



# THE FIELD

AND

# THE MEN FOR IT,

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

DIVINITY STUDENTS OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, KINGSTON,

AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION 1859-60.

BY PROFESSOR GEORGE, D. D.

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# THE FIELD AND THE MEN FOR IT.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION TO THE DIVINITY STUDENTS OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, AND NOW PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

Gentlemen,—You are aware that it has been the custom with me at the close of the session, to direct your attention to some practical topic, which cannot very naturally find a place in a series of lectures on systematic theology. The topic I have chosen for the present occasion is—*The field and the men for it.*

The Gospel has from the first been substantially one system. The object of its announcement has been from its first announcement in Eden, the same:—the salvation of men. All its true ministers have regarded this as the grand end of their mission. Their chief aim has ever been so to present the Gospel, that through their instrumentality sinners might be converted to God and built up in faith and holiness,—and just so far as they have been successful in this, they have felt, that they were successful in their work. And I may add, that the qualities necessary to ministerial success have been in all ages essentially the same. All true ministers of Christ have felt, that a full and clear knowledge of the Gospel, a firm faith in its truths, and great diligence and prudence in proclaiming these, were indispensable to their success. All reflecting men must ever thus feel. For while the most gifted never can forget, that a “Paul may plant and an Apollos water” “in vain, unless God gives the increase” yet as God works by means, all wise men realize the obvious truth, that they have no warrant to look for the increase, unless they go forth to the work with gifts and graces suitable to it. This is strikingly taught in the qualifications which Paul lays down for ministers in several of his epistles. But while it may be safely assumed, that no man in any age could be an efficient minister of Christ without knowledge, faith, zeal, prudence, and diligence, yet it may be just as certainly assumed, that there have been and still are portions of the vineyard, that require a peculiar adaptation of gifts and graces, in order to ministerial success. No one can suppose, that although Paul’s message, “Repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ,” was substantially the same, yet that his manner of presenting it *was precisely the same* to all persons. There can be no doubt, that his method of presenting the truth in Arabia, was not precisely the same which he employed at Athens, Corinth and

Rome. We see from specimens of his sermons which we have, as well as from his epistles, his consummate wisdom in exhibiting the truth in a way adapted to the intellectual capacities and the moral condition of those he addressed. It was in this sense—without ever sacrificing one principle—“that he became all things to all men that he might gain the more.” Now, this is what every minister will do, who wisely aims at winning souls. His message is one—“the Gospel of the grace of God.” This he must preach to the learned and the unlearned, to the polished and the rude, to the rich and the poor, for as guilty and depraved men, they all stand alike in need of the remedy which the Gospel provides. Yet while the herald of the Cross will never forget this, still, if a wise man, he will “rightly divide the word” so as to give each a portion as he may be able to receive it. He will strive to preach not at random, “or as one that beateth the air” but with such an adaptation of the truth to the peculiar condition of his hearers, as may make it tell best on their understanding and conscience. But to do this effectively, he must to some extent be a discerner of the signs of the times,—or at all events, must have a nice appreciation of the intellectual condition and the peculiar moral habits of those he addresses. Many have been very useful in the ministry, who had neither genius nor a high order of talents; but no man was ever useful who had not talents suitable to his field and who did not well understand the nature of the field in which he laboured.

Assuming, that you are looking forward to the employment of your talents in this Province, let me notice briefly some of the characteristics of that field in which you are to labour.

Of the people to whom you are to minister, I think it may be affirmed, *that there is a pretty wide diffusion of intelligence among them.*

Men may not think profoundly, nor reason very clearly on many subjects and yet possess a fair share of education and general knowledge. It is fashionable with certain parties to speak disparagingly of the intelligence of the people of this country. I think this an error—and an error which if found in clerical persons may in different ways prove extremely hurtful. Every candid and observant man must admit, that

there is some refinement of taste and a considerable share of general intelligence amongst our Presbyterian people; while some will be found in many congregations, who possess a large stock of knowledge and are on the whole correct and judicious in their literary tastes. This of the young is true to a very considerable extent. It will be well for you to keep this in mind. There are few, indeed, of the rising generation who, from the education they are receiving, cannot detect gross solecisms in language or serious blunders in grammar. I believe you to be incapable of grave offences of this sort, but let me urge you to guard against even trivial inaccuracies. Nor should it escape your notice, that from the wide circulation of much printed matter that is really well written, multitudes of reading persons in our day have acquired the capacity of seeing what is at least seriously faulty in style. A style in the pulpit, which would have given no offence to their fathers or grandfathers, would be intolerable to many in the present generation. The preacher, who *depends mainly* for effect on his peculiarly refined style, would do well not to go to the pulpit at all; but carry this sort of thing to some other place and seek for success from it there. Yet, the preacher, who addresses an audience in a style or manner *essentially bad* need not wonder if even good matter fails to produce any good effect. Whatever is offensive to correct taste either in language or delivery must impair and in some cases destroy altogether the effect of truth.

