

true, or appears to stand upon the testimony of God, so far you should receive and observe it.

It often happens, no doubt, that our words are without effect upon a portion of our hearers, because the matter of our discourses is not exactly such as they have previously made up their minds that it ought to be, and they will listen patiently to nothing that opposes this prepossession. Some are not satisfied except we dwell continually and almost exclusively upon a few points relating to the Saviour and his mediation; others are for practical discourses only—the latter forgetting that faith is the foundation of all christian morality, the former overlooking the following strong injunction of the Apostle, “I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” Were we to adapt our teaching to the taste of either of these sorts of hearers, we should not preach the gospel faithfully. We are bound unquestionably to press upon our people all the duties of the christian life, and to ground them on the motives which the gospel sets before us.

It is an unhappy consequence of the divisions prevalent among christians that a preacher can hardly expect to be heard with candour by persons of a different persuasion from his own; it were well if he could always depend upon such a hearing from members of his own church and congregation. For even within the church there is unfortunately a diversity of opinion as to what constitutes a full and faithful preaching of the gospel; and the preacher who has the misfortune to be represented, by persons who are thought to be good judges of such matters, as not delivering it fully and faithfully, cannot but find in this censure, whether he deserve it or not, a serious obstacle to success in his ministry; and as every preacher is plainly liable to this accusation from some quarter or other, a few calm words on the subject may not be out of place.

If it be meant by such censure that the preacher does not take precisely the same view of certain points as may be taken by those who utter it, but differs from them with regard to some matters which they have been taught to regard as of vital importance—and if such difference really exist—it is certainly much to be regretted. But it is not therefore certain that they are right, and that he is wrong, and the relative situation of the parties gives him a right to a patient and candid hearing, supposing him to be duly commissioned. Our duty—and it is one which I hope we earnestly endeavour to perform—is to inform ourselves the best we can on the subjects we have to treat, and

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