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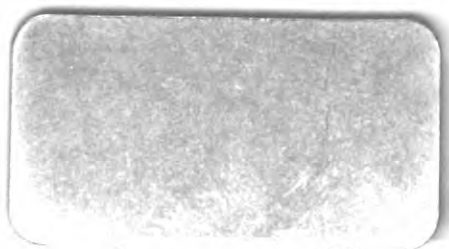
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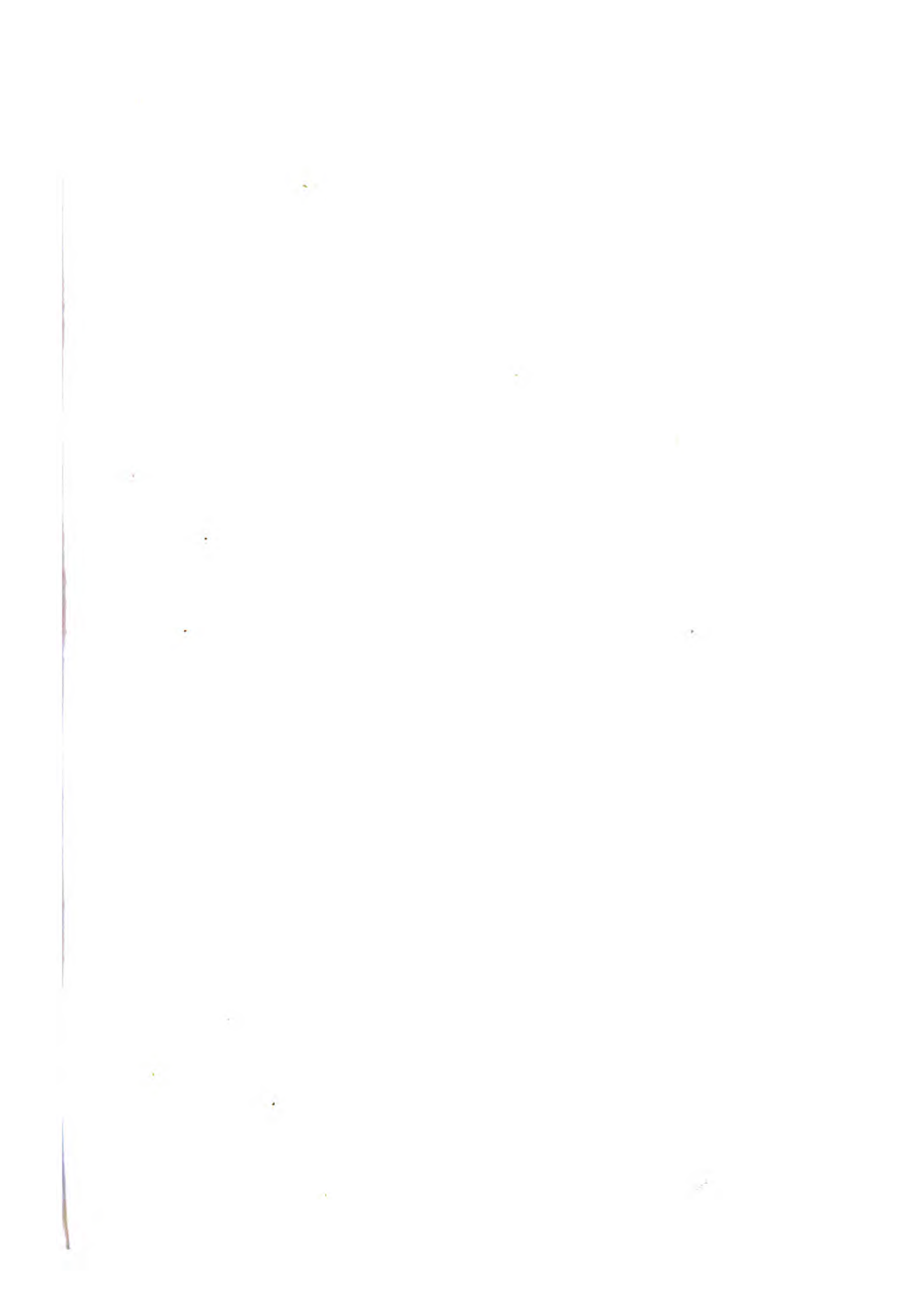


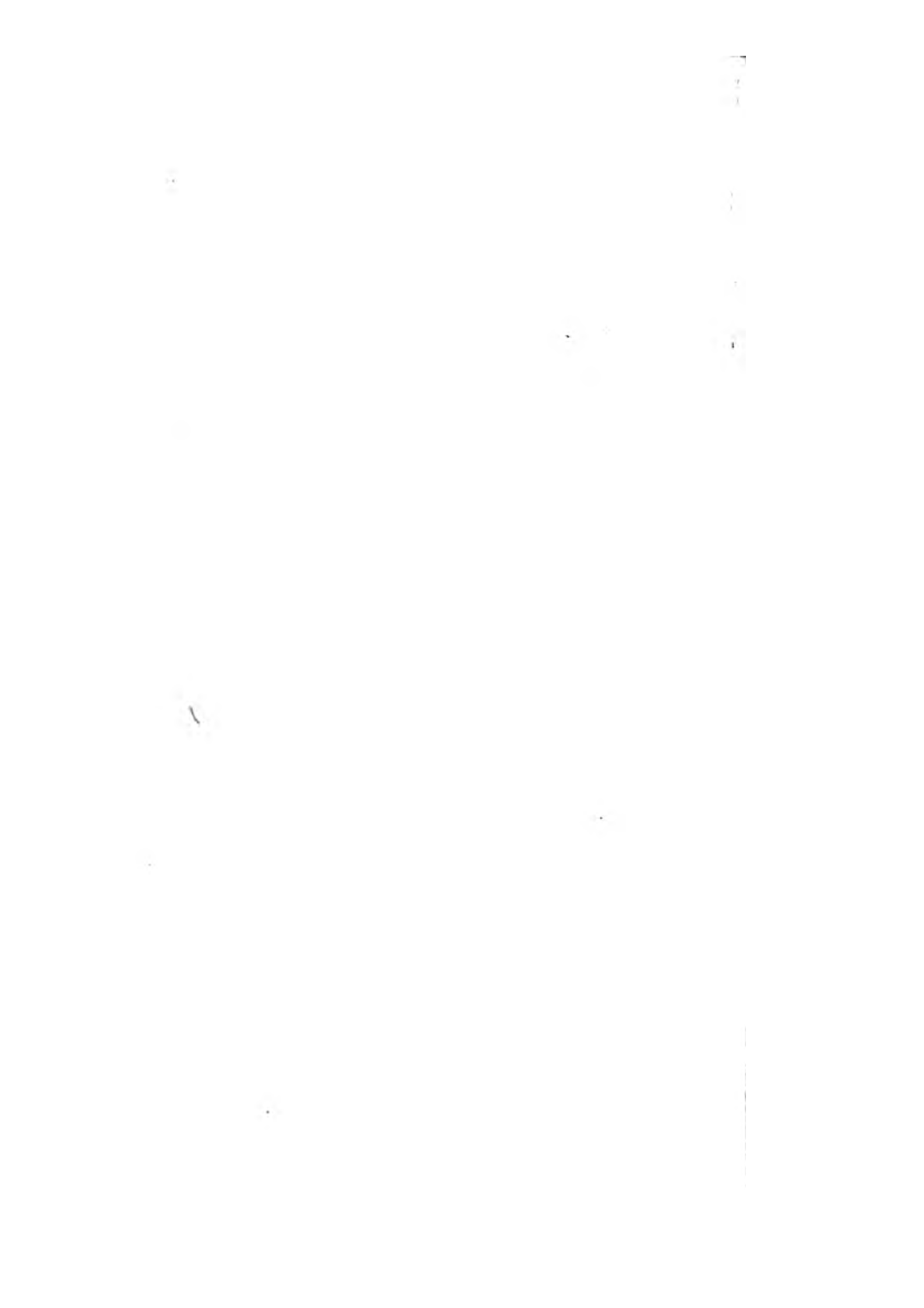


Alfred. W. Christopher.

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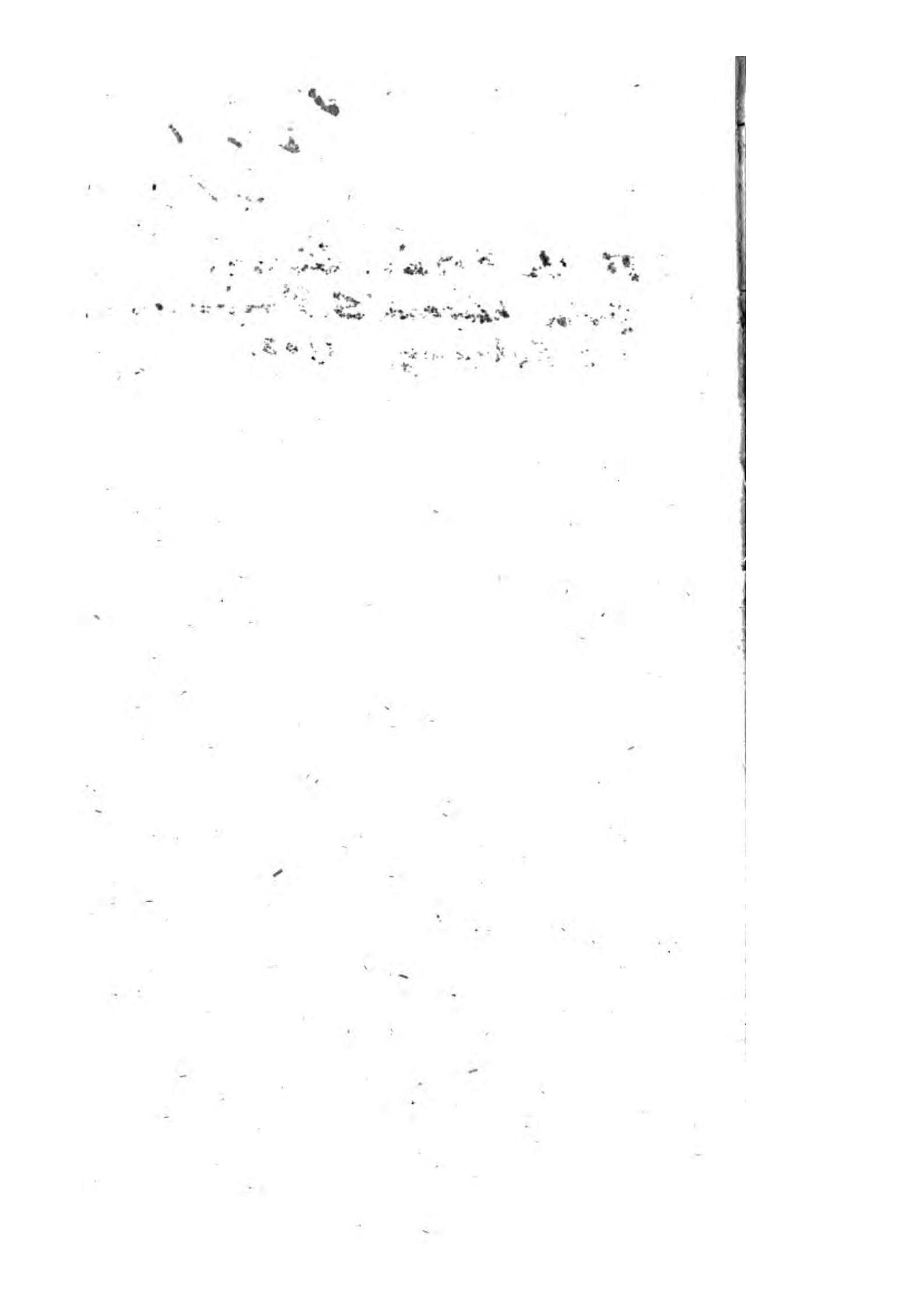






1.
Mr. Dyer


To the Bodleian Library
from Edward S. Dodgson. M.A.
3 February 1908.



THE
REFORMED PASTOR;

A DISCOURSE ON THE
PASTORAL OFFICE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN APPENDIX,
CONTAINING
HINTS OF ADVICE TO STUDENTS
FOR THE MINISTRY,

AND TO
TUTORS OF ACADEMIES.

Written by the Reverend and Pious
MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

Abridged and reduced to a new Method
BY SAMUEL PALMER.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

London:

PRINTED BY S. COUCHMAN, THROGMORTON-STREET,
FOR WILLIAM BAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1808.



P R E F A C E

By the COMPILER of this Abridgment*.

MR. BAXTER'S practical writings have generally been esteemed, by pious readers, in proportion as they have been known; and it is a favourable omen that they have of late risen considerably in price. His *Gildas Salvianus*, or REFORMED PASTOR, is a work peculiarly interesting to christian ministers of all denominations, and consequently to the people of their charge.

The occasion on which it was composed, was as follows: the associated ministers in Worcestershire and the adjacent parts, agreed to assemble at Worcester, *December 4, 1655*, to keep a day of fasting and prayer, particularly with a view to an engagement into which they had entered, to exert

* This Preface is now considerably shortened.

themselves more than they had done, in their ministerial duty, and particularly in that of personal instruction. On this occasion they requested Mr. *Baxter* to preach to them. He accordingly drew up the substance of this discourse on the pastoral office. But being prevented, by the increase of a painful disorder, from meeting his brethren, they united in desiring him to publish what he had prepared, which he did with considerable enlargements.

He himself, as he tells us, towards the close, “apprehended this to be one of the greatest and best works, that he ever put his hand to,” and he had the pleasure to find it eminently useful. In the account given of his publications, in his *Life*, he says, “I have great cause to be thankful to God, for the success of that book, as hoping many thousand souls are the better for it, in that it prevailed upon many ministers to set upon that work, which I there exhorted them to. Even from beyond the seas, I have had letters of request, to direct them how they might conduct that work, according as that book had convinced them, it was their duty.”

Dr. BATES, in his funeral sermon for Mr. *Baxter*, after a high encomium on his other works, pronounces the Reformed Pastor “An accomplished
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P R E F A C E.

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ed model of an evangelical minister ;” and he adds, from his intimate acquaintance with the author, “The idea of a faithful minister delineated in that book, was a copy taken from the life ; from his own zealous example.”

Many other testimonies to the excellence and usefulness of this piece, from competent judges, might easily be produced ; but that of Dr. *Doddridge* will serve instead of a thousand, as few ministers ever acted more conformably than himself to the rules here laid down*. In the character given of authors in his Lectures on the Ministerial Office, the Doctor has the following passage concerning The Reformed Pastor. “It is a most extraordinary performance, and should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care ; and I think the practical part of it should be reviewed every two or three years : for nothing has a greater tendency to awaken a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which many good men are but shadows of what, by the blessing of God, they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in that incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued †.”

But

* See *Orton's Life of Doddridge*.

† The above passage is omitted in Dr. *Williams's* edition of *Dr. Doddridge's Lectures*, from whence it may be presumed

But valuable as this work is, it partakes of the faults common to most of the writings of the age, and of Mr. *Baxter's* in particular: prolixity, want of just method, frequent repetitions, long digressions, &c. which render his compositions far less agreeable to modern readers than they otherwise would have been. Of these he himself was very sensible, and on a review of his works he laments them as the effect of the great haste in which he usually wrote, in consequence of his many other engagements, and the disorders to which he was subject, by reason of which he viewed himself as standing continually on the borders of the grave. Considering all which, it is wonderful he wrote so much and so well as he did. On account of the above circumstances, Mr. *Baxter's* works admit of being abridged to great advantage, as several of them have been by Mr. FAWCETT, one of his successors, who imbibed much of his spirit, and closely followed his steps. The *Reformed Pastor* as much needed abridgment as any of the author's writings. This I at first undertook for private use only; but several judicious friends, to whom I had lent the copy, strongly recommended the publication of it.

that he had not a complete copy of them. Indeed the author never prepared or intended them for publication, and the MS. copies greatly vary.

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P R E F A C E.

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It will be proper here, to give the reader some account of the manner in which this work has been executed. What was foreign, or redundant, is omitted; sentences that were too long, are shortened or divided; the construction of such as were obscure, is made plainer by transposition; and obsolete or uncouth words and phrases, are changed. But the greatest liberties have been taken with regard to the method, which is almost wholly new, for the sake of lessening the number of subdivisions, and bringing into one point of view all the author's thoughts on the same subjects, which were sometimes scattered in three or four different parts of the treatise; so that many passages, and whole heads of discourse, are transposed with freedom. But the reader may be assured, that great care has been taken to preserve the author's ideas, and that no additions have been made, except in the Titles of the Chapters, but where the connexion required the insertion of a few words, which are distinguished by [crotchets.] In short, this is as really Mr. *Baxter's* work, as that published by himself.

The APPENDIX is principally an abstract of the author's *Counsel to Young Men*, taken from the 4th Vol. of his Works, p. 16, &c. It is introduced here, not merely as having some connexion with the subject of this Treatise; but, because the au-

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thor had given some valuable hints to *Students* and *Tutors*, in the *Reformed Pastor*, which could not properly be brought into this abridgment, but in a supplementary form. They are both here interwoven together.

Some parts of this work are greatly disproportioned to others, and several matters of great importance are but just mentioned, *e. g.* Part II. Chap. I. But the reader should recollect, that the author did not propose this (to use his own words) "as a directory for the whole ministerial work," his chief object being to recommend a more strict attention to the duties of private inspection, and personal instruction.

