

demands that we should act according to them, how can we expect to influence them for good. Surely we cannot. It would be a hopeless task: our solicitations would pass by them as the "idle wind"—as words without meaning.

The want among christians of the present day is this action from *principle*, and not from *convenience* or *impulse*; and in order to the due appreciation of our privileges as "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," and the duties required of us in our high and holy calling, we must seek to be acquainted with the truth revealed in the word of God. Ignorance of the glorious plan of salvation will subject us to the effect of every fanciful impulse, render us powerless for the accomplishment of good, and leave us weak and fearful advocates of the cause. An acquaintance with the design of christianity will, on the contrary, while we practise its precepts, put us in the situation that we may speak with boldness to a gainsaying world. Ignorant of the design of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, the few fishermen of Galilee, who had gathered round him and followed him in all his journeyings—had listened to his teachings, and saw the miracles which he did—deserted their Master on the first appearance of danger. In the words of the Evangelist, when the soldiers came out to take him, and lead him to the judgment hall of Pilate as a common felon, "they all forsook him and fled." But when the promised Comforter had descended upon them from heaven—when their minds were irradiated with the knowledge of the design of his sufferings and death, mark the contrast: we find those poor, weak, illiterate individuals, standing before the Jewish dignitaries, and in the face of persecution and death enunciating the noble sentiment, "We ought to obey God rather than man." And this would be the result now from a close perusal of the word of God. Convinced of our duty as christians, we should act from principle and not from impulse; and in the face of overwhelming opposition, dare to do right because God requires it. We should perform every duty in his fear, and so the cause of God would go on triumphantly. We should see a high and a noble principle actuating the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; they would meet their duties fairly, and perform them cheerfully, and the progress of the gospel would be unparalleled. If there was a close study of the word of God, we would see this action from principle pervading all the churches of Christ, and its effects would be visible in the closer union among the disciples—in a desire, when the well-being of the cause required it, to cast all small, selfish considerations away, and become self-denying christians for the sake of Him who once said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Contrasted with impulsive action—a calm and enlightened discharge of duty is calculated to give the individual christian a noble dignity of character. Despising the sordid considerations of time and sense, he acts with reference to his eternal interests, and all things earthly weigh but as a feather in comparison with these. His principle will sustain him amid the annoyances and besetments from those "who are without"—ever the attendants of a proper discharge of christian duty in this world; and conscious of his integrity he will calmly meet his latter end—nor shrink amid the fierce agony of the death-hour. He will not draw back waveringly when the cold waves