

the truth as it is in Jesus is the centre of every line. Take away a crucified Christ, and our ministry is gone, for this is its glory. To hold up a glorious Christ to the view of perishing sinners, this is our grand duty. "I love," said Halyburton, "to live preaching Christ, and I love to die preaching Christ." "Let Jesus Christ," said Matthew Henry, "be all in all. Study Christ, preach Christ, live Christ." In our pulpits, and at the firesides of our people, we must know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is Christ who knocks at the heart. It is Christ who unbars the closed door of that heart; and when thus opened, he enters in with pardon, and peace, and a new heart, and sanctifying grace, and all the gifts of the covenant. Christ is the only way to Heaven. We must preach Christ to man as a sinner—to man as sinner, wholly depraved, dead in sin; we must bring the glad tidings, that for such there are solid hopes for eternity, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. O did we but realize the value of one soul, and were we suitably impressed with the love of Christ, what different sermons we would preach! Gravely, earnestly, impressively, and without plainly and practically, should the Gospel minister preach Christ, and that not only on the Sabbath day, and in the sanctuary, but every day, and by that most impressive and memorable of all sermons, a Christ-like life.

Into this work the minister must throw his whole mind. Our work was described by one who had little of the Spirit of Christ, and who, speaking in scorn, spake the truth; he calls it "the heroic passion of saving souls." Now to this we must bring all the earnestness and all the energy we possess. We must not waste our time and strength on matters of inferior moment. All our pursuits must bear upon the one great object. The fisherman is not always on the water, but when not engaged in fishing, you will find him mending his nets, repairing his boats, or putting his tackle in order. And when the fishers of men spend a portion of their time in missionary, or temperance, or benevolent operations, they are mending their nets, and preparing more effectually for their immediate work. People sometimes think that ministers have whole days of relaxation, when perhaps these days are not sufficient for their conflict of study and of prayer; and when the laboring man sleeps sweetly on his pillow, his minister is perhaps striving with holy violence, seeking the blessing of God on his flock. The minister is called upon to strive with holy, humble, laborious exertion, and with intensity of interest to pursue his sacred work. Concentrating his mind upon his duties, he must make full proof of his ministry, by that self-denying devotedness, which hallows the most cursory as well as the stated employments of the ministry, and spiritualizes his very recreations. All this necessity is laid upon us by the greatness of the work.

Lastly, he must throw his whole heart into the work. It is a great mistake to suppose that nothing more is necessary to secure the reception of the Gospel, than the clear logical announcement of its doctrines. It was not thus with the Apostle Paul, nor with any minister upon which God hath bestowed success. The clearness at which we should aim is not that of the icicle, which chills and freezes while it glitters, but that of the warm sunbeam, ardent with the love of souls, and bursting with impassioned sensibility. Love to his parish, love to the individual souls committed to his charge, is alike the minister's duty and his comfort. How wearily would a minister drag along his tedious years, did not God knit his heart to his people, and their hearts to his. The minister's flock should have his whole heart: without this devotedness he cannot make full proof of his ministry. And each new conversion, and every instance of growth in grace, will form a new tie betwixt pastor and people, and draw more tightly the bond of affection.

It may seem to my readers, that I have addressed the ministry and not the people. But it is necessary to bring the truths about the ministerial office before the people, in order that they may understand the duties which they owe to their pastors; and to this topic I would now ask attention.

1. Seek in the ministry the pure Gospel of the blessed Jesus. The Church should seek a pious and evangelical ministry, and you should value the sermon most which humbles you the lowest, brings you nearest to Christ, and fills you most fully with his Spirit. The ministry that pleases by its sweetness, or awes by its sublimity, that startles by its novelty, or carries you away by its resistless reasoning, if it leaves souls unconcerned about their salvation, if it starves hungering saints and feeds the sinner with false flattering hopes, is not a Gospel ministry. Though Presbyterian by birth and by conviction, I would prefer an evangelical ministry of another denomination to an unfaithful ministry professedly Presbyterian. And were I asked to what church ought a man to go, I would unhesitatingly say—Take scripture doctrine where you can find it, rather than soul-destroying error under the hallowed name of the Church of Your Fathers: go where you can get the bread of life—this is the grand, the paramount consideration! Let congregations then learn to love and esteem the ministry just in proportion as they make full proof thereof, by feeding your souls with living bread. Do not seek great things, so much as good things.

2. Learn to throw no obstacles in the way of your minister's devotedness. Do not allow him to be harassed by worldly anxieties. Do not force him to give his attention to some other occupation that he may discharge the Christian obligation, to "owe no man anything." Do not give reason that he should enter his study and pursue his pastoral duties distracted by worldly cares. On this topic I only speak a word to the wise.

