

would have been far less so, but for the want of ministers, and the sudden and vast demands of the home-parishes. Often have our "hearts fainted within us because of the way." The distance of the mother-land, from which the associations of our people have been drawn, might have rendered our extinction as a branch of the visible church certain. But, thanks to an exasperating excess of agitation! thanks to the firmness and intelligence of our people, which led them to remain true to the church in her hour of weakness, which had sheltered them in her hour of strength! and thanks above all to that Lord, who guides the ark of his church over the troubled waters; we remain up to this hour. Our light still burns, not undistinguished among other luminaries of no mean lustre and no mean claims. Laborers coming now and again from our mindful and majestic mother-church, awaken the cheerful thought that, though distant, we are not forgotten, and that a mother's love can survive length of time, diverse sufferings and painful trials. We believe that the dark day of our church in *this* generation at least is past.

Forgive these tedious examples. We need to be cheered and instructed by the lessons of the past. No loving and fruitful portion of the visible church will the Saviour leave to perish. Storms may rage and dark clouds of trial and affliction gather around. Sectarian animosity may kindle into an intense heat. Christian bodies may take advantage of times of weakness, to imitate Jacob and supplant a brother. But the Saviour is exalted over all. Let us crowd the passing hours with the labors of this ministry. So long as we can be of service to our fellow men and exhibit our distinctive principles with firmness and charity, the Saviour will plant our candlestick firmly in the land.

II. I now ask you to contemplate the instrumentality by which the church is administered. That is the seven stars. These are the ministers of the gospel. They are held up in the hand of Christ so as to cast the light, which they draw from the son of righteousness, upon the branches of the golden candlestick. We have supposed that human means alone cannot *destroy* any church, and we now admit that human means alone cannot *build up* any church. We do say, however, that the instruments Christ employs are men. The *great* work of all the ages began in the incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole operations of the church are a constant incarnation in which the word is made flesh by the employment of men to do his work, by filling men full of his power, and by diffusing in the hearts of men his blessed fruits.

As to the instrumentality, I remark—

(1.) That the Saviour places ministers where they may draw their light from him. The seven stars were in the right hand of Jesus. The *true* minister is near Jesus Christ. As regards the enjoyment of that spiritual light, which he needs for his own salvation, the true minister lives near the Saviour, that

he may have a constant supply. Paul's active life was sustained by a constant inner communion with the exalted Redeemer. His closet was clearly his grand council-chamber, whither he carried that care of the churches, that would have sunk him to the grave but for spiritual contact with the Saviour, whereby he cast it upon a higher power. The eminent success of his ministry was the consequence. It was not in *words* but in *power*. If the sermons we write, were at all times consecrated with prayer, then might they be more honored by Christ to the promotion of his spiritual reign.

Dear Brethren! Nothing is clearer than that one, who is a mere automaton, whose conceptions of his office are mean, who does not magnify his office as did the Apostle of the Gentiles, who regards it as a mere profession to which so many of the human race devote themselves, who handles the word of God as a clerk manipulates his papers, and who fails to make the striking and eventful moments of his life as a minister at the sick-bed, the bier and in the pulpit interesting, because unaccompanied with emotion, cannot be of service to the cause of that Redeemer, whose zeal swallowed up his whole soul. The pastor is a messenger and a representative of his Lord. A representative should be in constant communication with the power that employs him. He has no power who cannot consult his principal. So the minister of Christ, who does not ordinarily draw near to him, who gave him his authority, furnished him with his message, promised his spirit to teach him its fuller and deeper meaning, and demands of him that constant intercourse with himself, which he enjoins him to teach others, cannot be in any community a true representative of the Saviour. However great may be his learning, and however imposing the proprieties of his social life, he is a usurper.

The star, that shall leave its orbit and wander in distant space, enjoys not the light of its sun, nor delights our eyes in the nightly spectacles of celestial beauty. So the spiritual stars of the churches, if they would save their own souls and the souls of them that hear them, must not leave their *riches*, but remain near to Christ. Herein lay the hidden power of the early preachers and the wonderful boldness and success of those reformers that single-handed dared to fight the enemy. Herein lay the power of John Knox. His words were far more terrible than the swords of the nobles, the bribes of the dominant church and the frowns of kings and queens. After his death, his noble panegyrist said, "He lies one, who never feared the face of man." Why was it so? It is to be ascribed not to nature, but to grace. He *never* feared the face of man, because he *daily* feared the face of his God.

(2.) The minister is placed in an official position, where he may diffuse light through out the churches. The minister is a teacher. The work of teaching is one of the grandest