

liest churches, those which were planted by the Apostles, were all comparatively poor. The words of Peter were, "Silver and gold have I none." It was the declaration of Paul, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are." Yet, notwithstanding all these disadvantages in their outward condition, these churches, as shown by the result of their efforts, were, in general, and so far as relates to all spiritual matters, abundantly strong.

Leaving out of the view, therefore, all other causes which may affect the condition of religious communities, it will serve the present purpose to notice a few of those which depend upon the moral and religious state of the churches themselves. The causes which tend to produce weakness, and those which tend to produce strength, are in general the opposites of each other, and consequently to speak of one is, in every case, to imply its opposite.

There are two correlative terms, which of themselves are sufficient to cover the whole ground,— *Death and Life*. The dead are, of course, without strength. It is the living only that possess any energy, and that are able to exert any power. We do not expect anything from the dead. Our hopes are altogether in the living. The same is likewise true in a moral and spiritual sense. If a church is dead, it can have no strength whatever ; and unless it can be resuscitated, unless by some miracle it can be raised from the dead, there is no reason to expect