

sense of personal accountability, under which the Gospel places every christian, enforcing obligation for the entire success of divine purposes, as far as God gives means, is no stranger to the church. Ministerial action, contemplating the mere personal and local, conduces to this, and the congregation and its members become detached units, instead of component parts of one grand, mutually influential whole. Individual judgment becomes thus, the sole guide of action, and destructive of personal, relative accountability, by transferring the authoritative from the Bible, to man's own consciousness and convictions of duty. Even where the Bible retains its official position,—from some unexplained cause,—in large organizations, individual responsibility is, too often, in the inverse ratio of the mass, the effect, it may be, of unwise centralization, but, certainly, the effect of the absence of that teaching which elevates the christian above the mere personal in religion, raises him to the contemplation of its sublime objects, and enforces individual accountability for all Jehovah's purposes, as far as means and qualifications are concerned,—a teaching that developes the highest degree of personal activity, and yet gives to centralization,—often a necessity of circumstances,—its commanding power as the expression of the intelligent, combined individualism of the entire church. Without this teaching, energies become contracted and localized, and upon pastors, office-bearers, boards and committees, all practical responsibility is unconcernedly permitted to devolve, as if they, and they alone, instead of *all the people of God*, were Christ's agents on earth. This is the natural effect of substituting the personal and local for the all-embracing activities of christian life. The absence of large, Christ-like sympathies, working individually, yet in combination, is not unknown in the church; and to this fact may be traced much that is unsatisfactory. Christians are, practically, not their brother's keepers, feel little interest in each other,—in struggling congregations,—in the conversion of sinners, or in the world's redemption. Large-hearted, spontaneous, giving, for Christ sake, how rare! There is a lack of that individualization, and yet cohesion, which mutual character and relations, and reciprocal duties and interests demand. The rarity of conversions to Christ,—the low standard of professional piety,—the limited interest taken in the great ends of christian life, are evidences of all this; signs of an unsound condition more dangerous than external antagonism. There is an agency paid to do all this,—we pay it, and thus christians settle their doubts as to their personal duty, if doubts ever existed, and the beauty of holiness and aggressive activity