

It should, methinks, brethren, be an awakening consideration, that in proportion to our occupancy and zeal about the advancement of religion, so in some respects is our danger of trusting to the external means, and seeking our own glory through these. And the want of success in many an enterprise that bears the aspect of being a Christian one, may just be referable to this, that the agents in it have been acting, as though they were doing all, and have been seeking to themselves the glory, and so they have been left to themselves. In this way, we fear that we are often denied the gracious presence of the Divine Spirit, in all our religious exercises,—as in the closet and family—the meeting for prayer—the sabbath school—the solemn assemblies of the sabbath—the sacramental services, and the meetings of the rulers of the church. We have in many cases sought our own glory, as personal agents, or the glory of our own church or communion; and, God has refused to maintain fellowship with us and to confer any true honor upon us. And, why should we wonder that he has thus dealt with us? Is He, by honouring those who dishonour Him, to become the rewarder of His enemies in the very acts of treachery and rebellion against himself? Let us rather admire his patience and long-suffering with us, and, while yet retained in His service, and permitted to occupy various stations of influence and responsibility, let us strive and labour in a dependance upon His blessing for the advancement of His kingdom.

But as God, in His spiritual kingdom, makes no account of the mere instrumentality, when He is not himself acknowledged in the use of it, so neither, as I now remark, *secondly*, does He regard the mere number of those who connect themselves with His service, but, in some circumstances, as in the case of Gideon's army, He honours the instrumentality of the few, rather than that of the many.

God saw that, had He given the victory to the thirty-two thousand, or even to the ten thousand, Israel would have vaunted themselves, and not have acknowledged Him in it. And, therefore, He cut off all occasion of glorying in themselves, by