

plain clothes, with modest home, with humble fare. You must not be ashamed to work. It is a thousand times better to have rough, black hands and a clean conscience, than to wear the most exquisite kid gloves and have villainy coiling round the heart.

IV. *Want of Fidelity in the cultivation of spiritual affections.*—Excellence is nearly always the result of long and patient culture. Skill in manual labor is acquired by a painstaking repetition which educates both eye and hand. Rapidity of consecutive thought comes only, if it ever comes at all, as the fruit of incessant application. This is so evidently a matter of fact that any one who expects to reach even a moderate degree of excellence in any department when almost his entire strength and enthusiasm are given to something else, and only mere fragments devoted to it, would be set down as lacking common sense.

And yet, somehow, men are disappointed if they do not reach a high level of attainment and religious experience without the use of the means, which for other purposes they know to be indispensable. A hasty prayer in the morning,—a hurried, incurious reading of a portion of scripture,—a formal attendance on public worship,—a visit to the meetings of the week of prayer and an occasional attendance at the prayer-meeting shortly before the communion—this is about the sum of the effort made to be religious. The rest of the time is given to business, to household cares, to the luxurious enjoyment of the comforts of home life, or to a round of pleasure-seeking and fashionable dissipation. And then while sucking the fatness of the world and filling the soul with its delight, but scarcely more than catching the odor of holiness and religion, people complain of being cold and dead, of having no satisfaction in the exercises of religion—of knowing nothing of fellowship with God. In fact they have to take all the supreme delights on trust. There may be such a thing as joy unspeakable and full of glory; Christ Jesus may be fairer than the sons of men; but as for them, judging from their past experience, they can scarcely hope to catch more than the faintest glimpse of His beauty, or to get more than the merest taste of the Wine of the Kingdom until the whole journey is finished. Now, sometimes people are vastly puzzled to find out why things are so with them. It never seems to enter their thoughts that their own careless absorption, their own luxurious indolence their own levity and self-indulgence are at the bottom of all their trouble. And sadder still, there are those who having eyes to see how far down they are in the scale of religious life, instantly jump at the conclusion that in their circumstances it is all they can expect, and then settle down