

same human mind that exercises itself about spiritual things, that has to exercise itself about temporal things, and so up to a certain point the processes will be the same. Now you know quite well how frequently persons are other than steadfast in their ordinary avocations and persuasions. You have perhaps met with men who could speak in some such way as this :—"There is a business enterprize ; I looked at it ; I regarded it favorably ; it seemed to me in the first instance as if it was sure to be a success, and I went a certain way into it, and by and by I saw, as I supposed, reason to change my mind, and so I got out of it." And in some instances you will hear men acknowledge frankly that they regretted that it was so. There may be for example, great public enterprises, and you hear men speak about them in some such way as this : "At first I thought very favourably of the movement, and went a certain length into it myself ; by and by I had occasion, as I supposed, to change my mind, and so I passed out of it, and ceased to be interested in it ;" and sometimes you will hear men make confession that they regretted that their minds did undergo this change. The same thing occurs occasionally with individuals in the matter of outlay of their own energies. You shall hear a man say "I thought of preparing myself to be a medical man, or a lawyer, or a clergyman, and I went a certain length in that direction, but in the course of time other views of life were presented to me, and I changed my mind and have moved in another direction," and sometimes you hear men say they regretted that they did allow themselves to change. Now, what I want you to understand is, that each individual has but one mind, and that mind works along distinct and definite lines, so this matter of steadfastness has something in common, in the matter of ordinary affairs, with the higher occupations of the spirit when engaged with things spiritual and eternal. Now what the apostle says is, "Be ye steadfast;" hold by the convictions of truth that you have received and avowed, and through which you can be possessors of the hope of which I have been speaking to you. "Well," but one may say, "looked at in that point of view, steadfastness is not a thing that will come by order ; it is not a thing which a man can evolve from within himself ; it is not a thing independent of evidence ; it is not a thing which you can direct somebody to get up as it were within himself." Steadfastness—firm and fixed conviction—according to the laws of the human mind rests upon the intelligent perception of evidence. "Well, but perhaps" some of you say, "in this matter of Christian faith, I don't stand exactly as I used to stand ; I was brought up by godly parents ; I had faithful Sunday-school teachers ; I lived in an atmosphere that was saturated with Christian truth ; I was perfectly satisfied, without the least hesitation, at one time about the absolute truth of this Christian faith ; but in the course of my life other thoughts were presented to me, other views gained possession of my mind ; I came to look upon other aspects of things ; I took, I venture to think, wider and broader views, and the consequence is I have not the same convictions now that I once had." You may perhaps hear persons make an acknowledgement of this kind, followed by the statement, "I wish I did believe with the same clearness with which I used to do." Why should you not believe as you used to do. What change has taken place in the grounds of belief ? What modification has there been of the evidences ? Where is the point on which the Christian cause is weaker than it was ten years ago, twenty years ago, fifty years ago ? Try to answer the question to yourselves. Where have the manuscripts been discovered that weaken our faith in the originals of these holy oracles ? Where have the monuments come to light that disprove their historical accuracy ? Where are the travellers who have detected blunders and mistakes in the geography of the Bible ? Where are the histories that have pointed out blunders, proved blunders, in the light of contemporary literature ? Where has the evidence broken down ? It is very easy for you to allow yourselves to think for the moment that there must be some very great change because you hear so many things, and you read so many things now, with which you were unfamiliar in