

is not the result, however. Some endeavoured to reach the same end by seclusion, pure meditation, reading and prayer. Some have had recourse to works of charity and benevolence. Some to a faithful and diligent observance of the outward Means of Grace, a close adherence to the ritualism of the peculiar church to which they may have belonged, supposed experience of conviction, faith etc., at a certain period in the past. With regard to all these, men who have tried them exclaimed, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." They have left them, not enriched in the spiritual life, but with empty souls and aching hearts. There may be a name that he is alive, as the possession of him who thus endeavours to purchase and nourish spiritual life. But there is one thing against him. He is *really* not alive at all. He may *think* that he is rich, increased with goods and has need of nothing. But the estimate of the judge of all the earth is that he is miserable, poor, blind, naked. He is perishing with hunger and faining to fill his belly with the husks, even while within the pale of the church of the Living One. "Man shall not live by bread alone." Thus, then, from whatever stand-point we view man, we find that he has no life in himself—that he consequently cannot be sustained by any mere human invention.

The provisions of this life—in the widest signification—are, in themselves, altogether insufficient to sustain and continue us in life. Over and above this there is the one efficient source of life—the one and true staff of life. This is: "Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

II. Let us consider this staff of life then, in the second place, from its *positive side*.

The great body of Christian men and women recognise God as the author of their being. They see in Him, too, the Great Provider that satisfies the wants of every creature and that overrules every thing for His Own glory. Few, however, seem to realize to any great extent the true nature of the relation that we bear to God as the source of life.

Few—comparatively speaking—seem to get a firm grasp of the truth, that it is in Him we live and move and have our being. Man, even as a physical being, has no life even for the shortest possible duration, save *in* God. "From Him we receive life and breath and all things." It is true that there are certain laws of health which must be carefully observed by us, if health is to be preserved. But what are these laws themselves? Are they not such as can be legitimately classed under the term "laws of nature?" Are they not, further, as all laws of nature are, simply manifestations of the method in which it pleases the Divine Mind to work in our frame and sustain it in life? Material food may be partaken of to the full—indeed it must be partaken of in obedience to the Divine law written in our system—but unless the digestive organs are in a healthy condition, unless the law according to which food is assimilated to the system is in active operation,