

his relation to us, and above all as the God of salvation, needs to reveal himself. We have lost the knowledge of this God. Every nation without the word of God has been as ignorant of him as if he did not exist. The utmost that even the Athenians could attain to was to set up an altar to "the unknown God." *But the word of God reveals him.* It discovers his true character. It makes known his holy and awful perfections—his law—its solemn sanctions—the penalty of violating these—the terrible doom of transgressors—all the fearful consequences of departing from God;—and then it opens up the way of pardon—the way by which we may return to God—the method of reconciliation—the means of salvation through the blood of the Cross—through the mediation of God's own son. The word of God does this, and through the preaching of the word all this is made known, is proclaimed, is published, that mankind hearing it, hearing of God, hearing of the way of salvation, and calling upon the name of the Lord, may be saved. It becomes of paramount importance, therefore, that the Word of God should be preached. *Not otherwise will sinners be saved:* not otherwise will men call upon the name of the Lord. They must hear of God first, and they cannot hear of him without a preacher. The preacher is God's messenger, to speak of him! This is the great purpose and duty of the Preacher—to speak of God—to make him known to sinners—to proclaim all the words of this life, and to command and beseech sinners to trust in God—to believe in his disposition to save all who call upon his name. It is to set forth the evil of sin—its demerit and danger—the holiness and righteousness of God, but his mercy in sending his son into our world, in laying upon him our iniquities, in exacting of him the penalty of our transgression, and pardoning the guiltiest sinner who believes in Christ.—Such is the burden of the preacher's message—such is the work for which he is ordained, to proclaim the word of God, to hold out the message of salvation to all who will hear and believe. Christ himself gave to the preacher his commission, "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature." The close connection, however, between the preaching of the Gospel, and the end it was to serve, is what is here insisted upon; and we see the necessity of the former, if the latter is to be accomplished—

If sinners are to be saved it is through the preaching of the Gospel. If they are to call upon the name of God, they must first hear of him, and how can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent? Christ sent the first preachers. They were called Apostles because they were sent.—They were sent on the great embassy of preaching the gospel! They were Christ's ambassadors. They were empowered to proclaim the words of eternal life—to reveal the unknown God—and invite sinners to trust in him. This was their message, and it is the message of all who in like manner are called to preach the Gospel. All who preach the Gospel are in like manner the ambassadors of Christ. The commission of Christ to his first Apostles applies equally to them—"Go and preach the Gospel unto every creature." There was to be a succession of Ambassadors, of preachers, of heralds of the Cross, of Ministers of the word, of teachers and pastors, to the end of the world. It was not to the disciples, in their own person, that the promise was given, "lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,"—it was to them as the representatives, or as standing in the place, of all that were to succeed them in their high commission.—The place or function of a minister of the gospel is brought out here. He is one of the links of the chain which the Apostle brings before our notice. The chain would not be complete without him. Now, just look at that chain.—What is the last link in it? It is stated first, but it is in reality the last, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." *What would become of that link without the foregoing?* All are necessary: the believing in God—the hearing of him—the preaching and the preacher. Would you break the chain? Would you sever the connection? Would you dispense with any one of the links? Is it important that we be saved? Is this a grand, a paramount, an all-important, matter? Would we choose to be lost? Would we go down to everlasting destruction? Would we do so when there is a gospel that proclaims the way of salvation? But if we would not, we must not dissolve that chain the links of which Christ himself has woven. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?