

THE LIBRARY
THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS

THE SOUTHERN
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XX.—NO. 1.

JANUARY, MDCCCLXIX.

ARTICLE I.

IS BAPTISM INVARIABLY IMMERSION?

JAN 1 0 1938
1.25
47

We are not among those who draw into common discourse the sectarian questions of an unspiritual character, "which gender strifes and disputings about words," and which concern mere modes and forms, about which good and wise men differ in opinion. For that ground which has been held on the subject by some good thinkers, may after all have a measure of truth in it, that God has designedly hidden the mode of baptism, by withholding any express scripture on the subject, just as he hid the body of Moses upon Mount Nebo; and for the same reason—that it might not become an ensnaring object of idolatrous worship to those who chain down the power of their own consciences to unimportant rites and ceremonies, and allow themselves to be gradually seduced out of sight of the lofty spirituality of religion.

Yet when persistent efforts are constantly made to change the faith of our people, as if for life and death, in a way which it must be manifest to all is not for the better, to any practical intent or purpose, by the alleged binding force of a form which

VOL. XX., NO. 1—1.

ARTICLE VI.

THE MINISTRY AND ITS DUTIES.

We propose to consider the nature of a call to the gospel ministry, the responsibilities and duties of the gospel ministry, and the considerations which should impel, sustain, and guide the minister of Christ, under the burden of his responsibilities and duties. The irrepressible outburst of the Apostle Paul, in the contemplation of the everlasting issues of the gospel ministry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" swells up in the heart and trembles on the tongue of every true gospel minister. It expresses justly the deepest conviction of all such, not only in the first and general and distant view of their awful task; not only when agitating the momentous inquiry, Shall I devote my life to the service of my God and Saviour in the sacred ministry? not only on some marked and memorable epoch of his existence, in some dark and trying period of his experience, or when his conscience has been terribly shaken and burdened by the heavy weight of unwonted responsibilities. It expresses the settled habit of his mind when he considers his sovereign judge, God; his life-mission, the gospel ministry; the endless and immeasurable results to himself and others of the manner in which he fulfils it; and, above all, reflects that the highest manifestation of the divine glory is inseparably connected with the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God.

An awful sense of the sacredness of God and of his more immediate service, of the dread responsibility of representing him in any sense and in any character; a profound impression of their own personal inadequacy and unworthiness, has been the uniform attribute of all his faithful servants, and is indispensable to efficient and acceptable service. So appalled have his best ministers been by the magnitude of the issues involved in the undertaking, by the conscious feebleness of their own powers, in comparison with the vastness of the work to be done,

that they have been forced and lashed into the service as by a whip of scorpions. When called to be the leader and lawgiver of Israel, Moses at first positively declined. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." "And Moses said unto the Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."* In like manner, Jeremiah, "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child."

Ezekiel was evidently terrified at the prospect of his mission; for the Lord assures him, saying, "Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks."

It is not a little remarkable that three of the most illustrious of the Reformers evinced the same solemn dread of entering on the responsibilities of the gospel ministry, under a painful conviction of their own personal incompetency. The most picturesque and vigorous of all writers who have sought to interpret Luther to the English mind, Thomas Carlyle, thus describes the tremendous struggle through which he passed to the pulpit: "Often did there seem to meet in Luther," says Carlyle, "the very opposite points in man's character. He, for example, of whom Richter had said, 'his words were half battles;' he, when he first began to preach, suffered unheard of agony. 'Oh, Dr. Staupitz, Dr. Staupitz!' said he to the Vicar-General of his Order, 'I cannot do it; I shall die in three months; indeed, I cannot do it.'" Dr. Henry tells us, in his "Life of Calvin:" "As the voice, on the road to Damascus, thundered through the soul of Paul, so did the words of Farel so impress themselves upon Calvin's conscience that he never forgot them. Even in the year 1557, he said: 'As I was kept in Geneva, not by any express exhortation or request, but rather by the terrible threatenings of William Farel, which were as if God had seized me by

