

Sin has destroyed the original band which connected the head, and the heart together, and which made them run in harmony. Even in the study of divine truth, it is not uncommon to find a sad discrepancy between the advance of mere knowledge, and the progress of Scriptural holiness, and it is at least possible for a student, under the pressure of his class work, and of ambition to excel in the several departments of his curriculum, to suffer the privilege of the closet to degenerate into mere duty, the service of the sanctuary into form or professional criticism—so that at the termination of the session he may find himself less spiritually earnest, less Christ-like, and less meet for his work, in the highest element of fitness, than when he commenced. “But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”

In selecting a theme for the present address I have found some difficulty. Your degrees of progress, and your relative nearness to the work of the ministry, necessarily vary. I have therefore thought, that as you all look forward to the same sacred employment at the close of your collegiate course, and should ever seek to gain more accurate and impressive views of it, by frequently holding it up before your minds in all its various aspects, that I might give you a few simple thoughts on the Christian ministry, and a few unpretending hints on some of the things which may help a man to enter on it.

I. The Christian ministry is unique. It differs wholly from the priesthood of the previous dispensation; for the founder clearly did not intend to form a sacerdotal class for ceremonial purposes; nor did he design that an order of educated men, for the mere purpose of expounding the doctrines of his new religion, should be established; he wished to furnish the world with those who should preach Himself, be his ambassadors, to pray men in his stead to be reconciled to God. Indeed the Christian ministry, in its entire conception, must be directly traced to Christ himself. Not only is it framed after his own plan, and based on his own authority, but it originated in his work, and is reflective of his purpose, his spirit, his character, and his life. “The servant is not greater than his Lord;” nay, considered in himself, he is infinitely his inferior, and yet in a certain sense he is his successor,—comes clothed with his sanction, and acts in his room and stead. If this position be correct,—and of it we have no doubt,—then it is evident that if we are to form a right idea of the Christian ministry, we must apprehend the true idea of the Saviour’s mission. Let us then as briefly as possible endeavour to reach this apprehension. Three related points claim our notice: (1) Its ultimate aim as revealed in Scripture. Under a variety of imagery the one sublime thought is frequently presented. He came, that at last, he might present to God “a multitude which no man can number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” and present them holy and unblemished, and unreprouvable in his sight.” (2) To accomplish this object, coming to a world in open and ceaseless rebellion against God,—a world under righteous condemnation,—it was needful that he should secure by his own merits and suffering a method of reconciliation, by which God would be just, and yet the justifier. To reach this end “he was made of a woman, made under the law,” endured a life of ignominy and suffering, bore the passion of the garden, and the agonies of the cross. (3) At the foundation of this sublime work lay his incarnation. We see unfolded a *personal* Saviour, “The fulness of the Godhead bodily,” the actual fulness of manhood, “very God, of very God; *very man*, as verily. *In himself* all centres; *from himself* all flows;