

they think proper. But God, says St. Paul, is not the author of confusion but, of peace, and certainly this great truth is written as with a sunbeam upon every work of his hands, and upon every appointment of his providence. The first announcement we have of his counsels and operations, forcibly impresses us with this sentiment. The most admirable order succeeding to chaos,—every part of the “*extremely beautiful*” creations adapted to its specific end,—each particular subservient to the general purpose,—the whole wonderfully illustrating the wisdom of Him, whose understanding is infinite. His providential ordinances in the succession of the seasons, the laws of vegetation, and the precise and uniform qualities of the different elements, inviting philosophy to trace the various agencies, which the creative energy of God has brought into exercise, and from the regularity of his plans to adduce convincing proofs of the one supreme CAUSE : abundantly amplify our evidence, while they proportionately confirm it. Nevertheless, it is in the Church that this manifold wisdom of God is pre-eminently seen ; he having constituted her the depository of those doctrines, which ensure salvation to all who obey them ; and commissioned them to her Ministers to commit them to such as they deem faithful, and able to teach others :—thus provision is made for the perpetuation of the Christian ministry to the end of time. And who that properly considers the numerous, varied, and important duties of the sacred vocation, can remain unconvinced, that it requires the devotion of all the time, and all the mental and physical strength of such as are consecrated to it, and that in proportion as their attention is divided by secular concerns, their sacred work must be proportionably neglected. This view of the subject receives confirmation from the words of inspired authority : “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath called him to be a soldier.” And not only is the courage of soldiers employed to illustrate the Christian minister’s duty and calling, but the tenderness of nurses, the fidelity of stewards, the vigilance of watchmen, and the affectionate assiduity of parents also, thereby greatly amplifying our views of its multiplied, and various, and onerous engagements. This having established, let us briefly remark upon the mutual duties enjoined. From the highest authority we learn that “the priest’s lips should keep knowledge and the people should seek the law at his mouth.” “Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” is St. Paul’s directions to Timothy. The minister is hereby required to impart knowledge, pure, scriptural knowledge ; in season, with wisdom and with prudence, and in the spirit of love, exercising itself agreeably to the character and circumstances of the people. For this important purpose, God has furnished him with his own word, which contains a vast fund of knowledge, admirably adapted to this end, and “able to make us wise unto salvation.” And thus as the circumstances of the people vary from time to time, and the Church

presents a variety of experience according to the religious standing of her members, even so being furnished out of the treasury of truth, he will be enabled to administer a word in season, whether of counsel, or reproof, or encouragement, or admonition, that will prove as apples of gold in pictures of silver. Thus the wisdom of Paul manifested itself in speaking “wisdom among the perfect” and truths more simple unto the less advanced.

As an affectionate parent will carefully adjust the quantity and quality of food to the age and health of the several members of his family, even so the wise and prudent minister of God’s holy word, will give milk to babes, and stronger meat to those more advanced.

Richly endued with the spirit of love, it will deeply and feelingly interest him in their welfare, and prompt him to vigorous exertion, and render him willing to spend and be spent in their service. Such ministerial fidelity demands respect and esteem, commending itself, as it must do, to every ingenuous mind. Well may we enquire, what greater gift could our heavenly Father afford, than that of such a ministry, combining, as it does, the light of truth with the heat of love,—the authority of precept, with the persuasive lure of example ! Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of such a messenger, and welcome to their community his establishment among them. This just sense of the Divine goodness, in so estimable a gift, must be practically exemplified, in a conscientious adherence to those great principles, for the defence and maintenance of which it is given.

We have already seen that the obligation is mutual, and that while the Teacher’s lips are to keep knowledge, the people are to seek the law at his mouth. As it is for his work and office sake that they respect him, so in the discharge of the interesting, and sometimes painful duties of his office, he should be supported. The faithful ministry of the word, the conscientious discharge of pastoral duties, the vigilant maintenance of discipline,—and the monitions of apprehended dogmas, may possibly subject him to the opposition of evil-minded men ; but so much the more zealously should he be encouraged by the countenance of the faithful. Great was St. Paul’s glorying in the Corinthians, and most abundant his comfort, when thus responded to by them, in the exercise of a most painful but necessary duty.

The remark of an eminent Divine of the last century, “that a good man will highly esteem the approbation of the pious,” will especially apply to the Christian minister, who, next to the approbation of heaven, will desire that of God’s holy Catholic Church, also are repeatedly enjoined in Scriptures. How much importance St. Paul attached to this, and how earnestly he solicited an interest in their prayerful regards, is well known to those who are familiar with his invaluable writings. How much good has resulted to the ministers of Christ from the united prayers of his people, can only be known to Him who heareth prayer ; but accustomed as we, perhaps, are, to trust implicitly in inspired authority, we must

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