It is probable, that many readers will think, that some things here retained, on these heads, are either unnecessary, or impracticable in most places, in the present day. But what these are, the editor apprehends it is the Reader's business, and not his, to determine. That may be needless, or impossible in some places and circumstances, which in others may be easy and useful. If, to particular persons, any thing here retained should appear impracticable, or even imprudent, it is hoped that they will not on this account throw aside the book; nor, because they cannot do every thing here enjoined, determine to do nothing. The author's

thor's directions may be applied to some good purpose, though not just in the particular way he proposes. Much more might certainly be done than generally is done, in regard to that personal instruction which he so strongly recommends, and so diligently practised; especially by the pious Established Clergy, who have generally more of that influence over their people which Mr. *Baxter* had, than Dissenting Ministers commonly possess. However, different situations and circumstances must be allowed to make a considerable difference; of which ministers are left to judge for themselves, and to act accordingly.

S. P.

Hackney,
Jan. 13, 1766.

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POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT

TO THIS NEW EDITION.

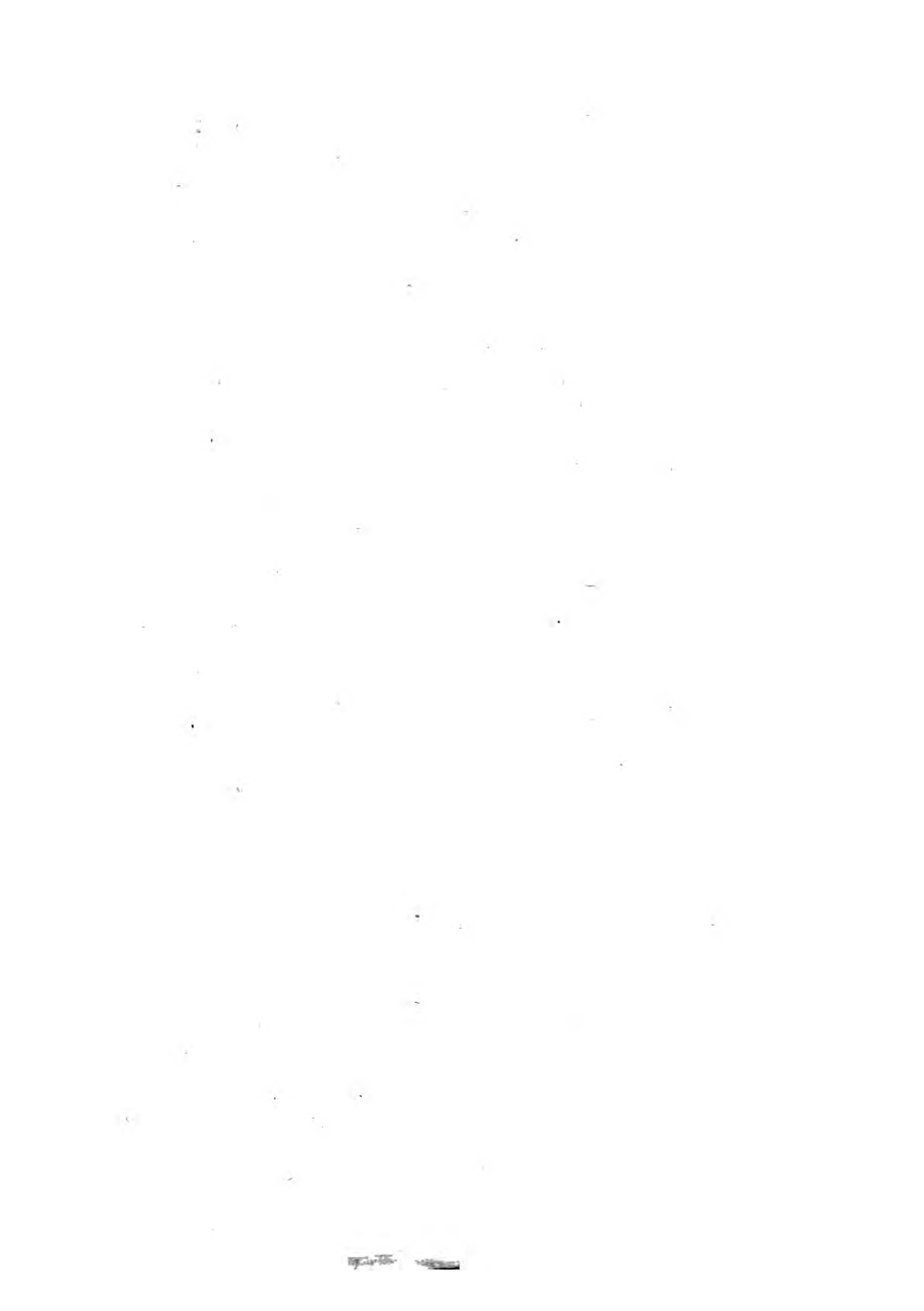


THE former edition of this Work, having been many years out of print, and difficult to be procured, I have been frequently urged to publish a new one. This I at length determined upon doing, and had revised the copy for that purpose; but was induced to desist, by the publication of another abridgment of the same work, by the late Mr. *Rutherford*, a very worthy minister in Mr. *Wesley's* connexion, whose last declining days were employed in preparing it for the press; not knowing, it should seem, that any other similar work had ever been undertaken. It was expected that this of his, would have superseded the republication of mine. But though it is doubtless a valuable performance, the size is so little reduced, and the pious editor has added so many other pieces to it, that, with the memoirs of his own life, it is in fact made larger than Mr. *Baxter's* original work. On this account, several ministers were of opinion, that

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that there was still sufficient reason for reprinting my abridgment. I have, therefore, after delaying several months for the other to circulate, committed it to the press, without any material alteration. I have, however, carefully revised the book, and made such corrections, as it might be supposed, a work printed at so early a period of life, might require. A very few short passages have been inserted from Mr. *Rutherford's* edition; as also a few brief Notes; but very little is omitted, though I have in some places further compressed the language. On the whole, I flattered myself, that those of my brethren, who espoused the Work as first published, will think it improved in this edition, and will concur with the editor, in wishing its success.

Hackney,
March 27, 1808.



EXTRACTS

FROM THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

PERHAPS the freedom with which the following treatise is written may be thought by some to need an apology. It may be said "That I ought not to have spoken so plainly and sharply; especially against the SINS of ministers, in a discourse published to the world: at least that it should have been done in another language, and not in the ears of the vulgar, when so many are endeavouring to bring the ministry into contempt, and our people are too prone to hearken to their suggestions." I answer, it has not been insinuated that all ministers are guilty of the several faults that have been censured: and those who are not guilty are expressly excepted. There are many humble men who are willing to know their sins that they may forsake them, and their duty that they may perform it. As to others,
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where the sin is open in the sight of all the world, it is in vain to hide it ; the attempt will but aggravate our guilt and increase our shame. If the ministers of England had sinned only in *Latin*, I would have made shift to admonish them in *Latin*, or else have said nothing to them ; but if they will sin in *English*, they must hear of it in *English*. If we will not find out our sin, it will surely find out us. Unpardoned guilt will never let us rest, though we are at ever so much care and cost to hide it. ‘ He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.’ If we be too tender of ourselves and loth to confess, God will be less tender of us, and will indite our confessions for us. He will either force our consciences to confess, or his judgments will proclaim our iniquities to the world. Indeed the tongues of many are already at work to proclaim our sin. Because we will not speak the truth, they will speak more than the truth. The world knows that we are sinners: as none can suppose us perfect, so our particular sins are too apparent to the world. And is it not fit that they should see that we are *penitent* sinners? Penitent confession and speedy reformation are the means to silence our adversaries, as well as to repair our credit with wise and godly men.

If any who have set their hands to this sacred
work,

work, give themselves up to self-seeking, negligence, pride, and other sins, it is necessary to admonish them. If we could see them reform without reproof, we would gladly forbear to publish their faults. But if reproof itself is ineffectual, it is time to sharpen the remedy. To bear with the vices of ministers, is to hasten the ruin of the church; for nothing contributes more to the undoing of the people than the depravity of their Guides; nor can we more effectually promote a reformation, than by endeavouring to reform the Leaders of the church. For my part, I have herein done as I would be done by. I do not blame my brethren, as some others do, to make them contemptible and odious; but to heal those evils that would make them so. It is not to indulge my own inclination, for I displease myself as much as I do some of them; and would rather have the ease and peace of silence if it might consist with duty. It is merely the necessity of men's souls, and the prosperity of the church, which forces me to this arrogance and immodesty, if it may be called such. When the honour of God and the everlasting happiness of so many persons are concerned, who that has a tongue can be silent? If thousands of you were in a leaking ship, and those who should pump out the water and stop the leaks were sporting, or quarrelling, or sleeping, or only favouring themselves in their labour,

labour, to the hazard of you all, would you not call them to their work? If you used sharpness with the slothful, would you think that man in his senses who took it ill? who accused you of pride, self-conceit, or want of good manners for talking so saucily to your fellow workmen? If they charged you with diminishing their reputation, would you not say, "The work must be done, or we are all dead men! The ship is ready to sink; and do you talk of reputation? Had you rather hazard yourselves and us than hear of your sloth?"—This, brethren, is the case with us. The work of the Lord must needs be done. Souls must not perish whilst you mind your worldly business, take your ease, or quarrel with your brethren; nor must we be silent, for fear of seeming uncivil, while men are hastened by you to perdition. If you had chosen some other calling, and only had sinned by yourselves, and perished alone, it had not been so necessary to molest you; but if you will enter into an office which is for the necessary preservation of us all, so that by letting you alone in your sins we must give up the church to apparent hazard, do not blame us if we talk to you more freely than you would have us to do. There is no bearing with your remissness. How much soever it may displease you, take it how you will, you must be told of it; and if that will not do, you must be told of it

it more closely still.—If you have so much greater business that you cannot ordinarily have time to do the ministerial work, you should not undertake the office; for ministers are men ‘separated to the Gospel of Christ, and must give themselves *wholly* to these things.’

TO THE LAY-READER.

I dare not let this work come into your hands, without a word of caution and advice, lest you should misunderstand, or misapply it.

Do not entertain any unworthy thoughts of your pastors, because we here confess our own sins, and aggravate them in order to our humiliation and reformation. You know that we are *men* and not angels, whom God has put into the office of your spiritual guides; and you know that we are imperfect men. Let Papists and others pretend to sinless perfection, we dare not do it, but confess that we are sinners. And we should heartily rejoice to find the signs even of imperfect sincerity in them that make so confident a pretence as this; nay, if in some of them, we could find common honesty, and a freedom from the crying abominations of the ungodly; such as cruelty, lying, slandering, &c. Yet some of these
people,

people, because we confess that we have sinned in neglecting the work of the Lord, pretend to prove us deceivers from our own confession: whereas God saith, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;' but that 'he that saith he hath no sin deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. — For our parts, we believe that 'in many things we offend all.' We profess to know but in 'part; to have our treasure in earthen vessels;' and to be insufficient for these things [about which we are employed:] see therefore that you love and imitate the holiness of your pastors [as far as you discern it] but take not occasion of disesteeming or reproaching them for their infirmities.

Beware of those (particularly the Papists) whose design is to unsettle you in matters of religion, and, in order to it, to bring you first to suspect, and then to contemn and reject your teachers.— Let me warn you, as you love your souls, that you keep close to scripture and a faithful Ministry. And let me tell you, that notwithstanding all those sins of ours which are here confessed, the known world hath not a more able, faithful, godly ministry than *Britain* hath at this day. If at the Synod of *Dort* the *Clericus Anglicanus* was called the *Stupor mundi** (before all

* The English clergy were called the wonder of the world.

those

those ignorant and scandalous men were cast out) what may we call it *now*?

Brethren, let me deal freely with you. The ungrateful contempt of a faithful Ministry, is the shame of thousands in this land; and if a thorough repentance prevent it not, they shall better know in Hell, whether such ministers were their friends or foes; and what they would have done for them if their counsel had been heard. [We are told concerning the Jews that] when 'they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and abused his prophets, the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, till there was no remedy*.'—Shall ministers study, and preach, and pray for you, and shall they be despised?—When they have the God of heaven and their own conscience to witness that they desire 'not your's but you;' that they are 'willing to spend and be spent' for your sakes; that all the wealth in the world would not be regarded by them in comparison with your salvation; and that all their labours and sufferings are for your welfare; if yet they shall be requited with your contempt and scorn, or discouraged by your unteachableness—see who will prove the losers in the end. When God himself shall justify and

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

commend them with a 'Well done good and faithful servant,' let those that reproached, despised, and condemned them, defend their faces from shame, and their consciences from the accusations of horrid ingratitude, if they can!

Let me advise you to obey your faithful teachers, and improve their help for your salvation while you have it. Take heed that you refuse not to learn when they are willing to teach. Particularly see to it that you refuse not to submit to them in this duty of *private instruction*, which is more especially recommended in this treatise. Go to them when they desire you, and be thankful to them for their help; and at other times, when you need their advice, go to them and ask it of your own accord. Their office is, to be your guides in the way to life. If you seek not their direction, it seems that you either despise salvation itself, or else are so proud as to think yourselves sufficient to be your own directors.— Shall God, in mercy, send you leaders to guide you in the way to glory, and will you stoutly send them back, or refuse their assistance, and say, "We have no need of their direction?"—Is it for their own ease or profit that they trouble you, or is it not for your everlasting gain? Remember what Christ hath said to his messengers,—'He that despiseth you, despiseth me.' If your obstinate refusal

refusal of their instruction cause them to bear witness against you in Judgment, look you to it and answer it as you can. For my own part, I would not be then in your case for all the world. —If you read this Book, remember that the duty which you find to belong to ministers, doth also shew what belongs to *yourselves*; for it cannot be our duty to teach and admonish, if it be not yours to hear and learn.

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T H E

THE
REFORMED PASTOR.

ACTS XX. 28.

*Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock,
over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers;
to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased
with his own blood.*

Reverend and dearly-beloved Brethren,

IF the people of our charge must teach, admonish and ‘exhort one another daily;’ no doubt teachers themselves may do it, as brethren in office, as well as in faith, without any supereminence in power or degree. We have the same sins to mortify, and the same graces to be quickened and corroborated, as they have. We have greater works than they have to do, greater difficulties to overcome, and no less necessity is laid upon us. We have therefore need to be warned and awakened, if not instructed, as well as they. So that, I confess, I think we should meet together more frequently, if we had nothing to do but this. And we should

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deal as plainly and closely with one another, as the most serious among us do with our Flocks; lest, if they only have the sharp admonitions and reproofs, they only should be found and lively in the faith. This was PAUL's judgment. I need no other proof of it, than this rousing, heart-melting exhortation to the Ephesian elders.—A short sermon, but not soon learned. Had the bishops and teachers of the church but thoroughly learned it, (though to the neglect of many a volume which has taken up their time and helped them to greater applause in the world) how happy had it been for the church and for themselves!

I shall now touch upon no part of it but my Text.—The persons here addressed under the characters of *overseers* or *bishops*, were officers appointed to teach and guide the Ephesian church in the way to salvation; and are the same that in the 17th verse are called *Elders*. So that all who stately officiate in the same work and capacity, as the Pastors of a particular church, may consider themselves as included.—The exhortation here addressed to such, consists of two parts.

The FIRST is —That they should take heed to
THEMSELVES:

The SECOND—That they should take heed to
all the FLOCK; to feed the church of God.

The

The MOTIVES to which are—their own engagement and relation as overseers—the authority of him who called them to the office ; the Holy Ghost—the dignity of the object ; the church of God—the tender regard of Christ to it, and the price he paid for it ; he purchased it with his own blood.

PART THE FIRST.

*Of the Duty of Christian Ministers with regard to
THEMSELVES.*

THE apostle in the first place exhorts the pastors or overseers of the churches of Christ to 'take heed to *themselves.*' The word in general denotes, applying the mind to any thing with strict and close attention. Here it signifies, diligently to watch over ourselves ; our own conduct and behaviour, our heart and life : all our tempers, words, and actions. I shall briefly shew you wherein this must be done, and give some reasons for this part of the work. But for the sake of brevity, I shall adjoin the application to the explication. And I beseech you, brethren, let your hearts attend, as well as your understandings.

I. Above all, see to it that a working of saving grace be thoroughly wrought on your own souls.

Take heed to yourselves lest you be strangers to the effectual working of that gospel which you preach; and lest, while you proclaim to the world the necessity of a Saviour, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss of an interest in him and his saving benefits. Be that first, yourselves, which you persuade your hearers to be; believe that, which you daily persuade them to believe; and heartily entertain that Christ and Spirit, which you offer to them.

You have a heaven to win or lose yourselves, and souls that must be happy or miserable for ever; it therefore concerns you to begin at home, and take heed to yourselves. It is possible (though an unusual thing) that preaching well may succeed to the salvation of others without the holiness of your own hearts and lives; but it is impossible it should save your own souls. Though it be promised to 'them that turn many to righteousness' that they 'shall shine as stars,' it is on supposition that they be first turned to it themselves. Believe it, Sirs, 'God is no respecter of persons.' A holy calling will not save an unholy man. God never did save any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his
master's

master's work. Nor can it be reasonably expected that he should save any for offering salvation to others, while they refuse it themselves; or for telling others those truths which they themselves neglect and abuse. If you stand at the door of the kingdom of grace to light others in, but will not go in yourselves, you shall knock at the gates of glory in vain. Many a preacher is now in hell, who called upon his hearers a hundred times to use their utmost care and diligence to avoid that place of torment. Preachers of the gospel must be judged by the gospel:—must be sentenced on the same terms, and dealt with as severely as other men. 'Many at that day shall say, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?' Who shall be answered, 'I never knew you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity.' And what case can be more wretched than that man's, who made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and help others to attain it, and yet after all is excluded from it himself?