* Exodus iii. 11; Exodus iv. 1, 10; Jer. i. 6; Ezekiel ii. 6.

his awful hand from heaven, so was I compelled, through the terror thus inspired, to give up the plan of my journey, and yet without pledging myself, for I was conscious of my timidity and weakness to undertake any definite office.' Elected preacher and teacher of theology, he would accept only the latter appointment; but the following year he was obliged to submit to the wishes of the citizens who chose him as their preacher." *

The violent assault made upon John Knox in the public congregation, solemnly charging him, in the name of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, not to refuse this holy vocation, together with its effect upon the heart and conscience of the Scottish son of thunder, is graphically given by Dr. McCrie. "Overwhelmed by this unexpected and solemn charge, Knox, after an ineffectual attempt to address the audience, burst into tears, rushed out of the assembly, and shut himself up in his chamber. His countenance and behavior, from that day till the day that he was compelled to present himself in the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart; for no man saw any sign of mirth from him, neither had he pleasure to accompany any man for many days together." †

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." But they who are truly called of God, and justly estimate the cares, the labors, the dangers, the responsibilities, the perplexities, and the results of the gospel ministry, cannot but shrink from it; and nothing but a constraining sense of duty to God, and a cheerful trust in his gracious promise to be with them "to the end of the world," could impel them to undertake it. But they know that responsibility cannot be evaded by inaction, and they hear the awful voice that rang in the apostle's ears echoed in their own hearts—"Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."

The man who assumes the responsibilities and enters on the duties of the gospel ministry, under the same considerations and impulse with which he might enter a lawyer's office, a merchant's store, or a mechanic's shop, is not likely to discharge those duties with patient and zealous fidelity. His estimate of the

* Vol. I., p. 105.

† McCrie's "Life of Knox," page 47.

peculiar sacredness and force of a divine call to a special service of danger and glory is widely different from that of the prophets, the apostles, and the reformers. They felt that the charge of souls was not a common allotment of Providence, but a special dispensation of grace—the most awful charge ever committed to man to be attested by extraordinary evidence, and to be discharged with sacred diligence. The real motive that underlies the low and lax view of the gospel ministry, now becoming prevalent, is the felt inadequacy of our numbers to our needs, and the competition between rival theological seminaries and between the different religious denominations. The strength of the ministry, however, it should be remembered, does not consist in its numbers, but in the spirit of consecration, humility, zeal, and love, which rests upon the body; as the strength of the Church at large does not consist in her numbers or wealth, her social authority or political favor, but in an enlightened and immutable attachment to divine truth, in love to God, and charity to all men.

“Ah, Constantine! of how much ill was cause,
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy Pope received of thee.”

When a call to the gospel ministry is supposed to be nothing specific, imperative, individual; a constraining sense of solemn duty, springing from a special and spiritual impulse; a fire in the bones; a vision in the soul of gracious recompence, or deserved and deadly wrath; a voice in the ear, crying, “Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel;” but is supposed to be of the same general providential nature with a call to the service of God in any secular employment, the spirit in which it will be embraced and abandoned will be the same which animates ordinary men in the choice of a secular business. Instead of imbuing the followers of secular pursuits with a sacred spirit, the danger will be of importing a secular spirit into the sacred office. The element of truth in the doctrine of “apostolic succession,” and that which gives to the doctrine plausibility and power, is the profound conviction that men must have a divine and authen-

ticated call to serve God in the ministry of the gospel. The error is in supposing that provision has been made for the manifestation of such call in this particular form; in a word, that any corporate body is intrusted with such powers, and can confer such authority exclusively and at will. The call to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God is internal, individual, and of God. The only function of the Church in the matter is to ascertain, authenticate, and enforce the divine call.

