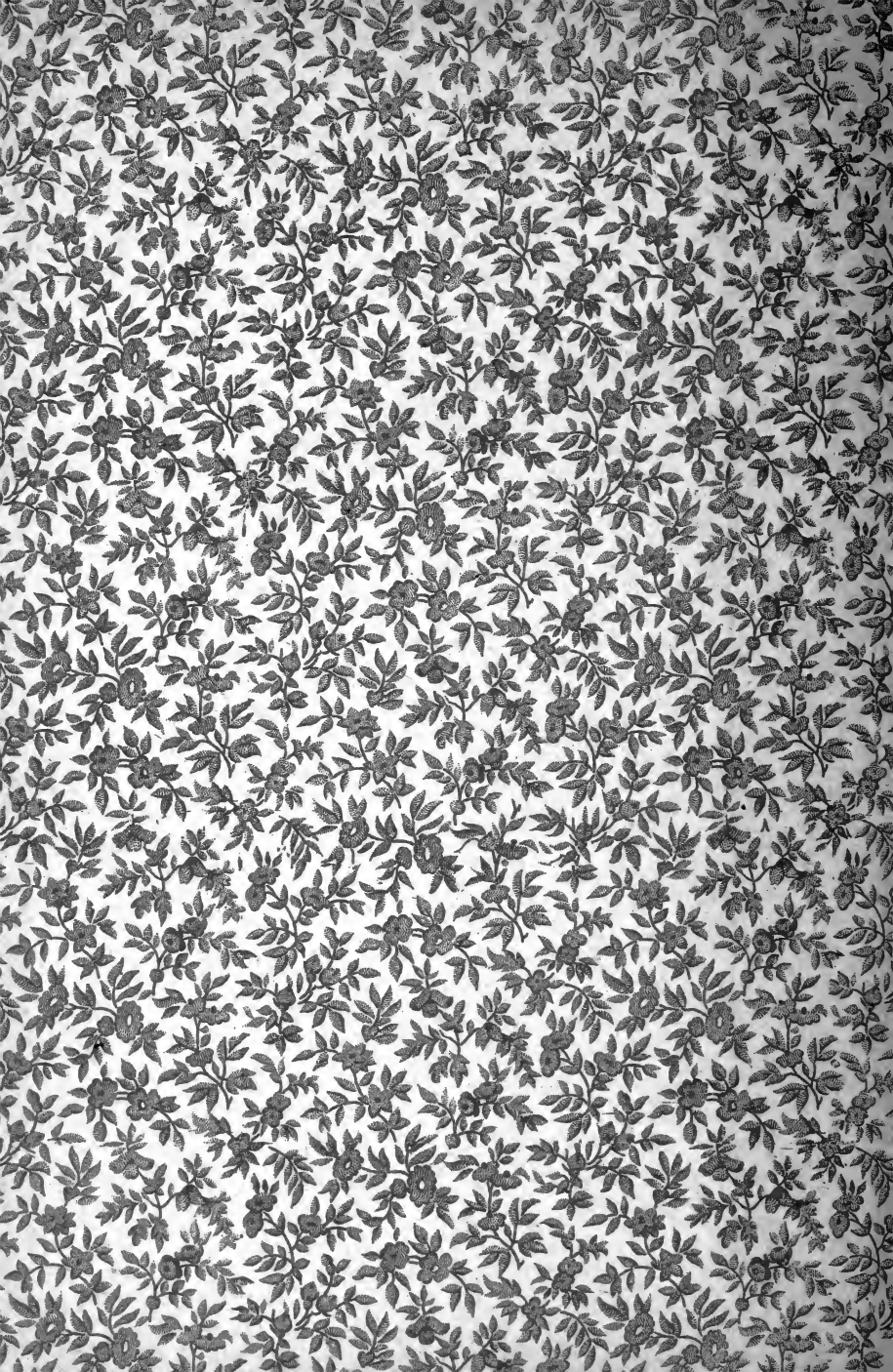
Let us cling to those blessed appeals, ever mindful of the judgment to come, and of those precious words of our Lord when he said, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book," (Rev. 22: 18).

"Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN."

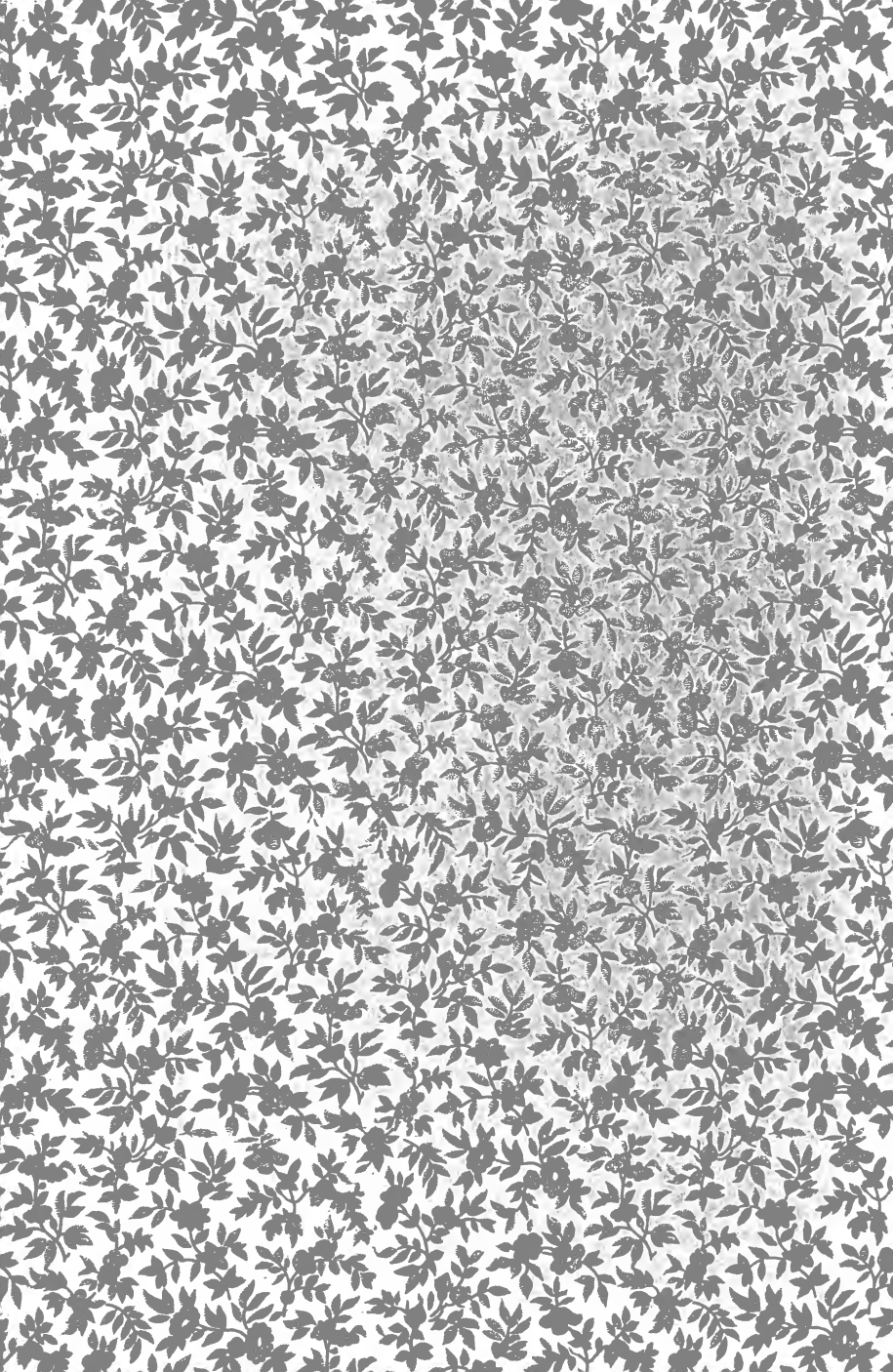




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