When it is said, that the Saviour "spake as never man spake, and spoke as one having authority," I cannot but think that there must have been much in his style and delivery, peculiarly pleasing and forcible. In contemplating the grandeur of the truth which he uttered, are we not apt to overlook the style and manner of delivery, which may have affected many, who could but imperfectly appreciate the doctrines which he taught? One cannot doubt, that the sermon on the Mount was delivered in a manner admirably fitted to enlist the attention and move the feelings of the hearers. We know how exquisite the style is, and may we not infer that the delivery was in keeping with the style? We instinctively shrink—the feeling is commendable—from speaking of the Saviour as an orator. Yet, when we think of the perfection of His wisdom, the purity of His motives and the warmth of His feelings, we may reasonably conclude that his delivery was perfect. This, at least, may be boldly affirmed, that they do no honour to the Saviour and no justice to His truth, who deliver that truth in a style, feeble, coarse or inaccurate, and with a manner, cold, vulgar, or affected.

But if Gospel truth labours under disparagement when thus addressed even to illiterate persons, it is easy to see that it may be fatally marred, when thus addressed to persons of some education and taste. Such hearers, if pious, may *try to listen*, but they listen with pain and with hardly any profit; but if not pious, they naturally turn away with disgust. Were the

disgust only felt for the ill cultured and slovenly speaker, I should see but little cause for regret. But when the evils we deprecate awaken, as they often do, disgust to the truth itself, there is ground for bitter lamentation.

Let me not be mistaken—I do not mean that the bulk of the people that you are to address are highly educated. What I mean is simply this, that the mental condition of the greater part to whom you are to minister is such, that to do them justice, you will require to be careful and diligent in preparing your discourses, as well as careful in the delivery of them. Depend on it, that either a want of due mental culture, or of suitable care on your part will not fail to offend the taste and pain the feelings of your judicious hearers. Nor can I think well of the minister who is satisfied with himself, because an ignorant people may not detect his literary inaccuracies, or be disgusted with his careless performances. If the people are ignorant, he ought to aim not merely to instruct their consciences, but to improve their understanding and refine their tastes. To be satisfied with a poor performance, because the people may not detect your deficiencies, is certain to expose you to detection and severe reprehension, whenever you happen to speak to persons of a higher order of mind. Nor should it escape observation, that a man of correct taste, earnest and thoroughly industrious, while most alive to the spiritual interests of his people, will *indirectly* but very effectually elevate their thinking and cultivate their taste.

In a word, let the intellectual attainments of your audience be what they may, your reasoning ought to be clear, direct and conclusive; your language simple, accurate and forcible, and your delivery solemn, natural and earnest. All this you may attain to, although neither men of genius, nor of the highest order of talents, if so be, you have a moderate share of education, are diligent in your studies, and thoroughly in earnest in the work of your Master. The slothful fancy all things easy, or the easiest things impossible, while the man of a feeble conscience realizes but very imperfectly his responsibility *to do his very best* to make the best things effective. He whose chief aim is to make a respectable appearance is not a hopeful man, and will not be a fruitful minister; but he that does not aim even at this, is at once hopeless and despicable. He not only wants piety, who does not strive to do his best, he wants that sense of honor, which you often find in men of the world, when they strive to do their best in performing their duties. And one cannot but think, if some ministers knew to what an extent their want of mental culture, their sloth and bad taste in the composition and delivery of their discourses impair their usefulness, they would not err as much as they do, in finding the true cause of their want of success in the work.

