

The pastor failed to look to Jesus directly for the light, and so every book from the Bible downwards failed to give it to him.

Baffled in this quarter he turned to another. His next movement was that of humbling himself by taking a bold stand for unpopular truths and reforms. Pulpit and platform and press, groaned under his appeals. He challenged the world to say what it pleased about him, and let them know that he was not to be turned from his course, or kept back by fear of the brand. Relentlessly and heroically he pushed his crusades. Not so much, however, in hope to secure the reforms, as to humble and sanctify himself. And what was the result? Was he humbled and sanctified? No. But lifted up in the pride of his heart, so that he began to despise his brethren who did not come out and stand with him, and stand by him; and although not at all inclined to censoriousness, it was hard for him to withhold denunciations of their course. At last,—seeing as he did the rising pride of his heart, when he looked to see it thoroughly humbled in the dust,—hope from this quarter died out and he turned to another.

It would have been strange, indeed, if he had not tried making the outside of the cup and the platter clean, to sanctify the inside. He did not indeed pull up his carpets, and sell them, with every other elegance or curiosity or luxury of his house, as some have done. His tasteful and excellent wife might have put in some serious objections if he had proposed it. Possibly he thought so, and therefore said nothing to her about it. Another minister, who had gathered a splendid library, sold all and gave to the poor, under a similar pressure, reserving only a few devotional books, and a few absolutely indispensable.

Our pastor was wiser than that. He left his library complete. It seems not to have once occurred to him that putting the light out of his library might bring it into his mind; at any rate he did not try it. The mint-and-anise process, of course, reached his wardrobe and person, though not to any very ridiculous extreme. He did not go so far as the lady who sold her wedding ring, and then disposed of the old watch, the heirloom of her paternal ancestry, because conscience would not down at her bidding, and because she hoped by stripping her person of the last jewels and ornaments, to bedeck her spirit with the higher graces coveted.

But whatever he did or did not do, he failed in all, and gave up hope in this quarter in turn.

He had now tried, first, inquiring of books and men for the way, *and failed*. Next, he had sought humility of heart by braving reproach, *and failed*. Next, he had tried punctilious observances, regulating dress, and time, and occupations, and expenses, and intercourse with the world, and everything by rule, as a means of regulating the heart, *and failed*.

What next?

Now he turned to seek the Holy Spirit by prayer, to do the work which he took it for granted would be done—that is, cleanse his soul and give him to feel that he was really holy. This he pushed more earnestly than all before. Every book upon prayer was searched, the Bible above all. Every example.