

CHRISTIAN DUTY.

"Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."—Hebrews xii. 14.

We do not undertake to set forth Christian duty in full. We are by no means equal to such a task. Nor, in the presence of an open Bible, would such an undertaking be aught else than presumption. Far less is it our purpose to set down particulars of duty to individual men. These are the personal business of the individual which, followed or despised, are matters upon which the individual, as responsible to God, must exercise his conscience. Our purpose is an humble enquiry into those principles of "growth in grace," whereby a sinner born again may hope to progress from the condition of a babe in the faith of the Son of God, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13).

These principles are the same for all the members of the Church of Christ in its every time, state, and section. Their complete fitness to every shade of change in every Christian heart, is proof of their divine origin. In this respect the words of Our Saviour are verified. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John vii. 7.)

But unchanging as are these principles, their scope is the soul of man, buried in the *mêlée* of Christian warfare, torn by fightings without, troubled by fears within, and subjected to the outpoured enmity of a world in which, by the unfailing word of the Captain of their Salvation, their stay is inseparable from tribulation. The inspired men, whose words at the movement of the Holy Spirit first gave body and shape to these principles, were in the midst of the special struggles of their personal place and particular era in the history of the Church. Naturally they moulded their words in some measure in accordance with the condition of themselves and their brethren. That condition was one of fierce persecution. Resentment, prompting revenge, was, humanly speaking, the natural return for such treatment, at the hands of their fellow men.

Forgiveness, prompting PEACE, was that laid down as their special duty. Nor was this forgiveness to be of that equivocal nature which should choose its own time and object. It was not to be put on for an occasion. It was to be *followed*. It was to be set before each Christian heart, and, as an object of incessant desire, *pursued*.