

APPLICATION

If ye bite and devour one another, v. 15. There is a strain of grim humor in the warning, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not bitten, and the devourer devoured. If union is strength, disunion opens the sluiceway for destroying forces. The lesson is to avoid strife. It is good advice in the home: a home divided against itself cannot stand. There is no quarrel so bitter, and so iniquitous to all concerned as the family quarrel. A club or society into which strife enters is doomed. It no longer serves either for the pleasure of its members or to carry out any good task. The little Central and South American republics are examples of how disunion blasts the natural life. The country that is not at peace with itself will have but small standing amongst the nations.

Walk in the Spirit, v. 16. A newcomer in a church was spoken slightly of to the minister as "an every-day sort of Christian". The shrewd old minister caught up the word with enthusiasm. "An every-day sort of Christian, is he? Is he that? I wish I had known it when I gave him the right hand of fellowship. I would have given him both hands. My greatest difficulty is with the every-other-day sort of Christians." Our only security against the temptations we meet daily is to "walk" in God, to live always in the consciousness that He is with us, and not to turn away from Him even for a moment.

Not fulfil the lust of the flesh, v. 16. When a great sculptor chisels a marble block into a perfect figure, there is a great wastage. Much is thrown aside. But the result is a statue far greater in value than the original mass of marble. So we must give up much in life that has a strong attraction for us, if we are to follow Christ; but the result is a fuller life and deeper joy.

Flesh lusteth against the Spirit. the Spirit against the flesh, v. 17. Sometimes a stream sinks down into the tiniest thread, and drags itself through the mud, when away up in the

mountains, the clouds gather and burst, and in a few hours the banks of the stream are full of swift, rushing water, pouring down its channel with resistless force. Christ came, that we might have the mighty power of the blessed Spirit come, like a rushing river sweeping away before it all the works of the flesh. We have but to open the gateways into our nature, with the keys of faith and prayer, and this conquering force will flow in upon us, to free us forever from the enslavement of evil practices and habits.

Not under the law, v. 18. One bright Saturday afternoon, when the River Mersey was full of traffic and the ferry boats were crowded with pleasure seekers, a tug was hauling a great liner to her berth, when the rope fouled, the liner quietly pushed the tug over, and she disappeared like a pebble beneath the waves. In the twinkling of an eye scores of men from surrounding craft were in the boats or in the river. Never did squirrel climb a tree as rapidly as these men leaped at the chance to save other lives at the risk of their own. No law compelled them to take these risks; they were taken willingly. Nor does any outward law compel the Christian to face toils and dangers in the service of his Master; he acts freely out of love to that Master.

The works of the flesh are manifest, v. 19. Of course they are, when full-grown, but how innocent many of them look when they first come to us, and make their seductive promises. The sparkling cup that seems to brim over with fascination, why not taste it and see what it has to offer? According to the old fable, a crafty lion hailed a fox that was passing by, and invited him in. "No, thanks", he replied. "Oh, come in. You're surely not afraid. Why, lots of foxes have been here. Look at their footprints." "Yes, but I notice that all their footprints go one way. They all go in. None come out." A thousand examples teach us that the drunkard's tracks lead only to ruin. No wise person will set his feet in those tracks.

The fruit of the Spirit, v. 22. One was asked which was the most important end of a

Every-day or
Every-other-
day

The Sculptor's
Waste

The
Conquering
Force

When the Tug
Went Down

Footprints All
One Way