

*The Quaker.*

But we must consider the arguments of those who think otherwise. The Quaker tells us at once that we have described a formal and not a spiritual ministry; a ministry of the Old Testament, not of the New. "A true minister is consecrated such by an inward call. The voice of the Spirit, not of men, invites him into God's vineyard. Older and more experienced men may judge whether his vocation be a real one; but they do not give him his appointment; still less can they confer one upon persons not chosen by God. Under the old dispensation there was a succession to the office of priest in a certain family. Such an arrangement belonged to the time; it is done away in Christ. And even under the first covenant there was a race of prophets who simply obeyed the Divine voice, simply spoke and acted as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The (so called) Church of Christ has adopted the obsolete part of the whole system, has rejected the living and spiritual part of it. Lastly, the Christian teacher is fitted for his work by the teaching of the Spirit, not by the preparation of human culture." Each of these points deserves a careful consideration.

1. It follows from that doctrine of Baptism, which lies at the threshold of our Churchmanship, that we suppose every Christian infant to be taken under the guardianship and education of God's Holy Spirit. In the faith of this truth, the well-instructed parent brings up his child. Whatever of stern discipline he uses to curb its self-will, whatever of tender affections he manifests to call forth in it corresponding affections, hath this end, that the subject of his visible and temporary government may be brought to feel that it is under the government of an unseen Teacher; that the object of his imperfect and wavering love may perceive that it is unceasingly tended and brooded over by a love which is unchangeable and imperishable. Which life-giving truth, when it has dawned upon the mind of the child, will create some blossoms and buds there, upon which

the parent will gaze with an anxious but confiding eye. Strange thoughts and impulses before unknown; wonder respecting his own condition; hopes stretching into infinity; a deepening sense of ever-present evil; a brightening view of an ever-present Deliverer: such mingled emotions, as he watches them arising, the foster-father knows assuredly to be indications that his care has not been in vain, and that the boy is learning the secret of his other—his royal—parentage. And, gradually he imparts to him the conviction, that not merely his adoption and expected inheritance appertain to another region than this, but that all the dim desires and longings which have pointed to them, have been heavenly inspirations. Joyful and consolatory tidings indeed—yet not precious only for their own sake, but as interpreting other feelings and impulses which are to arise within him hereafter. For now the questions, What is he? or, Whither he is going? are not all that occupy him; but, What relations exist between him and his fellow-men? How is he to act upon them? What is his destined vocation? In pursuing this inquiry, he will remember, first of all, that which he has often been told by his earliest instructors, that just so far as he nourishes all gentle affections within him, and keeps himself from sensual defilement, and seeks the temper of a little child, and thinks on things which are lovely and pure, and maintains a cheerful heart, and does good according to his opportunity, and strives to avoid noisy excitements of the flesh or the spirit, and is not impatient of present perplexity, or greedy of distinctions—so far he will be able, in quiet meditation and prayer, to learn the mind of the Spirit, and to know in what part of his vineyard God has destined him to labour. And then, if the circumstances of his outward position show him that he is intended to be one of those who minister to the carnal necessities of men, and the apparent end of whose vocation is mercenary, he will be sure that in this station, whether esteemed among men or not, he is to glorify God, and vindicate his calling from every deserved reproach, maintaining a free and noble and heavenly spirit, amidst all temptations to be sordid and secular. Or if

