

But he who, having the opportunity, fails through indolence or any other cause to improve it to the utmost, relying instead upon the mere undisciplined fervour of a "zeal not according to knowledge," is verily guilty in the sight of Him who "has called him to be a soldier." Hence, we repeat, whatever may be the true lesson taught by the difficulty under consideration, it cannot be that the Christian student should deliberately choose mediocrity, or inferiority, and be content to go forth into the world a half-trained weakling, an intellectual sloven.

We pass to a second proposition which we would enunciate with, if possible, still greater emphasis. The Christian soldier, who would accomplish anything in the service of the Master, must have not merely spiritual life, but life developed, *spiritual power*. This is the very fountain of strength. His relations alike to Heaven and to Earth demand that the life from above should inform his whole being, imparting a loftier purpose and an intenser energy to all its powers and activities. That tasting of the "powers of the world to come" must have been faint and unsatisfying indeed, which leaves the soul content without draughts deeper and renewed day by day. The Christian, student or otherwise, whose retrospect does not reveal a process of spiritual growth and much more, that one whose spiritual consciousness bears testimony to chronic feebleness and declension, has indeed need to take alarm and search after causes. And yet, and this is the point we wish to make, experience and the Bible concur in teaching that both feebleness and decline are inevitable unless the spiritual life is constantly fed and nourished. The law of the spiritual kingdom is *growth*. It has been well said, "The infant born into the world is a man in miniature; all the parts of the body and all the faculties of the mind are there in embryo. So the regenerated sinner is the saint in embryo. The new principles are there, the new affections.