

Word establishes the fact, that Israel did not keep separate from the Canaanitish nations.

Another principle comes out in this passage : declension is *gradual*. Step by step Israel's course is downward, until the solemn moment when the angel of the Lord definitively quits Gilgal for Bochim. This is true both of the Church (Rev. ii, iii), and the individual. A Christian who has walked in the power of the Holy Spirit, if he allows the world even a little room in his heart, instead of treating it as an enemy, will by degrees get under its thralldom, and will perhaps close his career in the sore humiliation of a defeat.

Chapters xix-xxi of our book are a narrative of events which historically precede Chap. i. We shall consider them more particularly by-and-bye, but I mention it here to bring out a third principle apparently contradictory to the second—namely, that, *from the first*, before God had delivered them over to their enemies, the people, as to their moral state, were *totally lost*. It was the same with the Church. Scarcely had the last apostle passed off the scene, when a tremendous gap was visible between the principles of the primitive church and those of the times immediately following. Christians suddenly lost even the elementary views of salvation by grace, the work of the cross, justification by faith.*

These two principles, gradual declension and

* See, on this subject, a valuable tract, "Christianity, not Christendom," by J. N. D. (To be found in his Collected Writings, vol. 18.)