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## WHAT A PEOPLE OUGHT TO BE.

Christianity is a power—its home is a living heart—its beauty is not the marble form, exquisite in its proportions but cold and dead, it is rather the hallowed performance of works of usefulness in the world, of devotedness in the closet, and of sacrifice in the church. Every individual follower of Christ has a great work to do. The strength to do it, comes from Christ. That Divine Redeemer looks then to see in his churches the mighty influence of faith in his name, and the product of his enlightening grace. Inquiry is made for works of faith and labours of love; not what are the professions, pretensions, and plans existing, but what are the performances of his people. Blessed of the Lord, the essential graces flourish. The subject on which we shall dwell in this paper is—“What a people ought to be.” An example of a working church is to be found in the case of the Thessalonians. From them sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place their faith to God-ward was spread abroad.

A people should be *practical*. There is work to do in the world. Souls are redeemed with high objects in view. The life of Christ has more than poetry in it; the agony of Christ is more than a tragic spectacle. The purchase of his pain was the salvation of souls. Like their Master, his people ought to have great practical objects. No one liveth to himself. A contest with the devil, the world, and the flesh, must be pushed to victory. Doing good to the body and souls of men is a holy vocation. Bible doctrines are practical; the foundation of holy living is laid in divine truth. The bones of the human body are of account as well as flesh and blood. It is a mistake to suppose that the doctrines of christianity are of minor importance. In the practical work of saving souls how can a sinner hear of pardon without doctrine—what can he know of what the work of Christ is without doctrine—when can he possess the benefits of redemption without doctrine? All scripture is full of practical purpose. Churches of Christ then exist not to keep up a mere fashion—to give currency to sentimental expressions—to theorize on topics affecting man here and hereafter. An earnest practical work is theirs. How futile mere speculation! A writer says—“I recently passed under a high bridge, (unused and weather beaten,) the connecting link of a railway whose construction would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. Along the line of this road a few months before, the sounds of toil were heard and the rushing train was soon to carry its living freight and its merchandise.