

to their spiritual welfare. Countless are the hindrances it places in their way—wily and ensnaring the allurements which it spreads for them. By its fair looks and winning smiles, and flattering promises, it entices them to sin; while, on the other hand, its frowns, and threats, and crosses, and hardships, deter them from duty. Its pleasures are tempting, its riches are corrupting, its cares are engrossing, its honors are dazzling; its maxims are often calculated to mislead, its friendships to seduce, its fashions and evil examples to deprave us;—so that the man who would progress steadily along the narrow way of life, is under the necessity of striving against the world,—arming himself against those influences wherewith it seeks to move him from his steadfastness, and meeting them, in the strength of Divine grace, with a resolute and unyielding opposition.

Now, if such be the influence of the world even over those who do not set their hearts upon it, how much more powerful must its influence be on such as have yielded up to it their full affection! In them, alas! the wicked world *without* is fatally seconded by the wicked heart *within*. The world no sooner knocks, than the kindred spirit is ready to open a wide and effectual door for its admission. Temptations to vanity meeting with a vain heart—temptations to covetousness meeting with a covetous heart—temptations to ambition meeting with an ambitious heart—temptations to folly and dissipation meeting with a frivolous and foolish heart—find it not only a sure but an easy conquest. So was it the case of Demas. His worldliness of spirit led him to forsake the Christian cause, when he saw that he could not longer adhere to it without endangering or prejudicing his temporal interests. So was it too in the case of that ingenuous youth who came to the Saviour inquiring the way to eternal life, and of whom we read, that “Jesus beholding him, loved him;” but who went away sorrowful, because he had much riches, which he could not consent to part with in order to have treasure in heaven. And so has it been with thousands upon thousands more. For, oh! what shipwrecks of faith and of a good conscience has the world occasioned! How many a fair promise has it blighted! how many a hopeful beginning has it checked! how often, when the good seed was ready to spring up, have “the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches,” checked the rising plant, and rendered it unfruitful!

Indeed, when the heart is fairly set upon the world, it is wonderful how easily men are drawn away by it from the path of duty. A mess of pottage was a sufficient bribe to Esau. Ahab and Jezebel, with a kingdom in their possession, would commit murder for a vineyard. Haman would compass the death of an innocent man, because he disliked to see him sitting at the king's gate. And Judas would betray his Lord for thirty pieces of sil-

ver. Equally paltry are the inducements which prevail with many worldly-minded men to prejudice their soul's welfare. Some empty distinction, some vanishing delight, some trifling gain, the gratification of some low appetite, the smile or frown of some fellow-mortal, (it may be of one whom they inwardly despise, the fear of being thought singular or out of the fashion,—these, and such like pitiful considerations induce multitudes to fall from their integrity. Demas had at least some intelligible, although by no means adequate motive, when he forsook the Christian cause from fear of being exposed to persecution. But many who sin now after his example, have no such ostensible motive that they can plead. They compromise their adherence to the Gospel, without any such inducement as would lead them seriously to encroach on their present ease, or wealth, or comfort. Things, which they would consider too dearly purchased if they had but to go a few miles out of their way, or to lose a few nights' sleep in order to get them, are sought with eagerness when nothing more than a departure from the faith is necessary for their attainment.

And yet, surely, if men would but reflect, the folly of thus forsaking the ways of God, and at the same time forsaking their own mercies, could not fail to strike them with amazement. For, oh! what can the world do for us, in comparison with what religion can do for us? Is not religion “the pearl of great price?” Is it not the “one thing needful?” Does it not outbid all the world's bribes? Does it not outvie all the world's charms? Aye, and does it not out-threaten all the world's threatenings? Who that seriously considers what is implied in the everlasting welfare of the soul, would ever justify the barter of so rich a treasure for aught that this world is able to afford us?

What say you, then, dear brethren, to these things? Demas, you have seen, forsook the way and work of the Lord through the influence of worldly motives. “Will *you* also go away?” Will *you* take part with this miserable man, who made so sad a shipwreck concerning the faith, and, for aught that we can tell, “drew back unto perdition?” Consider well before you do so. Whatever be that worldly object for which you are at any time tempted to forsake the Lord, you had surely need to examine it very thoroughly, and to see that you be not mistaken in your estimate of it, before you practically hold it forth and say, “Here is the thing for which I am prepared to compromise my interest in the Saviour,—to stake the loss of heaven, and to run the risk of hell!” Count well the costs, before you thus allow yourselves, for the sake of any earthly consideration, to be moved away from the hope of the Gospel; and pray that your answer may be that of the apostle,—“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”