It is a dreadful thing to be an un sanctified professor; but much more to be an un sanctified Preacher. Do not you, who know this to be your character, tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, you are drawing up indictments against yourselves. When you are arguing against sin, you are aggra-

vating your own. When you proclaim to your hearers, the riches of Christ and his grace, you publish your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your own unhappiness in being destitute of them. What can you devise to say to your hearers, but for the most part, it will be against your own souls? If you mention hell, you mention your own inheritance. If you describe the joys of heaven, you describe your own misery in having no right to them. O wretched life! that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend his days in a course of self-condemning! A graceless unexperienced preacher is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth.

Yet he is ordinarily, the most insensible of his unhappiness. He has so many counters, that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that resemble the christian's jewels, that he is seldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty; but thinks 'he is rich and wants nothing, while he is wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked.' He is acquainted with the holy scriptures; he is exercised in holy duties; he lives not in open disgraceful sins; he serves at God's altar; he reproveth other men's faults, and preaches up holiness of heart and life; and therefore can hardly suspect himself to be unholy. How awful the delusion of such! how aggravated their misery!—to perish with the bread of life in
their

their hands, while they offer it to others!—How deplorable! that those ordinances of God, should be the occasion of their delusion, which are the appointed means of conviction and salvation!—that while they hold the looking-glass of the gospel to others, and shew them the true face of their souls, they should turn the back part of it towards themselves, where they can see nothing!

Verily it is the common danger and calamity of the church, to have unregenerate and unexperienced pastors! Many men become preachers, before they are christians; are sanctified by dedication to the altar as God's priests, before they are sanctified by hearty dedication to Christ as his disciples. Thus they worship an unknown God; preach an unknown Saviour; an unknown Spirit; an unknown state of holiness, and communion with God; and a future glory that is to them unknown, and to be unknown to them for ever.

And can it be expected that such persons should prove any great blessings to the church? How can it be imagined that he is likely to be as successful as others, who dealeth not heartily and faithfully in his work? Who never soundly believeth what he saith, nor is ever truly serious, when he seemeth most diligent? And can you think that any un sanctified man CAN be hearty and serious in the ministerial work? It cannot be. A kind of seriousness indeed he may have; such as proceeds from a

common opinion that the word is true: he may be actuated by a natural fervour, or by selfish ends: but the seriousness and fidelity of a sound believer, who ultimately intends God's honour and men's salvation, he cannot have.

O Sirs! all your preaching and persuading of others will be but dreaming, and trifling hypocrisy, till the work be thoroughly done upon yourselves. How can you constantly apply yourselves to a work from which your carnal hearts are averse? How can you, with serious fervour, call upon poor sinners to repent and come to God, who never did either yourselves? How can you follow them with importunate solicitations to forsake sin, and betake themselves to a holy life, who never felt the evil of the one, or the worth of the other? And let me tell you, these things are never well known till they are FELT; and that he who feels them not himself, is not likely to speak feelingly of them to others, or to help others to feel them.

He that does not so strongly believe the word of God and the life to come, as to take off his own heart from the vanities of this world, and bring him, with resolution and diligence, to seek his own salvation, cannot be expected to be faithful in seeking the salvation of other men. He that dares to damn himself, will dare to let others alone in the way to damnation. He that, with JUDAS, will sell his master for silver, will not scruple to make
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merchandize of the flock. We may well expect that he will have no pity on others, who is thus wofully cruel to himself; and surely he is not to be trusted with other men's souls, who is unfaithful to his own. It is a very unlikely thing that he will fight against Satan with all his might, or do any great harm to his kingdom, who is himself a servant of Satan and a subject of that kingdom; or that he will be true to Christ, who is in covenant with his enemy. What prince will choose the friends and voluntary servants of his enemy to lead his armies in war against him? Yet alas! many preachers of the gospel are enemies to the work of the gospel which they preach. O how many such traitors have been in the church of Christ in all ages, who have done more against him under his colours, than they could have done in the open field! Though many of these men seem excellent preachers, and cry down sin as loudly as others, yet it is all but an affected fervency, and commonly but a mere ineffectual bawling. A traitorous commander, who shooteth nothing against the enemy but powder, may cause his guns to make as great a report as theirs that are loaded with bullets; but he doth not hurt the enemy by it. So one of these men may speak as loud and with as much seeming fervency as others; but he will seldom do any great execution against sin and Satan.

No man can fight well but where he hates, or is very angry ; much less against those whom he loves, and loves above all. So that you see, an un sanctified man, who loves the enemy, is very unfit to be a leader in Christ's army ; and he is very unlikely to engage others to renounce the world and the flesh, who cleaveth to them himself as his chief good.

If such a wretched man would take my counsel, he should make a stand, and call his heart and life to an account. He should fall a preaching awhile to himself, before he preach to others any more. He should consider, whether ' he that names the ' name of Christ' should not ' depart from all iniquity ?' Whether, ' if he regards iniquity in his ' heart, God will hear his prayers ?' And whether a wicked preacher ' shall stand in the judgment, or a sinner in the assembly of the just ?' When such thoughts as these have entered into his soul, and kindly wrought upon his conscience, I would advise him next, to go to the congregation, and there preach over *Origen's* sermon on *Psalms* l. 16, 17. ' But to the wicked, God saith, What ' hast thou to do, to declare my statutes, or that ' thou should'st take my covenant into thy mouth ? ' Seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my ' words behind thee.'—When he has read this text, I would have him sit down (as *Origen* did)

Part I. *Qualifications requisite for a Minister.* 11

did*) and expound and apply it by his tears ; then make a free confession of his guilt before the assembly, and desire their prayers to God for pardoning and renewing grace ; that hereafter, he may preach a Christ whom he knows, may feel what he speaks, and may commend the riches of the gospel by experience.

II. Take heed to yourselves, that you be not destitute of the necessary qualifications for your work.

And oh ! what qualifications are requisite for a man that hath such a charge as ours ! He must not be a babe in knowledge that will teach men all those things which are necessary to salvation. How many difficulties in divinity are there to be opened ; yea, about the very fundamentals of religion ! How many obscure texts to be expounded ! How many duties to be done, wherein ourselves and others may miscarry, if in the matter, the end, the manner, and circumstances of them, they be not well informed ! How many sins, and subtle temptations must we direct our people to avoid ! How many weighty, and yet intricate, cases of conscience have we frequently to resolve ! How many strong

* This refers to his being compelled to offer incense to an Idol, for which he was excommunicated by the Church. See *Clark's Lives of the Fathers.* ED.

holds have we to beat down! What subtle, diligent, and obstinate resistance must we expect from those we have to deal with! We cannot make a breach in their groundless hopes and carnal peace, but they have twenty shifts and seeming reasons to make it up again; and as many enemies, under the appearance of friends, that are ready to help them. We dispute not with them upon equal terms; but we have children to reason with, who cannot understand us. We have wilful, unreasonable, distracted men to deal with; who when they are silenced, are not at all the more convinced; but when they can give you no reason, will give you their resolution. We have multitudes of raging passions and contradicting enemies to dispute against at once; so that whenever we go about the conversion of a sinner, it is as if we were to dispute in a noisy crowd.

Dear brethren! what men should we be in skill, resolution, and unwearied diligence, who have so much to do, [and so much to hinder us in doing it!] Did *Paul* cry out, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ And shall we be careless or lazy, as if we were sufficient? ‘What manner of persons ought we to be’ not only ‘in all holy conversation and godliness,’ but in all knowledge, resolution, and diligence!

To preach a sermon, I think, is not the hardest part of our work. And yet what skill is necessary
to

to make plain the truth ; to convince the hearers ; to let irresistible light into their consciences, and keep it there ; to drive the truth into their minds, and answer every objection that opposes it ; and at the same time, to do all this with regard to the language and manner, so as best becomes our work ; as is most suitable to the capacities of our hearers ; and so as to honour that great God, whose message we deliver, by our delivery of it !

It is a lamentable case, that, in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so, as that the whole business should miscarry in our hands : that God should be dishonoured ; his work disgraced ; and sinners rather hardened than converted, through our weakness or neglect. How often have carnal hearers gone jeering home, at the palpable and dishonourable failings of the preacher ! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy, and we bring not with us skill and zeal enough to awaken them !—Brethren, do you not shrink and tremble under a sense of the greatness of your work ? Will a common measure of ability and prudence serve for such a task as yours ?—Necessity may indeed cause the church to tolerate the weak ; but woe to us if we tolerate and indulge our own weakness.

Do not reason and conscience tell you, that if you dare venture on so high a work as this, you should spare no pains to be fit for the performance
of

of it? It is not now and then an idle taste of studies, that will serve to make an able divine. I know that laziness has learned to argue, from the insufficiency of all our studies, that the SPIRIT must wholly and alone qualify us for, and assist us in our work. But can we reasonably think that God, having commanded us to use the means, would warrant us to neglect them? Will he cause us to thrive in a course of idleness? Or bring us to knowledge by dreams? Or take us up to heaven and shew us his counsels, while we are unconcerned about the matter? Strange! that men should dare, by their sinful laziness, thus to quench the spirit! God has required us that we 'be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Therefore, brethren, lose no time: study, pray, discourse, and practise; that by these means your abilities may be increased.

Besides the composition of sermons, how many other things should a minister understand! What a great defect would it be to be ignorant of them; and how much shall we miss such knowledge in our work! In order to gain a competent measure of knowledge, a variety of books must be read, [and well digested.] Experience will teach you, that men are not to be made learned or wise, without hard study and unwearied diligence. Shall we then be indolent? Will neither the natural desire of knowing, nor the spiritual desire of know-
ing

ing God and things divine, nor the conscioufness of our ignorance and weaknefs, nor a fense of the importance of our ministerial work, keep us close to our studies, and make us diligent in seeking after truth ?

We should the rather take heed to our qualifications, because such works as ours put men more upon the use and trial of their graces, than those of other persons. Weak gifts and graces may carry a man through an even and laudable course of life, who is not exercised with any great trials. Small strength may serve for easier works, and lighter burdens : but if you will venture on the great undertakings of the Ministry ; if you will engage against ‘ principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses’, in order to rescue captive sinners from the dominion of Satan, and lead on the troops of Christ in the face of all their enemies, common abilities will not be sufficient. The tempter will make his first and sharpest onset on YOU. He bears you the greatest malice, who are engaged to do him the greatest mischief. He has found, by experience, that to ‘ smite the shepherd,’ is the most effectual means to ‘ scatter the flock.’ You therefore shall have his most subtle insinuations, incessant sollicitations, and violent assaults. So that you must expect to come off with greater shame and deeper wounds, than if you had lived a common life, if you think to go
through

through such things as these with a careless soul. We have seen many persons that lived a private life, in good reputation for parts and piety, who, when they have taken upon them either the magistracy, or military employment, where the work was superior to their abilities, have met with scandal and disgrace. So also have we seen some private christians of good esteem, who having thought too highly of their abilities, and thrust themselves into the ministerial office, have proved weak and empty men, and have become some of the greatest burdens to the church. They might, perhaps, have done God more service, had they continued in the higher rank of private men, than they did among the lowest of the ministry. If then you will venture into the midst of dangers, and bear the burden of the day, 'take heed to yourselves.'

This care and diligence is now the more requisite for ministers, because the necessity of the church forces so many from our places of education so very young, that they are obliged to teach and learn together. It were very desirable that the church should wait longer for their preparation, if it were possible; but I would by no means discourage such young persons as are drawn out by mere necessity, if they are but competently qualified, and quickened with earnest desires of men's salvation, to close study, and great diligence in their work.—And this is necessary; for if the people
take

take them to be ignorant, they will despise their teaching, and think themselves as wise as they. The lowest degree tolerable in a minister, is to be *supra vulgus fidelium*. It will produce some degree of reverence, when your people know that you are wiser than themselves.

If you are conscious that you are none of the most able ministers, and despair of being revered for your talents, you have the more need to study and labour for their increase. That which you want in natural ability, you must make up in other qualifications; and then you may be as successful as other persons.

III. Take heed to yourselves, that your ENDS in undertaking and discharging the ministerial office are good and honourable.

The ultimate end of our pastoral oversight, is that which is the ultimate end of our whole lives: viz. to please and glorify God. With this is connected the honour of Christ, the welfare of the church, and the salvation of our people: their sanctification and holy obedience; their unity, order, beauty, strength, preservation, and increase.

The whole ministerial work must be managed purely for God, and the good of souls, without any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. None but the upright make GOD their end, or do all or any thing heartily, for his honour.

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As for other persons, they choose the ministry rather than any other calling, either because their parents devoted them to it; or because it is a pleasant thing to know; and this is a life wherein they have the most opportunity to furnish their intellects with all kinds of science; or because it is not so fatiguing to the body, (loving to favour the flesh) or because it is accompanied with some degree of reverence from men; and they esteem it an honourable thing to be leaders and teachers; to have others depend on them, and 'receive the law at their mouth;' or because it affords them a comfortable maintenance. For such ends as these do many undertake the ministry; and were it not for some or other of these, they would soon give it over.

Now can it be expected that God should greatly bless the services of such men; since it is not for him that they preach, but for themselves; their own ease or advantage? No wonder if he leave them to themselves for the success. A wrong END spoils all our work with regard to ourselves, how good soever it may in itself be. They that undertake this as a common work, to make a trade of it, in order to their subsistence in the world, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though it be a good employment. Self-denial is of absolute necessity in every christian; but of double necessity in a Minister, as he hath a double sanctification or
dedication

dedication to God ; and without self-denial he cannot faithfully do God any service. Hard studies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, if the end be not right, are but more glorious, hypocritical finning.

IV. Take heed to yourselves, lest you fall into those sins you preach against, and lest, by your example, you contradict your doctrine.

Will you make it your business to magnify God, and when you have done, dishonour him as much as others ? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet rebel against it ? Will you preach his laws, and then wilfully break them ?—If sin be evil, why do you commit it ? If it be not, why do you dissuade men from it ? If God's threatenings are true, why do you not fear them ? If they are false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them ? 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God ?' It is a palpable error in those ministers, who make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living, that they will study hard to *preach* accurately, and study little or not at all to *live* accurately. They are loth to misplace a word in their sermons, but they make nothing of misplacing their affections, words, or actions in the course of their lives. They are so nice in their compositions, that they seem to look
upon

upon it as a virtue in them to preach seldom, that their language may be the more polite; and all the rhetorical writers they can meet with are pressed to serve them for the adorning their style; but when it comes to matter of practice, how little do they regard what they said? What a difference is there between their pulpit-speeches and their familiar discourse! They that are most impatient of barbarisms and solecisms in a sermon, can too easily tolerate them in their conversation. — Surely, brethren, we have great cause to take heed what we *do*, as well as what we *say*. A practical doctrine must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. If the saving of souls be your end, you will certainly attend to it out of the pulpit, as well as in it; you will LIVE for it, and contribute all your endeavours to attain it. If you intend the end of the ministry only in the pulpit, it seems you take yourselves for ministers no longer than you are there: and if so, I think you are unworthy to be esteemed such at all.—You have very great need of the strictest care over your conduct; for

1. You have the same depraved nature and sinful inclinations as others. There are, in the best of us, the remnants of pride, unbelief, self-seeking, hypocrisy, and other sins. How small a matter may cast us down, by enticing us to folly, enkindling our passions, perverting our judgments, abating

abating our resolution, and cooling our zeal ! Without great care, our treacherous hearts may some time or another deceive us ; and those sins that seem to lie dead, may revive.

2. Remember too, that as you have the same evil dispositions as other persons, you are exposed to temptations peculiar to yourselves ; particularly (as has been already observed) from the great enemy of souls ; who obtains a very great conquest, if he can make a minister unfaithful, and tempt him into sin. Do not gratify your grand adversary, nor give him an occasion to insult and triumph.

3. Many eyes are upon you, and therefore many will observe your falls. The eclipses of the sun by day-time, are seldom without many witnesses. If other men may sin without great observation, you cannot. While you are ‘ as lights set upon an hill, you cannot be hid.’ The light of your doctrine will expose your evil doings. Live therefore as those who remember that the world looks on you with the quick sighted eye of malice, ready to find the smallest fault ; to aggravate and divulge it ; yea, to make faults where there are none.

4. Take heed to your conduct, because your sins are attended with more heinous aggravations than those of other men. It was a saying of king Alphonfus, “ that a great man cannot commit a
“ small

“small sin.” We may with more propriety say, that a *learned* man, and a *teacher* of others; cannot: or at least, that *that* sin is great when committed by him, which would be esteemed smaller in another person.—Your sins are committed against greater knowledge than the sins of most others can be. They discover greater hypocrisy, and carry in them greater treachery. You are laid under more solemn obligations to abstain from them than other men, and you enjoy superior advantages for so doing.

