

your ministry. Did not the Apostle of the Gentiles view the subject in this light? What said he? "Thou one thing I do—(how many things had he to do besides—the care of the churches, journeys to travel, sermons to deliver.)—“forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Let it never be forgotten, that in regard to spiritual advancement and personal holiness you ought to be examples to the flock, to go before them, to invite them onward, and to say—“Follow us as we follow our Lord.” Be examples in word, in spirit, in faith, in purity, and in charity.

But, you have also received authority to preach God's holy word. We believe that you have been called by the Great Head of the Church to this office and ministry; and we hold that Jesus Christ has never resigned his prerogative to select and commission his own ministers. This is his own inalienable right; and we have ever held, and maintain, that there is such a thing as a divine call to the Christian Ministry. You are persuaded, I believe, that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministration.” And then this divine call, (of the certainty and reality of which you are personally persuaded,) has been ascertained as far as it can be ascertained by men,—ascertained by your fathers and brethren,—for you have been engaged in a probationary ministry each at least four successive years, exercising the talents as well as graces which the Head of the Church has given you. Moreover, he has affixed his seal to the exercise of your probationary ministry, by granting you success in your labours. And you have also been personally exercised since you came to this Conference; a large proportion of you, in the presence of the great congregation, have witnessed a good profession before many witnesses; and, with this conviction, you have been so eminently and actually set apart by “the laying-on of hands of the presbytery;—so that the divine call has been ratified by the official sanction of the fathers in that ministry with which you are now connected. You are not, therefore, self-appointed ministers;—you are not unauthorized ministers. The first apostles were extraordinary men,—they had an extraordinary calling,—they were invested with miraculous endowments,—they received the miracle-working power to accredit their ministry,—and they went forth in the plenitude of heavenly inspiration. They were a race of men unique. It was requisite that the apostles of Jesus Christ should have seen the Lord,—should be witnesses of his resurrection, as the promulgators of our common Christianity. Their work is done;—they have rested from their toils;—the like to them the world never saw before;—nor will the world ever “look upon their like again.” In these times, we hear much, and read something, about what is called the Apostolic Succession. Now, it certainly is for those who prefer that claim, and who assert it for themselves, in order to establish their claim, to make out the reckoning. Both assertions I have sometimes heard, and frequently read: the proof of these assertions I have never yet found. But if you, or I, could fully make out the reckoning,—and could ascertain and produce every link of the chain from St. Paul or St. Peter to this very hour, I see not how that could prove that I am, or any one of you can be presumed to be, on that account, either a good man or a good minister, for the obvious reason—“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.” Be it yours, then, to be employed Sabbath after Sabbath and day by day, in the transmission of apostolic doctrine,—to imitate the apostolic example,—to imbed and exercise the apostolic spirit, the spirit of self-denial, of genuine meek humility, of enduring patience, of burning, quenchless, flaming zeal. Be it yours, to look for, and never be satisfied till you receive, apostolic success, seals to your ministry, sinners converted, souls saved from death: for these are the highest and very best credentials that can be produced, that you are the true ministers of the Lord Jesus, and the followers and imitators of the apostles of Christ. I trust that you will ever be able to say, to those who may institute inquiries, with all humility, ascribing the grace and glory to God,—“Go and tell John the things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their

sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.”

Now, the subject of the apostolic ministry, as I had an opportunity of remarking the other morning, was pre-eminently and especially “Christ crucified.” “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake.” “God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ must be the theme, the subject, of your ministry: Christ, in his person, his work, his redeeming grace, his saving benefits, his glory, and his kingdom; Christ, not only upon you in his name,—not only among you in the ministrations of his truth and the ordinances of his house, but Christ in you, the hope of glory. This is the essence of apostolic preaching. I am either greatly mistaken, or there is not a little danger of reducing Christianity to a mere ceremonial, to a matter of church authority, to sacraments, so as to supersede or relax vital, personal, experimental Christianity. Be on your guard against this. Remember, it is “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” “whom we preach.” “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,—not ritual and ceremonial only,—but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” See to it, then, my dear brethren, that yours be ever a Christian ministry,—that in your ministry Jesus Christ is all and in you all. You are not commissioned to deliver mere philosophical lectures,—to bring before your people mere metaphysical disquisitions,—no, nor to deliver mere ethical discourses. There is a word employed, in certain quarters, at the present day,—a word that designates a certain kind of preaching,—a word that I think circulates far more than it is worth;—the term is—“he is an intellectual preacher.” and I fear it is employed to designate a ministry, a kind of preaching, that is not very spiritual,—that is not truly out and out evangelical,—that is not very experimental, and heart-searching and soul-converting.—alas, alas, for all such intellectual preaching! Remember, the legitimate subject of your ministry is evangelical religion—“the truth as it is,—where”—“in Jesus;” and then be as intellectual as you please,—as you possibly can; only see to it that the operations of your intellect are employed on subjects that are legitimate to the Christian Ministry.

