

without *this*, their preaching would be in vain, for "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase; so then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6-7.); but, *with it*, the weakest of God's ministering servants becomes the honoured instrument of extending the boundaries of the Redeemer's kingdom, and saving the souls of men. What hope could we have of success in our ministry, if we could not look up to God to "send down upon the congregations committed to our charge the healthful Spirit of His grace, and to pour upon them the continual dew of His blessing?" But knowing that it is the office of the Spirit of God to bless His own word, to open the heart to attend to those things that we deliver "out of God's most holy word or agreeable to the same," to bestow faith and repentance, and all those fruits that are so peculiarly His own, we are encouraged to go forward in the path of duty, supported by the assurance that, however weak and unworthy may be our ministrations, "the word of God shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that which He pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it." (Isa. lv. 11.)

Such, brethren, you will, I think, agree with me in regarding as the great leading principles which are to support and encourage us in the execution of our sacred office,—principles, whose truth are like Him from whom they emanate, ever unvarying and unchangeable,—in no degree affected by the measure of our success,—capable of yielding as rich support and consolation to the faithful servant of Christ, whose labours seem unproductive of fruit, as to him upon whose ministry there rests a visible and signal blessing from on high. With the truth of God to preach, with God's commission to preach it, and with the promise of God to bless it, in the measure that seemeth Him good, the Minister of Christ may well be steadfast and unmoveable, even though, like Elijah, he seem to stand alone and the whole world to be against him. But, although it is the will of God sometimes thus to try His ministering servants, because He has given them principles that