

salvation.—I should like to ask, whether you have a right to continue in it supposing you lose that grace? Then, upon this principle, let me advise you, first of all, by the life of faith, by continued and humble prayer, by conscientious watchfulness, and by living very near to God, the spring and fountain of all grace, to retain that blessing of salvation which we believe at present you so happily enjoy. "Take heed to thyself," young man;—take heed to the state of thy heart, to thy spirit, to thy walk with God, to thy intercourse with the spiritual, invisible, and eternal state: "be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." And, recollect, whether you relinquish the ministerial office or not, when you lose your privilege, and sink into a cold, callous, and carnal state, you will sustain the office in a state of utter unfitness for the right discharge of its functions; and you will be as a dead branch, bearing no fruit, and yielding no glory to your blessed Saviour. . . . Let me say, also, that this state of the heart,—inward religion,—stands very intimately connected with a fitness for the right discharge of the duties, the highest duties, of the ministerial office. I instance the study of the truth, and the right apprehension of its meaning. That remark of the apostle Paul, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned,"—ought to be held by every minister, as an axiom. You may lay it down as an infallible truth, that it is just as applicable to your study of the holy scriptures for the edification of our people, as it is applicable to the people themselves in their study for personal edification. The dispensation of the Lord Jesus Christ is a spiritual dispensation, and can only be understood by the spiritual mind. The highest and best preparation for the study of the truth is an enlightened understanding and a sanctified state of the heart. The treasures of the Scriptures will unfold themselves to such a mind, when these treasures shall be locked against very high intellect, and, I may add, very high learning. It is quite true, that in the Bible we have history,—we have what I may designate sacred philosophy,—we have beautiful, elevated, stirring, and sublime poetry,—we have facts and principles unfolded to our view of the deepest interest, revelations of God which carry us far beyond all mere secular knowledge, and plant us in a spiritual world, surrounding us with bright visions of glory; and it is possible that any of you may give yourselves to the study of the Scriptures in these lights, and yet, at the same time, obtain very little knowledge which will be assisting and helpful to you in the conversion and salvation of men. What I mean may be easily comprehended, if you turn to the commentators. You will find many of them very learned, and recondite, and interesting in these views; but you will obtain very little assistance from them for your ministry; whilst, if you turn to others, you will find them rich in evangelical sentiments, and they will administer to your own mind great spiritual light and edification. Now, what is true with respect to a commentator, is equally true with respect to a preacher. You may fill sermons with matter which may be deemed learned and interesting; but, at the same time, you will not take into these sermons the meaning of the Spirit, unless you yourselves dwell, live, walk, and move in the spirit of God, and in the spirit of his Son. . . . Then, experimental religion is in strict accordance with the object proposed by the ministry; and I may just warn you, that you will feel yourselves unhappy, distressed, not at home in the work of God, unless you keep up a state of deep religious feeling, and that state of religious feeling, on its part, produces in your minds a sympathetic feeling towards all the objects of the ministry. These are twofold: some of them lie in the church, and some of them without the church. Now, when you go into the church, what do you discover there?—evident occasions to call forth all the sympathies of piety and religion. Your intercourse with the church is intended to lead all its members to the possession of the happy privileges of God's grace—his peace, his joy, his love, his image. In your intercourse with the people of God, it will be your interest to endeavour to lead them forward into the happy possession of all these privileges: but how can you do this unless you have a sym-

thy with the blessings you recommend, by a happy possession of them in your own heart! What care can you have about the privileges of believers,—their interests in them,—and the happy possession of these blessings, unless you feel their importance by their rich enjoyment? . . . In your intercourse with the church, you will be called upon to lead the people to all the blessings of christian piety, piety, and holiness. This is one of your obligations and duties,—to set before all believers the most exalted and elevated blessings, of the kingdom of God,—that they may be entirely sanctified and restored to the divine image,—that the perfect love of God may glow in their hearts,—that their habits may be habits of deep piety—and that they may altogether live to God and thus be fitted for the heaven of God. but how can you lead the people to the enjoyment of these exalted blessings, unless you live in the enjoyment of them yourselves! You can have no sympathy, either with the obligations or excellences of christian piety and holiness, without the religion of the heart. . . . Within the enclosure of the church, you will meet with a great number of the Lord's people in a state of temptation, and inward trouble and conflict;—for the church is on its trial in this its probationary state, and exposed to the machinations of the devil; religion is to be maintained and advanced in the midst of a world of opposing sin; those who continue to believe and to work with God do so in the midst of dark and oppressive evils which surround them. They will pour their