

the learned professions, to which many devote themselves, and in the following out of which, both the highest talents, and the rarest attainments, find full and appropriate scope. In the zealous prosecution of such professions, the individuals enjoy most favourable opportunities for personal improvement, and if they really become eminent in their callings, they can scarcely fail to reach a high degree of mental cultivation, which must always command respect wherever it is to be found. These professions also, when honourably pursued, undoubtedly contribute not only to men's temporal welfare, but serve also to promote the social and moral interests of the community. We must be excused, however, for saying that, even in these respects, all such professions fall immeasurably short of our sacred vocation. The themes with which our attention is occupied are of all others the most lofty. They call for, and exercise, and improve, faculties the most acute and vigorous. They demand learning the most thorough and profound; and they are fitted, under God's blessing, to exert an influence the most beneficial on the moral and spiritual nature of all who honestly and earnestly devote themselves to their investigation. Then, as to the effects which our office is fitted to produce on our fellow men, we venture to affirm that there is really nothing which so much advances the social, and even temporal, welfare of a community, as the faithful, able, and successful preaching of the gospel. Would you elevate a degraded neighbourhood above negligence, indolence, poverty and wretchedness, with probably discord, dissipation and vice, no method so effectual can be adopted as to send among them a humble, pious, competent, and zealous preacher of the gospel. In proportion as his labours, accompanied by divine grace, become successful, intelligence, industry, sobriety, concord, good-will, and general comfort and prosperity may be expected to result. But this is taking low ground. Incomparably the most important aspect of our profession has still to be brought into view. Let us recollect, then, that it bears more directly than any other on the promotion of the glory of God in the highest, which must always be regarded as the noblest object in the universe, while at the same time, it aims specifically at securing the eternal welfare of our fellow men, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, rescuing them from guilt and depravity, and the natural and inevitable consequences thereof, everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; and as a humble instrumentality in the hands of the Holy Spirit, introducing them into a state of favour and acceptance with God, restoring to them the moral image of their Creator, and thus after fitting them for joy and peace here upon earth, conducting them to glory, honour and immortality in heaven. The transcendent importance of the department to which we have devoted ourselves need not be enlarged on. It is universally admitted. Alas that so many who admit it, content themselves with the admission! May God give us grace, while magnifying our office, to feel deeply our