Even with the end in view—which is to multiply ministers—this superficial estimate of the nature of a call to the ministry argues ignorance of human nature and of the tendencies of our own time in particular. If the call to the ministry be put on a level with a call to serve God in an ordinary profession, the latter will, in a majority of cases, be found incomparably more attractive. This politic expedient will be seen to work badly, as human wisdom is apt to do, when it usurps the place of the divine method, and seeks to supersede or to improve upon it. It is on a par and of a piece with those ingenious devices, to give additional currency to the doctrines of the gospel by corrupting, diluting, or suppressing them; or to render the worship of God more agreeable to carnal eyes and ears and hearts, by false and meretricious attractions, degrading it from a divine service to a mere æsthetic exhibition. In these the gospel Church, our own Presbyterian Church at least, can never compete with the opera and the oratorio in magnificent scenery, and splendid decoration, and soft and sensuous music. We would not be understood as condemning the use of instrumental music in the service of God, when properly conducted. But scenes of vicious enchantment will always prevail over any attractions of the same kind which our conscience and our ecclesiastical traditions will permit us to employ.

The Church of Christ is strong, invincibly strong, but she is strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. She is rich, not in corruptible riches, as silver and gold, but in a precious treasure of truth and grace. Hers is the dowry of Achsah, the upper and the nether springs, the truths and ordinances of heaven. She is radiant and lovely, but it is in the “beauties of

holiness" that she shines—a beauty brighter far than any born of art and man's device. She is mighty in the simple majesty of heavenly truth. She is fair to look upon in the unadorned simplicity of evangelic worship, alive with a saintly glow, bright with the garments of unperturbed and unpolluted praise. The Church of the Lord Jesus, the crucified one, the earthly dwelling place of the eternal God, is indeed stately and grand, but not as was the Parthenon at Athens, that "miracle of rare device," constructed wholly of Pentelic marble and ornamented by the master-pieces of Phidian genius; nor even the sacred and costly temple of Solomon, the noblest pile ever reared by human hands, which in all its glory, compared with the simple and spiritual worship of a better dispensation, established upon better promises, might be called, in the language of the apostle, "a wordly sanctuary, the abode of carnal ordinances." Samson, shorn of his sacred locks, was weak as another man; and the Church divested of that divine heritage of truth and love, which is at once the badge of her Master's favor and the secret of her mysterious might, becomes corrupt and impotent as any mere human organisation.

In some points of view, there is indeed not a confusion or identity, but a striking analogy, between the call of God to be a Christian and to serve him as a Christian, and the call of God to be a minister and to serve him as a minister. No man is capable of exercising the affections and discharging the duties which are distinctive of a believer but he who has been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the glorious kingdom of God's dear Son; and no man will endure the self-denial and dedicate his life to the arduous services of a true gospel minister, who is not smitten with the sacred love of souls, and does not feel assured that God has specially called him to the good work of preaching the gospel. To make a minister of the gospel, then, it is needful, 1. That he be called to the service of God generally as a partaker by like precious faith in Christ of the common salvation. 2. That he be specially called to this sacred function by the constraining sense of duty to God, and to the souls of those for whose redemption the Lord of glory died.

8. That his individual convictions of duty have the sanction of the authoritative voice of the Church.

The higher the work, the higher the faculties needed for it. The work of the ministry, as the most exalted on earth, requires, 1. Moral qualities of the noblest nature, and in the largest measure, faith, hope, charity, wisdom, zeal, righteousness. 2. Intellectual faculties, reason, judgment, knowledge, imagination. 2. Physical powers, strength, endurance, a body trained to labor, and accustomed to obey the imperial behests of the soul.

The work of our redemption being the highest ever undertaken in the universe, required the most marvellous person, the everlasting Son of the Father, God manifest in the flesh, endowed with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, absolutely and without measure. The arrangements of God's providence and grace with direct reference to the special needs of those whom he employs in the most exalted and sacred spheres of service, are such as reflect the highest honor on his own perfections, and inspire his willing and obedient servants with a just and noble confidence.