If men were to reflect, how perilous popularity is in the pulpit, fewer would lament the want of it. Pulpit popularity can indeed—it is well that it is so,—be possessed but by few. And even when possessed in a high degree,

whatever the world and the devil may say to the contrary, it is in no sense to be taken as the measure of a minister's success. But how can he hope to be either popular or successful, who is utterly careless of all those appliances by which truth may be presented in forms best fitted to enlist the attention, to act on the reason and to move the affections? My counsel is—strive to be acceptable, that you may be really useful—strive to be interesting, that you may in the fullest sense benefit the understanding and conscience of those you address. Ministers may, without any sour arrogance, justly complain of the natural aversion of the human heart to the truths of God. It is, indeed, an old and a true complaint, yet, it might not be amiss for some men, who are perpetually making this complaint, to enquire if *their mode* of presenting truth has not tended to increase this aversion in their hearers. Be assured of it, there are other modes of giving "offence to those that are without," than by an unholy walk. If the world has done injustice to the ministry in its reckless judgments, let the ministry beware, when censuring the world for indifference to the truth, that the censure be wisely uttered and honestly apportioned.

*Great worldly mindedness is another characteristic of the country and the time.*

You must be prepared to deal wisely with this, so as to mitigate the evil and keep your own souls clear from sin in the matter. The love of the world, it is true, is not peculiar to our times, or country. When the Apostle declared "The love of money to be the root of all evil," he announced a principle of very general application. Men will seek happiness according to their taste and moral propensities, and until the heart has acquired a relish for what is spiritual, they will naturally seek for gratification from the things of the world. To obtain this, they will strive to accumulate wealth. It will not escape your notice, that the opportunity to do this, is a new thing—I might almost say a new emotion—with many who have come to this country. And as the opportunity for gratifying this desire is very considerable, it is not wonderful to find it manifesting itself with extraordinary force. "Men hasten to be rich." Worldly mindedness is, indeed, the besetting sin of the American Churches. Even when it does not lead to practices directly dishonest, or degrade its victims into a loathsome niggardliness, it deeply corrupts the heart and mars the piety of many professing Christians. They strive to lay up treasure on earth, with an avidity quite appalling; while they profess to serve both God and mammon with a prim and decent bearing, which is even more appalling. They speak of heaven as their eternal home, but their souls cleave to the dust. It is true, Mammon has no temples in our cities, yet in how many bosoms is he enshrined?

It does not seem to be well understood by many that the inordinate love of the world may be as fatal to spirituality of heart, as those grosser vices from which all decent persons turn away with marked aversion. Yet it real-

ly is so—for it engrosses time, thought and affection, and unjustly withholds what is due to the claims of religion and benevolence. Hence, wherever this worldly spirit is dominant, it eats out the religion of the heart, and starves the Church in which it prevails. That no eye sees is the more painful, yet enough is seen of this worldly spirit to pain exceedingly every right thinking man. What can be more painful, and I may add more shameful, than to see a prosperous worldly community, in which there is just one worthy and industrious man doomed to penury—worst of all a *genteel penury*—and that man the minister of this people. This cannot happen where piety is in a healthy condition, but it does happen not seldom, where piety is feeble and the love of the world strong. One cannot but think, that if the Manse be the only house in the older settlements of this country, from which penury cannot be banished, either the tenant of the Manse ought to be removed as an unsuitable servant, or the people ought to be filled with shame and remorse at their base worldly mindedness.

But deeply important as this aspect of the question is, it is not the one to which I wish at present specially to turn your thoughts. How shall you, as the ministers of God and the guardians of souls, deal with this worldly spirit? This is the question to which I would briefly bespeak your attention. First of all then, guard against being subdued yourselves by worldly mindedness. Like people like priest, has a deep significancy as well as the opposite maxim. A minister settled among a thoroughly worldly people, although he may never betake himself to their methods of making money—indeed may have no turn for it—yet may have his heart deeply corrupted by the influences that prevail around him. Ministers are often influenced to an extent they are little aware of by the dominant feelings that prevail among a people. Worldly mindedness may thus deeply taint the soul of the minister, and may be just as fatal to his spirituality as if he were to work on a farm, open a store, or higgie in bargain-making with the sole wish of making property. It is easy to see that no minister can ever be so thoroughly in the wrong place as the man who lives among a worldly-minded people, with his heart and life entirely secularized. I need hardly add that such a people are all the more likely to do what they can to keep him in poverty, while, by his talk and general example, he deepens their love of the world. It were scarcely virtuous to warn such a man of his imprudence, yet his imprudence costs him more than he is aware of. But this is not the worst—nothing is more natural than that between such a minister and people, the very face of religion will in the long run be lost. Indeed, in a worldly-minded congregation, the most spiritually minded man has every way a hard task, nor let him suppose that he will ever accomplish his task well by professing a supercilious disregard for the world, or by recklessly denouncing it. The former is often a mere pretence, the latter but hardens the heart. The spirit of the world is not by either