5. Take heed of falling into sin, because the honour of your Lord and Master is concerned. As you may do him more service, so you may do him more disservice than others. The nearer men stand to God, the greater dishonour does he receive from their miscarriages. A heavy judgment was threatened and executed on *Eli* and his house, because they ‘kicked at his sacrifice and offering;’ and we are told, ‘the sin of the young men was ‘great before the Lord,’ because on account of their prophane behaviour, ‘men abhorred the ‘offering of the Lord.’ The aggravation of their sin was, that it ‘caused the enemies of the Lord ‘to blaspheme;’ which circumstance provoked God to deal more sharply with *David*, with respect to his crime, than otherwise he would have done. Never give sinners occasion to say, “there goes a covetous, or a drunken priest:” or to reflect,
when

when they see you, that “ notwithstanding all
“ your talk, you are as bad as they.” ‘ Offences
‘ will come: but woe to the man by whom they
‘ come.’ You ‘ bear the ark of the Lord;’ you
are intrusted with his honour; and dare you
let it fall? Take heed, in the name of God, of
every word you speak, and of every step you take.
God will indeed wipe off all the dishonour that
may be cast upon him; but you will not so easily
remove the shame and sorrow from yourselves.
Once more

6. Take heed to your conduct, because the
success of all your labours does very much depend
upon it. If you unsay by your lives, what you
say with your lips, you will prove the greatest hin-
derers of your own work. It greatly prevents our
success, that other men are all the week contra-
dicting to the people in private, what we have
been speaking to them from the word of God, in
public; but it will prevent it much more, if we
contradict it ourselves; if our actions give our
words the lie. This is the way to make men
think that the word of God is but an idle tale.
Surely he that means as he speaks, will do as he
speaks. One improper word, one unbecoming ac-
tion, may blast the fruit of many a sermon.

Say, brethren, in the fear of God, do you regard
the success of your labours, and wish to see it upon
the souls of your hearers, or do you not? If you
do

do not, why do you study and preach, and call yourselves the ministers of Christ? If you DO, surely you cannot easily be induced to spoil your own work. You do not much regard the success of it, if you are willing to sell it at so cheap a rate, as for the indulgence of any sin. Long enough may you lift up your voices against sin, before men will believe there is any such harm in it, or such danger attending it as you talk of, if they see you commit it yourselves. While men have eyes as well as ears, they will think they *see* your meaning as well as *hear* it; and they are much more ready to believe what they see than what they hear. All that a preacher does is a kind of preaching. When you live a covetous or careless life; when you drink or game, or waste your time, &c. by your practice you preach these sins to your people. They will give you leave to speak against these things in the pulpit as much as you will, if you will but let them alone afterwards, and talk and live as they do; for they take the pulpit to be but as a stage; a place where preachers must shew themselves and play their parts; where you have liberty for an hour to say what you please. They will not much regard it, if you do not shew, by your conduct amongst them, that you meant as you said.

Consider further, since the success of your labours depends on the grace and blessing of God,
whether

whether you will not by your sins, provoke him to forsake you, and blast your endeavours ; at least with regard to yourselves, though he may in some measure bless them to his people. Once more,

V. Take heed to yourselves, that your **graces** be maintained in life and in action.

For this end, preach to **YOURSELVES** the sermons you study, before you preach them to others. If you were to do this for your own sakes, it would be no lost labour. But I principally recommend it on the public account, and for the sake of the church. When your minds are in a holy frame, your people are likely to partake of it. Your prayers and praises and doctrine will be sweet and heavenly to them. They are likely to feel it when you have been much with God. That which is on your hearts most, will be most in their ears. I confess, I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I publish to my flock the distempers of my soul. When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold ; and when it is confused, my preaching is confused also. And I have often observed, in the best of my hearers, that when I have grown cold in preaching, they have grown cold accordingly. The next prayers I have heard from them, have been too much like my sermons. You cannot decline and neglect your duties, but others will be

losers by it as well as yourselves. If we let our love decrease, and if we abate our holy care and watchfulness, it will soon appear in our doctrine. If the matter shew it not, the manner will ; and our hearers are likely to fare the worse for it. Whereas, if we could abound in faith and love and zeal, how would they overflow to the refreshing of our congregations ! and how would this appear by increasing the same graces in our people ! Watch therefore, brethren, over your own hearts. Keep out lusts, and worldly inclinations ; and keep up the life of faith and love. Be much at home, and be much with God. If it be not your daily serious business to study your own hearts, to subdue corruptions, and to walk with God, all will go amiss with you, and you will starve your audience. Or if you have an affected fervency, you cannot expect any great blessing to attend it.—Above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. There you must fetch the heavenly fire, that must kindle your sacrifices.

But besides this general course of watchfulness for ourselves and others, methinks a minister should take some special pains with his own heart, just before he goes to the congregation. If it be cold THEN, how is he likely to warm the hearts of his hearers ? Go then to God, especially, for life. Read some rousing awakening book ; or meditate
on

Part I. *Immediate Preparation for the Pulpit.* 27

on the vast importance of the subject on which you are to speak ; and on the great necessity of your peoples souls ; that thus you may go in ‘ the zeal ‘ of the Lord, into his house *.’

* With a view to the object above recommended by Mr. Baxter, Dr. Doddridge frequently read a passage from this work of his, on the Lord’s day morning previous to his going out to preach ; and some other ministers have experienced the utility of doing the same.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

C.

PART

PART THE SECOND.

*Of the Duty of stated Ministers with
respect to their PEOPLE.*

HAVING shewed you, as it was first necessary, what we must be, and what we must do for our own souls, I proceed to the

SECOND branch of the exhortation: ‘Take heed unto all the FLOCK over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.’

Here it is necessarily supposed, That every flock should have their own pastor, and every pastor his own flock. It is the will of God, that christians should ‘know their teachers that labour among them, and are over them in the Lord.’ *Paul and Barnabas* ‘ordained elders in every church.’ Though a minister be an officer in the universal church, yet he is in an especial manner the OVERSEER of that particular church which is committed to his care. When we are ordained ministers,
without

without a special charge, we are licenced and commanded to do our best for all, where we are called to exercise ; but when we have undertaken a particular charge, we have restrained the exercise of our gifts and guidance especially to that : so that we should allow others no more of our time and help than our own flock can spare. From this relation of pastor and flock, arise those duties which we mutually owe each other.

It is further implied, that our flocks should be no larger than we are capable of overseeing, or taking the care of. The nature of the pastoral work is such as requires it to be done by the pastor himself.

By the *flock* or *church* is meant that particular society of christians of which a bishop or elder has the charge ; associated for personal communion in God's public worship, and for other mutual assistance in the way to salvation. The word ποιμνιον properly signifies *a little flock*.

What is meant when we are exhorted ποιμαίνειν την εκκλησιαν seems to be, not only to *feed* the church, as it is translated ; nor merely to *rule* it, as some understand it ; but to perform every branch of the pastoral oversight. In a word, it is *pastorem agere* ; to do the work of a Pastor or Shepherd to the flock : The several branches of which shall now be considered.

C H A P. I.

*Of a Minister's stated public Work: Preaching; Prayer;
and administering the Sacraments.*

ONE of the most important and most excellent parts of our work is

I. The public PREACHING of the Word. [Here we shall suggest a few thoughts on the design of preaching—the manner of it—the pronunciation—and the composition of sermons.]

1. OF THE DESIGN OF PREACHING.

The grand design of preaching is, to shew men their truest happiness, and to direct them how to attain it.—It is the great work of christian ministers to acquaint men with God, and that glory which all his chosen people shall enjoy in his presence; to shew them the certainty and excellence of the promised felicity in the life to come, compared with the vanities of the present world, that so we may turn the stream of their thoughts and affections; bring them to a due contempt of this world, and put them upon seeking that durable treasure. This is the work about which we are to treat with men, day after day; for could we once bring them to propose a right END, and set their hearts unfeignedly

edly on God and heaven, the greatest part of our business would be done.

Having shewn them the right end, our next work is to acquaint them with the right means of attaining it. We must first teach them the evil and danger of sin; then we must open to them the great mysteries of redemption;—the person, natures, incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and dominion of the blessed Son of God. As also, the conditions imposed on us; the duties he has commanded us; the everlasting torments he has threatened to the finally impenitent; the rich treasury of his blessings and grace; the tenour of his promises, and all the privileges of the saints. We must recommend to them a life of holiness and communion with God. We must excite them to, and direct them in, the performance of all the spiritual duties which the gospel requires. At the same time we must discover to them the deceitfulness of their own hearts; the many difficulties and dangers they will meet with; especially we must shew them the depth of Satan's temptations, and assist them against all these. We must reveal and recommend to them the great and gracious designs of God, in his works of creation, providence, redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. In a word, we must teach them as much as we can, of the whole works and word of God. And what

two volumes are here for a minister to preach upon! How great, how excellent, how wonderful! All christians are the disciples or scholars of Christ: the church is his school: we are his ushers; the Bible is his grammar: this it is we must be daily teaching them. The *Papists* would teach them without book, lest they should learn *heresies* from *the word of truth*; but our business is not to teach them without book, but to help them to understand this book of God.

2. OF THE MANNER OF PREACHING.

Preaching is a work which requires greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us commonly bring to it. It is no trifling matter to stand up in the face of a congregation, and deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy thing to speak so plainly that the most ignorant may understand us; so seriously that the dearest heart may feel, and so convincingly that contradicting cavillers may be silenced.—Certainly, if our hearts were set upon the work of the Lord as they ought to be, it would be done more vigorously than by the most of us it is. Alas! how few ministers preach with all their might, or speak about everlasting joys and torments in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in earnest! It would make a man's heart ache to see a number of dead
and

and drowfy sinners sit under a minister, without having a word that is likely to quicken or awaken them. The blow often falls so light, that hard-hearted persons cannot feel. Few ministers will so much as exert their voice and stir themselves up to an earnest delivery. Or if they speak loud and earnestly, oftentimes they do not answer it with earnestness of matter; and then the voice does but little good. The people will esteem it but mere bawling if the matter does not correspond. On the other hand, it would grieve one to hear what excellent subjects some ministers treat upon, who yet let them die in their hands for want of a close and lively application; what fit matter they have for convincing sinners, and yet how little they make of it.

O sirs! how plain, how close, how serious should we be in delivering a message of such importance as ours, when the everlasting life or death of men are concerned in it! Methinks we are no where so much wanting, as in seriousness; yet nothing is more unsuitable to our business, than to be flight and dull. What! speak coldly for God, and for the salvation of men? Can we believe that our people must be converted or condemned, and yet can we speak to them in a drowfy tone? In the name of God, brethren, awaken your hearts before you come into the pulpit; that when you are there you may be fit to waken the

hearts of finners. Remember, that they must be awakened, or damned: but surely a sleepy preacher is not likely to awaken them. Though you give the holy things of God the highest praises in words, if you do it coldly, you will unsay by your manner all that you have said. It is a kind of contempt of great things, especially so great as these, to speak of them without great affection and fervency. 'Whatsoever our hand findeth to do, (certainly then in such a work as preaching for men's salvation) we should 'do it with all our 'might.' Though I do not recommend a constant loudness in your delivery, (for that will make your fervency contemptible) yet see to it, that you have a constant seriousness; and when the matter requires it (as it should do in the application, at least) then 'lift up your voice and spare not' your spirits. Speak to your hearers as to men that must be awakened either here or in hell. Look upon your congregation with seriousness and compassion; and think in what a state of joy or torment they must be for ever; and that surely will make you earnest, and melt your hearts for them. Whatever you do, let the people see that you are in good earnest. You cannot soften men's hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale, or patching up a gawdy oration. They will not cast away their dearest pleasures, at the drowsy request of one who seems not to mean as he speaks,

speaks, or to care much whether his request be granted or not.

Let us then rouse up ourselves to the work of the Lord. Let us speak to our people as for their lives, and 'save them as by violence, pulling them out of the fire.' Satan will not be charmed out of his possessions; we must lay siege to the souls of sinners, which are his chief garrison; must play the battery of God's ordnance against it, and play it close, till a breach is made; not suffering them to make it up again. As we have reasonable creatures to deal with, we must see to it that our sermons be all convincing; and that we make the light of scripture and reason shine so bright in the faces of the ungodly, that unless they wilfully shut their eyes, it may even force them to see. A sermon full of mere words, while it wants the light of evidence, and the zeal of life, is but an image, or a well-dressed carcase. In preaching, there is intended a communion of souls between us and our people; or a communication of somewhat from ours to theirs. We must endeavour to communicate the fullest light of evidence, from our understandings to theirs; and to warm their hearts, by enkindling in them holy affections from our own. The great things which we are to commend to our hearers, have reason enough on their side, and lie plain before them in the word of God. We should therefore be so furnished with a proper store of

evidence, as to come as with a torrent upon their understandings, and bear down all before us. With our dilemmas and expostulations, we should endeavour to bring them to a nonplus, that they may be forced to yield to the power of truth; to see that it is great and will prevail.

3. OF THE PRONUNCIATION.

A great matter with most of our hearers, lies in the pronunciation and tone of the voice. The best matter will not move them unless it be movingly delivered. When a man has a reading or declaiming tone, and speaks like a school-boy saying a lesson, or pronouncing an oration, few are much affected with any thing that he says. The want of a familiar tone and expression, is as great a defect in the delivery of most of us, as any thing whatever: in this respect therefore we should be careful to amend. Let us guard against all affectation, and speak as familiarly to our people as if we were speaking to any of them personally.

4. OF THE COMPOSITION OF SERMONS.

In the study of our sermons we are apt to be too negligent; gathering only a few naked heads, and not considering of the most forcible expressions to set them home to men's hearts. We must study how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick; not leaving all this

to

to our *extempore* promptitude, unless it be in cases of necessity*.

Next to preaching, another very important part of our public work is,

II. To guide our people, and be their mouth to God in the PRAYERS and PRAISES of the church; as also to bless them in the name of the Lord.

This sacerdotal part of our office is not the least; nor ought it to be thrust into a corner, as it too frequently is. A very considerable part of God's public service, was wont in all ages of the church, till of late, to consist in praises and eucharistical acts of communion. The Lord's day was kept as a day of thanksgiving, in the hymns, and common rejoicings of the faithful; in special commemoration of the work of redemption, and the happy condition of the gospel church. Though I am as apprehensive of the necessity of preaching as most persons, yet I think it ought not to prevent our solemn prayers to, and praises of God, from employing more of the Lord's day than they generally

* Mr. Baxter was used in general to write his sermons at length, as most of our old divines did. In some place in his writings, he acknowledges and laments it, when he neglected this, as the effect of indolence, and as productive of unhappy consequences. Some excellent directions for the composition of sermons may be seen in *Doddridge's Preaching Lectures*.

do.

do. Our worship should be as evangelical as our doctrine. [Now as it is our business to lead the devotions of our people on such solemn occasions, we ought to take heed that we do it with such propriety and fervour as will be conducive to their real edification.] *

Another part of our pastoral work is

III. The administration of the sacred mysteries, or the seals of God's covenant, BAPTISM, and the LORD'S SUPPER.

Some ministers totally neglect these ordinances; others administer them in a very careless manner; and a third sort lay a very undue stress on trifling circumstances relating to them, and make them a matter of much contention, even in that ordinance, in which union and communion are so much professed. [We not only ought carefully to avoid all

* It is much to be wished that Mr. Baxter had enlarged a little on the subject of PUBLIC PRAYER; which, though a part of divine worship of peculiar importance, is often worse performed than any other. See some too just complaints on this head in the *Evang. Mag* for June 1807. Mr. Baxter greatly excelled in prayer; of which one evidence appears in his *Reformed Liturgy*, and in the forms which he drew up for families. These are introduced in *A Collection of Family Prayers*, and they are some of the best in the volume, from which young ministers might derive much assistance.

these

these faults, but take peculiar pains in the administration of these ordinances, for the edification of the church*.]

C H A P. II.

Of personal Inspection and private Instruction.

WE are commanded to 'take heed to ALL 'the flock;' that is, doubtless, to every individual member of it. To which end, it is necessarily supposed that we should know every person that belongs to our charge; for how can we take heed to them if we do not know them? We must labour to be acquainted, as fully as we can, not only with the persons, but with the state of all our people,—their inclinations, and conversations; what are the sins they are most in danger of; what duties they neglect, both with respect to the matter and the manner; and to what temptations they are peculiarly liable. If we know not the temperament or disease, we are likely to prove unsuccessful physicians.

* See on this head *Doddridge's Lectures—Mason's Student and Pastor—and Orton's Letters to Dissenting Ministers.*

Being

Being thus acquainted with all the flock, we must do the work of a pastor towards every individual. And one would imagine, that all reasonable men would be so well satisfied in regard to this, that nothing need be said to recommend it. Does not a careful shepherd look after every individual sheep, and a good physician attend every particular patient? Why then should not the shepherds and the physicians of the church take heed to every individual member of their charge? Christ himself, the great and ‘good shepherd,’ who has the whole flock to look after, takes care of every individual; like him whom he describes in his parable, who ‘left the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness, to seek after one that was lost.’——PAUL ‘taught the people publicly, and from house to house.’ He ‘warned every man, and taught every man, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.’ We are to ‘watch for souls as those that must give an account’ how we have done it. *Heb.* xiii. 17.

