

Another argument may be drawn from the importance of the office of the gospel minister :—God has appointed the foolishness of preaching, as a means of salvation to them that believe : It is also the most effectual means in His hands of promoting sound morality and practical piety in the heart, the closet, the family, and in society in general.

Again when we consider the bad effects which result from a Minister's having his time and attention occupied in secular affairs, it will convince us of the necessity of having such a provision made for him, as shall free him from worldly cares, and leave him at liberty to serve him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. Every person who is acquainted with the gospel ministry, knows that much depends, under God, upon the spirituality of the preacher : And we generally find, that where exhortations are addressed to Ministers in the N. T. personal religion is the first thing noticed, thus "take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine ;" to thyself first, to the state of religion in thy own heart and life ; and then to the doctrine, and again, be thou an example to the believers, in charity, spirit, faith, purity, &c. and as a means of cultivating religion in their own hearts, and drawing down a blessing upon others, we find the servants of God, both under the O. T. and the new ; resorting to extraordinary seasons of fasting and prayer.—In like manner also, when we read the lives of those who have been eminent for piety and usefulness in modern times, as Brainard, Pearce, &c. we shall find them abounding in this practice, and recommending it by their own experience to all who would turn many to righteousness. But it is evident that where a minister has to support a family, in whole or part, by a temporal calling, his time will be so fully taken up between his business, and the public duties of the ministry, that he will hardly find time for the ordinary duties of religion, in the family and the closet, much less for those of an extraordinary nature. Hence it will be generally found, that religion will languish in his heart and life ; a worldly spirit will prevail against him, his spirits will be depressed, and his heart will sink within him, when he contrasts what he is, with what he ought to be. It appears also to be absolutely necessary, that ministers should give themselves to reading, to meditation, and prayer ; that the word of Christ may dwell in them richly, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they may be as workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and enforcing all the counsel of God upon their hearers. But it is evident that where the minister's time and attention are necessarily taken up in temporal things, this cannot be the case ; his mind will be unfruitful, and not having a sufficient variety of matter, he will be frequently obliged to recur to the first principles, and most common topics in religion ; there will be a poverty and sameness in his communications, that will render them uninteresting, both to himself and his hearers. Instead of coming to his people in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and as a cloud full of rain, his deficiencies will be painfully evident, both to himself and his hearers. We find Paul exhorting Timothy, to meditate upon divine things,—to give himself *wholly to them* ; and in Acts 6th, we find the Apostles chusing deacons to manage the temporal affairs of the church, that they might give themselves *continually to the ministry of the word, and prayer* ; and if this was necessary when gifts and graces were so liberally bestowed, much more is it necessary in ordinary