

which of course would be injurious. On that point I do not profess myself to be a competent judge, but the allegation rather surprises me. To speak only of the "improvement" of sermons, which some say is the most important part, what seems more natural there, than exhorting men to manifest the sincerity of their faith in the doctrines of the gospel, and the genuineness of their love to the Saviour by devoting themselves to his service. Various departments of service might, from time to time, be condescended on, and might not the work of the ministry be pretty frequently mentioned among the number. Or what is more usual and appropriate than to inculcate imitation of Jesus Christ? And was not he a minister? Was not he sent to bear witness unto the truth? Was not he habitually occupied in preaching the gospel, and promoting the moral and religious welfare of mankind? Or, once more; what so fit and proper to be urged on the hearers of the gospel, as obedience to the two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets—to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul, and mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves? Now, what more easy than to shew that among the many ways of displaying such love, there is none more direct or likely to be more effective and fruitful, than devoting one's life to the furtherance of the gospel of the grace of God, which at once brings glory to Him in the highest, and at the same time promotes most certainly and abundantly the real good of men both here and hereafter?

But, supposing all this based on misapprehension, still I am at a loss to understand why we so seldom hear it made matter of supplication by our ministers in the pulpit, that God would dispose the hearts of such as he may approve, to give themselves to serve Him in the gospel of His Son. Almost every minister, in some part of the public service, offers up supplications for the furtherance of the gospel, and for a blessing on those engaged in proclaiming it. Would it not be natural to subjoin a petition that an additional supply of laborers might be sent forth unto the harvest? The efficacy of prayer for good and holy objects is surely not doubted. We often hear, and for my own part I believe, that it proves effectual in two ways—direct and indirect. It is a divinely appointed means of bringing down blessings. What less could our Lord mean when he said "ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you?" But besides this, the fitness of prayer to operate in an indirect or reflex way, is quite obvious. It is a very impressive and solemn mode of presenting truth and duty to the mind; and from the continued and unceasing reiteration of that, surely good effects may be expected, in due time, though that may not be immediately, nor even speedily. Let us imitate the husbandman, who ploweth and soweth in hope, and waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it. I observe that in the States, it is not unusual, with some denominations, to appoint seasons and meetings for the specific purpose of interceding with God, that he would vouchsafe to His Church a due supply of pastors and teachers. To that I know of no solid objection, but I would place far more dependance on the ordinary exercises of the sanctuary from Sabbath to Sabbath all the year round.

I shall deeply regret, Sir, if anything I have said is fitted to be offensive. But if the subject to which I have referred is habitually excluded from the