To these and a variety of other scriptures, which might be quoted to our present purpose, I might add many passages from the ancient councils, from whence it appears that such a personal inspection was the practice of the most ancient times. I shall only mention one from *Ignatius*: “Let assemblies be often gathered; seek after (or
“ inquire

“ inquire of) all by name ; despise not servant-
“ men or maids.” *Ignat. ad Polyc.*

To mention a few particulars :

1. We should use all the means we can to instruct the ignorant in the matters of their salvation.

We should use our own most plain, familiar words in discoursing with them, and should give or lend them such books as are fit for them. We should persuade them to learn catechisms ; and direct such as cannot read, to get help of their neighbours, whom we should exhort to give them their assistance ; especially such as have the best opportunities for it.

2. We should be ready to give advice to such as come to us with cases of conscience ; especially that great case which the Jews put to Peter, and the jailer to Paul and Silas, ‘ What must we do ‘ to be saved ?’

A minister is not only to be employed in public preaching to his people, but should be a known counsellor for their souls, as the lawyer is for their estates, and the physician for their bodies. Not that a minister (any more than a physician, or lawyer) should be troubled with every trifling matter about which others can advise them as well. But every man that is in doubts and difficulties about matters of importance, should bring his case
to

to his minister for resolution. Thus Nicodemus came to Christ, as it was usual with the people to go to 'the priest, whose lips were to preserve ' knowledge, and at whose mouth they were to ' ask the law, because he was the messenger of the ' Lord of Hosts.' *Mal. ii. 7.*—Since the people are grown too much unacquainted with the office of the ministry, and their own duty herein, it belongs to us to acquaint them with it, and to press them publickly to come to us for advice in cases of great concernment to their souls. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring them to this. But how few are there who heartily press their people to it! A sad case, that men's souls should be injured and hazarded, by the total neglect of so great a duty; and that ministers should scarcely ever tell them of it and awaken them to it! Were they but duly sensible of the need and importance of it, you would have them more frequently knocking at your doors, to open their cases, to make their complaints, and to ask your advice. I beseech you then, put them more upon this; and perform your duty carefully when they seek your help.

To this end it is very necessary, that we should be acquainted with practical cases, and especially with the nature of true grace, so that we may assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question, which concerns their everlasting
life

life or death. One word of seasonable, prudent advice, given by a minister to persons in necessity, has sometimes done that good which many sermons have failed of doing.

3. We should have an especial eye upon FAMILIES, to see that they be well ordered, and that the duties of each relation be well performed.

The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of church and state, depend much upon family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we undo all. What are we likely to do towards the reforming a congregation, if all the work be cast upon us alone, and masters of families neglect that necessary duty of theirs, by which they are obliged to help us? If any good be begun by the ministry in any soul, a careless, prayerless, worldly family is likely to stifle, or very much hinder it. Whereas if you could but get the rulers of families to do their part; to take up the work where you left it, what abundance of good might be done by it! Do all that you can therefore to promote this business, if ever you desire the true reformation and welfare of your parishes.

To this end, get information how every family is conducted, and how God is worshipped in it, that you may know how to proceed. Go now and then among them, when they are most at leisure, and ask the master of the family whether he prays
with

with them and reads the scripture. Labour to convince such as neglect this, of their sin. Pray with them before you go, to give them an example how you would have them pray, and get them to promise that they will be more conscientious therein for the future.—If you find any unable to pray in tolerable expressions, through ignorance or difuse, persuade them to study their wants, and get their hearts affected with them. Advise them frequently to visit those neighbours who use to pray, that they may learn; and in the mean time recommend it to them to use a Form of prayer, rather than omit the duty. It is necessary to most illiterate people who have not been brought up where prayer has been used, to begin with a Form; because otherwise they would be able to do nothing. From a sense of their inability, they will wholly neglect the duty, though they desire to perform it. Many persons can utter some honest requests in secret, who will not be able to speak tolerable sense before others; and I will not be one of them who had rather the duty were wholly neglected, or prophaned and made contemptible, than encourage them to use a Form, either recited by memory, or read.—Tell them however, that it is their sin and shame to be so unacquainted with their own necessities, as not to know how to speak to God in prayer, when every beggar can find words to ask an alms; and that this Form is only
to

to be used, till they can do without it ; which they ought to endeavour after, that their expressions may be varied according to their necessities and observations.

See that besides the Bible, they have some profitable moving books in every family. If they have none, persuade them to buy some of a low price. If they are not able, either give them, or procure for them such as are likely to be of the greatest use to them. Engage them to read in the evening, when they have leisure, but especially on the Lord's day ; and by all means persuade them to teach their children to read. Particularly, direct them how to spend the Sabbath ; how to dispatch their worldly business, so as to prevent encumbrances and distractions ; and when they have attended public worship, how to spend their time in their families. The life of religion, among poor people especially, depends much upon this, because they have very little time besides this to spare. If they lose this, they lose all, and will remain ignorant and brutish.—Persuade the master of the family, every Lord's day evening, to cause all his family to repeat some catechism to him, and give him an account of what they have learned that day in public.—If you find any who cannot spend the time profitably at home, advise them to take their families to some godly neighbour that can.

If

If any in the family are known to be unruly, give the master a special charge concerning them, and make him understand what a sin it is to connive at, and tolerate them.—If you can thus get heads of families to perform their duty, they will save you much pains with the rest, and greatly promote the success of your labours. You cannot expect a general reformation, till you procure family reformation. Some little obscure religion there may be, in here and there one; but while it sticks with single persons, and is not promoted by these societies, it does not prosper, nor promise much for future increase.

4. Another part of our ministerial oversight lies in VISITING the SICK, and helping them to prepare for a fruitful life, or a happy death.

Though this be the business of all our lives and theirs, yet a time of sickness requires extraordinary care both in them and us. When time is almost gone, and they must be now or never reconciled to God and possessed of his grace, oh! how does it concern them to redeem their few remaining hours, to ‘lay hold on eternal life!’ And when we see that we shall have but a few more days or hours with them, in which to speak to them in reference to their eternal state, what man that is not an Infidel, or to the last degree stupid, would not be with them, and do all that he can in that
short

short space for their salvation! Will it not awaken us to compassion, to look upon a languishing man, and think that within a few days his soul will be in heaven or in hell?—So great is the change made by death, that it should awaken us to the greatest sensibility to see a man so near it; and it should excite in us the deepest pangs of compassion, to do the office of inferior angels for the soul, before it departs from the flesh, that it may be ready for the convoy of superior angels, to transmit it to the prepared glory. When a man is almost at his journey's end, and the next step puts him into heaven or hell, it is time for us to help him, if we can, while there is hope.

As the present necessity of sick persons should induce us to take that opportunity, for their good, so should the advantage which sickness and the foresight of death affordeth for it. There are few of the stoutest hearts but will hear us on their death-beds, though they scorned us before. They will then be as tame as lambs, who before were as untractable as mad-men. I find not one in ten of the most obstinate scornful wretches in the parish, but when they come to die, will humble themselves, confess their faults, seem penitent, and promise, if they should recover, to reform their lives. With what resolution will the worst of them seem to cast away their sins, exclaim against their follies, and the vanities of the world, when they see that
death

death is in earnest with them! I confess it is very common for persons at such a season to be frightened into ineffectual purposes, but not so common to be converted to fixed resolutions. Yet there are some exceptions. That there are so few, should make both them and us the more diligent in the time of health; and that there are any, should bestir us at last, in the use of the last remedies.

It will not be useless to *ourselves* to read such lectures of mortality. Surely it will much try the faith and seriousness of ministers or others, to be about dying men. They will have much opportunity to discern whether they themselves are in earnest about the affairs of the world to come. 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting;' for it tends to make the heart better when we see the end of all the living, and what it is that the world will do for those who sell their salvation for it.—It will excite us the better to consider the use of faith and holiness, which cannot prevent us from dying, any more than others, but which may enable us to die better than they.—To render your visits to the sick the more useful, take the following directions.

Stay not till their strength and understandings be gone, and the time so short that you scarcely know what to do, but go to them as soon as you hear they are sick, whether they send for you or not.—When the time is so short, that there is no opportunity

tunity to attempt the change of their hearts in that distinct and gradual way which is usual with others, we must be sure to dwell upon those truths which are of the greatest importance, and which are the most likely to effect the great work of their conversion.—Shew them the certainty and glory of the life to come; the way in which it was purchased; the great sin and folly of neglecting it in time of health; yet the possibility that remains of obtaining it, if they do but close with it heartily as their happiness, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, as the way thereto; abhorring themselves for their former evil, and unfeignedly resigning up themselves to be justified, sanctified, ruled, and saved by him. Shew them the sufficiency and necessity of the redemption by Jesus Christ, and the fulness of the Spirit, which they may and must be partakers of; the nature and necessity of faith, repentance, and resolutions for new obedience, according as there shall be opportunity. Labour, upon conviction and deliberation, to engage them by solemn promise to Christ, that if their lives are spared, they will yield him such obedience*.

* In Mr. BAXTER's works (Vol. I. p. 511, &c.) there is "A form of exhortation to the godly and the ungodly in their sickness," containing excellent directions on this head.—Since this was written, the piece referred to has been printed, in a small volume, entitled, *Instruction and Consolation to the Aged, the Sick, and the Dying.* Burditt. Pr. 2s.

If they recover, go to them purposely to remind them of their promises, that they may reduce them to practice. If, at any time afterward, you see them remiss, go to them again, to put them in mind of what they formerly said. This is often of great use to such as recover; it has been the means of converting many a soul. It is necessary therefore, that you visit them whose sickness is not mortal, as well as them that are dying. You will hereby have some advantage to bring them to repentance and newness of life, as you will afterwards have this to plead against their sins. When the emperor *Sigismund* asked the bishop of *Colen* "What was the way to be saved?" he answered him, "That he must be what he promised to be, when he was last troubled with the stone or the gout."

5. It is the duty of ministers to reprove and admonish such as have been guilty of notorious and scandalous sins.

Before we bring such matters to the congregation, (of which hereafter) it is ordinarily fit for the minister to try what he himself can do more privately, to bow the sinner to repentance. A great deal of skill is here required, and a difference must be made according to the various tempers of the offenders. But with the most, it will be necessary to fall on with the greatest plainness and power; to shake their careless hearts, and shew them the
evil

evil of sin ; its sad effects ; the unkindness, unreasonableness, unprofitableness, and other aggravations that attend it ; what it is they have done against God, and themselves.

6. We ought to give due encouragement to those humble, upright, obedient christians, who profit by our teaching, and are ornaments to their profession.

We should, in the eyes of all the flock, put some difference between them and others, by our more especial familiarity, and other testimonies of our approbation of, and rejoicing over them, that so we may both encourage them, and excite others to imitate them. God's graces are amiable and honourable in all, even in the poorest of the flock. The smallest degrees must be cherished and encouraged ; but the highest, more openly honoured, and proposed to imitation. They who slight the most gracious because they are of the laity, while they claim to themselves the honour of the clergy, as they shew themselves proud and carnal, take the ready way to debase themselves, and to bring their office into contempt. If there be no honour due to the real sanctity of a christian, much less to the relative sanctity of a pastor ; nor can he reasonably expect it should be given him.

C H A P. III.

Of several particular cases and characters, to be regarded both in preaching and private discourse.

WE are next to consider our ministerial work (both in public and in private) in reference to the several qualities of the object.

I. The first part of it lies in bringing unsound professors to sincerity, that they who before were christians in name only, may be such indeed.

Though we be not absolutely certain that this or that man in particular is unsound and un sanctified, yet as long as we have a certainty that many such attend upon our ministrations; and since we have a great probability that this is the character of some that we can name, we have ground enough to go upon, in treating with them for their conversion.

Alas! the misery of the unconverted is so great, that it calls loudest for our compassion. They 'are in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity.' They have no part or fellowship in the pardon of sin, or the hope of glory. We have therefore a work of great necessity to do for them; even to 'open their eyes, to turn them from darkness unto light; from the power of Satan unto
' God,

‘ God, that they may receive the forgiveness of
 ‘ sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified by
 ‘ faith in Christ ;’—to soften and open their hearts,
 to the entertainment of the truth, ‘ if peradven-
 ‘ ture God will give them repentance, to the ac-
 ‘ knowledging of it, that they may escape out of
 ‘ the snare of Satan, who are led captive by him at
 ‘ his will.’

It is so sad a case to see men in a state of dam-
 nation, that methinks we should not be able to let
 them alone, either in public or in private, whatever
 other work we have to do. I confess I am forced
 frequently to neglect that which would tend to the
 further increase of the godly, and what may be
 called ‘ stronger meat,’ because of the lamentable
 necessity of the unconverted.—Who can talk of
 controversies, or nice unnecessary points, or even
 truths of a lower degree of necessity, however ex-
 cellent, to gratify certain hearers of higher fan-
 cies, (who look for rarities, and expect to have
 their ears pleased) while he sees a number of igno-
 rant, carnal, miserable sinners, before him, who
 must be changed or damned? Methinks I even see
 them entering upon their final woe! Methinks I
 hear them crying out for the speediest help!—If
 they have not hearts to seek or ask for help them-
 selves, their *misery* speaks the louder. As Paul’s
 spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the
 Athenians so addicted to idolatry, methinks it

should cast us into one of his paroxysms, to see such numbers of men in the greatest danger of being everlastingly undone. If by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues, than *Cræsus's* danger did the tongue of his son. He that will let a sinner go down to hell for want of speaking to him, has infinitely less esteem for souls than the Redeemer of them had ; and less for his neighbour, than rational charity will allow him to have for the greatest enemy. Oh ! therefore, brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the most miserable. Whatever you pass over, forget not poor souls, who are under the condemnation and curse of the law, and who may every hour expect the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. Oh ! call after the impenitent with the greatest importunity, and diligently pursue this great work of converting souls, whatever else you leave undone !

II. The next part of our ministerial work, is for the building up those who are already converted. And here our work is various, according to the various conditions of such.

1. Many of our flock are young and weak ; though of long standing, yet of small proficiency or strength.

Indeed

Indeed this is the most common condition of the godly: most of them stop at very low degrees of grace; and it is no easy thing to get them higher. To bring them to higher and stricter *opinions*, is easy enough; but to increase their knowledge and gifts, is not easy; and to increase their graces is the hardest of all.

A state of weakness in grace is of very bad consequence. It abates consolation and delight in God, and makes persons less serviceable to God and man. They dishonour the gospel, they do but little good to any about them, or to themselves. And as they live to but little profit, they are unwilling, and too unfit, to die. How diligent then should ministers be to cherish and increase the graces of God's people! The strength of christians is the honour of the church. When men are inflamed with the love of God; live by a lively operative faith; set light by the profits and honours of the world; love one another with a pure heart fervently; can bear, and heartily forgive a wrong; suffer joyfully for the cause of Christ; walk inoffensively in the world; study to do good, willing to be the servants of all for this end; becoming all things to all men that they may win them; yet abstaining from the appearance of evil; and seasoning all their actions with a sweet mixture of prudence, humility, zeal, and heavenly spirituality; O what an honour are they to their profession!

what ornaments to the church! how excellently serviceable to God and man! The world would sooner believe that the gospel is indeed a work of truth and power, if they could see more of these effects of it upon the hearts and lives of men. They are better able to read the nature of a man's religion in his *life* than in the Bible. Those that 'obey not the word, may be won by the conversion' of such as these. It is therefore a necessary part of our work, to labour after the polishing and 'perfecting of the saints,' that they may be strong in the Lord, and fitted for their master's use.

2. Another sort of converts, who need our assistance, are such as labour under some particular distemper, or such as are often overcome by some particular lust, which keeps their graces under, and makes them temptations or troubles to others, and burdens to themselves.

Alas! there are too many such persons as these. Some are especially addicted to pride; some to worldliness; some to this or that sensual desire; and many to sudden anger or violent passions.— Now it is our duty to give our assistance to all these. We should labour, by dissuasions and clear discoveries of the odiousness of their sin, and by suitable directions about the way of remedy, to help them to a fuller conquest of their corruptions. We are the leaders of Christ's army against the
powers

powers of darkness, and we must resist all the works of darkness, wherever we find them, though it be in the children of light. We must be no more tender of the sins of the godly, than of the ungodly; nor ought we any more to befriend or favour them. In proportion as we love their persons above others, should we express it, by opposing their sins.—We must expect to meet with some tender persons among them (especially when iniquity has got to any head, and many have indulged it) who will be as peevish, and as impatient of reproof, as some worse men; nay they will interest piety itself with their faults, and say that a minister who preaches against them, preaches against the godly. But the servants of Christ must do their duty, notwithstanding men's peevishness, and must not so far 'hate their brother,' as to forbear the plain rebuking of him, and 'suffer sin to lie upon his soul.'

3. A third sort of persons who require our regard, are DECLINING christians, who have either fallen into some scandalous sin, or have abated their zeal and diligence, and discover that they have 'lost their former love.'

