

dual state—the strength and exercise of their spiritual capacities—the kind of food, which they severally require for the nourishment of the Christian life, according to their infantile, growing, or adult state—their special hindrances or advantages—their advance, apparently stationary condition, or visible decay, in the ways of God. The treatment of these several individualities demands a deep and well-digested acquaintance with the methods of the grace of God, in order to administer a seasonable and effective distribution of the word. The Apostle marks also the gift of “utterance”<sup>1</sup> as a spiritual endowment in the dispensation of the word—enabling us to address our people with “opened mouth” and “enlarged heart;”<sup>2</sup> to “speak as the oracles of God”—in mode as well as in matter—in “sound speech” as well as in “sound doctrine;”<sup>3</sup> delivering our testimony with holy confidence, “not as the word of man, but in truth the word of God—in a manner suitable to the dignity of the pulpit, and yet plain to the weakest capacity. The natural powers of clear thinking and arrangement of matter, of aptitude of expression, and of familiar and appropriate illustration, are often used as sanctified instruments for conveying the life-giving power of the Gospel with increasing acceptance and powerful application. Not however that these abilities are communicated by an extraordinary or sudden afflatus, or that they necessarily accompany in an equal measure the efforts of diligence.<sup>4</sup> The diligence of faith will ever receive its measure of encouragement in the growth, increase, and improvement of Ministerial gifts. Yet we must not intrench upon the exercise of the Divine sovereignty; remembering, that “all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”<sup>5</sup>

‘It is not to be supposed’ therefore, (to use the words of a sensible writer) ‘that such an office can be easily filled. It

<sup>1</sup> Eph. vi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Titus ii. 1, 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Sanderson observes—“It was Simon Magus’ error to think, that the gifts of God might be purchased with money; and it has a spice of his sin, and so may go for a kind of simony, to think that spiritual gifts may be purchased with labour. You may rise up early and go to bed late, and study hard, and read much, and devour the marrow of the best authors; and, when you have done all, unless God give a blessing to your endeavours, be as lean and meagre in regard of true and useful learning, as Pharaoh’s lean kine were, after they had eaten the fat ones. It is ‘God that both ministereth the seed to the sower, and multiplieth the seed sown’: the principal and the increase are both his.” Sermon on 1 Cor. xii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 11.

demands not merely some, but many, nay, all excellences, in happy combination. A person may, in a general way, be said to be qualified for the Ministry, who has talents for preaching, though not fitted for profitable private intercourse, or the affairs of Church Government. But this is evidently not a complete adaptation to the work. It is, on the contrary, a very imperfect one, and one with which no man should be content. For, all the aspects of Ministerial labour are, if not equally, yet highly, important; every one of them far too important to be trifled with. The right performance of each affords facilities for the rest, and gives additional beauty and efficacy to all. To be fit for only one department, cannot but greatly impede our activity, and diminish our success. To fill the Ministerial office with a degree of satisfaction and benefit commensurate with its capabilities, or with the desire of a heart awake to its importance, we must be all that it demands—men of God, perfect, completely furnished to every good work.<sup>1</sup> This is an elevated standard. He that aims highest will most approximate to it.

## CHAPTER VII

### PREPARATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

WE have already seen, that the weight of Ministerial responsibilities renders the work apparently more fitting to the shoulders of angels than of men.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore a matter of the deepest regret, that any should intrude upon it, equally un-

<sup>1</sup> Hinton on Completeness of Ministerial Qualifications, pp. 11, 12. ‘It will not fail to be objected’—remarks Mr. Ostervald—‘that if none were to be admitted into holy orders, except those who are possessed of every necessary qualification, there could not possibly be procured a sufficient number of Pastors for the supply of our Churches.’ To which I answer, ‘that a small number of chosen Pastors is preferable to a multitude of unqualified teachers. At all hazards we must adhere to the command of God, and leave the event to Providence. But in reality the dearth of pastors is not so generally apprehended. To reject those candidates for holy orders, whose labours in the Church would be wholly fruitless, is undoubtedly a work of piety. Others, on the contrary, who are qualified to fulfil the duties of the sacred office, would take encouragement from this exactness and severity; and the Ministry would every day be rendered more respectable in the world.’ Ostervald on Sources of Corruption.

<sup>2</sup> Onus Angelicis humeris formidandum.—Augustine.