3. Co-operate with your minister. As God gives you opportunity, seek with him the salvation of souls. Let each aspire, with noble and sanctified ambition, to win that precious word from Christ's lips to the woman—"she hath done what she could."

4. Pray for ministers. Pray that God would raise up faithful ministers and give them success. Brethren pray for us. D. I.

### THE MORNING OF LIFE.

Ecclesiastes xi., 6—"In the morning sow thy seed."

Frequently has man's life been compared to a day. In the eye of the Eternal One, even a thousand years are but as one day. Viewed in the light of an ever-rolling eternity, the existence of the oldest member of the human family seems made up of a few brief hours, which fly successively over his head with lightning rapidity. This is the picture Christ presents in his parable of the laborers. Job describes man as an hireling fulfilling his day. David describes him as "going forth unto his work till the evening." Paul gives the exhortation, "Work while it is called to-day;" and this is the consideration by which he stimulates to effort, "the night cometh, when no man can work." The day, as the night, has its courses; and so life has its generally recognized divisions. It is evidently to the first in the list that our attention is here called. The morning is the period of youth. The passage inculcates the duty of taking advantage of this period for doing good, as we have opportunity. If as sowers we would go forth to sow, we should especially remember to take time by the forelock. He that makes the morning the starting point in bearing and scattering the precious seed, shall doubtless have the gratification of bringing many sheaves with him. There are many evident

reasons why the morning should be diligently improved:—

1. In the morning everything looks fresh. Awake from the slumber of night, all nature seems invigorated. The curtain is uplifted, the shadows fly away, the rising sun tinges with its golden glories the eastern sky, the drops of dew are strewn like pearls along the ground, or glisten tremulously from the opening buds, a current of new life circulates through every channel, and nerves for coming trials and troubles. Thus is it with youth. There is an elasticity, a buoyancy, a vigor and freshness, which gradually disappear, as the sands diminish in the glass and the snows of age gather on the brow. Hope is on the wing, and gilds whatever it touches with its bright though shifting colours. There is a standing on the tiptoe of expectation. The untutored powers are on the look out for a field over which to expatiate. When the mind is in this energetic, expectant state, it is of the utmost importance to meet it, to slake its thirst, to furnish wholesome food for its nourishment, and an appropriate field for its employment. There is deep sunk within every one a tide of passion and of power, physical and mental. If suitable channels are excavated for its outlet, it will refresh and fertilize. But allow it to rush on without bank or bed, and it will spread devastation on every side. Oh! then let the mind by all means be taken hold of early, before it be pre-occupied, in its morning, ere the hurry and bustle of the day come on. Bring the expanding faculties under the controlling influence of some principle, and the likelihood is, that the beneficial rule thus begun will be maintained.

2. In the morning or spring-time, especially, the soil is soft, the icy chains have melted; saturated by the rain and dew of Heaven, the ground is in a moist, impressible state. And is it not precisely so in the period of youth? There is a softness, a susceptibility of impressions from which, if proper advantage be taken of it, much that is good may be derived. Not like the rock, which will take on no impression at all, or the sand, which will do so only to have it erased by the advancing tide, the mind in youth resembles rather the wax or the clay. According to the seal that is stamped upon it, and the mould into which it is cast, will be the figure it subsequently assumes. Let us therefore be up and doing. Let parents and teachers, especially, be impressed with the thought that on them, under God, it depends, whether the rising generation shall bear the image and superscription of God, or of the devil, be vessels of honor or of dishonor, be ornaments to society or pests, be elevated to the joys of heaven or consigned to the misery of hell.

"Deep on thy soul, before its powers,  
Are yet by vice enslaved,  
Be thy Creator's glorious name  
And character engraved."

3. The morning gives its complexion to the day. Generally speaking the daily course will receive a bend, will catch a tinge from the morning exercises. This is an additional consideration, directly flowing from the foregoing, which gives increased force to the precept, "In the morning," &c. It is now the seed time of the soul. "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap. The principles implanted now regulate the future practice. Character is being formed. You all know the power of habit. In youth those habits originate which make the man. It is, in one sense, the easiest thing in the world to have a habit formed; and man being naturally inclined to what is bad, his habits are apt to partake of his natural character. If his faculties and feelings be not kept in with bit and bridle, but permitted to roam at will over whatever objects may casually present themselves, there is the greatest risk of his becoming a reckless knave, or a frivolous fool. Let the morning of life be spent in idleness, or in fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and you may an-