Take care, my dear brethren, from time to time, in the selection of subjects, that you bring before the people that which is adapted to their state and circumstances, and that which is likely to be useful; for this is what we should keep in view,—not personal display, not the exhibition of talent, not acuteness, nor critical acumen, or eloquence. These are utterly unworthy. What will the great Heart-searcher think of us? We must direct our ministry to the benefit of those who hear us, that they may be profited, edified, and built up in their most holy faith. I shall not soon forget what a venerable minister of the Established Church (the late Mr. Cross, of Bradford) said to me, some twenty years ago, when I was comparatively young in the ministry. Several friends, who had been present, left the room, and we remained by ourselves. Affectionately and tenderly taking hold of my hand, and turning towards me his sightless eye-balls, he said—“Dear brother, you are a young minister; suffer me to give you a word of advice: always in your preaching give prominence to the great capital doctrines of the gospel—to the divinity and atonement of Christ, the fall of man, justification by faith, the direct witness of the Spirit, (for he held that doctrine,) and the Spirit's work in the heart of man, producing holiness there, and leading to holiness of life and conversation: depend upon it, that is the preaching God will bless, and to which the Holy Ghost will affix his seal.”

Let me suggest to you all, in the exercise of your ministry, whether on the Sabbath or week day,—in the town congregation or village chapel,—in the hamlet or the private house,—that you always preach under a firm conviction, and persuasion, and realization of the truth and importance of that of which you speak. Never, oh never, speak of divine things and of our common christianity, as though, after all, it remained to be proved whether christianity is a divine institution, and somewhat doubtful whether christianity be from heaven or of men. You have examined? I affirm, and I have seen

on occasions where you may be specially called to place before your people those evidences of the divinity of our holy religion,—its external evidences, its internal and collateral proofs,—you know how to classify them, but where is the propriety of staying to prove what not a man of your congregation doubts? And, if there be those who doubt, you have already witnessed its divine power and efficacy, therefore go forth in the conviction that it is the truth of God, revealed from heaven, for the instruction and salvation of men. And oh, think of its importance. Why, on the admission that it is true, it must be important,—it must be of the first and last importance to every human being. If christianity be anything, it is necessarily everything—it connects itself with the glory of God, and the salvation and happiness of man. Ever have present to your mind's eye, and recollection, and heart, the truth and importance of divine things. This will give a character to your preaching, to your manner, to your very style and language, corresponding with the sacredness of the things of which you are speaking. You will not be tempted to descend to anything low, vulgar, or coarse. Nothing of that will you find in the discourses of our Lord and his apostles. On the other hand, never attempt to soar to something out of your reach. Never attempt a style and language gorgeous, or overloaded with flowers and ornaments of speech. Depend upon it, this will greatly offend the most devout and pious of your people. Anything of this sort will be disgusting to persons of real learning and correct taste. Oh, there is a charm, a beauty, an impressiveness, an attraction, in simplicity of style, language, and manner, for which I vouch that you can find no adequate substitute. Deem it unworthy of you to spend time in endeavouring, first to collect materials, and then to construct artificial flowers, which, after all, are sickly and scentless. If you have powers of imagination as well as intellect, or if there is a flower just in your way, just growing upon the margin of the path in which you are treading, I know of no harm in plucking it, but never go out of your way in search of flowers. Dare to be yourselves. There are some young ministers, who seem disposed to renounce their own identity,—who, in the pulpit, are inclined to be somebody else, by attempting to ape some favourite preacher, they may have happened to hear. Now, let me say a word or two on this subject. First, it is much more easy to imitate the defects than the excellencies of any given character whatsoever; and, generally, those creatures of imitation acquire the defects and imperfections rather than the excellencies of the men on whose model they wish to form themselves. Then, if the originals happen to be known, your attempting to ape them will, in the eyes of your congregation, make you perfectly ridiculous. Again, this is unnatural. The garment of another man does not sit easy upon me, nor would mine upon you. They don't suit or fit us. He who made us all, made us to differ in size and external appearance; and perhaps mentally we differ as much as physically. Cultivate then your own powers. Dare to be yourselves. Endeavour to find out your particular talent. Some of you may be called to be “sons of thunder,”—to hurl from Mount Sinai the thunder and lightning,—to flash conviction on the guilty mind by the terrors of the law. Others may be designed to be “sons of consolation,”—to administer the soft, still, small voice of peace and of comfort.

