

the age by powers no higher than are within the age itself ; we would lift it up by the aid of power omnipotent that cometh from above. "Ah, but," they say, "you Christians are in some degree in bondage ; we are free ; we are free-thinkers." I declare again that we Christians are the true free-thinkers. I am a free-thinker ; I do not hesitate to avow it in the presence of any man,—I am a free-thinker—that is to say, I claim to judge upon questions on which I am bound to form an opinion by evidence, but it must be by proper evidence. And there is the blunder into which the so-called "free-thinkers are continually falling. Is it an historical question ? Then I ask historical evidence. A scientific question ? Then I ask scientific evidence. A moral question ?—moral evidence. A spiritual question ? spiritual evidence. And God would have you and me reason in that way. "Prove all things," He says to you and me, "and hold fast to that which is good." That is my counsel to you "be ye steadfast in your hold of all that God has been pleased to reveal." Now, when I make this argument to you, founded upon the nature of the human mind and its processes, I do not forget that the truth of God works faith in the human soul ; but He does not make a human soul a machine ; He works through and by the powers and faculties and aptitudes God has given to that soul, and He does not trample upon the human will, but guides and directs it ; and I would not forget myself, and I would not have you forget, that when once we have committed ourselves to any cause that the Bible condemns, that moment we become disqualified in some degree for the acceptance of its honest teaching. It comes with the statement that sin is unspeakably hateful to God and that its penalty is death. "The wages of sin is death." Let me be conscious of sin without having received the atonement and there will be that within myself which by processes which all men can understand (though they cannot always define them), will make it easy to persuade me that death is an undue, an extravagant, and unreasonable penalty to follow my faults and errors. Take a man who has been condemned and sentenced for murder, to capital punishment, and it will not be very difficult to persuade that man that it is impolitic and unwise, and even unjust, to inflict the death sentence. So I say to you, my brethren, if you would be steadfast, if you would remain steadfast, keep from everything that this word condemns ; do the will of God ; be honest and sincere in your practical loyalty to its truth ; and in the very process of doing it you acquire and cultivate within yourself a susceptibility to spiritual impressions, you invoke and invite the guidance of the Spirit of Holiness. "Oh, send forth Thy light and Thy truth ; let them lead me ; let them guide me." So much, then, for this statement, "Be ye steadfast."

Now we come to the next word, "unmoveable ;" Bengel, in common with many other Greek scholars, we find taking this word and applying it to the regulation of life, the things that we do, and then the meaning is that we are to hold fast to the forms of obedience to this divine will. "Oh yes," some one says, "that word is exactly correct—forms, they are only forms ; religion is the real and spiritual thing, independent of forms, and I value religion in its own proper place, but the forms I don't value highly." Well, now, let us be frank and candid about the matter. Is it true that forms are of no account ? Have you ever had occasion to sign leases ? To write your name to discharges ? To enter into compacts and agreements and form companies ? Were the forms of no importance in these matters ? Forms of justice—are they of any moment ? A crowd persuades itself that a man is guilty of murder, and it tramples upon forms and lynches the man. Is that good policy ? Why, no ! The safety for you and me, in life and property, is in the forms of justice. Forms of politeness—are they of no significance ? Are they of no moment ? Do you educate your children upon that plan ? No ! Do you not know that if men and women habitually disregard the forms of civility it will be difficult for them to keep the reality ? That is human nature, brethren, and God has adapted the system of His revealed religion to our human nature, and so it is neither wise nor right of us to disregard forms of religion