

credible. We reply by asking, is anything incredible when it is shown to be a clear, indisputable fact?

Well, says another, if that be the case I have no desire to become wiser than past generations. What they failed to discover I may well leave undiscovered. Certainly that option is before every one. The mere fright engendered by facing such a possibility as is here more than hinted at is quite sufficient to cause some to surrender their birthright of independent thought and bold, fearless examination of truth. All such must of course lag behind. What was good enough for their fathers is good enough for them.

But this unpleasant thought should present itself to such laggards. Our forefathers would not have found their spiritual life as good as it really was if they had deliberately and knowingly turned away from what appeared to them as possibly better. It was the fact that they were not called on to investigate further that made their knowledge and experience as good as it was.

The moment we refuse to investigate, from the fear of possible, unpleasant consequences, immediately that which before was good loses, in part, at least, its former value—it ceases to be to us the good it formerly was.

In this nineteenth century, this age of thorough investigation, he who refuses to re-examine the foundations of his belief in any accepted truth at once ceases to hold that truth as a truth; it is even possible that henceforth he will hold it as a lie, even if after all it is a truth and capable of standing the most crucial investigation.

POSSIBLY NOT TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE.

As an alternative to the above considered result it may be possible that the New Testament Scriptures do not, and never did teach the possibility of keeping converted. This possibility must also be faced in our investigation of the subject, for he who goes to the Bible simply for confirmation of some previously entertained views is clearly unfurnished for truth-searching.

But if such be the teaching of Scripture, surely it must be best for all con-

cerned to know the fact, and then to state it in clear-cut language, that it may be maintained as truth against all comers.

We shall then, mayhap, find it taught in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, that a man may come to God through Jesus Christ for forgiveness and regeneration, and freely receive both on his compliance with the easy terms prescribed. But he will, in no case, be able to remain in that gracious state. He will ever and anon forfeit it by committing sin, either through ignorance or through yielding to the resistless tide of his natural propensities and desires. However, he may be restored any moment, even although he should repeat the act of faith for pardon and cleansing a thousand times per day.

Now, no matter how such a statement of the case might shock our sense of what should be the outcome of the life and sufferings of Christ, still, if this is the *very Gospel* it is evident that Christians, to be consistent, should maintain it as God's truth. Why shrink from knowing this fact with certainty, if taught clearly and unmistakably in the Bible?

But it is suggested by some that this ideal is too low, that by placing a higher ideal, even that of continuous conversion, before the followers of Christ, they will make better progress in the divine life. Well, if this also is the clear teaching of Scripture, of course adopt it openly as the truth. But let it be definitely stated and not treated as if there was to be some sleight-of-hand work about it, as if the Christian should trick himself into forgetting that it was impossible to keep converted in order that he might act as if it were possible, and so gain greater good from his efforts after holy living.

But if this is correct reasoning, then the Scriptures are a party to a huge deception, and Christ is made to be the minister of sin. From such legitimate conclusion we unhesitatingly recoil, and hence reject all such Jesuitical arts as necessarily foreign to all Scripture teaching.

It then must be right to state clearly and openly whatever the Scriptures may teach on this important subject.