And then, let me strongly recommend to you, to cherish and cultivate a truly catholic spirit,—a spirit of love to all. Love the truth, love holiness, wherever you can find the one or the other; and, where the one is you will generally find the other, for, like wisdom and prudence, they live together. You are Wesleyans;—you have made your choice;—Wesleyans in your views of christian theology and doctrine, of Christian discipline and church order;—Wesleyans from conviction and from inclination,—but then it follows not from this, that you are to be bigots,—that you are to indulge in or manifest a narrow sectarian spirit. That was not the spirit of our divine Master. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” If we must talk about the apostolic spirit, then this narrow, exclusive spirit is not apostolic. What says the great apostle? “If Christ be preached, I do rejoice, ye and I will rejoice.” If then Christ be preached by a minister of another section of

the church, I trust you are sufficiently apostolic, in spirit and temper, as to say—“We also rejoice, and will rejoice.” Let me tell you, a catholic spirit is a Wesleyan spirit. You have read, I trust, the sermon of our venerable Founder on this very subject; and, I trust, have not only received conviction from it, but are cherishing the same spirit, and arming yourselves with the same mind; and, in subsequent years, will be ready to say—“If thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand,”—having ministers of other denominations, and people of other sections, as your brethren in the Lord, and letting your language be—“Grace be upon all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

Let me earnestly and affectionately say to you—be men of prayer, of much prayer, earnest prayer, continuous prayer, unceasing prayer. A good minister not only gives himself to the ministry of the word, but also to prayer. Remember the language of a venerable servant of God, of old time,—“Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.” How can any man expect to be successful in teaching “the good and the right way,” unless he sanctify all his ministrations by prayer to God? A grievous sin it would be, against God and man, were you to cease to pray for the people of your charge. “But,” said the great apostle—(alas for the man, under the name of a Christian minister, who cannot say it)—“God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that I daily, without ceasing, make mention of you in my prayers to God.” Continue you to be men of prayer. You will not study to advantage, or preach with success, without prayer. I was struck with an observation respecting a minister, which I heard from a person the other day—“He preaches as though he prayed a great deal.” If you are much in prayer, you will feel God in your ministrations, and what you say and do God will prosper. It is recorded of the celebrated Thomas Walsh, (and as a man of learning as well as piety, he was an honour to the country which gave him birth,) that he always, when he had an opportunity, went from his knees to the pulpit and from the pulpit to his knees. He did not come down and begin to fish for adulation and praise. What was the advice of the never-to-be-forgotten Dr. Adam Clarke, to a young friend of his and of mine,—and to many of us, at that time, one of our coevals, but our coeval no more, (the late David McNicoll)—“Study yourself half dead, and then pray yourself quite alive again.”

And then always expect success. Remember, it is the truth you publish: it is the gospel of salvation you proclaim: it is God's own ordinance,—it is his own institution: it is a dispensation of the Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is there to bear witness to the truth, and apply it to the hearts and consciences of the people. “Lo, I am with you always.” That promise did not belong exclusively to the first apostles. It is added—“to the end of the world.” So the promise is yours, and if you live in the spirit of your Master, the Master will accompany you, and then you may expect success. Never content yourselves merely by preaching so many sermons. Your great object is, to bring sinners to Christ,—to save souls from death; and I hope you never will be satisfied unless you see that God gives you his blessing, that you have seals to your ministry and souls for your hire.

The Rev. Speaker then went on to describe, in detail, the duties of the ministerial office, which they were called upon faithfully to perform. As invested with the Christian pastorate, they were bound to conduct properly the public worship of Almighty God, to be the mouth of the people in prayer, and to see that the singing was simple, congregational, and devotional. They must also duly administer the holy sacraments,—baptism and the Lord's Supper. In exercising christian discipline, they must be mild, firm, and impartial, knowing no man. He enforced the duty of meeting and addressing the Societies, as distinct from the general hearers. They were also called upon, four times in the year, to speak personally and individually to the members at the quarterly visitations. If likewise urged upon them the vast importance of pastoral visitations,—to seek out those who were sick, weak, or perplexed. A great man had said—“The best way to find the road to a man's heart, was first to find the way to