

under the burning words of the Apostles?* It is true, we have churches without number, and sects not a few. We have sermons *ad nauseam*; bibles elegantly bound; unexceptionable prayer books; choice music; comfortable pews; fashionable congregations. We have all the outward trappings,—all the “pomp and circumstance of a most glorious religion;” but—where is the religion itself? Far be it from me to aver that there is *no* true piety left amongst us. Thank God, Christianity is not utterly dead; it *cannot* die. From its very slumbers it sheds a benign influence on even those who would fain shake off its blessed yoke; but, the Christianity which now passes current is not the pure gold of the New Testament. Doubtless God has still left His *hidden ones*; men and women who secretly live His life, and feel His love, and say little about it;—thousands who have not “bowed the knee to Baal,”—their “light so shining before men” that their Father in heaven is glorified. But, tens of thousands who are far from thinking so, seem to be going down blindly to sure destruction, if the words of the text have any meaning at all. Somehow or other it does seem to me, that, in our times, mere soundness of *creed* has been substituted for soundness of *heart and life*. Now, I am the last to depreciate the importance of a true belief. It is difficult to build up a true life on the basis of a false creed. To the Church at least, taken as a whole, orthodoxy is indispensable,—a matter of life or death. I question whether, to the *individual member*, its importance may not be over-rated. How often do we see ignorant Christians live the life of Godliness; whilst the most immaculate and critical orthodoxy goes hand and hand with depravity of heart and life! There will be millions of poor ignorant people in heaven, who prayed their prayers, and did their duty, and knew little or nothing of dogma, and much of that little tainted with error. No, my brethren, creeds and catechisms, however valuable, will not save us. Good sermons will not save us. An orthodox belief will not save us. You might know the Bible by heart, only to be tortured with its words in a future world of woe. It is not the light we have, but the love; not what we *know* simply, but what we *do*, that will tell in the judgment: Not simply what we do, but also what we *fail to do*: “Inasmuch as ye did it *not*.”

I have long thought also that the current estimate of the damnable qualities of the various sins of men is erroneous in the extreme. I am fully alive to the fact, that public opinion is a fearful power; but so it

* I am no advocate of Communism, or of prodigal liberality, or indiscriminate charity. I simply call attention to the precepts of Christ, and the spirit and practice of the first Christians.