a secret impulse of his spirit, not the less to be heeded because outward influences and early education may have co-operated with it, or have created it, should lead him to those pursuits which have their basis in science, and require in him a scientific insight, as well as all diligence in the study of experiments and facts—then, whether it be man's physical structure, and the secret powers of his life, and the circumstances of his diseases and decay, which most engage his thoughts—or whether it be the civil ordinances, by which our social position is upheld, and our wrongs redressed—or whether he is drawn to look still more comprehensively at our different relations, and to meditate on those mysterious powers of sympathy, or fear, or awe, which are the real bonds of human policy, he will feel that it is a Divine Instructor who is marking him out for a physician, a lawyer, or a statesman; and to the same watchful guidance he must look to direct his intellect while he is preparing for the work, and while he is actually engaged in it to preserve him in the fear of God and in honourable, affectionate thoughts of his fellow-men, that he may not dare to follow any low or selfish impulses, or be ever tempted to think of his brethren as the legitimate victims of quackery, chicanery, or party-spirit. Nor can I so far yield to prejudices and feelings which I respect, and which I would not wish to remove from the mind of any Quaker till I can show him what I conceive is the truth which they pervert, as not to carry this principle a step farther, and to maintain, that every soldier of really brave and gentle heart has been led to reflect on the preciousness of national life and the duty of upholding it even at the cost of individual life, awful as that is, and has been taught to dedicate his energies to the preservation of this higher life, not by an evil spirit, but by that same Spirit of truth and love, who, when He would lay the foundation of His new kingdom on earth, chose for the first subject and witness of it a Centurion of the Italian band. But, when a young man, studying in all things to approve himself to his great Taskmaster, finds not in himself any of these particular promptings, but rather a large and general desire to be the servant of his

race—when a certain stronger sense is given to him than to others of man's highest destiny, mixed, perhaps, with a less keen perception than in other men would be desirable of those necessities which, though they may be baptized with a heavenly life and adopted into religion, are themselves of the earth, earthy—when spiritual forms, which the majority have need to see reflected in sensible mirrors, rise up before him in their naked substance and majesty—when good and evil present themselves to him, not as means to some result, but as themselves the great ends and results to which all is tending—when the conflict which is going on within himself, leads him to feel his connexion with his kind—when there is imparted to him a lively sense of temptation, and of its being most perilous to those whose objects and vocation are the highest—when he has been endued with a certain habit of measuring acts and events, not by their outward magnitude, but according to their spiritual proportions and effects—when he has been taught to reverence poverty and helplessness—when he has understood that that truth is the highest, not which is the most exclusive, but which is the most universal—when the immediate vision of God, and entire subjection of heart and spirit to His loving will, seem to him the great gifts intended for man, after which everyone for himself and his fellows may aspire: then, surely, if a strong combination of outward circumstances do not oblige him to what perhaps is a still more glorious, though more painful, task of yielding to a wisdom which he adores without understanding, he may conclude that it is to no partial or specific service, but to that one which we emphatically call *THE Ministry*, that the Divine Voice is inviting and commanding him.

Thus far, then, our opinion respecting inward calls seems to accord with that of the Quaker, only that we carry it farther. He considers that there is one inward call, which is needful for a Christian, and another which is needful for the Christian preacher. We contend that every Christian should believe himself called to every work in which he engages; and that except he believe this, the work will be unholy and cheerless, pursued

without confidence in God or any expectation of high and worthy fruit. Not that in this I mean to explain away the express call of the minister, as if it meant nothing more than what everyone pleases it to mean; my wish is rather to maintain, that the language, which we use in reference to the highest pursuit, determines the tone which we should adopt in speaking, or at least in thinking, concerning all our pursuits. Other men may have honourable thoughts and inspirations, and may honestly obey them, and silently and implicitly attribute them to their true source. But the minister of God, with fear and trembling indeed, but still without cowardly diffidence, is to declare to himself and to others, the real fountain of that which is within him. He cannot teach others to believe themselves the temples of the living God, if he dare not acknowledge the plain consequences of this doctrine in relation to himself.

