

foundation of our faith are apt to occasion, but to promote the victory of the truth of God over the various forms of unbelief and error. The sceptical and irreligious thought of the age becomes bold and outspoken in presence of a cold, wordly, and self-indulgent church. Its confidence is shaken, in its dreary negations, when it is brought face to face with a religious life, full of reality and of force.

Again, one cannot overlook here, the absorbing interest with which, in many instances, the mind is allowed to give itself to the purely worldly interests, and the consequent displacement therefrom of divine things. It is not so much, in most cases, that the realities of the spiritual world, the things which are above, are disbelieved, but they are kept for long periods together, out of the sphere of actual thought. The mind is otherwise engaged; engaged not with any thing bad or vicious, but yet so engaged, that divine things are kept at a distance—are not permitted to impress themselves deeply on the heart. Men have not leisure, rather, they do not take nor make leisure, to look at them and to receive the deep impressions which only a steadfast and oft repeated contemplation can convey. There is, in the life of many professing Christians, almost no meditation on the truth of God. It is one continuous scene of bustle about the perishable interests. I need not enlarge on the necessarily injurious effects of this. It is, "speaking the truth," or rather, meditating on the truth, for such is the force of the word used by the Apostle, letting it sink into the soul in closest and most constant contact with it, that believers are "to grow up in love unto Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

It is impossible to overlook the influence of the daily and weekly press in this connection. There is something even to be thankful for in the character which it possesses, within our bounds. It does not sneer at religion. It does not, in many instances, at least, speak other than disapprovingly of vice. It is, in the most powerful and widely circulated organs of public opinion, generally speaking, respectful towards Christianity; indeed, more than respectful, reverential; while its moral tone is comparatively high and pure. But it is "of the earth, earthly." It does little, one may say nothing to hinder, much indeed to help, that continuous occupation of the mind with wordly interests, motives, ambitions, and intrigues, which we have seen to be so injurious. Its apology, doubtless, would be, that it speaks to the tastes which it finds strongest and most general. And yet, it may surely be affirmed, that there is, at least, quite a respectable minority which could appreciate, and indeed earnestly desires, a style of writing even about daily occurrences, in which there should be a greater prominence given to those events which directly concern the interests of religion, and a more distinct recognition of God, in those which are termed secular or profane. It is surely our duty to encourage those who seek to supply this increasing felt want.

Among the injurious influences at work, affecting the religious life of this, as of preceding ages, I have not mentioned what have been termed the drinking usages of society. I notice them in closing, only to say, that they seem to be operating more widely and more disastrously than twenty years ago; so much as to awaken not only the sorrow of the Christian, but the alarm of the patriot. While refraining from judging one another in this matter, one might well desire that Christian people should see it to be their duty to break all connection with usages so fruitful in misery to the souls and bodies of men—so destructive, in many cases, both to happiness and goodness.