tale of woe, and affliction, and inward trouble into your ears, and seek your counsel, help, and direction. They have a right to expect you to "weep with them" when they weep, as well as to "rejoice with them" when they rejoice. But you will not be able to do this,—to enter into their feelings and circumstances, without the religion of the heart. . . . Many perplexing and difficult cases of conscience will be brought before you. People harassed in business and the world, surrounded by dangers and evils on every hand, will come up to your closet, and question you respecting things perplexing to their minds; and they have a right to expect you to solve difficulties which they cannot solve themselves. But you will not have the power,—you will not have the wisdom,—you will not be able to comprehend the meaning of these distressed people, unless you yourself live in the light of religion and enjoy its rich provisions. . . . The poor will require your help; and they have a right to require it. You will have to visit them in their cottages,—in the abodes of affliction and misery,—to give them counsel, to pray with them, and to help them to bear their load of suffering and woe. You will be called upon to enter into sorrows deep and afflictive, and you will not be able to do it with any comfort to yourselves—(if you visit them at all, but you will avoid that)—unless you possess the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is pre-eminently a religion of love. The gospel is not more impressively sublime than it is impressively lovely. . . . And as I am touching upon the question of visitation, I may say, that I have a deep impression upon my own mind, that, under present circumstances, the success of our ministry will depend very much upon our faithfulness in the discharge of this duty, perhaps, the most difficult and trying to men who sustain your office. You will have to put the wants of the poor against the enjoyments of your study, your books, your converse with ages past, the beauties of literature, and all such pursuits,—which, as educated men, many of you will be enabled to enjoy very little. You will have to put the wants of the suffering poor against these pleasures, and to make your selection, and it will cost you a good deal of resolution to do that which is right. But the vows of God are upon you. Pleasure, or no pleasure, his work must be done. Let me recommend you to acquire the habit in your youth,—(it is not easily acquired in after years, and we are all much the creatures of habit.)—let me recommend all young ministers in early life—to apportion a suitable amount of time, every day or every week, to the duty of visiting. Your persons will be known,—your characters will be estimated,—affections very deep and tender will be created, such as ought to exist between ministers and people,—you will be heard with greater interest and profit,—and you will yourselves be better able to preach to the people after you have conversed with them. But I say again,

you will not be able, or disposed, to attend to this important branch of ministerial duty unless you keep up the religion of the heart: for it is worth everything. . . . Then, no minister can exercise sympathy with those objects which lie without the church, without true religion: as, for instance, the conversion of the unconverted. Richard Baxter, in his Reformed Pastor, says something of this sort—"If we felt aright on the danger, the imminent danger, of unconverted men, whenever we looked them in the face we should burst out in a flood of tears." Remember, every unbeliever, as an unbeliever, is in peril, jeopardy, danger of damnation. If our Bible is true, and these principles are sound which we embrace, every man not forgiven, not regenerated, cannot enter the kingdom of God. We are asleep,—all asleep; probably not a man among us feels as we ought on the question of the salvation of sinners. I recommend you, my dear young brethren, to fix attention pre-eminently on this object of your ministry—the conversion of the unconverted. Study, pray, compose your sermons, preach, with a view to the conversion of men. Pastoral duties must be regarded,—evangelical labours must be regarded too: your office is two-fold—the edification of the church and conversion of sinners. But you will not be able to attend to this, you will not attend to it, unless you have a deep sense of religion in your own souls. How should you! What will you care for the souls of men, whether they are saved or lost, happy or miserable, go to hell or go to heaven! You will sleep on,—read poets, orators, and philosophers,—and enjoy yourself in frenzied mental pleasure;—you will care nothing about the salvation of sinners, unless you feel the power of religion in your own hearts. . . . Then, as to extra labours: you will not be urged to these by the promptings, and impetus, and influence of the grace of God within the soul;—you will content yourselves with so many sermons on the Lord's day and on week-days, taking your plan and filling it up;—but you will do nothing beyond: you will think this duty enough, and will evade as much of it as you can, unless you possess within you the burning zeal and love of the Saviour. A young man in our connexion is worth nothing, and is likely ultimately to be worthless than nothing, unless there is that exuberance about his feelings, that he will not content himself with the discharge of his duty, but will go beyond the line of that, and endeavour to seek the good of mankind in an extra way. If you have not a little life, warmth, enthusiasm, and devotion, above the common, ordinary track in youth, when its freshness and vigour are upon you, what can be expected when you become old! While, then, God gives you strength, health, life, "go about doing good." Mr. Wesley says:—"You are not called to preach so many sermons, but to save as many souls as you can." Some hardly think of doing good except by the pulpit,—except through the medium of sermons,—and