

nual flow of vitality from God through Jesus Christ to those in connection with Him. The two things which bring about the loss of it are backsliding and want of vitality.

Have we claimed the promise of God made to us in our baptism? What God does for us in baptism is provisional, adapted to the present circumstances of our lives. We cannot believe that children who die in infancy are saved by their innocence, but according to their capacity of perception are they partakers of eternal life. And as our responsibility increases with our growth in years, this provisional economy of grace passes away. What settles our spiritual condition is the fact of our having claimed the gift of God.

We can only receive it by exhibiting that moral attitude which we call faith. There must have been many church workers in Sardis, or it would not have had a name to live. But it was an incomplete church, it wanted vitality, its works were not found perfect; it was dead.

The only way we can pass from death to life is by a definite appropriation of God's gift.

#### PART II.

#### *Rev. III. 14—22. Epistle to the Church of the Laodiceans.*

The first great question we have to face is whether we are living or dead. When we know this, we must remember that we have a foe opposed to our spiritual development. But God has made a provision for the maintenance of that life. Christ is the emporium of spiritual vitality. When we lose contact with Him life diminishes.

The Laodicean Church was outwardly prosperous, yet Christ found nothing to commend in it.

When a man is cold God knows how to deal with him, his own conscience convicts him of sin, but the great feature of this lukewarm Christianity is its complacency. "I am rich and have need of nothing."

The Christian world may be divided into three classes.

1. Those who live up to their religion, as it were, who find it a reality in their daily life.
2. Those who are earnestly desirous to live up to their religion, who are dissatisfied with their present attainments.
3. Those who have not realized their privileges as Christians, nor are they dissatisfied with their lives. They are content to live year