of these ways to be exorcised. That can only be done, as far as man can do it, by giving a clear exhibition of truth and a just manifestation of a simple and high spiritual mindedness. Indeed, it avails nothing to denounce avarice and declaim against the worthlessness of riches. If you are to do any good to the slave of the world, you must show him, first of all, that he has a soul, that ought not to be thus enslaved—a soul that needs something infinitely better than the world can give for its true and lasting happiness. But while a full and clear exhibition of the doctrines of the Bible as to the ends of man's being, and his true interests as an immortal creature is to be so given, that worldly men may see their folly and their danger in seeking merely the treasure that gratifies "the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life," yet it will be chiefly by a well developed spirituality in your every day walk, that you will teach most effectively the wickedness and madness of an avaricious spirit. Good example is specially required here.—Worldly men, who can hear without a pang of remorse, or a moment's serious consideration, the inordinate love of the world denounced, and spiritual things commended from the pulpit, because, as they think, done professionally, cannot so easily overlook a consistent spiritual walk in their minister. They know him to be intelligent, and to have a relish for all the innocent enjoyments of life. They see that he despises not wealth, but properly values it as means to its legitimate ends—for he is no ascetic, no ignorant fanatic, no sly hypocrite:—yet they see that he sets not his heart on earthly things, but is really doing what he teaches—laying up treasure in heaven, where his heart is. They can hardly altogether mistake such a man. They find from observation that, although he does not refuse to talk of the things of the world with them, yet the conversation on these is not what warms his bosom, or brightens his eye. It is when he talks of things spiritual and eternal that his heart seems to burn within him. And even they have a kind of faint notion, that although he rejoices—no man more so—in their temporal prosperity, yet it would give him a far purer and higher joy to see their souls "in health and prospering." Nor can they fail altogether to perceive that although he is sincerely grieved at any temporal loss they sustain, yet his sorest grief is that they appear so indifferent to the loss of their souls. It is but in a dim and poor way that worldly men can see all this; yet even to see it imperfectly may not be little. I do not say that the man who thus carries himself year after year among a people will either be fully understood, or will in all cases break up their worldly mindedness. The spirit of God alone can truly draw off their hearts from the sinful love of the world. Yet among all means for this, surely none is so powerful as the every-day walk of a truly spiritual minded minister. Besides, he is really the man from whose lips the most forcible warnings come against the folly of trusting to uncertain riches, and the most effective admonitions to seek that treasure which "neith-

er moth nor rust can corrupt." Admit that the best man may do little by the wisest teaching and holy example to root out worldly mindedness—yet who can think, without a shudder, of the man, who, whatever he says on the Sabbath does, nevertheless, by his conduct through the week in his intercourse with his people, but deepen their love of the world and keep their conscience easy in the practice of this sin. Great is that man's guilt. You will, I trust, keep your soul clear of it. Show by your conduct, as well as by your words, that you seek for yourselves, and ardently wish all that hear you to seek, a better country—even a heavenly. Let all that are under your ministry understand that your great aim is to make them rich towards God—unspeakably rich in the friendship of God.

It cannot be regarded as a harsh judgment to say that *many in this Province have the form of religion without its power.*

You will come into contact with not a few who have not even the form. Many of these persons in their native country made a profession of Christianity, but have dropped it since coming here. It is abundantly plain that these men did not need to put off much of "the livery of heaven," and their children will have to put off less to take that place in the world which really belongs to them. I cannot, however, readily join in the declaration so often made, that it is better for men to be without any profession of religion than to make a poor profession. When a man who has often sat at the communion table, fairly takes his place with the world, his position is peculiarly perilous. Yet this may be truly said, that for the earnest minister, the change simplifies the difficulty of dealing with him. His position is now defined—he plainly declares himself to be "without God and without hope." This is true of every man of the world, whether he has laid aside a formal profession, or never made one. But as to the former, you cannot fail to see that if he will listen to you, you are not embarrassed in giving your appeals all the directness which the case demands. In dealing with such, deal tenderly and prudently; yet honestly and earnestly beseech them to flee from the wrath to come. You can tell them that by their own admission they have neither part nor lot with Jesus—and you can without any indelicacy tell such, that even now, they are in condemnation, and if they repent not, they must perish eternally. In all probability, with many of these persons, your pointed and earnest appeals will be ineffectual. The want of success, however, should not readily discourage you, for although often disappointed, yet, if you approach them with the love of the Saviour, and love to their souls burning in your bosom, and speak to them in the meekness and gentleness of Jesus, as well as with his truthfulness, your labours may be blessed in cases which at first seemed the most hopeless. Ministers, who in a spirit of noble self-denial and untiring love pursue this course are often instrumental in plucking many brands from the burning. Indeed, far more of this work must

