

science is stifled, in order that one may not lose in business, nor fail of the rare opportunity of mingling in a promiscuous crowd.

"But," you ask, "why should all this so particularly disturb the clergyman, and cause him such special anxiety, when it is only one evidence among many of the weakness and infirmity of human nature?" When we would answer, because it discloses to him such a want of christian principle among his people, and shows him that with many of the souls for which he must account, self-interest (covetousness) or passing inclination (mere whim) will over-ride every consideration of duty, and set aside the most sacred obligations to God and His church. He knows, but too well, that those who can be counted upon to attend church only when there is nothing to attract them elsewhere, are not "the faithful" who would endure persecution for the truth's sake; but, on the contrary, that they are mere self-pleasers, or man-pleasers, ready to sacrifice the church or her interests, whenever they themselves are promised a sufficient compensation, and can make it pay enough in business, or in personal gratification.

Let anyone only consider, that for him to come to church when there is no where else to go—no counter attraction drawing him away—this is no evidence of sincere attachment and devotion to the Church of God—even the idler and the infidel might do the same. It is when there are strong allurements, decided attractions, and powerful temptations to be resisted, and one persists in coming to church when it costs something to do so, and involves a sensible sacrifice on his part.—It is only when interest and inclination oppose the act, that one can be sure that he thinks more of the church, and of his duty to her, and to God through her, than he does of self, or business, or pleasure—it is then only that he makes it appear that he is really constrained by motives of christian duty and Divine obligation, and is prepared to stand by the Church of God through evil report as well as good report; and whether he can gain any temporal advantage or special gratification from it, or not. And then, consider again, if one is ready to forsake the Church and her

services, whenever there is for him a sufficient attraction elsewhere, he evidently holds these things more or less cheaply, and as that which may be renounced upon occasion, and for an adequate price; and, if he can be induced thus to surrender them for one Sunday, you have only to make the same, or similar inducements, to operate continuously, and, perhaps, with some enhanced attraction, in order that he may forsake the Church *altogether and forever*. This is not an exaggerated statement; it is only too true. And the faithful pastor does well to be troubled when he notes such signs of incipient apostasy among the sheep of his flock.

But "how long halt ye between two opinions?" O ye Churchmen! If the Church is really what she herself claims to be, "the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth,"—if she is indeed the Ark of Salvation, by Divine will and command set up in this world as a refuge from sin and condemnation,—if she is the divinely appointed school to train God's people for heaven, its purity and joy,—and if you have any doubts on these points, it is surely time that you were settling them by careful investigation and study. But oh, if she be all this, and more, even the very Body of Christ, the chosen spouse of the Lord, then CLING to her. Cling to her constantly and habitually, at all times and under all circumstances; and, "forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her" in prosperity or adversity, in joy or in sorrow, in life or in death, and you will be no "reed shaken with the wind," and carried hither and thither wherever the excitement is, or there is something to be made for self.

—◆◆◆—

*"Whether we live we live unto the Lord; or whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's."*

"WE ARE THE LORD'S."—How true these words of the Apostle in the sense elsewhere expressed by him, "ye are not your own, but bought with a price." But do they with each individual soul represent