

firm unto the end." Whose children we are not if we do wickedly; for he that worketh not righteousness "is not of God," but of the evil one; and "in this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil;" they bear the family likeness. Such is plainly Scripture teaching, and its practical bearings are not far to seek.

Without perplexing ourselves with theological subtleties, which are only fitted to turn us aside from our practical duties and privileges, let us realize this fact—two natures are striving within us, the god-like, the devilish, and if our adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion seeking to devour, or the prince of the power of the air would, by more subtle agencies, lead us captive at his will, the spirit which God has caused to dwell within us longeth for us with even an envious longing (Jas. iv. 5), and pleads, why will ye die? And whilst the father of lies has nothing to offer us, save a prodigal riot to end in prodigal famine, rags and despair, the God of all truth and consolation has, perhaps, sharp discipline here that our trust be proved, nevertheless, the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those exercised thereby.

It is an awful responsibility to choose evil and manifest our character as devilish, to take the guard from the door of our lips and cherish those lusts that war against the soul; to cultivate the root of eternal bitterness, and to curse with sorrow, if not with sin, those who walk with us life's fitful pilgrimage. Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? Have any peace to whom the way of God is not known? True, oftentimes, to outward seeming, there are no bands in the death of the wicked, and in life their strength seems firm: nor are they troubled as other men. There are no bands felt by the coffined clay, nor trouble in the death vault's damp corruption; but death is not the end you seek.

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.
'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh, life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that we want."

and the devil never gives his children anything but the darkness of eternal death. Who openly would choose this? Take willingly the dread responsibility of death, when life is within reach? Think of a spiritual suicide! Ah, my soul, come not near!

But, if it is an awful responsibility to choose evil, it is a blessed privilege to be assured of sonship with God; for "with Him is the foundation of life; in His light we shall see light." True, the future is not all revealed; we see through a glass darkly; it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but there are many things we may know, such as, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich;" that "the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." And such knowledge gives confidence, and he that walks in confidence walks in comfort. Even in broad daylight, with cloudless glory overhead, we walk with nervous pain when we have no assurance of the way, and to wander in darkness is to dwell in the very shadow of death. God's children realize a father's care and watchful love, for they "know whom they trust, and are persuaded that He is able to guard that which they have committed unto Him;" that "all things work together for good to those that love Him;" and that though it may "not yet be made manifest what we shall be, we know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is."

"So, on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God,
Than go alone in the light."

"And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Here, then, is a ground of rich and full assurance. "If ye know that He is righteous, know ye that every one that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him." But how "do righteousness," when temptations without and lusts within beset and beguile, buffet and baffle? An old question asked under conviction, asked of and answered by the Master, "What must we do that we may work the works of God? This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." Eighteen-and-a-half eventful centuries have passed since that answer was given. Men have discovered, invented, searched, explored; even to-day the buried wisdom of the centuries are being brought to light, and the accumulated and accumulating wisdom of the world's systems,