

degree of this is merely the weakness of our fallen nature, and does not by any means imply a habit of indifference about the most interesting of all concerns. It is a fault, however, which we ought not to pardon to ourselves, but labour most carefully to correct. The voluntary indulgence of it is a crime not only against God but also against our own souls, the consequences of which are very dreadful. Like other evil habits when it once becomes settled, it is most difficult of cure; so that it greatly behoves us to take heed that it do not grow upon us. There is nothing in fact against which we have more reason not only to watch but to pray, than a habit of inattention on a subject so unspeakably important, however it may be brought before us. Whenever we come hither, it should be with the most deliberate purpose of gaining all the instruction which can be gained from what is said; and after we have departed hence, it would be well if we made it a rule to ourselves to give some time to serious consideration, whether something may not have been said which is worthy of a continual remembrance, and to which, for the sake of our own souls, a careful and steady observance is due, as an useful incitement of devotion, or a rule of life and manners. We claim

II. TO BE HEARD WITH CANDOUR.

The ministers of religion have often to complain of unreasonable prepossessions and prejudices of various kinds existing among those to whom they are commissioned. Some are prepossessed against christianity in general, or against particular parts of it. Others there are who profess the greatest respect for religion itself, but to whom the priesthood is an utter abomination. They cannot express their horror of all religious establishments, nor tolerate those who belong to them. Such as these however are seldom, I presume, to be found among our hearers. But there is another prepossession with which all of us have to contend more or less, and which is either of a personal nature against the preacher himself, or applies to the matter of his preaching. But no prepossession of this nature—I think I may add—not even a well grounded objection to the character of an authorized teacher, which is the strongest and most trying case of all, should prevent you from giving him a candid and attentive hearing, not for the preacher's sake, but for your own. You should consider, not who it is that speaks, nor how he expresses himself, but *what* he utters. And so far as the doctrine is discerned by your reason, or felt by your conscience to be