

priests to persecute the church of God, learned the rudiments of it, and afterwards made the most astonishing proficiency in it; though John of Patmos is supposed by many to have excelled him in the purity of his diction and in an acquaintance with the peculiar idioms of the language. And I am told that "the just made perfect", of whom Paul wrote, know more about it than any pilgrim in this vale of tears. Christ has no minister in his employment who is ignorant of this elegant language. It is the medium through which he holds communication with his people. Every minister of the New Testament must be conversant with it. Nor is it difficult to learn. To obtain a knowledge of its alphabet, it is true, often requires considerable mental effort; but this once accomplished, all obstacles are surmounted. It has but one *simple* sound, and few *combinations*. And whether accompanied by all the "thunders of Sinai", or heard in the "still small voice of Horeb", the purport of its communication is nothing more nor less than—*love*! My Brethren, the gospel cannot be successfully preached through any other medium. Justice must not be overlooked; but mercy alone can meet the sinner's case.

It is likewise considered a matter of no small consequence, that a public minister *should not be at variance with the party to which he is sent*. It is not absolutely essential that he should be on terms of intimacy beforehand—for he may at first be an entire stranger to them—but there ought to be no antagonism existing between him and those amongst whom his labours are to be expended. Great care must be taken in this particular in the selection of an ambassador, or no access will be gained to the offending party. Many have been rejected on no other ground than that of being personally obnoxious to the court. The enemy refused wholly to treat upon any terms, or to entertain the question of a settlement, through the medium of a hated party. Nor have these objections always existed prior to the minister's being sent out.—They have frequently arisen from his arbitrary assumptions and his overbearing manner after entering upon his duties.

It is very deeply to be regretted that many Christian ministers have, through similar misconduct, completely defeated the purposes of their calling. The modes in which this may be done are too numerous to mention. Yet I cannot forbear to adduce a few of them. It not unfrequently happens that a pastor damages his influence with his flock by unnecessarily combating their prejudices, by taking a side in neighbourhood contentions, or by identifying himself with particular sections of the community to which other sections are known to be hostile. He may injure himself materially by injudicious public reproof; and especially in dealing with the sinner, he may drive him for ever from the house of God. But worse than all, by engaging in warm political contests, has the messenger of Christ degraded his holy office, and lost the confidence of at least a *portion*—often the *greater portion*—of those