be done by the ministers of Christ, if they will be truly faithful to their Lord. The command "to go out to the highways and compel men to come in" has been but very partially reduced to practice by many who are faithful enough to those who attend their pulpit ministrations. These ministers feed those who come to the feast, but overlook such as have forgotten, or never knew that a feast is provided. There must be a holy and prudent violence to compel such to come in. In this peculiarly difficult and needful work, strong faith, ardent zeal, patience, meekness, perseverance and love have accomplished great things. "The spirit of the Lord is not straitened,—His arm is not shortened," and why should not His servants in this department of labour yet do great things in saving souls.

But now let me direct your attention more especially to those *who make some sort of profession* of religion, but give no evidence of its power on their hearts.

These form the larger, and, in some respects, the more difficult class, with whom an earnest minister has to deal. The man of the world makes no profession of feeling any interest in your message. With him you cannot be deceived, nor does he attempt to deceive you. He is coldly polite, or coarsely repulsive to you, because quite indifferent to the gospel you bring. Yet, possibly, his heart is not colder to you than is the heart of the man who acknowledges you as the minister of Christ, but as a mere formalist, neither loves nor esteems you, nor the truth that you utter. Still you cannot speak to him as a mere man of the world—delicacy forbids this—a tender, although sometimes a questionable charity, also forbids it. At the same time neither justice to that man's soul, to yourself, nor the truth, will warrant you frankly to regard him in your heart as a believer in Jesus. You cannot discern spirits—no—but you can judge by fruits, and you see in him no fruit unto holiness. You would fain hope, but find in many of these cases that you cannot. The painful conviction is forced on you, that although these men name Christ, they have not put on Christ—they have no true faith. For they have no works that manifest true faith. And yet, as to some, this judgment may be unjust. You will dread this; hence, be afraid of judging hastily, lest you judge harshly. This is indeed needful—for as there are flaming professors, who are still "in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity," so there are *hidden ones* whose piety although real is but little developed, and sometimes even unwisely concealed. Here you need great charity, forbearance and prudence. Yet after you have carried these graces as far as you can, you will be forced to conclude of not a few professing Christians, that they have but a name to live. Well then, if you are to keep yourselves clear from the blood of their souls, there are two things which you must hold steadily in view. *First*—you must give such an exhibition of Gospel truth as a whole, that men shall see clearly what it is to be a Christian. And *next*—you must not only give such a view of the doctrines essential to saving

faith, that men may know what these are, but also, be specially careful, so to unfold the relation between faith in these doctrines, and a godly practice, that it shall be clearly seen, that he that utterly fails in the latter wants the former. A half view of truth is not half the truth, in many things it is not truth at all. I cannot think it possible for an intelligent man to give a full view of the Gospel without unfolding a deep sense of responsibility to duty in every one who professes to believe the Gospel. It is nevertheless plain, that there may be such a partial and disjointed view given of the Gospel, as shall greatly weaken a responsibility to duty. If it be fatal, to teach men to trust in anything but Christ's righteousness for justification, it is scarcely less fatal, to present this grand doctrine in a way by which men shall fancy they embrace it, and yet feel easy, although they have no righteousness of heart and life. It is dangerous to souls and dishonouring to the Saviour, to preach up His priestly office to the disparagement of His kingly authority. Indeed, no just view can be given of one part of the mediatorial work, unless just views are given of all the parts of it. It is in fact partial and disjointed views on this, that lead to much error in theory and to much practical inconsistency in professing Christians. Not understanding the perfections of God and His government, men do not see the nature of sin, nor their guilt and helplessness under it;—hence, do not see the need of a Divine Saviour and a Divine Sanctifier. And, not understanding the end of redemption for the glory of God, and the highest interests of the soul, they do not see the need of holiness—hence they remain satisfied if they can prate sacred phrases, although their hearts are impure and their lives unholy. It really needs no saving faith to say "Lord, Lord," and when men do this, yet do not the things which the Lord requires, they give painful evidence that they have no true faith in Him, either as Saviour or Lord.