The gifts which he bestows upon his children are always the best in their kind and of their kind; not the blessings always of earthly prosperity, health, riches, the favor of the great, but the choicest and clearest tokens of spiritual adoption, the secret joys of the Holy Ghost, and the blessed hope of eternal life.

The office of the Christian ministry contemplates the most illustrious manifestation of the glory of Christ, in the dispensation of the highest possible good to men, an incalculable accession to the sum of holiness and happiness on the earth, and an inheritance in heaven, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." To discharge his duty aright in any measure, to bring him into sympathy with his gracious aims and ends, our Father, God, has made ample and special provision; giving unto him "exceeding great and precious promises," and breathing into his soul the Spirit of his own divine benignity and love. Every thing that can be conceived of or alleged to create and enhance responsibility, meets in the calling of the Christian min-

ister; the magnitude, the importance, the difficulty, and the sacredness of the work; the results of his ministry to the man himself and to those who hear him, so incalculable, so immeasurable; the awful and acknowledged fact that the brightest forms of the divine glory, as capable of being made manifest to creatures, are to be evinced in the everlasting salvation or perdition of immortal souls. We may embrace propositions in words, intelligible enough in themselves, whose full significance we can never fathom or compass. They recede or melt away when we seek by any effort of the mind or will to detain, or grasp, or measure them. They melt away, and are lost in the vast horizon of thought, of the impalpable and the eternal, the illimitable and the unknown. This is principally and emphatically the case within the awful domain of religion: the ideas of the soul, of sin, of God, of eternity, of grace, residing in the bosom of the Father as in its sacred and original habitation; of redemption by the blood of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world; of the Holy Ghost in his person, nature, and offices, as truly and properly divine, proceeding from the Father and the Son, the immediate author to us of saving illumination and spiritual quickening, our sanctifier, comforter, and guide.

These high truths of divine revelation are capable of being stated in words, but not of being estimated by mortals. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" The substantive realities which these words stand for, which they reveal and represent in themselves, their relations and results, can never be adequately known by us, or by any other than by God himself.

Eternal truth and eternal wisdom can never grow old; but the forms and aspects which they may be made to assume, the cases to which they may be made to apply, the diversified conditions and combinations of circumstances, may be endless. Hence the Bible must not only be studied and pondered by the private Christian, but expounded and applied by the instructed and accredited minister; and hence the sermons of one age are wholly unsuited, or at least inadequate, to the needs of another. The forms of thought, the modes of apprehension, the topics of spec-

ulation, the systems of philosophy, the literary code, the condition of political societies, the matters of practical inquiry and pressing interest ; in a word, the spirit of the age and the needs of men, are peculiar to each generation. And what we may well marvel at, in the inspired Scriptures, is their amazing elasticity, their inexhaustible fertility of just application, their infiniteness and perfect adaptation to the altered condition of human society and all the emergencies of human experience. Who that considers the practical difficulty and the personal responsibility of selecting and applying the truths of Scripture to the actual cases before us, the men with whom we have directly to deal, can repress the exclamation, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Here is a celestial armory, abounding with all weapons for attack or defence: which shall he select for the error or the adversary occurrent? Here are medicinal springs and herbs of healing virtue for all the various forms and types of spiritual disease and suffering; which shall he prescribe and apply to the special malady before him?

The minister of the gospel is to present the truth of God, not merely in its integrity and harmony, without reserve or abatement, as it is in the Bible, keeping back nothing that is profitable, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear; but he is to present it in its divine proportion and order, with nice discernment of times and needs, with sound judgment and exact distribution, giving to every one his portion in due season. It requires strong faith to preach the gospel as it ought to be preached. Faithfulness to man is founded on faith in God, and never more than in this age, when there are so many received and applauded systems, philosophical and ethical, directly at war with the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; an age in which so many accredited teachers of divine truth would be better than the Bible and wiser than God.

