

God had to threaten the Church, that unless a radical change took place it would cease to be.

How do we lose our first love ?

Some cannot lose it because it is not there to lose. Let us ask ourselves have we this love, which comes to us when first we see the Lord at Calvary ? When first we see the wounds borne for us ? This love of our spiritual espousals.

Just as the first, passionate demonstrative love deepens and broadens into the quieter, but none the less true love of the happy marriage, so this first love, which sometimes seems almost irreverent in its expression, matures into the deeper, quieter love of the older Christian, love developed not forsaken. But we lose our love when we forget the cross, for it is God's will that our spiritual experience should revolve round the cross. We lose it when we allow other things to slip in between us and our God. God is a jealous God, because He is love, and love is always jealous, not with that mean, miserable jealousy of man, but because His love is so great that He cannot admit spiritual infidelity. He is grieved when we allow anything to come between us and Him, and He needs to withdraw Himself. Summer goes, winter begins.

In each virtue commended in the Ephesian Church, we may find something contributed to this loss of love. Work, we may become so interested in for its own sake, that it slips into God's place, Patience, Endurance, May we not often get into such grooves of orthodox living and thought, that we mistake habit for spirituality, and habit may take the place of direct spiritual intercourse with God. We may be so sound in doctrine, that we may be unsound in charity. What then is the remedy ? Repent,—do the first works, get back to the cross, once again "sit under His shadow with great delight."

*Rev. II.—12—17. Epistle to Church in Pergamos.*

The lesson suggested by the history of this church is the improvement of adverse circumstances. God permits our circumstances to be what they are ; for the perfection of our character which is strengthened by resistance. Our moral nature would lack spiritual force but for the battling with evil. This Church was evidently in sore straits, "Thou dwellest where Satan's seat is." This may refer perhaps to special form of devil worship. The Christian religion was