

gift and sealing of the Eternal Spirit of the living God, in His mysterious works of regenerating and sanctifying our natures;—we may well say, in the words of the apostle, "On the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

That office, then, can be neither unimportant nor mean, whose declared object is the persuasion of humanity to "know and to receive the things which are freely given to us of God." It has a connection with and a similarity to the glorious mission of the Son of God to our world. What says the apostle? "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry—the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Of that wisdom pervading the works and operations of God, preaching is one: "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." Viewed, then, with reference to such subjects and objects, and in the light of eternity, the Church of Christ and the office of the ministry therein have a grander position—a loftier moral elevation—and fill a wider and nobler sphere than the palaces and cabinets of this world's rulers. Here humanity are labourers together with God—God's husbandry—God's building—God's temple. And whether the operations and effects of "this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory to be revealed," reaches and affects other orders of beings, or not, we do not venture to say. But doubtless there is some wide and gloriously exalted scope and design involved in the great gospel scheme. In reference to this, have not these words of inspiration a deep significance? "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord;" or again—"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself—that in the dispensation of the fulness of the time, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."

III. The gospel is glorious in its effects and results.

Much of what might be said under this division has been in a manner necessarily anticipated or indicated. The glorious effects of

the gospel is a subject, you well know, suggestive to us of a variety of topics—a diversity of illustration—and indiscriminate detail. But the present time and occasion, brethren, call for selection and brevity of remark.

"It must surely be a point conceded on all hands, that the gospel diffuses an influence so as to elevate man's social condition, and to promote his interest in every relation of life and station or position in the world. It is clear as the light of the sun, that those countries in which the gospel is known, and where humanity comes under its influence, differ very greatly for the better from those in which it is unknown. "Tell me where the Bible is," says one, "and where it is not, and I will write a moral geography of the world." We are to remember that the operations and events of divine providence in the world, are rendered subservient to and dependent upon the dispensation of the glorious gospel. This world and all that it contains rolls on in its course under the mediatorial reign of Jesus Christ. He has "power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given to Him. He is head over all things to the Church. He now reigns till all enemies are subdued, and the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ." And is it not the fact, that the best governments and institutions of the nations—their political influence—their progress in the arts and sciences—and their social advantages and comforts, are to be marked and measured just in proportion as they are pervaded and permeated by the gospel's principles and influences?

But, however important the gospel in this respect, and however interesting such views of its effects, it fills a higher sphere—treats of sublimer interests—and is identified with more glorious results. Its annunciations enforce the claims and unfold the dignity of that unchangeable law which is interwoven in the constitution of our moral nature. In the gospel revelation we view and contemplate the signatures of God's justice and holiness and goodness and mercy. How impressively this appears throughout the stages and phases of the gospel's development and progress! How completely is it answered and fulfilled in the gift and wondrous work of the glorious Redeemer—the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus! Here the glorious result is, the law is honoured and magnified, and at the same time the divine love and compassion are extended and commended to humanity for a free deliverance from deserved wrath, for assimilating our moral nature to the divine image, and for our becoming glorified in eternal happiness.

Our Fathers and Brethren in the christian ministry before whom we stand—our fellow-professing christian disciples now present, will suffer from us a word of admonition and exhortation.

Remember that the gospel is glorious, not