

too great, but the ebb is quite as excessive, with its exposed sludge, in which we run some risk of sinking, and its floating malaria, which may gender fever. A clear idea and settled conviction is now represented as a thing impossible, and not desirable if it were possible. Doubt is exalted to the rank of a virtue. Cloudiness is thought to be preferable to clearness.—Using, but abusing the language of scripture, they tell us that we must all be baptized in the cloud and in the sea. People will not remain long in their present position of vagueness or vacillation. Suspense is at all times painful, and persons hasten out of it as soon as possible, preferring even the worst uncertainty. It is this circumstance which renders these times so momentous. * * * *

Our professors of theology and philosophy have a very important duty to discharge, in sending forth from our colleges a body of young men, thoroughly provided with principles and with learning to meet and overthrow the advancing evil. Not, indeed, that I would expect, or even wish, that all, or the great body of our young preachers, should be encouraged to go forth and do battle with the infidel. On the contrary, I am convinced that it would be an unmitigated evil to find our ordinary preachers appearing before a promiscuous congregation, not to preach Jesus Christ to perishing sinners, and recommend holiness of life, but to meet objections which the audience, perhaps, never heard of, till a feeble attempt was made to reply to them. * * * That is the theology best suited to the age, which is put forth by living men of the age, drinking of the living word for themselves, by the power of the living Spirit.

There are persons in our day even telling us that the old theology of Scotland was in many respects defective. Our old Scotch divines, and those who follow, have not, they say, set forth Christ with sufficient prominence as a living person in his love and sympathy, and as the proper object of faith. They declare that, as many in the last century, and in the beginning of this, preached a cold morality, and not the Saviour, so are not a few in this age preaching formal doctrines, and not Christ.

Now I am not inclined to say that there is no justice in this reproof. No believer should allow himself to blame those who, with a genuine heart, would magnify the person of the Saviour. Certainly they cannot be wrong who make Christ the head. When he is there he keeps all else. He keeps doctrine, he keeps the Church, he keeps ordinances in their proper place—in an honored, but still subordinate place, as members of his mystical body. So far as this new theology, of which we hear so

much, errs—as I believe it does err—it is not in what it inculcates, but in what it omits; not in what it teaches, but in what it does not teach; not in what it affirms, but in what it denies. Where it errs is in exhibiting a mutilated Christ. It calls our attention to certain lovely features of his character, and hence it cannot be wrong; but it leaves out others, and deadly error must come in at the open gap. In particular it is losing sight of the expiatory character of the work and sufferings of the Redeemer. And verily I cannot at all understand my Lord's life or death, I cannot comprehend those deep groans, that fearful agony, that exceeding sorrow even unto death, that awful cloud on the Father's face, till I connect them with my sins. I believe the burden is off me when I see it laid on Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. In reading certain books published in our day, and hearing certain sermons, I am inclined to say with young Isaac, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" How relieved am I when I hear the declaration, "My son, God will provide." He has a living lamb for the burnt offering. While we retain a Bible, divine and inspired, and so distinguished from any other book, I think we see more fully that we are at liberty, and that we should be ready, to accept lessons from every quarter—from nature, and from history, from literature, and from art."

HOW TO ACT AS A STEWARD FOR GOD.

I. DETERMINE FOR YOURSELF WHAT PROPORTION OF YOUR INCOME YOU OUGHT TO CONSECRATE TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.

Nobody has a right to do this except yourself; but it is your duty. The Word of God will be your guide. You will find something there in favour of making the proportion a tenth; but the New Testament rule, about which there can be no question, is, "As God hath prospered you," 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Do not leave this point comfortably vague, but honestly consider it and fix in your conscience the proportion you should give.

II. DO THIS ON THE LORD'S DAY.—"On the First Day of the week." It need not take long time; but it is worth while to do it seriously and thoroughly for the satisfaction of your own mind, as being yourself one who is "bought with a price."

III. SET APART THE SUM, whatever it may be, week by week, so that it shall not be mixed up with your other monies. If your income is a fixed one, a separate purse will be necessary; if you are in business and