

good than twenty years' study of those lower things, which, though they get you greater applause in the world, yet separated from these, will make you but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.¹

It is evident, however, that this Ministerial standard presupposes a deep tone of experimental and devotional character—habitually exercised in self-denial, prominently marked by love to the Saviour, and to the souls of sinners; and practically exhibited in a blameless² consistency of conduct. The Apostle justly pronounces “a novice”³ to be disqualified for this holy work. The bare existence of religion provides but slender materials for this important function. A babe in grace and knowledge is palpably incompetent to become “a teacher of babes,” much more a guide of the fathers. The school of adversity, of discipline, and of experience, united with study and heavenly influence, can alone give “the tongue of the learned.” Some measure of eminence and an habitual aim towards greater

¹ Reformed Pastor.

² Some of Erasmus' terms are far too unmeasured—“In Ecclesiasta hæc imprimis spectanda sunt, ut cor habeat ab omnibus vitis et cupiditatibus humanis mundum” (He goes on however, in his best style of terseness and accuracy of description,) “ut vitam habeat non tantum a criminibus, sed et suspicione, specieque criminum, puram, inculpata; ut spiritum habeat adversus omnes Satanæ machinas firmum, adamantinum, inconcussum: ut mentem igneam, et ad bene merendum de omnibus flagrantem; ut animum habeat sapientem ad condiendam populi stultitiam, cor habeat prudens et oculatum; ut facile dispiciat quid silendum, quidve dicendum, et apud quos, quo tempore, quo modo, temperanda oratio. Qui cum Paulo sciat mutare vocem, et omnia fieri omnibus, utcumque viderit salutem auditorem expedire. Nam hunc unicuique oportet esse scopum, ad quem Ecclesiastes rationes suas omnes dirigat; a quo si deflecteris oculos, continuo fit, ut quo magis instructus fueris ad dicendum eo maiorem invehas perniciem in gregem Dominicam.” Eccles. Lib. i. p. 10. We may compare with this, another finished portrait of the Christian Minister from the pen of the admirable Vitringa. “Quanti igitur facias fidum servum Christi, doctorem evangelii, animo rectum, gloriæ Divinæ et salutis hominum studio flagrantem; non quærentem quæ sint hominum, sed homines; non quæ sua sunt, sed quæ Domini; a Spiritu Sancto doctum, viarum Dei per experientiam peritum; castis purisque moribus; virtutes pietatis, modestiæ, mansuetudinis, zeli, prudentiæ, gravitatis, docentem exemplo; qui instar lampadis impositus candelabro, omnibus, qui in domo sunt lucem præfert; omnibus salutis suæ cupidus, tum viam salutis demonstrat, tum ipsam gratiam et salutem conditionibus evangelicis dispensat! Quoquo incedit, lux est. Quoquo se vertit, salus est. Ubi aperit, sal est. Ubique carus, venerabilis, non minus solatii aliis impertit, quam ipse sibi solatio est; post decursum vitæ ac laborum studium tandem ausurus se Domino ac Judici suo sistere cum fiducia, et libero ore, administrationes suæ reddere rationem, secundum formulam: ‘Duo talenta a te accepi. Domine: totidem lucratus cum sorte tibi reddo.’” Pref. animadv. ad method. Homil. A third striking sketch will be found in Chrysost. De Sacerd. Lib. iii. 16.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 6. Comp. note 2, pp. 14, 15. Bowles' Pastor. Lib. i. c. 13.

eminence are indispensable for Ministerial completeness; nor will they fail to be acquired in the diligent use of the means of Divine appointment—the word of God and prayer.

II. *Spiritual attainments also must be combined with a spiritual character*—including chiefly a clear and comprehensive view of the evangelical system. However we may admire the simplicity of the Gospel, (consisting only of a few leading ideas, and included often in a single verse¹) and admit an experimental acquaintance with its elementary principles, “as able to make wise unto salvation;” yet the Scripture, in its comprehensive extent, is given for a variety of important purposes, and for this express intent; “that the man,” or the Minister, “of God” (who seems to be chiefly meant) “might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”² The solid establishment of the people may be materially hindered by the Minister's contracted statement, crude interpretations, or misdirected Scriptural application. His furniture for his work must therefore include a store of knowledge far beyond a bare sufficiency for personal salvation. “The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.”³ He must be the “householder—instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”⁴ Without this store he

¹ Such as John iii. 16, or 1 Tim. i. 15. ² 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. ³ Malachi ii. 7.

⁴ Matthew xiii. 52. “The cursory perusal of a few books,” (as Dr. Owen well observes) “is thought sufficient to make any man wise enough to be a Minister. And not a few undertake ordinarily to be teachers of others, who would scarcely be admitted as tolerable disciples in a well-ordered church. But there belongeth more unto this wisdom, knowledge, and understanding than most men are aware of. Were the nature of it duly considered, and withal the necessity of it to the Ministry of the Gospel, probably some would not so rush on the work as they do, which they have no provision of ability for the performance of. It is, in brief, such a comprehension of the scope and end of the Scripture, of the revelation of God therein; such an acquaintance with the system of particular doctrinal truths in their rise, tendency, and use; such a habit of mind in judging of spiritual things, and comparing them one with another; such a distinct insight into the springs and course of the mystery of the love, grace, and will of God in Christ, as enables them, in whom it is, to declare the counsel of God, to make known the way of life, of faith, and obedience unto others, and to instruct them in their whole duty to God and man therein. This the Apostle calls his “knowledge in the mystery of Christ,” which he manifested in his writings. For as the Gospel, the dispensation and declaration which is committed unto the Ministers of the Church, is “the wisdom of God in a mystery;” so their principal duty is, to become so wise and understanding in that mystery, as that they may be able to declare it to others, without which they have no Ministry committed unto them by Jesus Christ.” Owen's Pneumatologia.