

of purity; to be always like a flame of fire in the service of Christ; always burning to be instrumental in saving souls." They must not give the least indication of the flesh. Well; if they fully answer every one of these particulars, they barely pass uninjured. But let them fail in a single point, and an excitement is immediately created. The most wicked persons in the community seem to regard themselves as the constituted guardians of ministerial character. Their souls are "vexed within them" when they behold the gospel messengers even slightly depart from the path of rectitude.

My hearers, there is much involved in being truly *holy*. It is a superlatively great thing to maintain a character in which "not a word, nor a look, nor an action, nor the general air and bearing of the man, nor the very gait, shall betray a feeling other than might be looked for in a saint of the noblest attainments, an expectant seraph, an embryo angel." Such a character men demand that a Christian Minister should sustain. No marvel, then, if many are doomed to be disappointed. Fools they are, not to consider that if ministers are liable to err, so are they who pronounce judgment upon them. If the accused are fallible, so is the tribunal before which they are arraigned. Still, there are qualifications which it may be profitable to notice. These I shall distinguish as of a twofold description—*natural and acquired*.

By *natural abilities* I intend those faculties of the soul with which every man is endowed as he proceeds from the hands of his Maker. It is not essential to my purpose, whether they depend on the construction of the skull, as phrenologists inform us, influenced by the proportionate development of each distinct organ, the whole inherited from our ancestors; or whether the entire mental system is dependent on the arbitrary will of the Almighty Creator. I refer only to the *mental condition* of those whom God calls into His work. No sovereign would appoint a ninny or a maniac to the important post of foreign minister, or ambassador to a foreign court. So the Great Sovereign of the universe, it is quite certain, would never call a fool or a madman into his service. Too many momentous duties are attached to the station—duties which require the exercise of a sound understanding. Look at the servants of God in every age. They have been, often indeed men of indigent temporal circumstances, but men of *good natural parts*. Such were Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Nehemiah. And surely *Paul* had few superiors in this respect. Even the fishermen of Galilee, though of an humble calling, were men of natural ability. True, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise"; but while he has passed by *worldly wisdom*, he has eschewed *intellectual inferiority*.

Nor does the fact of a "diversity of gifts" make against my argument. God has work for all, however varied their talents; but he never employs those who can be of no use in any place.—