

about with him a huge medical dictionary, and consult it at every bedside. What confidence would such a man inspire? and what confidence will a minister inspire unless his people know that he himself draws from the fountain-head? We trust that none of *you* will be content to do so great a work in so small a way.

You see then how groundless are the objections, or rather the excuses, which are made by those who wish to get rid of the necessity of severe study on the part of those who aspire to be "Ministers of Christ and Stewards of the mysteries of God." We must now, however, bring our subject to a more directly practical bearing, which we propose to do by briefly considering the bearing of exegetical study on the most important parts of the ministerial work.

We have already spoken of the first, and in one point of view the most important part of a Christian minister's work, viz.: *the simple preaching of the gospel*. We have said that this part of the work may be and often is very effectively done without much exegetical study. Still even here there is such variety in the modes in which the simplest truths of the gospel are presented, that much more scope than at first sight might be supposed is given for the application of exegetical skill. (This point was illustrated by a comparison of some of the plain doctrinal statements of the way of salvation with some of our Lord's parables, such as the "Wedding feast," and "Prodigal Son.")

Passing, however, from this, let us look at exegesis in its relation to the work of *edification*. This part of the subject is itself wide enough for an entire lecture or series of lectures, and therefore we must content ourselves now with a few hints and suggestions. We shall present these in the form of inferences from the fundamental position we have laid down, viz.: that the Word of God is the great instrument to be used by the minister of Christ for the edification of his people. Let me repeat it: *The Word of God (not the word of man) is the great instrument of edification.*

From this we infer, first, that the first duty of the minister is to assure himself that what he intends to present is in deed and in truth the Word of God. This involves of course a careful study of the passage in the original and a faithful endeavour to get at its true meaning, without any attempt to force it to mean what you wish it to mean. For example, suppose you are full of the idea of the worthlessness of the good works, or so-called good works of the unbeliever, and wish to preach a sermon on the subject, and you think of the text: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." If you have little respect for the Word of God, you will probably proceed at once and write a sermon on the subject you have chosen, without much solicitude as to whether your sermon be on the *text* or not. But, if you are faithful to God's Word, you will examine the passage, and find that it has no bearing on the subject you wish to deal with at all—you will find that, instead of asserting the worthlessness or sinfulness of the works of the unconverted, as is commonly supposed, it lays down the important principle, that the man who commits an act which his conscience does not clearly approve at the time, is committing a sin, whether the act be right or wrong in itself: "He that doubteth is damned if he eat," i. e., he that hesitates whether he ought or ought not to eat is condemned if he do eat; for "whatsoever is not of faith"—whatever action proceeds not from a clear decided conviction of its lawfulness—"is sin" to the person thus tampering with his conscience. It is quite obvious that if you would still preach on