hardly think of going out of a sermon to save a soul. Our Lord sat down with the woman at the well of Samaria,—he talked to the people in the temple,—he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass and performed a miracle as well as communicated truth; and it is remarkable, that to the woman at the well he made two of the clearest revelations which he gave during his personal ministry,—one that "God is a Spirit," and the other respecting the Messiah—"I that speak unto thee am he." If you can get into the habit of talking with every one,—of communicating truth to all you meet with, it will be a blessing to them, will edify your own souls, and will lead many to salvation. A mere *ex-officio* ministry is not a thing we ever yet absolutely cultivated;—we never yet thought ourselves called to work upon a certain rule in the communication of truth and the salvation of men:—we have been deemed "irregular;" I trust we shall always continue so, and that Methodist ministers will consider it their duty whenever and wherever they can save a soul. . . . Then, further, you will not be able to take your full share in that great work—the evangelization going on in the missionary department, unless you cherish and cultivate a spirit of deep religion. I am not here speaking of going into the mission field, and taking a stand on a distant shore,—though there is no good reason why every one of us should not possess a spirit that would induce him to go; such a spirit

ought to be cherished by us all; and if we are not called upon by the church to go, we owe it to this great work to bear it good will, to sympathize with its noble enterprises, and to support it by our prayers, our charities, and our advocacy. Some of you may say—"We can't make missionary speeches."—"any body can talk with a warm heart; and if our lips are sealed, be sure there is something wrong with us. . . . I am speaking now of spiritual religion, and I may remark, that it stands very intimately and closely connected with the development of character. It is extremely probable,—(I am not acquainted with the personal history of many of you, but I know a great number of Methodist ministers,—it is extremely probable, that you owe to the force, power, and influence of religion on your minds, that mental elevation which, as ministers of the gospel, you at this moment possess. It is very likely that, had you remained in sin, its incrustation would have kept your powers dormant,—you would have been nothing, lost in the mass,—you would have thought as a common creature thinks, and never have soared to anything dignified, respectable, or great;—you would never have been "able to teach others," but your minds would have remained their impotent and shrivelled-up state, without power, compass, ornament, or grace. And this had been the case with a number of the most eminent ministers that ever adorned the office, or preached the everlasting gospel. There is no great marvel that it should be so. Admit the light of heavenly truth within the mind immortal,—the knowledge of God, of Christ, of immortality, and of the way of salvation,—and there is no marvel that that mind should receive a new bias, a powerful impulse, great expanse, and evangelical energy. Many of us are little, because there is a scanty amount of religion within us: if our souls moved on the glorious platform of religious truth, it is impossible that we should be so dwarfish. Look at the writings of Howe. He scorns before you on angel's pinions, leads you into untried regions, exhibits before you spiritual and heavenly beauties; the pathway of his mind is evidently to everybody above this earth, and you feel at once that his greatness is religion. Why should you follow him! Be constantly conversant with the great things of God; let your minds dwell upon them incessantly; get the habit of abstraction; leave the world with its littleness and pleasures, and endeavour to hold intercourse with sacred things. I am prepared to say, that our connexion really does want elevated talent. Mind, I don't mean abstract intellect, but talent founded upon the bias of religion; that is, the highest and the greatest. As a community at this day, we must have our pulpits occupied by men of this calibre, or, otherwise, we shall in some sense or degree, sink down. And don't be afraid that your simplicity will be frittered away by seeking after these high qualifications, as the best men in our connexion,—the holiest,—have been the greatest. Look at these monuments behind me. (Pointing to the tablets in memory of John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher, Coke, Benson, Clarke, and Watson.) That is what I mean. Look at your leader and founder, John Wesley. Here's simplicity; and, let me say, in that simplicity is the element of all greatness. Nothing is either great or beautiful but what is simple. And when I advocate an elevated mind, a mind moving on a lofty platform, I don't mean the cultivation of what the world calls talent;—I mean christian talent, deep, lofty converse with the deep things of the blessed God. . . . And let me tell you, there is an intimate connection between real eloquence and real religion. What is eloquence? Impassioned reasoning: truth fused with the fire and spirit of a feeling mind. Nobody would say that Locke is eloquent, just because that Locke propounds his dogmas coldly: but every body perceives that Burke is eloquent, though equally philosophical, because he speaks the truths which he delivers from a feeling mind. You may express deep and overflowing feeling in strong expressions, or in vigorous and even poetical language,—only let it be genuine,—don't pluck it from something else,—from poets, orators, and writers lying on your shelves. We are in some danger of this. I should not like to see young promising men, who ought to do and might do better, fall into the habit of writing pretty little sermons and filling them with pretty little things, from poets, orators, and