As for an ordinary Christian, so more especially for a minister, the great thing is to keep God and eternity constantly in view; to live as ever in his great task-master's eye; to endure as seeing him who is invisible; to look not at the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things

which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. He is to remember that for him, and for those whom he ministers, all other possessions sink into insignificance compared with the divine favor; that when he looks back on his life from the bed of death and the borders of eternity, all things will seem worthless and vile but truth, duty, the grace of Christ and immortal glory. "When in your last hour, think of this," says Richter; "all faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away, and die into inanity—imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment, then at last will the night-flower of belief alone continue blooming, and refresh with its perfume in the last darkness." The minister of Christ is not to seek his recompense in any thing that man can give, but in the salvation of souls, in the reward of eternity, in the delightful sense of the divine favor. He should feel that nothing is so important to him and to his hearers as their salvation. He is not to consider himself, except in the light in which he is exhibited in the Scriptures, as the special servant of God. It is enough that he be made the instrument and the channel of conveying the highest spiritual gifts to God's creatures. Through him, as an earthen vessel, flows the wine of life, the truth and grace, which bring salvation.

The minister of the gospel must abound in study, abound in pastoral labor, and abound in prayer, if he would be wise to win souls and accomplish the great end of his spiritual calling. His only ambition should be, not to win the applause of men, but to please God; not to gain a name, but to save souls. His first and leading function is to expound and to apply the truth as it is in Jesus. He is an ambassador for God, and the authoritative instructions which, as an ambassador, he is to adhere to, to exhibit, and to enforce, are contained in a particular volume. That volume, then, should naturally receive his prime attention; be the matter of his principal thoughts and studies. These considerations are incomparably heightened when we reflect that this book, in the character of its contents, in the sacred sovereignty of its sense and tone, stands apart from all other books; that God dwells in it as in no other book, in no other structure, as he dwells not in the light of setting suns, as he dwells in

now in the mind of man; that it is in the strictest sense θεόπνευστος God-imbreathed, God-inspired; and according to the truth and according to the faith of our Church, not only is the general sense inspired, but the inspiration extends to the very words, which holy men spoke or wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. If the minister himself is a sacred person, because specially set apart to a sacred service, because specially near to God, more sacred still are the Holy Scriptures, because not merely do they testify of him especially, but because they proceed from him immediately. They are the very breath of his wisdom and love, making immortal music in the soul of man. Even under the old dispensation, it was required that the priest's lips should keep knowledge, although the proper function of the priest's office was not to teach, but to offer sacrifices. The prophetic order was ordained to receive, retain, and interpret the will of God, for the instruction and guidance of the people. If, then, the people were to seek instruction at the priest's mouth, how much more from the appointed interpreters of the counsels of heaven. Accordingly, aptness to teach is made an indispensable qualification for a Christian minister.

In the study of the Bible, three things are to be considered: First. The knowledge of the letter; the literal text; the grammatical construction and coherence. Second. The rational propositions which the terms embrace and embody. These two things a man may acquire by the diligent use of his natural faculties of understanding and memory. The third is the spiritual apprehension, the religious appropriation of the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth seen in this light is seen in the true light and tasted in its proper sweetness. In this respect, sacred truth differs from natural truth, and is incomparably higher. To be discerned in its peculiar glory, it must be apprehended in its peculiar nature. It must be irradiated by a light higher than that of nature and reason. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." The knowledge which the interpreter of the counsels of heaven is to seek is a

transcendant, a superhuman, a divine knowledge. He therefore needs not merely a human, but a heavenly teacher; not merely natural reason, but divine grace. The gospel of our salvation can be truly known by no other method, on no other terms, by no other agency, than by the effectual and interior illumination of the Holy Ghost. This will pour upon the sacred page an abundant flood of heavenly light. It will invest the word of life with a hallowed beauty; imbathes it with a heavenly glory; impart to it an imperishable interest; and at the same time communicate "a precious seeing to the eye." The true corrective of the dangers of a mere critical and intellectual study of the Scriptures is the warm and loving and life-giving Spirit, under whose inspiration they were indited.