As the case of backsliders is very sad, our diligence must be great for their recovery. It is sad to themselves, to have lost so much of their life and peace and usefulness; and to have become so serviceable to Satan and his cause. It is sad to us,

to see that all our labour is come to this ;—that when we have taken so much pains with men, and have entertained such hopes concerning them, all should be so far frustrated. It is saddest of all to think that **GOD** should be so abused by those whom he hath so loved, and for whom he has done so much ; that the enemy should have obtained such an advantage over their graces ; and that **CHRIST** should be so ‘ wounded in the house of his friends ;’ —that the name of God should be evil spoken of through them, and that those who fear him should be reproached for their sakes.—Besides, the condition of such persons is deplorable, as a partial backsliding has a tendency towards a total apostacy, and would end in it, if special grace were not to prevent. The worse the condition of such christians is, the more lies upon us for their effectual recovery. We should ‘ restore those that are overtaken with a fault, in the spirit of meekness ;’ and yet see to it, that the sore be thoroughly searched and healed, what pain soever it cost. We should especially look to the honour of the gospel, and see that such persons rise by such free and full confessions, and by such expressions of true repentance, that some reparation may be made to the church and their holy profession, for the wound of dishonour they had given both, by their sin. Much skill is required to the restoring of such souls.

4. Our

4. Our assistance is also necessary for such of our people as have fallen under some great TEMPTATION.

Every minister therefore, should have much insight into Satan's wiles. We, of all persons, should 'not be ignorant of his devices.' We should be acquainted with the great variety of them; with the cunning craft of his instruments, 'who lie in wait to deceive,' and with all the methods used by the grand deceiver.—Some of our people lie under temptations to error; especially the young, the unfettled, the self-conceited, and such as are most conversant with seducers. Young, raw, ungrounded christians, are commonly of their mind who have most interest in their esteem, and most opportunity of familiar conversation to draw them into their way. And as they are tinder, erroneous persons want not the sparks of zeal to set them on fire. A zeal for error and opinions of our own is natural; it is easily kindled and kept alive; though it is far otherwise with a spiritual zeal for God. How much prudence and industry then is necessary for a pastor, to preserve the flock from being corrupted with noxious conceits; and especially such as lie under peculiar temptations to them.

Others are under temptations to worldly-mindedness; others to intemperance; others to lust. Some to one sin, and some to another. A faithful pastor therefore, should have his eye upon all his

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flock ; should labour to be acquainted with their natural dispositions ; with their business in the world ; with the company they live in, or are most conversant with ; that so he may know where their temptations lie, and endeavour speedily, prudently, and diligently to help them, both by his public preaching and private discourse.

5. Another branch of our ministerial work, is to COMFORT the disconsolate ; and to settle the peace of our people's souls, on sure and lasting grounds. To which end, the quality of their complaints, and the course of their lives had need to be known ; for all persons must not have the same consolations, who have the same complaints*.

6. Strong and lively Christians also have need of our assistance ; partly to prevent their temptations and declensions, or to preserve the grace they have ; partly to help them to a further progress and increase ; and partly to direct them in the improvement of their graces for the service of Christ and the assistance of their brethren : as also to encourage them (especially the aged, the tempted, and the afflicted) to persevere, that they ' may receive their crown.'

* The author's reason for his brevity on this head, was, that he had particularly treated of it in his other works, (see Vol. I. p. 281, 477, and his *Directions for spiritual Comfort*, Vol. II. p. 846). He refers also to other authors, particularly to *Balton's Instructions for right Comforting*.

III. Those whose characters are DOUBTFUL are also to be regarded both in our public and private discourses.

There are some of our flock who, by a professed willingness to learn and obey, make it probable that they may have true repentance and faith, who yet, by their ignorance or lukewarmness, or by some uneven walking, will occasion us fears as great as our hopes, or greater, with regard to their present safety. We may see occasion to doubt the worst, though we have not ground to charge them with being unconverted and impenitent persons. I think that half who come to me are of this sort, among whom I almost dare pronounce ten to one to be unregenerate. It may put some younger ministers to a difficulty to know what they should do with this sort of people, where they have no sufficient ground to pronounce them godly or ungodly, whatever their fears or hopes may be.

I would advise you to be very cautious how you pass too hasty or absolute censures on any that you have to do with; because it is not an easy matter to discern that a man is certainly graceless, who professes to be a christian. Besides, we may discharge our duty with regard to such persons, without an absolute conclusion concerning their real characters. With regard to such let the following hints suffice.

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Keep them close to the use of public and private means. — Be often with the lukewarm and careless, to admonish and awaken them: for this purpose take the opportunity of sickness, which will bow their hearts and open their ears. — See that they spend the Lord's day, and order their families, aright. — Draw them off from the temptations to, and occasions of sin. — Charge them to come to you for help when their minds are distressed, to open to you their temptations and dangers before they are swallowed up by them. — In your preaching, and your discourse with them, strike at the great radical sins; self-seeking, carnality, sensuality, pride, worldly-mindedness, infidelity, &c. — Press them to read the scriptures, and other good books; and direct them to such as are most likely to awaken them. — Engage their godly neighbours to have an eye over them. — Keep up discipline in the church to awe them. — But especially maintain the life of grace in your own souls, that it may so appear to them in all your sermons, that every one who comes cold to the assembly, may have his mind properly affected before he departs.

[There is another sort of men, whom you will probably meet with, in regard to whom it may not be improper here to add a few hints of advice, namely,]

IV. OPI-

IV. OPINIONATED persons ; who being tainted with pride and self-conceit, are more ready to teach, than to be taught ;—who rather than receive instruction from you, will quarrel with you, as ignorant and erroneous.

The preservation of the unity and peace of your congregations, very much depends on your right dealing with such persons as these. To cure them of their conceits, and to prevent others being infected with them, take these directions.

1. If any such person should fall in your way in any of your private conferences with your people, and by his impertinence should strive to divert you from better discourse, tell him that the meeting was appointed for another use, and that you think it improper to pervert it from that. However let him know, that you do not say this to avoid any trial of the truth, but that you will, at any other time, give him satisfaction, or receive instruction from him.

2. When you meet him with such an intent, ask him such questions as appear to be of great importance, but take care to throw some difficulty in his way, and be sure to put him mostly upon defining or distinguishing. If he discover his ignorance in the case proposed, endeavour to humble him under a sense of his pride and presumption, in going about with a teaching, contentious behaviour,

viour, while he is so ignorant in things of such great moment. At the same time, see to it that you be able to give him information with regard to those points, wherein you find him ignorant.

3. Take care to discern the spirit of the man. If he be a settled perverse schismatic, quite transported with pride, humble him as much as you can before other persons. But if you find him godly, and there is hope of his restoration, only do this in a private manner. Do not let fall any bitter words that would tend to his disparagement. We must always be as tender of the reputation of good men, as our fidelity to them and the truth will permit. We must 'restore such with the spirit of meekness.' There is little hope of doing them any good, if you once exasperate them, and disaffect them towards you.

4. If you come to debate any controversy with such persons, tell them that seeing they think themselves able to teach you, it is your desire to learn. When they have spoken their minds in their dictatorial manner, let them know, that they have said nothing new to you; that you had considered of it all before, and that if you had seen divine evidence for it, you had received it long ago: that you are truly willing to receive all truth, but that you have far better evidence for the doctrines you have embraced than they have for the contrary. If they desire to hear what your evidence is, tell them,
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that if they will hear as *learners*, with impartiality and humility, freely entertaining the truth, you will communicate your evidence to them in the best manner you can.—When you have brought any one to this, shew him your reasons against the grossest imperfections of his own discourse, and then give him a few of the clearest texts of scripture in support of your sentiments. When you have done, lend him some Book that best defends the truth in question ; desire him to peruse it carefully, and to bring you a sober solid answer to it if, after the perusal, he judge it to be unsound. And if you can, fasten some one of the most striking evidences on him before you leave him. If he refuse to read the book, endeavour to convince him of his unfaithfulness to the truth and to his own soul.

But above all, before you part, sum up the truths wherein you are both agreed. Ask such a person whether he suppose that you may obtain salvation if you live according to your own faith ? And if he will allow that you may, whether they who are so far agreed should not live in love and peace, as children of the same God, and heirs of the same kingdom ? Whether, notwithstanding your smaller difference, you are not bound to hold communion in public worship and church relation, and to walk together in the fear of God ? And
whether

whether it be not schism to separate for the sake of so small a disagreement.

5. In order to preserve the church from such an infection it is desirable, that the minister be so far superior to the people, as to be able to teach them, and keep them in awe, and manifest their weaknesses to themselves and others.—The truth is (a truth which cannot be hid) it is much owing to the weakness of ministers, that our poor people run into so many factions. When a proud seducer has a nimble tongue, and a minister is so dull or ignorant as to be confounded by him in company, it brings him into contempt, and overthrows the weak, who judge *his* to be the best cause, that talks in the most confident, plausible, and triumphant manner.

6. Endeavour frequently and thoroughly to possess your people's minds with the nature, necessity, and daily use of the great unquestionable principles of religion, and of the great sin and danger of a perverse zeal about the lower points; especially before the greater are well understood. Convince them of the obligations we are all under, to maintain the unity and peace of the church.

If any small, but hurtful, controversy should arise, in order to divert them from it, do you raise a greater yourself; which you have better advantage to manage, and which is not likely to make a division. Let contentious persons know that there
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are greater difficulties than theirs, first to be resolved. Go and converse with the persons whom you perceive to be affected with any noxious conceits, as soon as possible. When a fire is kindling, resist it in the beginning, and make not light of the smallest spark.

7. Preach to such auditors as these, some higher points of doctrine, [about which they need information.] Feed them not always 'with milk,' but sometimes with 'strong meat;' for it exceedingly puffs them up with pride, when they hear nothing from ministers, but what they already know, and can say themselves. This it is that makes them think themselves as wise as you, and as fit to be teachers, and it is this that hath set so many of them on preaching: for they believe that you know no more than you preach.—However, do not neglect the great fundamentals of religion, nor wrong other persons for their sakes.

8. Be sure to preach as little as possible against such persons as these. Never in a direct manner oppose their sect *by name*, or any reproachful titles; for such people are ordinarily very tender, proud, passionate, and rash; so that they will but hate you, and fly from you as an enemy, and say that you rail at them. Without mentioning *them*, lay the grounds clearly and soundly, which must subvert their errors. If you are obliged at any time to deal with them directly, handle the controversy thoroughly,

thoroughly, peaceably, and convincingly. Be not however, long upon it; do not say all that can be said; but choose that which they can have the least pretence to quarrel with, and omit what would require more trouble to defend.

9. Keep up private meetings, and draw these persons in among you: manage them prudently, and by this means you may keep them from such meetings among themselves as will promote divisions. Professors very commonly will have private meetings; which, if well conducted, are of great use to their edification; but if not, will be of bad consequence.

In the management of them for the present purpose, observe the following rules. Be sure that you give a constant attendance. Let not the exercises of the meeting be such as encourage private men's ostentation of their gifts, but such as tend to the edification of the people. Do not let private men preach or expound scripture; nor let every one speak to questions of his own proposing. Repeat [the substance of] the sermons you have preached; call upon God in prayer, and sing his praise. Yet let there be some opportunity for the people to speak. When you have done repeating, give them liberty to propose any difficulties they want to have resolved, respecting the subject in hand, or any other. If you perceive any of them bent upon the exercise of their abilities
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for ostentation, be not too severe upon them, but mildly let them know, that it is for their good, and the edification of the church, that you oppose it. However,

10. Make use of your people's gifts to the utmost, as your helpers, in their proper places, in an ordinary way, and under your guidance. This may prevent them from using them in a disorderly way, in opposition to you. It has been a great cause of schism, that ministers have contemptuously refused to make use of private men's talents for their assistance, and thrust them too far from holy things. The good work is likely to go on but poorly, if none but ministers are employed in it. By a prudent improvement of the gifts of the more able Christians (none of which God gave to be buried) we may receive much help from them. For instance :

Urge them to be diligent in teaching, catechizing, and praying with their own families. Recommend it to them to step out now and then, to their ignorant neighbours, to catechize and instruct them, in meekness and patience. Desire them to go often to impenitent and scandalous sinners, and to endeavour, with all possible skill and earnestness, yet also with love and patience, to reform them, to convert, and save their souls.— Acquaint them with their duty of watching over each other in brotherly-love ; of admonishing
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and exhorting one another daily. If any of them walk disorderly, to reprove them, and if they prevail not, 'to tell the officers of the church,' that they may be further dealt with, as Christ has appointed.—At your private meetings employ them in prayer. In some cases, send them to visit particular persons in your stead, when you are prevented from going. Let some of them be chosen to represent, and be agents for the church, in affairs of importance relating to it. Let such as are fit, be made subservient officers, I mean *Deacons*, that they may afford you help in a regular way; and then they will discern themselves obliged, by their relation, to maintain the unity of the church, and the authority of the ministry. But be sure that they be men competently qualified for the office.

I am persuaded, if ministers had thus used the abilities of their ablest members, they might have prevented much of the division, distraction, and apostacy, that have befallen us; for they would then have found work enough upon their hands, for higher parts than theirs, without invading the ministry; and would have seen cause to bewail the inequality of their abilities to the work which belonged to them. Experience would have convinced and humbled them more than our words will do.

11. Still

11. Still keep up christian love and familiarity even with those that have begun to warp and make divisions: lose not your interest in them while you have any thoughts of attempting their recovery.

If they withdraw into separate meetings, follow them, and enter into a mild debate as to the lawfulness of it. Tell them that you have a mind to hear what they have to say, and to be among them for their good, if they will give you leave, for fear they should run to further evil. You will thereby prevent much reviling, and the venting of further errors, and by a moderate gentle opposition of them, may in time, convince them of their folly: and by this means, if any seducers come from abroad to confirm them, you will be ready to oppose them, and so you will at least do much to prevent the increase of their party.

Ministers themselves have occasioned many of the divisions in England, by contemning those that have withdrawn into separate meetings; by talking against them, and by reproving them in the pulpit, while they have been entire strangers to them, or have shunned their company; and in the mean time have given seducers an opportunity to be familiar with them, and to do what they pleased with them without contradiction.—Oh that ministers had been less guilty of the errors and schisms that they talk against! But it is easier to chide sectaries in the pulpit, and subscribe a testimony against

against them, than to play the skilful physician for their cure, or to do the tenth part of our duty to prevent or heal their disorders. I am not finding fault with prudent reprehensions of them in public; but I think too many of us have cause to fear, lest we do but publicly proclaim our own shame, by our negligence or weakness; and lest, in condemning and testifying against them, we testify against and condemn ourselves.

12. In order to preserve your church from divisions, and to keep your people from running after irregular, libertine preachers, be sure that you never let these authors of schism out-do you in any thing that is good.

As truth should be more effectual for sanctification than error, if you give them this advantage, you give them the day, and all your disputations will do but little good. Weak people judge all by the outward appearance and by the effects, not being able to judge of the doctrine itself. They think he has the best cause, whom they take to be the best man. I extend this rule both to doctrine and to life. e. g. If a libertine preach *Free-grace*, do you preach it up more effectually than he: be much upon it, and make it more glorious, on right grounds, than he can do on his wrong. If on the like pretence he magnify the grace of *Love*, do not contradict him in the affirmative, only in the negative and destructive part: but go beyond him,
and

and preach up the Love of God, with its motives and effects, more fully and effectually than he can do, on the corrupt grounds on which he proceeds; or else you will make all the silly people believe, that the difference between you and him is, that he is for Free-grace, and for the Love of God, and that you are against both. So if an enthusiast talks of the Holy Ghost, as the light and witness and law within us, do you fall upon that subject too, and do that well which he does ill. Preach up the office of the Holy Spirit; his indwelling and operations; the light and testimony and law within us, better than he does.—You must *dwell* upon these things in your preaching, as well as he; for the people will take no notice of a short concession. I might mention many more instances to this purpose, but these will be sufficient to shew what I mean: the sum of which is, that preaching TRUTH is the most successful way of confuting error. Further,

We should be careful that seducers do not excel us in the Practice of religious duties, any more than in defending any sacred truths.—Do any of them express a hatred of sin, and a desire of church-reformation? We should much more. Do they, when they meet together, spend their time in religious discourse, instead of vain jangling? Let us do so much more. Are they unwearied in propagating their opinions? Let us be much more diligent in propagating the truth. Will they con-

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descend

descend to the meanest, and creep into houses to lead captive the silliest of the flock? Let us stoop as low, and be as diligent to do them good. Are they loving to their party, and contemners of the world? Let us be lovers of *all*: especially of all the saints. Let us ‘do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith.’ Let us love an enemy as well as they can do a friend. Let us be more just than they; more merciful than they; more humble, meek, and patient than they; ‘for this is the will of God, that ‘by well-doing, we put to silence the ignorance of ‘foolish men.’—There is no virtue wherein your example will do more to abate men’s prejudices, than humility, meekness, and self-denial. Forgive injuries, and ‘be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.’ Imitate our blessed Lord, ‘who when he was reviled, reviled not again.’ Take not up carnal weapons against your enemies, but overcome them with kindness, patience, and gentleness. If you believe that CHRIST was more imitable than Cæsar or Alexander, and that it is more glorious to be a christian than a conqueror, or to be a man than a beast, contend with charity and not with violence. If we thus excel these men in a holy, harmless, righteous, merciful, fruitful, and heavenly life, as well as in soundness of doctrine, ‘by our fruits we shall be known;’ and the weaker sort of people will see the truth, in this reflection of it, who cannot see it in itself. Then

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our 'light will so shine before men, that they may be led to glorify our father who is in heaven;' and even 'they that obey not the word, may, without 'the word, be won by the conversation' of their teachers. — Oh how happy had England been; how happy had all the churches been, if the ministers of the gospel had taken these courses! this would have done more against error and schism, than all our exclaiming against them hath done, or than all the force of the magistrate can do.

