

With this dispensation my text stands connected. It is the language of one whom the best of men in modern times would be safe to imitate, following his example in all things practicable.—The Apostle speaks of the Christian Minister's labours and duties in chapter 2nd, and inquires, vs. 16th, "who is sufficient for these things?" He proceeds in the first part of this, the 3rd chapter, to show that those who are converted through the instrumentality of Christian Ministers, furnish sufficient evidence of the call of those ministers to preach the gospel—the most satisfactory proof, I may add, which can be adduced. Not that it establishes our superiority, or our ability to work a change upon the human mind; but it proves that God, who never sets his seal to a lie, has made us the *efficient*, though the *unworthy* instruments in His hands of saving precious, blood-bought souls. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament." In this sense we are "sufficient for these things"; but in no other sense whatever *could* we be "sufficient" for them. The original word, *hikanos*, here translated "able", is the same which, in the 16th verse of the foregoing chapter, is rendered "sufficient"; and this clause in the text may be read thus, "who also hath made us *sufficient* (or *competent*) Ministers of the New Testament."

I design this morning, my Brethren, in using this text as my foundation, to call your attention to the *Qualifications* and *Duties* of Ministers under the New Testament dispensation of Divine Grace.

The term "minister" signifies properly a *chief servant*; hence an *agent* employed to transact or manage business under the authority of another—a *delegate*, an *ambassador*, the *representative* of a sovereign at a foreign court. Though sometimes used in the Scriptures with a different meaning and with various shades of meaning, it has generally this signification, and I shall so interpret it in the text. Two parties, God and man, have been at variance. God sends his ministers or ambassadors with instructions to make overtures, and persuade the guilty party to come to an understanding and be reconciled. You perceive that the office of minister is at once an office of great responsibility and of great honour. Qualifications of an extraordinary character are required.

Nor are men generally ignorant of this fact. They have a very high standard to which they mean that all ministers shall come up. The evil is they expect too much from them: they expect them to be immaculate. Their conduct is closely watched. "In public and in private, at home and abroad, in the pulpit and in the parlour, and in the street, all eyes are upon them, if not awake to admire their consistency, most anxious to watch for their failings. It is expected of them to be paragons of humility, of heavenly-mindedness, and