

adduce in their proper place—yet this must never interfere with the claims of the Inspired Volume. To every man who errs here I would say pointedly, “This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.” Paul congratulated Timothy, that “from a child he had known the holy scriptures”; and it was one of, certainly not the least, important advantages, that he would thereby be kept “from fables and endless genealogies.”—The Bible should be the minister’s constant companion.

Sometimes, however, an ambassador finds his instructions insufficient or inexplicit, or he may not fully comprehend their meaning, or a case may arise which they do not seem to fully cover. He has then to *apply to his sovereign for direction*; and, my Brethren, instructions are very soon forwarded to him, so as to relieve him from his perplexity, and enable him to continue his negotiations. So a throne of grace is ever accessible to the faithful minister; and it is his frequent resort. Here the figure falls far short of the reality. What political ambassador ever enjoyed the privilege of his master’s constant presence, that he might consult him without delay? What minister residing at a foreign court ever received an *immediate* answer from his master? But the minister of the New Testament is thus favoured. His Sovereign is known to possess *ubiquity*. Nor have any of his servants applied to him in vain. Prayer is the life of the *Christian*. How indispensable to the *minister*! He should breathe an atmosphere of prayer. His sermons should be composed, and delivered, and followed, with the spirit of prayer. Of him it should ever be said, “Behold he prayeth!” With him prayer seems not so much a *duty* as a *privilege*. In this view, it is emphatically such. Without it, no man can become an “able minister.”

An ambassador must also be *acquainted with the language of the parties*. It often occurs that the nation to which he is sent is of quite a different language from his vernacular; and it is necessary that he should become perfectly familiar with the foreign language. This exigency is sometimes provided for by selecting a confidential person of another nation who possesses this qualification. But he may be one who had first to learn the language of his employer. This must be *thoroughly learned*. A deficiency in either case would render his work not only *uncertain*, but extremely *difficult*. Recourse must be had to signs, or to an interpreter, when the objects of his mission would be *embarrassed*, if not *defeated*.

There is a language which is peculiar to the people of God. It is one which appears to the wordly-minded as “foolish”, as an “unintelligible jargon”, but it is a *pure language—a living language*. It is the same kind that is spoken on the other side of Jordan, in the New Jerusalem. The patriarchs and prophets were pretty well acquainted with it; they used to converse in it; and some of them wrote it with tolerable correctness. Saul of Tarsus, while on his way to Damascus with authority from the chief