

dence indicate, but that other preparatory means of corresponding efficacy and force, are to be substituted? There is the same perverseness of human nature, and the same indisposition to the reception of divine truth now, as in the days of the Apostles. The opposition of a corrupt heart to the gospel is the same in every age. The minister of this day, then, needs as fully to understand the gospel, and to proclaim it with as much energy as did the Apostles themselves.

The importance of an able ministry is farther evident, from the strength and number of the forces to be encountered and overcome. The human heart, in every age, is desperately wicked, and, consequently, opposed to the holiness and purity of the gospel. It is steeled against every impression of Christianity. It has its false attachments, its thousand errors and prejudices, its thick darkness and delusion. To attack, with success, this heart filled with enmity against God, demands all the skill and power of the best cultivated, as well as sanctified talent. There is also a deep-spread and wide infidelity, which embraces in its service, talent, genius, learning, wealth, and station. And it never exhibited more stratagem, boldness, or energy and malignity of purpose, than now. To expose its sophistry, to silence its blasphemies, and to rescue the millions it would ensnare and ruin forever, requires a ministry that can pour forth light like the sun in his strength. But error is continually breaking forth in new forms, assuming different shades, and taking different directions. It sometimes approaches us masked in friendship, and by its artful insinuations, would beguile us from the simplicity that is in Christ. But we wrestle not merely with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, against the prince of the power of the air. Here are a host of enemies combined, under the direction of a wily adversary, of strong intellect, and of great knowledge. And where is an adversary whose movements are more insidious, varied, complicated, and rancorous against God and human welfare? Who can count the armies, and estimate the resources, wielded by this master spirit of sin and delusion? And can it be wise to

send out men of feeble minds, of slender intellect, and of small resources, to expose the devices, thwart the schemes, and subvert the empire of such an adversary? It is not thus that Christianity is to make its way over the earth. While it trusts in the grace, it demands for the conflict the ablest as well as the best minds heaven has created and sanctified. The better these forces are disciplined, furnished, and directed, the more sure and speedy will be the triumph of truth.

A ministry of power and strength is called for, by the greatness and importance of the object to be obtained. The field of action is a revolted, degraded, and ruined world. The Christian ministry is an embassy of reconciliation from its rightful and legitimate Sovereign. Its aim is to bring back an erring world to the path of rectitude, to restore sinful man to the favor of God, and to reinstamp upon him the Divine image. What enterprise in the whole compass of thought is so grand, so momentous? Who can measure the interest at stake in the issue? Who can contemplate the fearful consequences of a failure of success? Who can tell the happy consequences of a favorable result, its importance to God, to the world, to the universe? And how obviously absurd to communicate the keeping and direction of such a cause to the undisciplined, to the rash, or to the ignorant. When difficulties arise between a monarch and a portion of his subjects, or between two independent states, who is commissioned to adjust them? When life, or character, or property is at stake, who is sought for a defence? When a high-minded people, stung by reproach, and roused by oppression, resolve on freedom, who are selected to guide her counsels and direct her armies? Men of genius, of learning, of talent, and of power. And strange, indeed, if to men of inferior capacity can be intrusted the rights of God, and the everlasting interests of men! Strange, if slender powers and ordinary gifts can sanctify, when a world of intellect, an empire of mind in ruin, is to be restored to God, and trained for heaven! What are liberty, or property, or character, or life, or thrones that perish, compared with the honor of God, or the salvation of souls? The loss of a single soul, in itself considered, is a greater calamity than the extinction of the sun, or the destruc-