

# THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

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"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament."  
—2 Corinthians iii. 5, 6.

The Religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, my Brethren, concerns every man. Other systems have been adapted, by their peculiarities, to particular countries, and to particular portions of the human family; but this alone meets the wants of mankind at large. It defines the relations between man and man, as well as between man and his Maker,—it prescribes the limits to our indulgences, and shows us what we must do to inherit eternal life; in a word, it is calculated to bring us back to our allegiance, and restore us to the favour of God. The great truths which it unfolds are recorded in the Book of inspiration which cannot lie. This is the authority to which we must appeal in the decision of all controversies and the solution of all mysteries. It is the chart to steer us over the ocean of life, and the compass by which our course should be directed.

Here we have the history of our race. We see how God has borne with the sinfulness, and forgiven the transgressions of his creatures. But in providence, as in creation, he has invariably wrought by *means*. In the beginning his communications with man appear to have been more direct. The earlier members of the human family held intercourse with Him by an *audible voice*. Afterwards *angels* in human form were entrusted with messages from above. To these succeeded *prophets*, who were accustomed to "make known the will of the Lord": these continued through a long succession of years, embracing some of the holiest and most talented men. But "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his *Son*"; since the ascension of his Son, by the *apostles*; since their death by his *ministers*, their successors, whom he has called and put into the work. This last agency is under the constant direction of the Holy Spirit.

In several respects it has decided advantages over the dispensation of angels. Ministers are but men, and therefore are not raised above those to whom they minister. They can sympathize with the sufferings, and enter into the experience of their brethren. In short, they are on a level with them, while the aid of the Holy Spirit is more than sufficient to counterbalance the disadvantages arising from the frailties of flesh and blood.