

man of sincere and real, but not deep-toned and fervent spirituality, may be honored in occasionally bringing a soul to Christ, and so great is the vitality of Divine truth, that God has sometimes blessed it to the conversion of a sinner, when it has coldly fallen from the lips of a man without any piety at all; but can an instance of extensive usefulness be cited, in which the instrument was not distinguished for glowing zeal, strong faith, deep humility, and earnest prayer? The truth's mightiest champions, the church's brightest ornaments—her Pauls, Luthers, Knoxs, Whitfields, Wesleys, Paysons, and other precious men of God, whose names gem the pages of christian and ministerial biography, where all peculiarly holy, devoted men. It were easy to show, did time permit, how an intimate, daily walk with God, and a large supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, connect themselves with the efficiency of a man's ministry, and enable him to lay hold of the springs of thought and feeling in the human soul; how when the face is radiant and the eye glistens with interest in Divine things, others catch the spirit which is breathed warm and fresh upon them; how faith lays hold of an unseen but almighty hand, which unlocks the avenues to the impenitent heart; how a deep, prostrating humility makes it safe for God to bless us; and how a whole-souled consecration to the Divine glory challenges not in vain the fulfilment of the promise, "Them that honour me, I will honour." But there is no need for an array of proof, or for ample enlargement on a point in reference to which all the true servants of Christ are agreed. The great matter is, to bring home to ourselves in a practical way, what we acknowledge as truth. Permit me then to ask my brethren, and myself, is our piety of such a stamp as to render it a source of surprise, that the conversions under our ministry are few and far between? Is it reasonable to expect an increase of usefulness, without that augmentation of moral power, which comes in the train of eminent holiness? Have we such realizing views of the value of the soul, and the weight of eternal things, as make us thoroughly earnest men, and render our preaching impressive as a message from God? Have we that yearning desire for the conversion of our hearers which has been truthfully called, "a passion for souls?" Have we confidence in the truths we preach, so as to expect and watch for results? Do we consecrate ourselves with an undivided continuity of attention and purpose to our momentous work, so as to be able to say with the great Apostle, "One thing I do?" Have we by faith established our dwelling-place, so high above the world; have we reached such an eminence on the rock Christ, as to be able to look down with an untroubled mind upon lower and meaner things? Or are we perplexed with anxiety about personal difficulties—harassed with the trials that grow out of the waywardness, unreasonableness, and inconstancy of our people—weighed down with the solitudes and cares incident to a scanty, pecuniary support, so that our hands are not free to labour with unshackled freedom for God? Perhaps we have been disposed to reflect upon those to whom we are warranted to look for warm and faithful co-operation, and while conscious of the imperfection of our piety, and the many defects of our ministry, to blame Christians for a want of affectionate sympathy and zealous effort. We have perhaps attributed to *this* source, much of our weakness, and want of success. But have we taken a right view of the subject? "What is the Christian Church," to use the language of another, "but the material which the plastic power of a ministry, uttering the truth and pervaded by the Spirit of God, is to mould into the purest and noblest forms?" The truth is, we greatly need *more faith*. We look at our work, and under a sense of its magnitude and numerous discouragements, our hearts sink, and our courage droops. When challenged by our blessed Master, "Believe ye