

of producing real union, tends to RETARD that union which alone is valuable—a union founded in the knowledge of the will of God. They who adopt these sentiments, are prevented from searching into the mind of God on all the points of difference; and thus the same diversities may be expected to subsist so long as such sentiments are held.... It is not at all strange, that men who are ignorant of God should form opposite judgments concerning the *testimony of Scripture*; but that Christians should conclude differently respecting the meaning of the Divine records, is truly surprising. It cannot be supposed that the word of God really affords a shelter both for the opinions I defend, and those which I oppose; or that it does not afford ample materials to prove the one and condemn the other, and thus leave him inexcusable who is in error. The Scriptures certainly must clearly decide on these points, if they are the word of God. What, then, can be the reason that these things strike different Christians in such a very different point of view? Let them be what they may, they must be sinful on one side.... Guilt, and no small guilt, must lie upon him who forces the Scripture to speak a language the Spirit did not intend. If the Scriptures teach one thing, and I another, under the sanction of Scripture, I am fighting against God; and although I am doing this ignorantly, *my ignorance is sinful, for God has given his Word to instruct me.*

It is no trivial matter to be the occasion of leading the disciples of Jesus from the path of duty.... I am ready to renounce any opinion that can be proved to want a Scriptural foundation, and to receive any that comes thus recommended. I never suppose myself to have attained to perfection, and therefore there is no period at which I will pledge myself to go no farther. I acknowledge no extremes, but such as are without the bounds of Scripture. *To condemn the most exact copying of the churches planted by the apostles, is to raise up a standard different from the Scriptures.*

I entreat Christians to consider that it is their real interest to receive truth. Let them come to the examination with an unbiased mind.... They who turn from discussion, discover a secret distrust of the soundness of their own principles; and if their hearts condemn them, God is greater than their hearts.... If they can allow themselves to evade scripture, there will be nothing easier than to find expedients.

When I have not sufficient evidence to decide in favour of any side of a question in matters of revealed truth, I attribute this to my own imperfect acquaintance with the Scriptures, not to their deficiency, and hope that farther search and more enlarged knowledge of them will afford me what I want. I find that, in many points in which I might formerly think the Scriptures very

scanty in evidence, there is evidence completely satisfactory; and that my not seeing it must have been owing to some improper state of mind—to inadequate acquaintance with the manner and analogies of revelation, or to some prepossession unfavourable to the discovery of certain parts of truth. To resolve our doubts into the deficiency of the scriptures, is to suppose ourselves perfectly acquainted with them; yet I think it more reasonable to suppose that we are slow to learn, than that God has not afforded us the means of instruction. The Scriptures must be both a FULL and a CLEAR RULE; otherwise, the blame of our ignorance and difference must lie upon God.

#### HOW CAN I LIMIT MY PASTOR'S USEFULNESS?

Much every way, but chiefly—

1. *By neglecting his ministry.* This will grieve and depress him, and fill his mind with the most torturing anxiety whenever he appears in public. Everybody around you will also see that in your opinion he is not worth hearing. Moreover, it will effectually lessen in their estimation the value of the public ministry, and the importance of attending the worship of God. For how can the Sabbath-breaker and the ungodly of any class attach importance to these, when they see you who profess to "love the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth," practically disregarding them? Be assured that you cannot more effectually keep others from hearing your pastor than by neglecting his ministry yourself.

2. *Do not pray for him.* He may request it a thousand times, as the most precious influence you can throw around him; but never give it. Should you occasionally engage in the social circle of your brethren, be sure that they never hear from your prayer that you are interested in the success of his ministry. If you gather your family around you, forget him, lest your children or domestics should incidentally discover that you feel for him. Do not carry his wants, with deep and intense earnestness, before God in the closet. No: withhold all these, and you will accomplish your object. Deprive him of the prayers which his office claims, and you will paralyze his right arm, and deprive him of success.

3. *Never speak well of him.* Not only never admire or commend him in the presence of others, as one who should be loved for his work's sake, but be sure you play the great man! If occasionally you hear him, be the critic for the remainder of the day. Analyze the whole sermon. If a figure was not quite appropriate, spare it not. If an action was not classical, condemn his want of taste. If any error in language is discovered, expatiate upon his ignorance; and should a sentence be badly constructed,

dissect it with great glee. This will effectually serve your purpose. It will eradicate from the minds of your family any feeling of respect for your pastor. Nay, it will do more; for as you will no doubt exercise your power on other occasions, so a greater number will see that a profession of religion is only hypocrisy, and that attendance upon the service of God is only for amusement rather than the solid advancement of the mind in holiness and piety. I will only add,

4. *Let your example in daily life be a full refutation of his ministry.* Always stand in contrast with the truth he preaches. Never let it be seen in the circle in which you move, that it exerts any influence upon you. If he urges you to be heavenly-minded, spiritual, holy—then be as worldly as possible. If he cautions you against the world, rush into it headlong. If he inculcates the spirit of love, and advises you to be clothed with humility, be sure and assume all the airs and pride of the worldling. Whatever he may commend from God's word, admit it but never practise it. Be satisfied with the form, but never exhibit the power of religion. Do this, and you are sure of success. He cannot stand before it. He will be weak as an infant in your presence, and the might of your principles will be seen in leaving him powerless for good.

Reader, you will understand us. The success of the pastor, under God, is dependent upon the church. Its responsibilities are grave: its iniquities are fearful. Long and loud has been the cry about the ministry, and the condition of the church. We think the former is paralyzed by the latter. Let the church awake. But the church will only awake as individuals awake; and it becomes us therefore individually to ask, How far have we limited the success of the ministry? Dear reader, is this your condition? Do you frequently neglect the ministry? Do you never pray with earnestness and faith for your pastor? Are you ever captiously finding fault with his ministry, and lowering him in public estimation? Are you living inconsistently with the high profession you have made? If so, you have been hindering the gospel of Christ, and limiting the usefulness of your pastor. The blood of souls is in the skirts of your garment, and God is angry with you. Form immediately the holy purpose in everything to sustain the ministry, and a new era, we believe, will dawn upon and bless the church of Christ. S.

**PAYING DEBTS.**—Men may sophisticate as they please, they can never make it right, and all the bankrupt laws in the universe cannot make it right, for them not to pay their debts. There is *sin* in this neglect as clear and as deserving Church discipline, as in stealing or false swearing. He who violates his promise to pay, or withholds the pay-