

to hear it whispered, that another sort of preaching than "the Cross of Christ," would be really more useful, and give greater satisfaction. These persons—sage in their advice—would not object to a small portion of doctrinal preaching, and they even hint that the time may come when it would be useful to preach the doctrine of the Cross somewhat fully among them. But, in the mean time, good plain moral discourses are, on all accounts, more suitable. Now, all this, and much more, is endorsed in public, by their blank indifference, whenever the doctrine of the Cross is brought into view: while in private, the minister meets with broad hints, and cold looks, and dark surmises about men ruining their usefulness, by dwelling too much on the doctrinal portion of religion. Now, if the preacher be a man of high moral courage, all this will just tend to make him so much the more resolute in proclaiming the doctrines of the Cross.—It is, however, no great disparagement to a man to say, that even although pious, he may want firmness of mind. Hence, it is more than possible, that, under the influence of the temptation which we have supposed, some good, but too compliant men, might be induced to draw off from the more prominent ground, the peculiar doctrines, and place them in the shade, until, forsooth, the mind of the people is prepared, by a different sort of instruction, for giving them a more favourable reception. But not satisfied, it may be, with keeping what he knows to be the very essence of religion out of sight, the preacher endeavours to bring in the doctrines by stealth, and take the people by surprise. God hates expediency, when it implies a fear of displeasing men, should they see the truth as it is. This is not all. Those intended to be thus caught see the snare, and at once pity and despise him who employs it. They give him no credit for honest intentions. He reaps the reward that might be expected—dishonour: and what is far worse, truth is injured. Courage, fearless and honest, would save from all this; and ultimately produce much that is good, and, to the preacher, much that is creditable, in the best sense."

This description is graphic and applicable in the main, to cases which occur within the observation of almost all intelligent Ministers of the Gospel. Our author has, however, committed a mistake in representing the offence of the

Cross, as occasioned exclusively by doctrinal preaching. No doubt, the bold assertion of the righteousness of Christ, as the only foundation of the sinner's hopes towards God, does cross the pride of the natural mind; but, some of its strongest tendencies, and most inveterate habits, are not less directly grappled with, by the requirements of repentance, self-denial, and separation from the world, which must ever be urged in connexion with the testimony of the Gospel. There are in some religious communities not a few, who, from the training in orthodoxy, through which they have passed, can bear with nothing but doctrinal preaching, while yet they are ready to take offence, and to stumble, when the demand to forsake all in affection for Christ, is pressed home upon them. Many now, as in our Lord's own day, are offended at such sayings as these; "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." But, more, we believe, are repelled from the Kingdom of God, by these and similar declarations: "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of God. And again, I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." The error to which we have here adverted, arises merely from the want of explicitness: in another part of the discourse which we have quoted, our author shews that the preaching of the Cross, to which the offence attaches, is not the bare exposition of the sufferings of the Son of God.

But, we have done; we have noted freely some of the blemishes which are found in this discourse; and, without being hypercritical, we could have pointed