But then you must observe, that in dealing with formalists who are at ease in Zion, you are not to go to them and charge them directly and personally with formality and hypocrisy. A man of a bitter and fanatical spirit may do this under the pretence of being highly conscientious, and yet show nothing more plainly in the whole matter, than his own indiscretion and spiritual pride. Such conduct even were it tolerated would be unwise and often exceedingly uncharitable. But though you ought not, and cannot do this, you can preach to these careless men a whole Gospel. This you must do, and in doing it must labour with all possible clearness, to set life and death before them—to show them what God is, and what He would have them to be and do, that they may become His adopted children on earth, and His glorified children in heaven. In a word, in all your public ministrations you are to unfold the truth with such plainness, force, and directness, that men may be driven from every refuge of lies and find no rest, till they find it in Christ—and find no abiding rest in *their faith* in Him till they find evidence for this in a holy life.

By thus unfolding the truth in its fulness, and uttering it with the fearlessness and earnestness of men, who feel that they "stand between the living and the dead" you will probably offend many, but then you may be instrumental in this way in saving not a few. But whether men will hear or forbear your cry must be—"What meanest thou "O sleeper" arise and call upon thy God." Nor must you wonder, if, even when you give the Gospel trumpet no uncertain sound, you fail to arouse some to a sense of their danger. This will be painful to you, but then you will have the consolation that you have done your duty to these men, who will not be warned. But if you do not warn them as you ought, what must your reflection be, if after many years in the ministry among a people, you have to look on a widely diffused formality around you, and conscience shall whisper—if conscience can still whisper—that you have all along been uttering smooth things, although in a *Gospel accent* and saying in effect, peace, peace, to those, to whom you were bound to declare that for them there was no peace. If it be sad by your imprudent tone, to see you preach men back into the ranks of the world, it must be even sadder to see you preach in a strain, that shall soothe the men of the world into a false peace within the pale of the Church. Serious misunderstandings and resentments betwixt a minister and his people, must in all cases impair, and in many cases utterly destroy his usefulness. But when a people sunk into utter formality, are on good terms with their minister and he on the whole well pleased with them, although he sees no signs of spiritual life among them, then there is a spectacle even sadder than that of dispeace. The minister may be to such a people "as one that playeth very pleasantly on an instrument," yet little as he thinks of it, he is playing a very terrible kind of dead march.

*The peculiar forms which infidelity is assuming in the present age,* should engage the serious attention of those preparing for the ministry.

The ministers of religion should not only be able to teach the truth, but to defend it against all enemies, and should be able to do this with clearness and force when its foundations are assailed. No doubt there are communities in which there are no persons who either avow or propagate infidel opinions. In such places, ministers may fancy that they have no call to war against an enemy not in the field. Yet it might be well not to conclude too hastily that there are none amongst their flocks, who seek to subvert the grounds of their faith. Besides it should be kept in mind that young men, who are brought up where this danger does not prevail, may, when they go forth into the world, find in the first counting house, or workshop in which they are to labour, some avowed enemy of their faith. It cannot be well to permit pious but simple minded lads to enter on life wholly unprepared to meet the assaults of glib and subtle sceptics. That they be well grounded in the *faith* and influenced by right motives, furnishes unquestionably the best protection against the dangers of unbelief, as well

as the seductions of vice. Yet, powerful as the opposition of mere silence, sustained by a consistent walk, may be, it is not in all cases creditable to a man's understanding, or the faith he professes, when that faith is openly assailed. The truth is, that persons of some education ought not only to be able to give a reason for their faith, but also to shew, that infidelity is wholly without reason when it assails Christianity. But if a man can neither give clear reasons for his faith, nor clearly reason against infidelity, although a good man, he not only runs the risk, by his silence or absurd replies, of confirming the infidel in his opinions, but of shaking the faith of others who may be listening. Every educated man ought to understand to some extent, the leading arguments in defence of revealed religion. The time has come when this must be done, and done too in a way that shall enable Christians to meet infidelity, in the new forms in which it is now coming forth.

