

the Holy Ghost." Yes, my Brethren, he must feel something of that unyielding necessity which impelled Peter to say to the Jewish rulers, in the face of their solemn prohibition, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"; or which drew from Paul the emphatic declaration, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea, wo is to me if I preach not the gospel"; and which induced the apostle while at Ephesus to "cease not by the space of three years to warn every one, night and day, with tears." Were the man of God, after seeing what he has seen, after learning what he has learned, and after feeling what he has felt, to hold his peace, "the very stones would cry out against him."

The *nature and demands* of the ministerial office, as we shall see hereafter, require fervent piety. These demands cannot be met without it. Fearful indeed is the responsibility which he incurs who, deficient in this particular, obtrudes himself into the work of the ministry. Remember the history of Nadab and Abihu, who "offered strange fire before the Lord", and the breach upon Uzzah, who "meddled, uncalled, with the ark of God." Let the unconverted, then, relinquish the thought of this sacred office for ever.

But if personal piety be thus essential to the minister of Christ, then the more lively its exercise in our hearts, the more fully shall we be fitted for our work. Many considerations press upon us to be *active*. Sinners are hurrying on every hand to the gates of death. Souls are every where perishing through lack of bread. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."—Our own career, however influential upon the world, must necessarily be short. We are *mortals*, but mortals raised to a dignity and trust such as no angel of heaven ever bore. Our work is to be either "a savor of death unto death, or of life unto life", to all with whom we have intercourse. Our business is to "entreat men for Christ's sake"; and the result will be the salvation or condemnation of all thus entreated. We must rid ourselves of the "blood of all men." O, my Brethren, what calls for exertion!—Can we be idle in these emergencies? If no other motive can influence us, let that of *personal interest* induce us to progress in piety until the end of our course. Then shall we hear the welcome plaudit, "Servant of God, well done!" The Christian minister may heartily sing,

"This blessed word be mine,  
Just as the port is gain'd;  
Kept by the power of grace divine,  
I have the faith maintain'd."

But on the other hand, how fearful will be his condition, if he "run well only for a season." How alarming to think that "after having preached to others, he himself should become a cast-a-way."—What if he shall behold in the kingdom those who had been con-