

It is admitted, indeed, that there is a difficulty sometimes, to honest-minded Christians, in understanding how far they are called to separate from evil, when they see the prophetic declarations of incoming corruption, and find that, as a fact at least, there is the recognition of a mingled state of things of good and evil characterizing the general profession of Christianity. I do not here refer to the parable of "the tares of the field," in Matthew xiii, which is often wrongly referred to, as affording a sanction to this mixture of Christians with the world; for if any one would notice the terms of the parable, when he is urging the well-known passage, "Let both grow together till the harvest," he would see it stated, "the field is the *world*,"—not the Church. But on the contrary, when speaking of the *Church*, the language of Scripture is, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Purge out therefore the old leaven;" and "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat," &c.

But in the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, in the book of Revelation, and in the Epistle of Jude, there is the marked presence of evil. But both these cases have a prophetic bearing. For whatever might have been the incipient evils when the apostles wrote, both the Revelations and Jude look on to the final corruption of the profession of Christianity as committed to the responsibility of man. In Jude, moreover, a *remnant* is addressed apart; and the same may be said as to the church of Thyatira and the following churches in the Revelations. However, the solution of the difficulty is simply this, that, if God has stated prophetically what would be the results in the hands of man, and his failure in responsibility in regard to what has been committed, in Christianity, to his trust, that his people might not be stumbled when they see the evil, being thus forewarned of it, still the principles of His grace for their guidance can never vary. No outward changes connected with the course of the Church on earth can ever be a sanction for a Christian's separating, in his individual walk or corporate association, the principles of holiness and grace. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

It is assumed also that there has been a manifest departure on the part of the Church, through unfaithfulness, from the position in which it was set as a witness for Christ, in the world, in apostolic days; and that the dispensation with which the Church is connected will close in scenes of apostacy and judgment instead of universal blessing; and that the proper hope of the Church is Christ's personal appearing for her glory, and not a spiritual millennium through the means of the preaching of the gospel.

These things have been noticed in this place in order to obviate mistake or disappointment. The Scriptures abundantly teach the truths that have been asserted or assumed, so that it is not the setting up of any authority but the word of God. Moreover they are so plain that they will be at once obvious to the mind that is brought to study the Scriptures as they ought to be studied, and that is not biassed by the systems of men. However, from the number of subjects noticed, and the limits of these pages, it was not possible that the grounds of each principle should be adduced and argued out.

If I have insisted strongly, and, it may be, with some repetition, on the doctrine concerning the Church, I have done so because of its important bearing on all the practical questions which have been considered, and which are at this time agitating the minds of Christians. It is not merely that the Scriptures, which relate to its own position, and privileges, and duties, cannot be rightly apprehended, unless the distinctive character of the Church is seen, but even