It is the essence and sum of the basest hypocrisy to preach what we do not practise, or what we do not strive to practise. Every word we speak to men, urging upon them duties which we do not ourselves strive to fulfil, will rise up against us at the day of judgment. Nothing worse could be said of the ancient Pharisees than that they bound upon men's shoulders heavy burdens, which they themselves refused to touch with one of their fingers. To ministers of the gospel particularly, as to professing Christians generally, it should be an awakening consideration that a sacred profession does not make a man sacred in spirit and character—only in his calling and functions. Such should strive to have an inward subjective holiness, to correspond with the peculiar sacredness of their official station. Not that we are to make our own personal conduct the standard of our religious teaching. We are to preach the whole counsel of God; the whole sum of duty; the doctrine of revelation, in its integrity and in its totality; the law of God, as the rule of duty, the standard of obedience, and the test of character.

As a rule, we think it best that the mornings be devoted to study and prayer. A certain transient and flashy popularity may doubtless be gained by universal and unlicensed visiting—visiting every person and at all hours; but we shall be more pious, more happy, more learned, more useful, and ultimately and permanently more honored, if we are known to set a value

on our time. A long visit from a minister who has nothing to do and does it, is hardly felt to be a very important favor; but a call of a few minutes from a man who husbands his time is justly regarded. The books of the Sibyl were reckoned at their original cost, when reduced in number; and so, in many cases, are the visits of a minister of the gospel. Most real pastoral visits are made by those who are least abroad. Nothing deserves the name of a pastoral visit, unless it be accompanied by prayer, or by the reading of the Scriptures, or by the effort to lodge some sacred truth in the soul. Dr. John M. Mason, in his valedictory to the people of his charge, tells them plainly that if he had visited them as often as they were kind enough to wish and unreasonable enough to expect, he would have had no time to prepare for preaching to them. For a strictly pastoral visit, however, we should always hold ourselves ready, and make every thing give place to it, even the study of the Scriptures and private prayer. The minister is, for sacred service, the personal property of every man that needs him. He is bound to visit the poorest white man or colored man, at any hour of the day or night, who may really need his ministrations, or his mere presence and sympathy in his sins and sorrows. The faithful discharge of pastoral duties will not injure or impede our preparations for the pulpit, but greatly promote and facilitate them. It will help our prayers and our preaching, and give to our preaching a power which no eloquence can impart. The very sight of a family or an individual in affliction may be promptly suggestive. It may supply a topic of great value in the prayer or the sermon. God has established a perfect harmony and concurrence among all our duties. He has made a proper and proportioned attention to each essential to the right performance of any. The very element that gives life, simplicity, reality, adaptedness, effectiveness, and power to a sermon, and discriminates it from an abstract theological essay, is supplied by the fact that we are preaching to men, whose sins and sorrows, wants and struggles we know and care for. No preaching is so likely to do the people good, and to be listened to with respect and sympathy, as that of a man who is known to care for their bodily and spiritual needs.

The habit of religious reflection should be carefully cultivated, and of writing down our thoughts any way suggested—in our reading, in our Bible studies, in our pastoral visits; above all, in our private prayers. The best thoughts, in any sense, the soul ever conceives, are those suggested in private prayer, when she is concerned only with God, with the truth, and with herself. The deepest views we ever get of sin—its deceitfulness, its subtleties, its windings, its tenacity, its pollution, and its torments—are those which we gain when we bare our bosoms to the searching eye of the All-seeing Heart-knower. The truth and grace of God never shine out before us in a light so serene, so bright, so benignant, as when we look to Christ in the luminous solitude of our own chamber.