CHAP. IV.

Of CATECHISING : with peculiar Directions in reference to it.*

FOR the better management of this work, the following directions may be of service:—they are of two kinds, viz. for bringing your people to comply with your design,—and for executing it in the most acceptable and useful manner.

* By *Catechising*, the author meant, not only hearing persons repeat, and expounding to them, a *Form of words*, containing the principles of religion; but proposing to them familiar questions, in order to judge of their knowledge and dispositions, so as to be the more capable of giving them suitable instructions and admonitions. And this method he recommends not only with respect to children, but those who are come to years of maturity.

I. In order to bring your people to comply with this method of instruction, it will be a matter of vast importance to behave yourselves, through the main course of your ministry, in such a manner as may convince them of your ability, and your unfeigned love to them. When people are satisfied that a minister is qualified for his work, and intends no private ends of his own, but merely their good, they will more readily stoop to his advice, and be persuaded by him.

Supposing this general preparation, the next thing to be done is, to convince your people of the benefit and necessity of this method of instruction, for the good of their souls.—In order to this, it may be proper to preach some plain and serious sermons, to shew the benefit and necessity of an acquaintance with divine truths in general, particularly the great principles of religion; and that persons advanced in life have equal need to be instructed in them with others, and in some respects greater.—Make them understand that this is not an arbitrary business of your devising or imposing, but that necessity is laid upon you to look to every member of your flock, according to your ability, and that if you neglect to do it, they may ‘perish in their iniquities, and their blood be ‘required at your hands.’

When

When this is done, furnish every family that needs it with a catechism, or see that they furnish themselves. Take a catalogue of the names of all those whom you intend thus to instruct, that you may know whom to expect, and who fail to give their attendance.—Deal very gently with them, and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can. Do not insist upon every person's committing the catechism to memory ; but, where they labour under peculiar difficulties, only exhort them to read it often, and get the substance of it into their minds and hearts.—If any persons will not submit to be thus instructed by you, go and expostulate with them ; know what their reasons are ; and convince them of the sinfulness and danger of contemning the help that is offered them.—Souls are so precious, that we should not lose one for want of labour ; but should follow them while there is any hope, and not give them up as desperate till there be no remedy*.

II. Having

* “ Ignorant souls (says Mr. Gurnal) feel no such smart as to put them upon inquiring for a physician. If the minister stay till they send for him to instruct them, he may sooner hear the bell go for them than any messenger come for him. You must seek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are more afraid of their remedy than their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance than to have it cured. It should make us pity them the more because they can pity themselves so little.—It is an unhappiness to

II. Having brought your people to comply with this kind of instruction, the next thing to be considered is, how you should deal the most effectually with them in the work.

And I must say that I think it is a much easier matter to compose and preach a good sermon, than to deal rightly with an ignorant man for his instruction in the principles of religion. This work will try the abilities and tempers of ministers; it will shew the difference between one man and another, more than pulpit-preaching can do. Good bishop USHER observes, “As the laying of the foundation skillfully, is a matter of the greatest importance in the whole building, so it is the very master-piece of the wisest builder. Thus the apostle PAUL conceived of it when he said, *According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid the foundation.* The neglect of this, is the frustrating the whole work of the ministry.”—The directions which I think should be observed in the managing this work are the following.

some of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we cannot attend on them, as their needs require—but let us look to it, that though we cannot do what we should, we be not wanting in what we may.”—*Gurnal's Christian Armour*, p. 235. quoted by the author at the end of his preface. The whole passage is worth reading.

1. When

1. When your people, one family or more, come to you, (which perhaps it will be best for them to do*) begin your work with a short preface to remove all discouragements, and to prepare them for your instructions, *e. g.* “ It may perhaps appear to some of you (my friends) an uncommon and troublesome business, which I now put you upon: but I hope you will not think it needless. Had I thought so, I should have saved you and myself this labour. But God has told me in his word, how great a thing it is to have the charge of souls, and that the blood of them that perish will be required at the hands of such ministers as neglect them; so that my conscience will not suffer me to be so guilty of such a neglect, as I have been. The Lord only knows how long you and I may be together; it therefore concerns me to do what I can for your salvation, and my own, before I leave you and the world. I hope you will be glad of help in so needful a work, and not think much

* Mr. BAXTER, in his preface, tells us what was his method: “ At the delivery of the catechisms (says he) I take a catalogue of all the persons of understanding in the parish; the clerk goes a week beforehand to every family to tell them when to come, *e. g.* One family at eight o’clock, the next at nine, the next at ten, &c.”—It will generally be allowed that in the present day, there are few places in which this method would be practicable. And most will judge it far preferable, in every view, for a minister to go *from house to house*. ED.

of it that I put you to this trouble, when even the trifles of the world cannot be gotten without much greater.

2. In general, take each person alone, and discourse with him out of the hearing of the rest; for some do not like to be questioned before others, and cannot answer you with freedom. However, let none be present but those of the same family, or those with whom they are familiar. I find by experience that, in general, people will bear plain and close dealing about their sin, their misery, and their duty, when you have them alone, better than when others are present.

3. As for those that commit a catechism to memory, it may be proper at the beginning of these exercises, to take an account of what they have learned, and to hear them repeat the answers to each question.

4. When you form questions of your own to propose to them, be careful of the following things.—Let them be such as they may perceive to be of great importance, and of the nearest concernment to themselves: *e. g.* “What do you think becomes of men when they die? Do you believe that you have sinned? What doth sin deserve?—What remedy hath God provided for saving sinful and miserable souls? Hath any one suffered for sin in our stead? Who are they that God will pardon? What change must be made on all that will be saved?”

saved? And how is it made? Where is our chief happiness, and what must our hearts be most set upon?"—Take heed of asking them any nice, doubtful, or difficult questions.—Be very cautious how you put them upon definitions or descriptions: so contrive to bring the predicate into your questions, that they may perceive what you mean. *e. g.* "What is God? Is he flesh and blood as we are, or is he a spirit?"—Look not after words but things; and often leave them to a bare *yes*, or *no*; for there are many elderly and even godly people who cannot speak their minds in any tolerable expressions.—If you find them at a loss, and unable to answer you, do not drive them on too hard, or too long, lest they should imagine that you only intend to puzzle and disgrace them. When you perceive them troubled that they cannot answer, take off their burden by answering the question yourself; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, that they may understand it before you leave them.

5. When you have done what you think necessary in trying their knowledge, proceed to instruct them further. This must be done according to their several characters. If the person be a professor, fall upon something which you apprehend he most needs: either explain some doctrine, or lay the foundation of some duty which you have reason to think he neglects, &c. If the person be

grossly ignorant, give him a plain familiar summary of the christian religion; for though he may have it in the catechism, a more familiar way of discoursing upon it, may help him better to understand it. If you perceive he does not understand you, go over it again; then ask him whether he does or not; and endeavour to leave it fixed in his memory.

6. If you suspect any to be ungodly, whether they be grossly ignorant or not, make a prudent inquiry into their states. The least offensive way of doing it will be, to take your occasion from some article in the catechism which they have repeated: *e. g.* “ Though I have no desire needlessly to pry into the secrets of any, yet because it is the office of a minister to give advice to his people in the matters of salvation, and because it is so dangerous a thing to be mistaken, where life or death eternal are depending, I would entreat you to deal faithfully, and tell me whether you ever found this great change upon your hearts; whether you live in this or that sin; or, whether you perform this or that duty, &c.”—If any such person tells you he hopes he is converted, shew him, in the plainest manner, what true conversion is; then renew and enforce the inquiry. Ask him such questions as these: “ Can you truly say, that all the known sins of your past life are the grief of your heart? That you have felt yourself undone by them? That

That you have gladly entertained the news of a Saviour, and have cast your soul upon Christ alone for salvation?—Can you say from your heart that you hate the sins which you formerly loved, and that you now love that holy life for which once you had no relish?—Do you live in the practice of any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty?—Is the main course and the bent of your whole life to please God, and enjoy him for ever?—Mention particularly some of those duties which you most suspect him to omit, and ask him whether he performs them; especially PRAYER, in the family, and in secret; as also how he spends the Lord's day?

7. If you discern an apparent probability that the person is in an unconverted state, your next business is to labour, with all your skill and power, to bring his heart to a sense of his condition. Address him in some such manner as this.—“Truly friend, the Lord knows I have no mind to make your case worse than it is, nor to occasion you any unnecessary fear or trouble; but I suppose you would take me for an enemy, and not a faithful friend, if I should flatter you, and not tell you the truth. I much fear that you are yet a stranger to the new and divine life. If you were a christian indeed, you would not have lived in such a sin, &c. &c. Alas! What have you been doing? How have you spent your time, that you are so ignorant, and so unprepared for death if you should now be

called to it? If you had died, in an unconverted state, what had become of you, and where had you now been?"—Here be very earnest; if you get not the heart you get nothing. That which does not affect is soon forgotten.

Let this be followed with a practical exhortation concerning the nature and necessity of closing with Christ, and the use of every proper means, for the time to come, to avoid former sins. Speak to them to this effect.—“ I am heartily sorry to find you in so sad a case, but should be more so to leave you in it. Let me therefore entreat you, for the Lord’s sake and for your own sake, to regard what I shall say to you. It is a great mercy that you was not cut off in your natural state; that you have yet life and time; especially that there is a sufficient remedy provided for you in the blood of Christ. There is yet a possibility of your being converted and saved. Let me then entreat you, not to rest in your present condition, since, if you do, you must perish for ever. Think seriously of the vanity of the world; the awful nature of eternity; and the importance of religion. Without any delay, accept of the salvation offered in the gospel, and close with the Lord Jesus Christ who offers it to you. Resolve immediately against your former sins, and be diligent in the use of all God’s appointed means, till the great change of regeneration be wrought. Because you cannot effect this change yourself,
betake

betake yourself daily to God in prayer, and beg of him to effect it, as well as pardon your sins. Avoid carefully all temptations to sin and occasions of it. Forsake your evil companions, and join the company of them that fear God. Especially spend the Lord's day in holy exercises, both in public and in private. Lose not any time, but especially, lose not that most precious time which God has given you to be instructed by him, and prepared for your latter end."—Be sure, if you can, to get a promise from such persons that they will attend to your advice. Ask it solemnly ; reminding them of the presence of God who hears their promises, and will require the performance.

8. Through the whole of these exercises, see that your manner, as well as matter, be suited to the end. Make a difference according to the difference of the persons you have to deal with. With the dull and obstinate, you must be earnest and severe: with the tender and timorous, you must mildly insist upon direction and encouragement. With the young, you must represent the shame and evil of sensual pleasures, and the necessity of mortification. With the aged, you must disgrace the present world ; you must represent the nearness of their change ; and the aggravations of their sins, if they live and die impenitent. With your inferiors, you may be very free ; with your superiors and elders, you must speak with
more

more reverence. To the rich, the nature and necessity of self-denial must be opened: to the poor, we must shew the great riches of glory proposed to them in the gospel.

The evil and danger of those sins must be insisted on, to which each one's age, or sex, or temperature of body, or employment in the world, does most incline them. Be as condescending, familiar, and plain as possible with those of the weakest capacities. Give them the scripture proofs of all that you say, to convince them that it is not you only, but God, by you, who speaks to them. Be serious in all, but especially in your applications. I scarcely fear any thing more than lest some careless ministers will hurry over this work superficially, and destroy this, as they do all other duties, by turning it into a mere formality; proposing a few cold questions, and giving a few cold words of advice, without any life and feeling in themselves, or any likelihood of producing any feeling in the hearers. But surely he that values souls, and knows what opportunity is before him, will act accordingly.

To this end, it will be of considerable importance that both before, and in the work, we take great pains with our own hearts; especially to strengthen our belief of the truth of the gospel, and the invisible glory and misery which are to come. This work will greatly try the strength of
our

our faith. A superficial christian will feel his zeal quite fail him (especially when the duty is grown common) for want of a belief in the things he is treating of, to keep it alive. In the pulpit, from the pews, and in public acts, where there is room for ostentation, the hypocritical minister will give you his best: but an affected fervency and hypocritical stage-action will not hold out long in such duties as these: they are other kind of men that must effectually perform them.—We should endeavour to prepare ourselves for this business particularly by private Prayer. And, if the time will permit, it will be best to begin and end these exercises I am recommending with a short prayer with our people.—Lastly; if God has given you ability, extend your charity to the poorer sort before they part from you, for their relief, and for the time that is thus taken from their labours; especially for the encouragement of those that make the best proficiency.

C H A P. V.

Arguments for personal Instruction, particularly by familiar Catechising.

IT must, indeed, be acknowledged that the method of instruction which has been proposed is attended with many difficulties and discouragements.

ments. Many arise both from our people, and from ourselves.—There is in *us* much dulness and laziness; so that it will not be easy to bring us to be faithful in so hard a work. We have also a base man-pleasing disposition, which will suffer us to let men go quietly to hell, lest we should lose their respect. We are more ready to venture on the displeasure of God, and their everlasting misery, than draw upon us their ill-will; and are so carnal that we dare not be faithful for fear of losing our income, or bringing ourselves into difficulties. Many of us have a foolish bashfulness, which makes us backward to begin this great work. We are so modest, truly, that we blush to speak for Christ, or contradict the devil, or attempt to save a soul; while we are less ashamed of far more shameful works. We are commonly too unfit for this business by reason of our unskilfulness: we know not, as we ought, how to deal with an ignorant worldling for his salvation: how to get within him and win upon him; nor how to suit our addresses to men's several conditions and tempers. But the greatest impediment of all is, that we ourselves are too weak in the faith, and feel too little of the power of religion upon our souls. Our belief of divine truths and invisible things is so feeble, that it will hardly excite in us so kind, resolute, and constant a zeal as is necessary for this work.

Besides

Besides these difficulties from ourselves, we have too many to encounter from our *people*. Many of them will scorn to come to us to be taught, imagining they are too good to be catechised, or too old to learn. Many are so dull that they will keep away, as ashamed of their ignorance; or, if they come, you will find it a hard matter to get them to understand you; and yet more difficult to work upon their hearts, so as to produce a *saving* change; which is our principal end, and without which our labour is almost lost.—Oh what a rock is a carnal heart! How strongly will it resist the most powerful persuasions, and with what unconcern will sinners hear of everlasting life and death! And even when you have made some desirable impressions upon them, if you have not a special care over them, their hearts will soon return to their former hardness, and their old companions and temptations will work off all again. These are doubtless great discouragements; but in a necessary work, they should excite us to the greatest diligence. Consider the benefits to be expected from it,—and the obligations we are under to perform it.

I. Let us consider the *benefits* which may reasonably be expected from this method of private instruction.

1. It is attended with the most excellent advantage for informing the judgment, and changing the
will

will of the ignorant and ungodly. It will tend greatly to inform the understanding, to have the sum of christianity in the memory. The bare words will be but of little advantage, yet when the words are plain English, he who has them by rote, is much more likely to know the truths contained in them than another. Such forms of sound words (though some deride all catechisms as unprofitable) may be of admirable use; especially as we shall have an opportunity, by personal converse with those who have committed them to memory, to try how far they understand them; to explain to them what they do not understand; and to insist on those particulars which we apprehend each person has most need to hear.

In some respects private instruction has the preference to *preaching** What other argument need we

* " Private, frequent, spiritual conference (saith Dr. Hammond) between fellow-christians, but especially between the Presbyter and those of his charge, particularly in the discussion of every man's special sins, infirmities, and inclinations, may prove very useful and advantageous (in order to spiritual directions, reproof and comfort) to the making the man of God perfect. And to tell the truth, if the pride and self-conceit of some, the carelessness of others, the bashfulness of a third sort, the nauseating and instant satiety of any good in a fourth, if the follies of men and the artifices of Satan, had not put this practice quite out of fashion among us, there is no doubt but more good might be done by ministers this way, than is now done

we than our own experience? I seldom deal with men on this great business, in private serious conference, but they go away with some seeming convictions, and promises of new obedience; and sometimes with a deep remorse, and affecting sense of their condition. Yea, I have found (and I doubt not but you have experienced the same) that an ignorant sot, who for a long time had been an unprofitable hearer, has got more knowledge and remorse of conscience, in half an hour's close conversation, than he did by ten years public preaching. I know *that* is the most excellent means, because we therein speak to many at once; but this private way of preaching is usually far more effectual, for many reasons. *e. g.* We have the best opportunity to imprint religious truths upon the heart, when we can speak to each one's particular necessity, and can say to the sinner, 'Thou art the man;' when we can mention his particular case, and address him in regard to it with familiar importunity. If any thing in the

done by any other means, even than by that of public preaching, which is now almost solely depended upon: it being, as *Quintilian* saith, (comparing public and private instruction of youth) a more likely way to fill narrow mouth'd bottles (and such are the most of us) to take them single in the hand, and pour water into them, than to set them altogether, and throw ever so much water upon them." *Dr. Hammond on the power of the keys.* Ch. iv. § 104.

world

world is likely to do our people good, it is this. They will understand a familiar speech, who hear a sermon as if it were nonsense. Besides, they have far greater advantage for the application of it to themselves. By this means, you will hear their objections, and know where Satan has the most advantage over them, or what is it that resists the truth; and so may be the more able effectually to convince them. We can here answer their pleas, drive them to a stand, and urge them to discover their resolutions for the future.—Again; in private, we may speak in a much *plainer* manner than we can in public. The plainest preacher can hardly speak plain enough in the pulpit, to make the illiterate understand him. I have often been surpris'd to find how grossly ignorant many are who have been my hearers several years; who are as unable to answer some of the plainest questions as if they had never heard the gospel in their lives. In public we cannot use such homely expressions, nor so many repetitions as their dulness requires; but in private we may. In public our speeches are long: we quite over-run their understandings and their memories; so that they are confounded and unable to follow us. One thing drives out another, so that they know not what we have been saying: but in private we may take our work *gradatim*, and take our hearers with us as we go. By their answers to our questions we may see how far they go with us, and what we have next to do. In public,
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lic, by our speaking *alone*, we lose their attention; but when they are interlocutors we can easily cause them to attend. I conclude therefore, that public preaching will not be sufficient, nor effectual for the conversion of so many, as this method. Long may you study and preach to little purpose, if you neglect private instruction.

