

power in heaven above or earth beneath, or in any hell beneath the earth, can ever get the average man to believe that right is wrong, or wrong is right, or to think it ever can be the same with a man whether he be true or false in his speech, pure or impure in his thought, brave or cowardly in his actions. On these fundamental endowments we can fall back as evidences of God's care of us, just as we fall back on our constitutional desire for God as an evidence of His fatherhood of us, and of His desire for our filial love in return for what we find in our own very make. And this is only an indication of what, in greater abundance, is found in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Into further details I cannot go to-night, but upon this, I rejoice to say even a word, as indicative of a growing source of theology coming into a prominence for which there is a preparation in the growing study of man, in his constitutional attributes.

Nor is this to interfere with or lessen interest in the study of the Bible—the Word of God to His creature man—but rather to anticipate and to supplement it. The textual investigation of the Scriptures—corresponding to the microscopic study of nature—is as necessary to secure certain aspects of the truth, as are the thoughts of God that “wander through eternity”—corresponding to the telescopic views of the heavens, by which the far-reaching glories of God become better known. We are to remember that our Lord favoured all sorts of appeal to every source of knowledge in order to learn of God. “Consider the lilies of the field,” said He, “they tell of God.” “Search the Scriptures,” and ponder “the words I speak unto you,” said He, “they tell of Me; they bring you eternal life.” And that the minister be efficiently practical, he must be wisely profound; for we sadly miss the best of effects when we disregard the deepest of causes. Above all, the minister must not live in a constant terror lest the realities of things in some surprising form upset him, and his people with him. Nor must he fear the truth, the sweetly reasonable truth, the deep and solemn truth, the vastly overpowering truth of God. Its search doth lead to trust.

Reason pursued is faith, but unpursued
Where proof invites, 'tis reason then no more.

Hear this, from a seeker of truth: “To have a disinterested regard for truth, the mind must have contemplated it in abstract and remote questions. For the most part, the ordinary mind—that is, the uninstructed after this method—are only conversant with those aspects of truth in which their own interests are concerned. Most people's notions are local, present, personal, and consequently subject to what is local, present, personal, and little else. Hence the abundance of speech upon the striking and sensational; the disproportionate amount of utterance upon what comes uppermost, the lack of distinction between what is born of the heat of temper, and the warmth of love for the truth. Even the preaching of the Gospel may be open to criticism, as “of contention,” as manifesting a desire to overcome an antagonist, rather than to present Christ as the “altogether lovely,” or the “mighty to save.” It is to this more lofty, more taxing, more subtle and profound examination of the truth, that our rising ministry are invited. They are called away from the tramp and toil of life, to come up higher, to points of view beyond the ordinary, that they may be able more fully and richly to disclose to others the bearings of Christian truth, and to urge it on the conscience by considerations not always found on the surface of life. Some fear that this is to be wise above what is written; but it is upon what is written that these secluded years of contemplation are to be spent. And it is to make men wise unto salvation that the things written are thus to be pondered. Here we may well ask “Why are we endowed with intellect and reason, if not for an apprehension of the glorious perfections of our Maker, if not for minute and reverential examination of His wonderful works, the sublime movements of His providence, the more sublime operations of His