

Jesus Christ was born. In the apartments, lamps are kept constantly burning, and daily orisons ascended. The church was once very magnificent, but through Mussulman cupidity, has been sadly abused. From the summit of the convent we beheld the field where Abraham kept his flocks—it was bare and drear. The good monks received us kindly and bade welcome with plenty of excellent cheer.

On the twentieth, we bade farewell to the once proud city of Judea, the empire of Solomon, the once chosen of God. I stood upon the last hill to take one long, lingering look. With a sorrowing heart and chastened spirit, I cried farewell to that mournful, yet mysterious city; a denouncing judgment hovers over its awful desolation—but the glorious prophecy of hope rung with an echo on my ear. I turned, and dashing down through rock and bramble, joined the cavalcade for Jaffa.

MINISTERIAL.

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MINISTERIAL FIDELITY.

Of all the momentous things involving responsibilities of a fearful character, in which human probationers participate, the functions of an ambassador of Jesus Christ hold a decided pre-eminence. The writer of this lays no claim to superior knowledge, nor to any extraordinary discrimination touching the duties of the ministerial office; but such have been his views of this subject, and so painful the feelings awakened thereby, that, after great hesitation, he tremblingly offers a few thoughts, which are the result of serious reflection. That saying which was the dictation of the Holy Ghost, viz., "No man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God," may have a two fold application:—

1st. God allows no man to seize on the office as an ambitious aspirant. Having the most perfect knowledge of the moral condition of mankind, as well as the mental and physical constitution of all, he makes his own selection in the exercise of that infinite skill which needs none to be its counsellor.

2. No man, forming a just estimate of this "awful charge" will ever volunteer to meet the solemn claims of such a ministry, till so pressed with that divine agency which "thrusts out labourers into the vineyard" as to feel, "Wo is me if I preach not the Gospel." Who ever entered upon this great work with a firm conviction that the eternal happiness of millions depended on a faithful ministration of the word of life, and a corresponding guardianship over immortal souls, without realizing emotions, which language has no adequate terms to describe?

Many years have gone by since the writer first surveyed the fearful magnitude of this subject, as under the inspection of Omniscience. He has revolved it a thousand times since with absorbing thought and intense concern, and at every review there is left a more indelible impression of the sentiment almost inimitably expressed in the hymn,—

"Let Zion's watchmen all awake,
And take th' alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God
Their awful charge receive."

To proceed: a minister of the Gospel should maintain fidelity.

1st. In obtaining the various items of his message. To him God has said, "I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth." To do this he must apply himself to that word of revelation which embodies the great principles of Christianity in all the varieties of aspect necessary to render them clear to the understanding and forcible to the heart. Here are the pure doc-

trines of the Most High,—and wo to that man who shall dare to pollute them with the muddy streams of human philosophy. Every assembly met in the name of the Lord is authorized to look for unadulterated truth from the minister of Christ. God has set him as a guide to the people, and it is theirs to claim the truth at his hands, without addition, diminution, or alteration. In searching the sacred record he should collect his lessons of divinity as if he were the first and the last ever to lift up his voice in the hearing of a ruined world. He should take up his doctrines as he finds them, irrespective of the whims of mortal, or the phrensied vision of a bewildered race. He must "strive to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He is not to "walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." It should be his great object then to search for truth, that his mind may be replenished with its doctrine. Hence, the Bible must become the chart by which he is to ascertain his course respecting the pending interests of a fallen world. But he need not, he should not use it to the exclusion of every other book. Having searched this richest of all the treasures of truth with humble and fervent prayer, if he feels that thirst for religious knowledge which every minister ought to feel, he will fly with all the avidity of one famishing for the cooling spring to every help within his reach to be led more clearly and fully into the deep things of God. He will endeavour to gather up into the depositories of his own intellect the immense riches of pious research that have been pouring into the archives of the Church from the days of patriarchal simplicity down to the present era. He will avail himself of every scope of argument, and all the varieties of illustration, which have been the fruit of the most laborious thought among all the mighty men of God in every age. If his mind has been stored with the riches of science, and he has been permitted to trace Jehovah's unequalled skill in the amazing apparatus of the material world, he will find an imperious necessity of pressing all this knowledge into his service in the investigation of truth. If his scientific attainments are limited, and God has put him into the ministry, he will feel the demand for improving his mind to possess an imperativeness next to that which led him to enter into the sacred office; and when he ceases to give evidence of this, he furnishes proof that he is a blasted minister. He will not only fail to present his lessons of moral instruction in that rich variety of aspect so important to the nourishment and growth of the Church, but that Divine unction, which is indispensable to make the truth come to a sinner's heart "in power" will perish from his soul. He may offer "strange fire," which will kindle a spurious flame, while pure devotion and Scriptural revivals will be unknown under his ministrations. But he is as deeply concerned to know the teaching of the Divine record in relation to experimental religion as on any branch of speculative theology. He is the man to ascertain to the last minutiae what it is to be born again. He should know the entire measurement of that exceeding broad command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." He will be the least excusable of all the men God ever made for ignorance in this matter. He must read, and ponder, and pray, till the last shadow has fled from the subject, and till every lineament in the features of "the new man" shall gather into such vividness and prominence before his mental vision, as to form an uneclipsed and immovable distinction from all the semblances and counterfeits which this world of deceptions ever knew. There are men who look to God's messengers for guidance in these things with an honesty as confiding as that which marks the interrogatories of the dying; and who shall teach them to discriminate between the delusive dreams of fancy and the new creation of God, if these are