But then this question remains,—If, in every rightly ordered community, the tradesman, the lawyer, the physician, the soldier, the statesman, believes that the secret influences which determined him to embrace his own vocation in preference to any other were not themselves his title to enter upon that vocation, but only the pre-disposing motives to seek for such a title,—is the analogy in this instance violated, is the immediate minister of God in a different predicament? Does the secret call in his spirit make him a minister, or does it only set him upon inquiring what is the lawful way of becoming one? I confess I do not understand what should make the difference. I can see, indeed, that the call is to a higher work. I can see that it has need to be more distinctly apprehended as to its principle and origin, by him whose very outward duty is a spiritual one than by others. But I cannot see that the difference is one of kind, and that while the Spirit of God in all other cases moves a man to adapt himself to some rule or order, here it teaches him that he has no need of such an order, but that the “motion” is a substitute for it. I should have expected, certainly, that the minister of God,—if his very name be not a mere invention; if there be any communication between heaven and earth;

if any men be intended or called to teach their brethren in matters directly pertaining to God,—should receive his commission in some very different way from that in which the member of any other profession receives his. I should have expected that some scheme would have been devised, to show that he did not derive his authority from the king of his land, or from any learned incorporation, or from any limited power whatever. But I should never have expected that, whereas in other cases the witness of a man's own mind, and its inward impulses, though most needful for his own satisfaction, though most needful to convince him that he is walking in the road appointed for him, are yet considered wholly inadequate to confer authority, and affirm his position to others, here, in an office especially instituted for the sake of mankind, for the poor and ignorant,—an office in which the individual performing it is to be especially hidden and forgotten, and the majesty of God asserted,—these motions should be all in all, and no token given which all men alike can apprehend, as to the extent and derivation of the influence which they are intended to obey.

2. Next comes the question, so often discussed in previous sections, of the relation between the Old and New Testament. In the Jewish Commonwealth, as the Quaker confesses, we discover at first a strict, definite organisation; a priesthood limited to a certain tribe, a place and time appointed for sacrifices, the sacrifices themselves appointed. Here is a rigid system, the author of which now and then, as in the case of Eli, asserts as well his own prerogative, as the fact, that this, like every system, exists for an end and is not itself an end, by infringing some of its maxims. Yet we know that this Divine precaution was not adequate to prevent a dead sense of routine, injurious to the working of the system itself, from creeping over the hearts of the people who were subject to it. Wherefore, the next contrivance which we notice in this celestial machinery, seems intended to counteract this tendency, without any violation of uniformity. When the ecclesiastical constitution had been well established, and its principle explained by its

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operation, a new order of men is raised up, for the express purpose, it seems, of proving that forms and institutions are indications of our relation to God, and means of attaining to intercourse with Him, but neither create the one, nor are substitutes for the other. This being the very intent of the Prophet's vocation, several consequences follow inevitably. His functions cannot be defined in a ritual. It cannot be ascertained by a formal law, as in the case of the priest, to what portion of the community he shall belong. Either of these limitations would defeat the end of his existence, he would cease to fill his proper place in the great order. The prophet lives as the witness of a continual presence and power dwelling in the nation, which it may forget, but of which it cannot rid itself. He must rise up, as the emblem of the conscience which he awakens, of the law concerning which he testifies; he must come as a thief in the night upon the guilty soul; he must not allow it to forget itself in the dizzy whirl of events, or the monotony of observances; he must make it feel that both alike speak of a living person, who is coming out of his place to judge, whose day is at hand. To fasten this fact upon the mind and heart of the people, he must oftentimes do strange acts; he and his children are for signs and wonders; he must walk barefoot; he must carry on a mimic siege; he must see his wife die and not weep; he must marry an adulteress; by all means he must break the yoke of familiarity and custom. And yet he is most orderly. From first to last he is a witness for order. The neglect of institutions, the indifference to Divine precepts, the recklessness of the everlasting covenant,—these are his charges against kings, and priests, and people. If he reveals the inward law of God, it is in the outward law that he learns its nature and mystery; if he desires communion with God, it is in the temple he expects to enjoy it, and to behold His glory; if he is stricken with a sense of his own iniquity, and of his people's, it is a coal from the altar touching his lips, which purges it away; the desolation of the beautiful city calls forth all his human feelings; the loss of the Shechinah is the key-note to his most melancholy and awful religious musings.