

throne, that secured to us an open Bible, and freedom to worship God according to our consciences. Other topics connected with them you will not overlook; but upon these you will never feel that you can dwell too frequently or too earnestly. They constitute the main building of the gospel scheme; and though a scaffolding is needful in the erection of a building, the architect will not think that his work is progressing if he is always laboring at the scaffolding. Your duty is to "preach the gospel," and not merely things connected with it. The man that is wise, (says Jeremy Taylor,) he that is conducted by the Spirit of God, knows better in what Christ's kingdom doth consist, than to throw away his time and interest, his peace and safety, for what? for religion? no; for the body of religion? no, not so much; for the garment of the body of religion? no, not for so much; but for the FRINGES of the garment of the body of religion—for such, and no better, are many religious (or rather irreligious) disputes on things, or rather circumstances and manners of things, in which the soul and spirit are not at all concerned. In the impressive words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith, "I charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine."

It cannot have escaped your notice that there is a tendency in the present day to forsake that "form of sound words" which has been the rallying point of our Church since she was first established, and to indulge in wild speculations that have tended most grievously to unsettle some minds. Let me earnestly recommend you, while you avoid these yourself, to warn your people against them. In the language of the prophet Ezekiel, "Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." The noble standards of our Church, our Confession of Faith and our Catechisms, those marvellous productions of a body of men of profound learning and earnest piety—men who seem to have been guided in an eminent degree by the spirit of Truth and of Wisdom—these, always in subordination to the Word of God, will be of great use to you in your ministerial work, both in assisting you in preparing for the pulpit, and also in your private dealings with the people of your charge, especially in the instruction of the young.

The work on which you are entering is a most momentous one. It concerns not so much the things of the perishable body, as those of the soul. It deals not so much with the affairs of time, as with awful realities of eternity. And it is a solemn thought that when we enter the pulpit, and address our congregations, the everlasting welfare of souls

may be suspended on the issue. If we ho-
stir not ourselves, by earnest and affectionate appeals to the heart and conscience, Satan may prevail, the people whom we have been appointed to direct in the way to heaven may everlastingly perish. And if they perish through our negligence or unfaithfulness, we are assured, in the words of inspiration, that "their blood will be required at our hands."

It is a most honourable, but it is, at the same time, a most laborious service, to which you have now been set apart; and I am sure you must, ere this, have felt that no man in his own strength is sufficient for it. Be much in prayer, then, for strength. Even men of the most distinguished talents, and purest zeal, when they survey the extent and importance of their charge, and the strict account they must one day give of their stewardship, have cause with David to plead, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for, in thy sight no living man shall be justified." "*Seek, then, that sufficiency that is of God.*"

My dear young friend, God has committed to you a charge of supreme importance, and it will be your paramount duty to meditate on divine things, and give yourself wholly to them. Other things may solicit your attention, and you are not to go out of the world. But let nothing claim those hours that ought to be consecrated to God and His people. Say to all, and to everything that would withdraw you from what must constitute the business of your life, as Nehemiah said to Sanballat, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down; why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?"

Suffer me, farther, to exhort you to cultivate personal religion. Be much in prayer for yourself and for your people. Let the truths which you preach to others be the life and nourishment of your own soul. It is a fearful thing to think that one may preach to others, and preach even acceptably and successfully, and yet himself "be a castaway." And I know nothing more calculated to harden the heart, than being constantly occupied in the services of religion, while the heart is altogether unaffected by them. It will be your study, then, to preach to yourself as well as to others, and to apply to your own soul the glorious truths which you proclaim to your hearers.

Your great business must be to preach the Gospel; but there are other duties of the ministerial office which must not be neglected. Suffer me to recommend to you a practice which I have found to be extremely useful to myself and acceptable to my people: to visit much from house to house. I have always thought that he does the work of a minister very partially indeed who is seen by his people but once a week in the pulpit, and who is a total stranger to them all the rest of his time. Go, then, amongst