

and maintaining its permanency against those who assert that, if it ever existed, it has now lapsed. Secondly, we would have to speak of him who fills it, in his qualifications, such as natural talent, personal piety, and a sufficient amount of scholarship to be able to read and understand the sacred Scriptures in the original languages in which they were given; his call, both from Christ the King of Zion, and from the congregation; and his regular introduction to stated pastoral work. And thirdly, to his duties as a minister of the word. Of these the principal is public preaching. He may be required to visit from house to house, to instruct, rebuke, exhort, and comfort in private, to be as frequently as he can by the bed-side of the sick and dying, to be present in the Sabbath-School and to take an active part in the local efforts that may be made for the evangelization of the heathen abroad, but his great duty is to preach the Word and to give himself to reading and study, that he may prove himself a workman not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Prominence must be given to one subject above every other in his pulpit exhibitions of the Word. That subject is the person, offices, and work of Jesus Christ. There cannot be religion in the congregation where these are ignored, nor can it prosper where they are kept in a subordinate situation. They must constitute the main burden of a minister's preaching, and if they do not, he does not understand the high place they hold in the plans and purposes of the Divine mind, the connection which they have with the glory of the Divine name, the prominence which they occupy in the revelation of grace, in the great commission, and in Apostolic labours, and the bearing they have on the elevation of man from the state of degradation to which he has sunk, on his deliverance from the curse of the law and the infliction of eternal death, to which he has rendered himself liable, and on his transformation by the renewing of his mind, till his soul is adorned with all the beauties of holiness. "We preach Christ crucified" says the Apostle, when he would specify the distinctive subject of his own teaching and of his fellow labourers in the gospel. As a Christian man and as an office-bearer, he could say "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The cross was his theme both in addressing congregations composed of kinsmen according to the flesh, or of sinners of the Gentiles. In the synagogues of Damascus and on Mars Hill he dwelt upon the same topic. And all faithful ministers, all that would maintain a conscience void of offence toward God, and keep themselves free from the blood of souls, must make Christ the grand theme in all their discourses. Preachers may attract by their talents, captivate by their eloquence, please by their power of imagination, by the beauty and appropriateness of their figures, by the chasteness and smoothness of their style, by their apparent earnestness in delivery, but how can the word of God prosper through their instrumentality, if Christ be not all and in all in their sermons?

II. With regard to the efficient cause of Congregational Religion. This is the Holy Ghost. A large array of proof might be adduced in support of this position. If we glance at the representations which the Scriptures give of man's natural condition, we are led to the conclusion that he cannot receive the truth in the love of it, till he is acted upon by some powerful agent distinct from himself. He is dead in trespasses and sins; can he awake and come forth without the communication of energy; more than Lazarus could do from the tomb if Christ had not made his life-restoring power felt? Call to mind again, the names and descriptions given of the change which is wrought in the spiritually regenerate, and we see the power of the Holy Ghost. They are created anew in Christ Jesus unto love and good works; who but a Divine agent is competent to the work of creation? And as it was by the Spirit of God that order and beauty were given to the natural creation, is there not a congruity in appointing the same great and glorious person to bring order out of confusion which sin has wrought in the soul of man? To this province and work, moreover, he has been appointed in these economical arrangements into which the per-