If infidelity does not in our day invent many new arguments it displays at least wonderful art, in presenting its old sophistries and dogmas in new and imposing methods. In former times, infidelity generally lay imbedded in a bulky volume of metaphysics, which few read and fewer could pretend to understand. In our day although infidels vaunt as much as ever of their philosophy, and indeed pretend to press into their service no small portion of modern science, yet they have the art now of disseminating their scepticism in popular forms, so as to suit the tastes and gratify the passions of all sorts of readers—now making high pretensions to critical knowledge in ancient records—at another time professing to draw conclusive arguments from geology or ethnology, and anon, when it suits their purpose appealing directly to the sensual passions, or merely sneering at what they call superstition and human weakness. Verily infidels have in their own way, and for their own ends, become all things to all men. Hence they adapt their teaching to all sorts of thinkers, and especially to that large class, who have a smattering of learning, but not enough ever to think to any good purpose. If pride be the chief source of infidelity, assuredly infidels never succeed so well, as when they appeal to that vanity in their readers, which lives on the *assumption* of knowing much. If Christianity can fearlessly boast that she has no dread of true philosophy in any one of its departments, yet it cannot be denied, that many good but ill-instructed Christians have much to dread from philosophy falsely so called. It is at once a pleasing and painful reflection, that the simple minded and honest man, is, from his very honesty apt to be sadly perplexed, when he has to deal with that sophistry in argument, which he never employs. The truth of the matter is this—Christian men ought not only to be furnished with a clear outline of the argument for revealed religion, but should also be taught, how contemptible the sophistries are by which sceptics seek to overthrow their faith. There are many books which, if carefully read, would admirably ans-

wer both these ends. Still it is obvious, that on this, as well as on other matters, the pulpit must not only give the note of warning so as to lead men to read and think, but to the bulk of men, must furnish the arguments that shall conduct to safe conclusions on this matter. In a word, men must not only be taught from the pulpit what their faith is, and the evidence on which it rests, but they must also be taught how to stop the mouths of gainsayers.

Every minister should not attempt this—in fact no one should do so, until he has thoroughly studied the whole question. Indeed, few things are more perilous to a people, than to be frequently addressed on the points in dispute between Christians and infidels, by a man of little information and hazy perceptions—whose defence is chiefly made up of bitter and vulgar vituperations, or very silly declamation. Nothing can be worse than this—the thoughtless remain uninstructed, sceptics sneer and triumph, while the wise are mortified to think that their minister should have nothing better to advance, when professedly engaged in defending the foundations of their faith. Nor will it do now, to be merely well versed in the arguments of Warburton or Paley and others of the old masters of reasoning on this subject. These were indeed great men, and they have left us a noble store of defensive armour. But while no young minister can safely overlook the weapons which these masters of sacred dialectics have prepared for him, yet neither will it be safe for him solely to depend on this sort of armour in the conflicts which he has *now* to wage with infidelity. As the enemies of truth have adopted new methods of assault, so its friends must employ new means of defence or, at least, employ the old arguments with that new skill, which modern research, improved criticism, and a better logic have furnished.

All this is true when the conflict is with avowed sceptics from without, but you need to know that some of the most dangerous enemies are now at work within the Church. Socinian divines had long held loose and pernicious notions on the inspiration of scripture. No one wonders at this, as every Biblical scholar knows that some of their peculiar views can only be sustained by destroying the claims of the Bible to a true inspiration. But one has now to confess, with shame, that some clergymen within the pale of Trinitarian churches are giving to the world, such views of the inspiration of the Bible, and of the want of genuineness of large portions of it, as cannot fail to shake the faith of those who believe their teachings. The danger from this quarter is at present all the greater, that some of these men make high pretensions, to a certain kind of learning now much in vogue. They generally get the credit of being able German scholars, and this, with many is supposed to be synonymous with great erudition and extensive theological acquirements. German learning if wisely employed may assuredly do good, but much of it appears to have made some of our learned men not only insufferably vain, but almost mad in scepticism. To defend Christian-

ity now, you really require to understand how to defend it against certain learned clerical persons. Those who know what these men are doing to undermine the walls from within, can entertain no doubt that they are doing more mischief than the open enemies from without. I do not speak of the monstrous inconsistency of these men, and their loathsome dishonesty—but I take leave to say, that no enemies of the truth are more dangerous than those, who, while they avow Christianity to be from God, yet, labour to awaken suspicions in the public mind as to the genuineness and inspiration of the sacred volume. They tell you, that reason and enlightened criticism demand this at their hands—well, meet them with enlightened criticism and with a clear logic, so that you may be able to shew that their Philological pratings, hypothetical surmises and groundless inferences are the very opposite of enlightened criticism, or profound reasoning. But mark it—and I beseech you ponder it well—if you are to be successful in meeting the avowed sceptic, whether he comes forth with his mystical Pantheism, or is the subtle doubter with his metaphysical quibbles, or the philosophical doubter with his false inferences from science, or the clerical sceptic with his new readings and his new canons of criticism on the sacred text:—you must yourselves be men with a fair share of learning, of patient research and varied and extensive information, of clear apprehension, of sound reasoning of good sense and healthy piety.

