

doctrine, and when he does appear he will be like a man without any spinal column, a ship without any keel or keelson, a house without foundation. Does not all true religion come from God? Is it not placed in the soul by the working of the Divine Spirit. You are first taught the doctrine of sin, spiritual life through Christ, salvation by grace, sanctification by the truth, resurrection from the dead and glorification in heaven. God has bound those great doctrines together, and they are all necessarily connected. Doctrinal, experimental and practical religion must stand or fall together. He that said, "Ye must be born again," said. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The influence of the truth upon the heart is the origin of the Christian life, and that life must flow out in the keeping of the Divine commands. When you come to the Scriptures do not come with a mind warped by party feeling, for you are not permitted to hold the scale when judgment is placed in the balance. The Apostle John speaks of Gaius being in a state of soul prosperity, because he had the truth dwelling in him. He was walking in the truth; he was beloved for the truth's sake, and was a fellow-helper in the truth. May the time speedily come when every church that has sent lamentations in their letters to the Association may have such men living in the community and standing in God's house.

Closely allied to a study of the Sacred Scriptures is prayer, and a few remarks upon prayer shall form the second part of this letter.

II. The second cause of religious declension is the way many regard daily prayer to God. Prayer is the desire of the heart ascending to God in petition and supplication; the soul's moving in the presence of God in holding communion. In answer to prayer we receive out of His fulness grace for grace, but how is it so many of our prayers are unanswered? He tells us the reason: "Ye ask and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss." "If I regard iniquity in my heart," said the Psalmist, "the Lord will not hear me."

(a.) When we pray, do we really desire the things we ask? It is an awful thing to come intentionally into the presence of the great Heart-Searcher, and not feel the need of the things we ask. Yet an influence of this solemn working may run through our prayers. It is dangerous to ask God to keep us from besetting sins and still practise them. The godly man will seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face evermore. "I love the Lord," said David, "because He hath heard my voice, and my supplications, because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." "Pray without ceasing," said the apostle; not that the Christian can always be engaged in the positive act of prayer, but he should have the nature of prayer in him. The bird is not constantly on the wing, but is ready to fly at an instant. So the Christian