

apostles' doctrine, both in 'the way of holding fast their form of sound words and of waiting on their public instruction; (3) they entered into full sympathy and close fellowship with the apostles in their labours; (4) they kept up regular communion with the brethren in the breaking of bread and in prayers. This description of the early Christians just amounts to saying in modern language that they were devout, regular and zealous church-goers. There is a great danger of making a religion of mere church-going. This was the essence of what Christ calls the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. It was churchism. This is the essence of Popery. It is churchism in stead of Christ. It is the danger of substituting the church and its ordinances in place of Christ that caused an eminent minister of the gospel to say to his flock, as an old grey-headed man at the close of a long pastorate: "I spent many years of my ministry in driving you to the church, and now I intend spending the rest of my days in driving you from the church." He drove them to the ordinances of religion, because they were living without them, but when he began to fear they were resting on them instead of Christ, he sought to drive them from ordinances to the Saviour. This tendency to churchism in many quarters has driven some good people to the extreme of individualism. Having seen the danger of making too much of organizations and ordinances, some people have rushed to a state of separatism. But the remedy is worse than the disease, for if churchism obscures the beauty of Christ, individualism, if carried to its legitimate issue, would strike at the very root of this visible church, and bring chaos back again. The church, as an end, is ignoble, as a means, sublime. It was, therefore, a marked feature in the Apostolic Church that they gave to the ordinances and outward exercises of re-

ligion a high place in their hearts. The church ordinances were to them what the fountain is to the thirsty traveller. They rested by the fountain to refresh themselves, and they passed on in their heavenward march. Like the captain of their salvation, "They shall drink of the brook by the way; therefore, shall they lift up the head."

GOLD AND THE GOSPEL.

5. These devout church-goers showed themselves open-hearted and open-handed. "They sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." This is the next step in the grand march of the great argument. Terrified by the awful abyss on whose brink Peter's voice arrested them, rejoicing in the salvation placed within their reach, consistent in walk, and intense in piety fostered by meditation, communion and prayer, they learned the hardest of all lessons—the lesson learned generally by Christians only on the brink of the grave; they learned the uses and ends of money. Finding themselves enlisted under the banner of Christ, and seeing the great work that lay before them, they leaped at once to the sublime conclusion that the use and end of money was to advance the cause of Christ. It is said of Telford, the great engineer who built the Caledonian canal, that he was so enthusiastic on the matter of canals, that he could see no other end of water but for making canals. "What about rivers?" asked one of his friends. "Rivers!" replied he, "they were made to feed canals." When a child is sinking under a deadly disease, the parents feel that the only right use of their money is to save the child. When their land is invaded by a cruel enemy, patriots feel that their property and lives are at the service of their country. So these Christians were so filled with the glory of Christ, with the sweetness of His service,