

it. A few wearied moments given to the saying of a prayer, or the reading of a brief portion of Scripture, fail to restore the spiritual vitality of a mind exhausted by intense and prolonged application.

The danger of having the religious affections become cold is, as I have said, common to students in all departments. In keeping the heart the student of Theology would seem to have the advantage; for he is occupied with the study of divine truth. The very things in which religion consists are much before his thought, and the world of evil and temptation seems almost shut out. A man who is reading and speaking and thinking of spiritual things all the time can hardly help being a religious man, and being filled with the Spirit always. So it might seem.

Well, it is a great privilege, and should be a great joy, to engage in studies which bring us very near to God and Heavenly things; and if we do but rightly prosecute such studies they will constantly minister to our "growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

But Theology must be studied as a *science*; and its scientific aspects may occupy the mind to the virtual exclusion of the practical and experimental uses of divine truth. The theological student is also preparing for a *profession*. (for we may so call the Christian ministry, in a sense), and here again danger may lurk. The temptation may be to become a popular preacher, or an accomplished theologian, rather than a true herald and minister of Jesus Christ. And should some wrong conception of his work and office take possession of his mind, some wrong motive insinuate itself, the very sacredness of the material with which the theological student deals will make his spiritual peril the greater. Bunyan saw that there is a road which leads to hell from the gate of the Celestial City, as well as from the City of Destruction; and there is a way of considering and handling the truth of the Bible which may blind the eyes and harden the heart as certainly as will the undevout study of matter and force.

How then may study—earnest study—become safe, and even helpful to spiritual life? How shall we devote to our studies the energy necessary to success, and yet find our sense of divine things and our interest in them not impaired but enhanced?

First of all, the danger attendant on study must be fully recognized. That persons can take the superficial view of this matter, to which reference has been made in relation to theological pursuits, clearly shows that a word of warning is not unnecessary. On a subject of this kind few were better entitled to speak than John Owen, the great Puritan divine, and he has used very impressive words as to the special risks to piety connected with the professional study of theology and the discharge of ministerial duty.

For protection against all injury to religious life in the case of the student, the *devotional reading of the Scriptures and Prayer* are of the