

so called, christian experience. Hearing others give expression to feelings that he never experienced—confessing sins that he never felt the burden of—bemoaning tendencies to evil that never gave him any uneasiness—and speaking of conflicts in which he never engaged—there is nothing more natural than that a spirit of skepticism should take possession of him, and that he should be ultimately led to consider all religion as a delusion or a sham. Thus, as John Bunyan saw in his dream, that there was a way from the gates of paradise to the regions of despair, we may see that there is a direct path from the visible church, and even from a sacramental table, to the lowest depths of a scornful infidelity.

3. The body without the spirit is *undergoing a gradual process of decay, and will ultimately be entirely disorganized.*

It is true that, the ingenuity of man has discovered means by which the human body can be preserved in an organized state, for a length of time after the vital spark has fled. By means of the process of embalming, the dead body may be preserved hundreds of years. Still, it is only a question of time. No sooner has the breath left the body than the process of decay begins, which will, sooner or later, issue in the entire decomposition of the physical frame, whatever efforts may be made to retard its progress. So, a faith without works, a religious profession without life and love, will gradually decay also, and be ultimately decomposed. This process of moral decay may not, for a length of time, be apparent to one's own consciousness, or visible to others; still it is going on; particle after particle of a mere formalism is yielding to its influence, and it is as sure to eventuate in entire moral decomposition, as the body, deposited in the grave, is sure to be undistinguishable, in the lapse of time, from its kindred dust of the grave-yard.

This *process of decay* usually shows itself first in the *closet*. The morning and evening prayer, if not entirely neglected, is slurred over in such a manner as demonstrates that there is no "thirsting for God the living God." From the closet it extends to the *family*. The morning and evening sacrifice is no longer presented on the family altar, with the regularity of former days. More and more irregular, family worship and family catechising become, until at length these pillars of domestic piety fall, and with their fall perishes the last vestige of family religion. From the family it extends to the *prayer meeting*, and then there is no *time*, because there is no *disposition*, to unite with the twos and threes, in the unexciting exercises of private social prayer and praise. The *sanctuary* is usually the last place where this decay begins to appear, because in the excitements of public worship, there is less to repel a carnal spirit, than in the less exciting scenes of more private devotion. But even in the *sanctuary*, this moral decay begins, ultimately, to show itself. The preacher is not then what he was in former days. His sermons are either too long or too short, too poetic or too prosy, too pointed or too general. The distance to the house of God is greater, and the roads and streets muddier, than in former years. And then, that most mysterious of all the ills to which flesh is heir—the Sabbath morning headache—that disease that is peculiar to the Sabbath—which needs nothing to remove it but a little rest—and which invariably disappears in good time for Monday's business—that disease is more frequent and virulent in its attacks than in bye gone days, and one's seat is more fre-