

receive God's mercy through Christ, and the grace of the Spirit to renew and purify his heart, can he, who has never himself sought these blessings, adequately and sincerely warn others of the great guilt and danger of sin, or earnestly lead them to God through Christ? Nay, my Brethren, he may coldly and stately declare the words of salvation, and its general doctrines, but the life and spirit that should animate his exhortations will be wanting, and thus they will be a task and labour to himself, and will frequently fail of making any impression on his hearers.

And may we not say, that one of the great objects of our Lord in committing the Gospel to men, to proclaim to their fellow-men, is, that the deep feeling of their own sinfulness and weakness, and need of God's grace to purify and to renew them, may enable them to speak with personal knowledge, with sympathetic feeling, and with unwearied earnestness to the dying men around them, that they also may receive "part of this grace wherein themselves do stand." But if this spiritual life be wanting in the heart of the ambassador, the earnestness, the sympathy, the love for his fellow-creatures which should actuate his efforts, will be wanting also.

And we may see this (principle) constantly verified in earthly matter. How often is it found that any person who is himself in earnest in any thing which he advocates, succeeds in imparting, sooner or later, a part of his own convictions to those whom he addresses; they perceive that he is in earnest, they are thus led to consider more attentively the subjects which he presents to them, and are often induced to regard them with favor and to accede to them.

And although in the reception of the truths of religion the power is of God, yet one of the great means which He employs is the efforts and exertions of His ministering servants. The life of religion in the soul is therefore the great qualification of the Christian Minister.

And this Divine principle of spiritual life can only be obtained from the Lord and Giver of life. To obtain it, beloved Brethren, you must be men of prayer, of watchfulness, of meditation; your life must be hid with Christ in God. You must draw nigh to Him who "seeth in secret, and who will reward you openly." The blessing of Divine grace is to be obtained for the sincere asking of it, for * God "giveth His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Thus you must be daily in the invisible Sanctuary, in the special presence of God by prayer; in order that you may rightly minister in His visible sanctuary on earth. You must go † "into the Holiest, by the blood of Jesus," and draw nigh to Him who hath promised to draw nigh to you. Your heart must be an altar from which the daily sacrifice of prayer, for God's mercy to pardon, and God's grace to strengthen and renew you, must be offered up.

We trust, Brethren, that this has been your practice hitherto, and that the grace of God is now abiding in your hearts and drawing you to His service. But permit me to remind you that the same earnestness of supplication, and communion of heart with God through Christ,

* Luke xi. 13.

† Hebrews x. 19