

them from their purpose. They had received a commission signed by the hand, and sealed with the blood of their Master; and this commission they intended to execute—and this commission they did execute, till they died. Their only business was to preach the gospel; and the perpetual breathings of their hearts to heaven—their highest aspirations were, that this gospel might be blessed to the salvation of men. If their bosoms sometimes heaved with sighs, and their cheeks were bathed in tears, it was not on account of their personal afflictions; but these sighs and tears were poured out over a world at war with God, and obnoxious to his burning curse! If they were forbidden by the decrees of counsels to preach the gospel, their reply was, "We ought to obey God rather than men."—When arraigned before kings and magistrates, they seized the opportunity to deliver their message, pressing obligation upon the conscience, till their judges sometimes acknowledged their convictions, and trembled in anticipation of their impending doom. No hardships could subdue—no persecutions intimidate—no threatenings overawe—no temporary defeats tear away from their hearts the fond hope of future and triumphant success—and even martyrdom, armed as she was with fire and faggot, could make no impression on their fearless spirits. They had begun a work, and they intended to finish it. In the prosecution of their object, they were indifferent to many things which have been too eagerly sought by ministers in other ages of the church. They stood aloof from the clashings of politics; they had no ambition for literary fame; worldly titles and worldly honours they left to worldly men; they looked down upon the mere pomp and show of human eloquence; and they seem never to think of themselves but in connection with their Master, and the salvation of souls. In one word, they pursued their object with more *piety* and less *policy*, than any other race of ministers who ever blessed the world. They "determined," as one of their own number has recorded of himself, "not to know any thing" among the people, "save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified." And in this fact of exclusive devotedness to their work, we find at least one reason for their unparalleled success.

6. *The primitive preachers were more abundant in labors, than at the present day.*

It is not intended here to bring an indiscriminate charge of indolence against the ministers of the present day. That there are many in the sacred office against whom the charge might be sustained, in its full force, there can be no doubt. But extreme cases fall not within the limits of this discussion.