Without even touching on the prophetic view of the question, yet I cannot but think, that they are in the right who suppose, that the last terrible conflict that the church is to have will be the deadly conflict with infidelity, unfolded in some form of well-defined atheism. Now, one cannot but ask with anxiety, is the church prepared for this?—are her ministers fully armed for the conflict? I know well, that this battle is not to be fought and won by mere logic, even when a sanctified logic employs all legitimate appliances. Yet, if God is to give the victory, as he assuredly will, the friends of truth and especially the leaders of the Lord's host should be prepared for going into this conflict, not only "with the armour of righteousness," but with all the means by which this armour can be made most effective. It is pleasing to think, that the armoury was never so well furnished with weapons, both of offence and defence as at present. From this then, arm yourselves—or to drop the figure, endeavour to acquire all that knowledge and all that varied mental culture, by which you may be enabled to repel the assaults of those who are attacking the foundations of our faith and hopes.

It were mischievous to teach those, who are looking forward to the ministry, that all before them is full of difficulty and discouragement. If the Lord hath sent you into the field, if the Lord goeth before you, if the mighty God be at your right hand, you have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope. This joyfully admitted—still, to understand the nature of the

field in which you are to labour, and "the signs of the times" in which you live will all the better prepare you for your toils, trials and success.

I have already indicated plainly enough, that I think, if a minister in this country is to be successful in his work, he must possess rather more than an ordinary share of gifts. If genuine piety be indispensable to a minister in any part of the world, it is plain he needs a large share of that here, and to make it effective, he must be a man of mental culture, extensive information, untiring perseverance and great good sense. In any part of the world a minister that lacks these gifts must fail of doing good, but in Canada he can hardly fail of doing much evil. If he does not give the same offence to the ignorant, as to the well instructed; yet it is no paradox to say, that it is to the former not to the latter that he proves the more mischievous as a minister. The truly accomplished man—accomplished in the fullest sense, strives to raise the standard of taste and intellect as well as of piety among a people. Indeed experience shows that gifted ministers, if their gifts are truly consecrated to the Lord are the most successful in the conversion and edification of souls. Without respectable natural talents no man should think of the ministry. But then bear in mind, that whatever your natural talents are you will utterly fail in your work unless these are cultivated in every possible way.

When you have done your uttermost to cultivate your own minds, you may not produce sermons characterized by the highest finish, or marked by profound or original thinking, yet you will hardly fail, with prayerful labour well directed, to produce discourses which will please and edify those you address. Nor is it necessary that a discourse to be really good, and to do good, should possess the attributes of

the highest literary excellencies. But if through vanity or sloth you become careless in your pulpit preparations and take up with the slug-gard's creed, *that anything may do*—or what is not better, attempt by little affected arts of style, or little tricks of delivery to make up for the hard toils of the study—you will offend the intelligent, grieve the pious and utterly fail to instruct the ignorant. I do not know in what part of the vineyard such men can be useful—I am sure they will never be useful here.

In conclusion, if the views given of your field of labour be correct, you cannot but see that in addition to other qualities you will require a high and a holy earnestness of soul for your work. There is no part of the world where a minister of Christ may innocently live the easy life of a country gentleman, or spend his days in the elegant pursuits of literature; but in Canada this sort of thing in either form needs not be attempted. The battle *here* must be fought in downright earnest, or you may count with certainty on defeat and disgrace. When you enter on the work, then, I beseech you enter on it with strong faith, ardent zeal, and burning love—strong faith in that God whose ministers you are,—ardent zeal to advance the cause of truth—and burning love for your Saviour and the souls of men. If it shall be so with you, then may one hope that you shall so preach as not to offend the intelligent, and yet instruct and comfort the humblest of your flock—Then may one hope that you shall preach so as to arouse the worldly minded, break up formality, remove doubts from the weak, and silence the talk of foolish men. In a word, my dear young friends, so live and preach that through the grace of God you shall have many for a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. This is my wish for you all—this shall be my prayer for you all—Gentlemen fare you well.

