

greatly confirmed, indeed, by the advice of individual brethren, because the church cannot usually judge his probable call until he prepares himself.

2. The principles of Scripture which the Spirit will employ to instruct him and his brethren as to the divine will are such as these: That "it please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," (1 Cor. i. 21; Rom. x. 14). That every man is bound to render to God the highest service and love which his circumstances and capacities admit, (Deut. vi. 5; Matt xxii. 37). That "we are not our own, for we are bought with a price, and must therefore glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his," (1 Cor. vi. 20; Rom. xiii. 1). That "whether therefore we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all to the glory of God," (1 Cor. x. 31). That the work of him who is permitted to preach the gospel is of all others most excellent, (Titus iii. 1; Jas. v. 20; Dan. xii. 3). And that every Christian has been redeemed from his sin and death by the Saviour, for no other purpose than this, that he shall be that, and do that, by which he can best glorify his Lord, (Acts xxvi. 16; Eph. i. 6). These Scriptures, and a hundred others, plainly teach that the only condition of discipleship permitted by Christ to any believer is complete self-consecration to his service. In this the self-devotion of the minister is just the same as that of all other true Christians. If a Christian man proposes to be a teacher, physician, lawyer, mechanic, or farmer, it must be, not chiefly from promptings of the world or self, but chiefly because he verily believes he can, in that calling, best serve his heavenly Master. If he hath not this consecration, we do not say he is unfit for the ministry only, he is unfit to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. If any man think this standard of dedication too strict, let him understand at once that he is "not fit for the kingdom of God;" let him relinquish his delusive hope of salvation; let him at once go back among the dark company of Christ's enemies, on the ground scathed and riven by the lightnings of his wrath, and under the mountainous load of all his sins unatoned and unforgiven. There is no other condition of salvation. For did not Christ redeem the whole man? Did he not purchase with his blood all our powers, and our whole energies, if we are his disciples? We profess to desire to love him with our whole souls, and therefore what reason is there

which demands a part of the exertion and service in our power which does not also demand the whole? That professor of religion who contents himself with exerting for his Saviour a portion only of the efficiency for which his capacities enable him confesses himself a hypocrite. The *modicum* of religious effort which he renders is not truly rendered to Christ, but to self-righteousness, or to a guilty conscience, or to public opinion. Had the motives which exacted this partial service been genuine, they would assuredly have exacted the whole. Let every young Christian heed this solemn truth, and the question of the ministry will be relieved of its indistinctness; for then the question of the profession in which he shall serve God will be seen by every Christian to be only the relative one as to his own capacities and the demands of God's cause at that time.

This leads us to add another important class of texts by which the Holy Spirit will inform the judgment, both of the candidate and his brethren, as to his call. It is that class in which God defines the qualifications of a minister of the gospel. Let every reader consult, as the fullest specimens, 1 Timothy iii. 1-7; Titus i. 6-9. The inquirer is to study these passages, seeking the light of God's Spirit to purge his mind from all clouds of vanity, self-love, prejudice, in order to see whether he has or can possibly acquire the qualifications here set down. And his brethren, under the influence of the same Spirit, must candidly decide by the same standard whether they shall call him to preach or not.

3. Our definition of the call to preach asserted that God would make known his will to the candidate and to his brethren, not only through the medium of the Scriptures, but also of outward circumstances and qualifications viewed in the light of Scripture truth. Much has been said by Christians concerning "the leadings of providence," touching the duty of preaching and many other duties. And not a little nonsense, with perhaps some profanity, has been uttered on this subject. It is true that everything which befalls us is determined by God's special providence, for which reason we justly conclude that, in many cases, an occurrence, after it has happened, is a real expression to us of God's will. But there is another truth, that the designs of God's special providence are chiefly reserved among the awful secrets of his own fathomless wisdom. He forbids us to attempt