It were well to have a book in which every valuable thought should be recorded while it is fresh, and kept for after use in our pulpit preparations. A man who shall study the original Scriptures, and live in the constant habit of hearty prayer to God in secret, and take care to note down his best thoughts as they arise, shall not want for matter, and truly original matter, for his preaching.

The preaching of the gospel ought to be a real outpouring of the heart—an outpouring of the heart before God in our prayers, and an outpouring of the heart before the people in our sermons. Such was the spirit and habit of Paul: "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, beseeching you even with tears." True, profound, practical wisdom is the wisdom of the heart; not the cold, dry deduction of the mere intellectual principle, but the indwelling spirit of love, the baptism of all the forces and faculties of the soul by the spirit of love. This is the benign and blessed atmosphere in which the preacher of the gospel is to live and breathe and move; through whose golden, heaven-born rays—rays of glory from the eternal sun of righteousness—he is to behold with one glance, or with alternate glance, God and man, heaven and earth, time and eternity, saint and sinner. He is to speak the truth in love, not coldly, not harshly, with bitter and self-righteous scorn of his fellow-sinner; but warmly, kindly, lovingly, is he to speak of the common salvation, and of

the gracious and life-giving Saviour. The minister of God should have a high and sober disdain of all worldly ease, and worldly gain, and worldly glory; be taken up in all his faculties and hopes in his heavenly work; absorbed in the love and adoration and service of his heavenly King. He is evermore to feel that to be the friend, to be the follower, to be the fellow-worker of the Lord Jesus, is the most glorious exaltation to which he can himself aspire, or to which he can seek to attract others.

To a Christian minister, there should be no moment of lukewarmness, or insensibility, or indifference. with such prospects to enchant, with such interests to agitate him, with such motives to arouse and impel him to thought and action. He has continual and welcome access to the eternal throne of the heavenly grace. He has all the power of omnipotence, and all the resources of infinite wisdom, and all the unfathomable depths of divine tenderness, to draw upon for his defence and supply. The glorious Lord of heaven and earth is not ashamed to be known as his elder brother, and the uncreated Spirit of the Almighty is his promised guardian and guide. What we want is a tender feeling of solemn responsibility, that what we recognise as true and binding may sink into the soul and sway it absolutely, altogether, and at all times: so that there shall be alike in the soul and in the life a response to the voice of truth and duty—an instant and an answering echo. All the powers and passions of the soul ought to be enlisted in the service of our God. There should be an intense and unremitting energy in these things, beyond the highest enthusiasm of worldly men for the most glittering objects of worldly ambition.

It is faith in God which produces spiritual sensibility and spiritual activity, and the truths and revelations of the Scripture are the food and fuel of a divine faith. All that is necessary is that we receive those truths in their full import and proper force, and then we shall feel them and act upon them. Our blessed Lord tells us that our self-deceptions and deceptions of others are only for a time; that there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed, or secret that shall not be known. Now, if we held this before our minds distinctly, and believed it fully, what dis-

position should we have to cover up our hearts and our dealings from our own eyes, or from those of our fellow-men, seeing that all will come out at length in the open light of day? And why should we fear pain or loss, when the very worst that men can do is to kill the body; and if we die martyrs, all our troubles and disgraces end with our lives, and the gracious rewards of immortality begin? And how should we be able to shake off the constraining fear of God, if we firmly believed that he was able to destroy not only the body, but the soul in hell forever?

The grand and governing inspiration of the true minister of Christ is love to the person of his Saviour. What the attraction of gravitation is in the material universe, love to Christ is in the spiritual—the all-subordinating, the all-controlling principle. It is the principle of gravity which binds the planets to their orbits and causes them to revolve in harmony around their central sun; and it is love to the person of Christ which makes each member of the Church content and laborious in his proper sphere, serving the Lord with efficiency and ardor. This it is which makes all the true followers of Christ and ministers of Christ accomplish without conflict or confusion their appointed and appropriate work, trusting in the promised presence of their glorious Lord, “Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.”