

theory of beauty. One type of form and colour is beautiful to the Greek, another to the Roman; one in the Eastern and another in the Western world; one to the black and another to the white; one to the cultivated man, and another to the vulgar. Who shall determine which is right? Who shall reconcile these manifest contradictories? In view of these things philosophers have been led to think that *beauty*, like happiness, is no where to be found but in the soul itself—that it is nothing but a creation of the human spirit. Shall we say the same thing of success in the ministry, or rather of the judgment which is held in regard to it by the various congregations and peoples of the world? To some extent it is so. The sermons which delighted, and the ministry which satisfied, our fathers would be far from delighting or satisfying us. That which the German approves of would meet with no favour in France. That which in Scotland would be regarded as profound, able, and eloquent, would have no charm for an English audience. The minister who can fill a church to overflowing in one town may by the same preaching have scattered a congregation in another. That which impresses one mind and leads to deep convictions of sin, or satisfying views of grace, is regarded by another as weak, common place, and contemptible. We once knew a minister who received a letter of remonstrance from one of his hearers for certain expressions which he had used in the pulpit, and from another a letter of thanks for the light and comfort which the same expression had afforded. All this is very perplexing to poor ministers. They don't know sometimes what to do, or to think. They find no standard of excellency to which they can appeal by which to please men. If they try to *teach* they instantly become too abstract and too learned. If they aim at illustrating the practical and doctrinal truths of revelation, by bold and striking images, they are applauded by one class, and by another spoken of as being flowery and shallow. Each style has its advocates and its enemies. Often it happens that the more keenly a man is abused and opposed by one party, the more lovingly he is admired and countenanced by another. So much so is this the case that an astute saying of an observant friend of ours has to our thinking all the weight and wisdom of a proverb, namely; "That he never knew a minister to succeed until his usefulness was gone."

It must be allowed that there is a vast deal of absurdity and folly in many of the estimations in which ministers are held. Some speak of their pastors in the language of fulsome adulation, and exalt them to a pitch of goodness and greatness beyond that of an angel. It is good that people should indulge a pious affection for their ministers, and receive with some reverence the words which fall from their lips. No good will be got from a minister's labours unless there be entertained for his person and his office a becoming love and respect. But this is wide as the poles from that semi-deification, which some, and these not all weak minded persons, give to their ministers. Others, again, speak in the most disparaging terms, and with most unkind severity of the servant of Christ and his labours. They will allow nothing good, or able, or loving to come from his lips at all. They magnify every defect and overlook every excellency. They turn away the point of every appeal to the conscience by charging the speaker with insincerity. They say, in effect, with the Pharisees, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth." This spirit, we are happy to think, does not prevail very extensively among professing christians of our day; nevertheless it may be found, and in every instance in which it is indulged in, it will be seen to result in injury to the person's own soul, and to the community with which he may be connected. These are spots in our feasts of charity; sour grapes which turn the children's teeth. Between these two extremes we find many varieties of ways in which a minister's services are