2. This work, if well managed, will be the means of the most *orderly* building up those that are converted, and establishing them in the faith.

It hazards the whole work, or at least very much hinders it, when we do it not in a proper order. How can you build if you do not lay a good foundation? It is owing to the neglect of this, that there are so many deluded novices in religion, and that so many are labouring in vain; 'still learning, without coming to the knowledge of the truth;' like those that would read before they have learned the letters. This makes so many fall away, or to be 'shaken by every wind of doctrine.' These fundamentals are what must lead men to further truths; these they must build upon; these must actuate all their graces, and animate all their duties; these must fortify them against particular temptations. He that knows these well, knows as much as is necessary to make him happy. He that knows these best, is the most understanding christian. He that knows not these, knows nothing. The most godly people, therefore,

fore, in your congregation will find it worth their while to be thus instructed. If you would edify and well establish them, be diligent in this work.

3. Private instruction will tend to make our preaching better understood and regarded.

When you have acquainted persons with the principles, they will more easily perceive what you are aiming at; it will prepare their minds and open the way to their hearts; whereas without this you may lose the most of your labour; and the more pains you take in accurate preparations, the less good you will do.

4. By this means you will become familiar with your people; which is no inconsiderable advantage.

The want of this is a great impediment to the success of our labours. By distance and strangeness, abundance of mistakes between ministers and people are occasioned. Besides, familiarity tends to beget those affections which may open their ears to further teaching. When we are familiar with them they will be encouraged to use freedom in opening their doubts to us, for our resolution. But when a minister knows not his people, or is as strange to them as if he did not, it must be a great hindrance to his doing them any good.—By this familiarity we shall be better acquainted with each person's temper and spiritual state, and so shall know better how to watch over them, how to preach to, and discourse with them; how to lament for,

or

or rejoice over them ; and how to pray to God on their behalf.—We shall hereby be the better enabled to help them against temptations, and prevent their falling into any hurtful errors ; of which they are in great danger while their pastors are strangers to them, and seducers are very familiar with them.—Once more ; this familiarity with our people will better satisfy us in the administration of the Lord's supper ; as we shall hereby better know who are fit, and who are unfit for it. Whereas many will question a minister, who examines his people in order to this ordinance, by what authority he does it, and will not submit to such an examination, the same work will be done in such a course as this, in an unexceptionable manner.

5. This method will better inform the people concerning the nature of the ministerial office, or awaken them to a better attention to it.

It is common for men to think that our work is nothing more than to preach well, to baptize, administer the Lord's supper, and visit the sick ; they are therefore unwilling to submit to more ; and through a common neglect, ministers are become such strangers to their own calling, that they think of doing nothing more. They have hundreds of people to whom they never spoke a word personally for their salvation. Nay, the omission of personal instruction is grown so frequent, even among pious and able men, that the disgrace of it is abated,

ted, and a man may be guilty of it without any dishonour or observation.—Shew the world then, by your practice, what the nature of our office is ; and I hope that you will see the time, when neglect of personal oversight will be taken for as scandalous an omission, as preaching but one part of the day would now be esteemed.—In overthrowing the errors of Popery many have run into the contrary extreme ; lest they should seem to favour auricular confession, they have neglected all personal instruction. I am past doubt that the popish auricular confession is a sinful novelty ; but I must say (though some will think it strange) that our neglect of personal instruction is much worse. Let us, by our practice, shew careless ministers, as well as our people, the importance and necessity of this duty.

Further ; as this course will acquaint the people with our duty towards them, it will also inform them of theirs towards us ; and then they will be more likely to discharge it better. This I mention not for our own sakes only, but because their salvation is much concerned in it. If they do not know what our office is, viz. that it is one great branch of it to admonish and instruct them with regard to their particular cases, it is no wonder if they neglect to apply to us for our help, to their own prejudice. The matter is now come to this pass, that if we exhort them to come for instruction,

tion, or begin to discourse with them about their souls, they question our authority, and look upon us as proud, pragmatistical persons, who would bear rule over their consciences. They in general discover no more wisdom nor gratitude, than if they were to quarrel with a person for quenching the fire when their houses were burning ; or if, when one offered to save them from drowning, they should ask him by what authority he did it.—And what is it that has brought our people to this ignorance of their duty, but our neglect of ours ? Where it is the custom (as among the *Papists*) they are willing to confess all their sins to the priest ; but among us they disdain to be questioned or instructed, because it is not the custom.—Let us then by our diligence in this work endeavour to make it become a common thing ; and thus we shall facilitate the ministerial service to the next generation. If we can but establish this custom, our successors in the ministry will reap the fruit of our labours, as their work will be easier to them ; and thus we may be the means of saving many souls in ages to come, as well as in the present*.

* “ Perhaps you who find a people rude and ignorant (like stones in the quarry, or trees unhewn) may not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire. Yet, as *David* did for *Solomon*, you may, by your pains in teaching and instructing, prepare materials for another who shall rear the Temple. *Gurnal, ubi supra.*

6. Another considerable benefit of private instruction (especially by catechisms) is, that it will keep our people from much of that vanity, which now possesses their minds and takes up their time.

When workmen are employed in their shops, almost all their task is vanity ; and children are apt to learn foolish songs and idle stories, and thus fill their minds with filth and rubbish, which occasions them to lose much time, and to be guilty of many idle thoughts and words. Now when they have a catechism to learn, and know that they must give an account of it, much of their time and thoughts will be better employed. It will particularly find them, and heads of families, profitable employment for the Lord's-Day.

7. As the method of instruction I am recommending is, by supposition, very extensive, we have reason to expect the most *extensive* benefits from it.

It has a more excellent design, and therefore we may hope it will have more important effects, than our accidental conferences with here and there a particular person. In such occasional discourses, I observe ministers satisfy themselves to have spoken some few good words, but seldom set themselves, in so plain and so close a manner, to convince men of their sin and misery, and their need of mercy, as in this purposely appointed work, we shall have an opportunity of doing.

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In short, so weighty and excellent is this duty, that the chief part of church-reformation is behind without it, and consists in it. We are apt to look upon a reformation as what is to be wrought immediately by God, without considering, that it is to be effected by our means. But this we have no warrant to do: in order to it, we must use our unwearied endeavours, and particularly must be diligent in catechising and personal instruction; for this is likely to do more towards effecting such a reformation as we have long prayed and hoped for, than every other means without it. Brethren, all that our forefathers have been doing for the good of the church, and for a true reformation, for so many years, was but to prepare the way for you to come in and do the work. They have opened you the door, and at a great expence of labours and sufferings, have removed many of your impediments. And will you now stand still or loiter? God forbid! Have they spent so much time in fencing the vineyard, in weeding and pruning it, to make it ready for your hands, and will you now fail, who are sent to gather in the vintage? In the name of God, take heed that you do not frustrate their labours, their prayers, and their hopes!

8. The diligent prosecution of this work will do some good to ministers themselves.

It will be the best cure for their idleness and loss of time, in unnecessary discourses, journies, or other

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recreations;

recreations : and at the same time, will cut off that scandal which attends them.—Besides, it will tend to subdue our own corruptions, to increase our own graces, and consequently to procure much peace to our own consciences, and much comfort when our time and actions come to be reviewed. This constant employment of our minds and tongues against sin, and in the cause of Christ and holiness, will do much more towards habituating us to overcome our carnal inclinations, than all the austerities of Monks and Hermits, who addict themselves to unprofitable solitude, and ‘hide their master’s talents.’—Not to mention what an excellent means this will be, to take us, as well as our people, from vain controversies, and discourses upon lesser matters of religion, and thus to cure those unhappy contentions which too often prevail among ourselves.—Having thus considered the advantages of personal instruction, I shall now

II. Point out the obligations ministers are under to the practice of it.

1. The necessity of this duty may be argued from the regard you owe to the glory of God in the fuller success of the gospel.

God is most honoured and pleased when most souls are saved ; for he hath sworn that ‘he hath
‘no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but had ra-
‘ther

‘ther that he return and live.’ How gladly then should you take this course which will most effectually promote this end!—O brethren! if we could generally set this work on foot in all the parishes of England, and prosecute it skilfully and zealously, what a glory would it put upon the face of the nation, and what honour would redound to God thereby! If our common ignorance were thus banished, and our vanity and idleness turned into the study of the way of life, and every family employed in learning catechisms, and speaking of the word and works of God, what pleasure would God take in our cities and countries! He would dwell in our habitations and make them his delight. If we increase the number or strength of the saints, we thereby increase the honour of the King of saints: Christ will be honoured in the fruits of his bloodshed. And the Spirit of grace will also be glorified in the fruit of his operations. And do not these ends require us to use the means with diligence?

2. I may urge this duty, from the general obligation we are all under to do good; and from the regards we owe to the welfare of our people.

Every christian is obliged to do all the good he can for the salvation of others; but every minister is doubly obliged, because he is ‘separated to the ‘gospel’ of Christ, and is to ‘give himself up ‘wholly to that work.’ It is needless to make any further question about our obligation, when

we know in general that we are obliged to do all that is necessary for the conversion and salvation of our people, and that this work (as has been already shewn) is needful to these ends. Of these surely we cannot doubt: let us not then any longer neglect so reasonable and necessary a duty. If the saving of souls,—of your neighbours' souls,—of many souls, from everlasting misery be worth your labour, up and be doing! If you would be the fathers of many new-born unto God, if you would see the travail of your souls with comfort, and be able to say at last, “Here am I and the children “ that thou hast given me,” be diligent in this blessed work. If it would rejoice you to present your converts ‘blameless and spotless to Christ,’ and to see them among the saints in glory, praising the Lamb before his throne, be glad of this singular opportunity that is offered you. ‘What is your ‘hope and joy and crown of rejoicing?’ Are not your saved people ‘in the presence of Christ Jesus ‘at his coming? Yea doubtless they are your glory ‘and your joy.’ If you are the ministers of Christ indeed, you will long for ‘the perfecting of his ‘body, and the gathering in of his elect.’ Your hearts will be set upon it, and you will ‘travail as ‘in birth for them till Christ be formed in them;’ and will take all favourable opportunities, as the sun-shine days in a rainy harvest, in which it is unreasonable and inexcusable to be idle. Nay, if
you

you have but a spark of christian compassion in you, it will appear worth your utmost labour to 'save
' souls from death and to cover a multitude of
' sins.'

O remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that there is an opportunity in your hands to save a soul! to rejoice the angels in heaven! to rejoice Christ himself! and to increase the family of God! There is not a sinner whose case you should not so far compassionate as to be willing to relieve him at a much dearer rate than [by the labour here recommended.]—Can you see sinners as the wounded man by the way, and unmercifully pass by? Can you hear them cry to you as the man of Macedonia to Paul in his vision, "Come and help us," and yet refuse your help? Are you intrusted with an hospital, where one languishes, and another groans, crying out, "Oh help me! pity me for the Lord's sake!" and where a third is raging mad, and would destroy himself and you, and yet will you still sit idle?—If it be said of him that relieveth not men's *bodies*, how much more justly of him that will not relieve their *souls*, 'Who so seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' You are not such hard-hearted men—such monsters, but you will pity the naked, the imprisoned, or those that are tormented with grievous pain or
F 4 sickness;

sickness: and will you not pity a hard-hearted sinner, who must be excluded the presence of the Lord, (if a thorough, speedy repentance prevent it not) and lie under his remediless wrath?—What shall I call the heart of that man who will not pity such a one? The heart of an Infidel! a heart of stone! a very rock or adamant! Surely if he believed the misery of the impenitent, it would be impossible for him not to pity them. Can you tell men, in the pulpit, that they shall certainly be damned except they repent, and yet have no pity on them when you have so proclaimed their danger? And if you do pity them, will you not do thus much for their salvation?

What if you heard sinners cry after you in the streets—“O sir! have pity on me, and afford me your advice! I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God! I know I must shortly leave this world, and I fear lest I should be miserable in the next!”—What if they came to your study door and cried—“Oh pity us! O help us, lest we should be tormented in the flames of hell”—and would not leave you till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God; could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice? I am confident you could not. Why such persons, alas! who do not thus cry for help, are the most miserable. The hardened sinner, who cares least for your advice, needs it most. He that has not so much life as to
feel

feel that he is dead, nor so much light as to see his danger, nor so much sense as to pity himself, this is the man that is most to be pitied. O how can you walk and talk and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, and think of their future misery, you should break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon Hazael, and then fall on with the most importunate exhortations! When you come to visit them in their last sickness, will it not wound your hearts to see them ready to depart into misery, without your having ever dealt seriously with them for their recovery? O then, for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of such poor souls, have pity on them! Bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation.

3. Our obligation to this kind of instruction appears, both from scripture examples and precepts.

We have Christ's own example, who used this interlocutory preaching both to his disciples and to the Jews; and we have the examples of the Apostles who did the like. Indeed this was their ordinary way of preaching: and when they made a speech of any length, the people and they discoursed it out in the conclusion. Thus Peter preached to the Jews; (Acts ii.) and to Cornelius and his friends; (Acts x.) Thus Philip preached to the Eunuch; (Acts ix.) and thus Paul preached to

the jailer ; (Acts xvi.) Thus, as he tells us, he
 ‘ preached privately to those of reputation, lest he
 ‘ should have run and laboured in vain*’. That
 earnest charge of his to Timothy, no doubt, includes
 it: ‘ I charge thee therefore before God and
 ‘ the Lord Jesus Christ, &c. preach the word, be
 ‘ instant in season, and out of season; reprove,
 ‘ rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doc-
 ‘ trinet.’ [Some other passages to the same pur-
 pose were before quoted: vid. p. 40.] But I must
 further tell you.

4. This ministerial fidelity is necessary to your
 own welfare, as well as your people’s.

You can no more be saved without that fidelity
 which belongs to you as ministers, than your peo-
 ple can without that which belongs to them as
 christians. If you care not for others, at least care
 for yourselves. Oh! what a dreadful thing is it to
 answer for the neglect of such a charge as ours!
 What sin more heinous than the betraying of
 souls! That threatening (so often referred to) is
 enough surely to make us tremble; ‘ If thou warn
 ‘ not the wicked, &c. their blood will I require at
 ‘ thy hands.’ I am afraid, nay, I am past doubt,
 that the day is near, when unfaithful ministers will
 wish they had never known their charge; but that
 they had been employed in the meanest occupa-
 tions, instead of being pastors of Christ’s flock;

* Gal. ii. 2.

† 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

when

when besides all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for. Oh brethren! our death, as well as our people's, is near at hand; and certainly death is as terrible to an unfaithful pastor as to any. When we see that we must die, and there is no remedy; that no wit, nor learning, nor popular applause, can avert the stroke or delay the time; but that, whether willing or unwilling, our souls must be gone into that world we never saw, where our persons and worldly circumstances will not be respected—Oh! then for a clear conscience, that can say, “I have not lived to myself, but to Christ; I spared not my pains; I hid not my talent; I concealed not men's misery, nor the way of their recovery; ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness!’” Let us then be diligent in doing good to others and to ourselves, that we may end our days with this glorious triumph. Let us take time while we may have it; and ‘work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.’ If you would prepare for a comfortable death, and a glorious reward, ‘gird up the loins of your minds, and quit yourselves like men.’ If you would be ‘blessed with those that die in the Lord,’ labour now, that you may ‘rest from your labours’ then; and do such works as you would wish to ‘follow you.’

C H A P. VI.

Of Church Discipline.*

THE next part of our over-sight is the use of **CHURCH DISCIPLINE.** This consists (after private reproofs, which were considered above) of the following particulars:—

I. Publicly reproofing offenders.—To conduct this in the most useful manner these things must be observed.

1. The accusations of none (not even the best in the church) should be taken without proof. A

* N. B. The author, in treating this subject, goes on the supposition that discipline is to be extended to all that are in what he calls a church-state, *i. e.* not only those who are admitted to the Lord's table, but those who have acknowledged their relations to the pastor as his charge, by giving him their names; after having regularly "passed from an infant to an adult state, by confirmation;" the nature and the grounds of which rite he has considered at large, in a treatise called "Confirmation and Restauration." See his works, Vol. IV. p. 254.) However, in this Abridgment, what was peculiar to the author's ideas of a church is generally omitted, and this chapter is, for the most part, accommodated to any mode of government which christian churches have commonly adopted.

minister

minister should never make himself a party, before he has sufficient evidence of the case. It is better to let many vicious persons go unpunished and without censure, when we want full evidence against them, than to censure one unjustly: which we may easily do if we go upon bold presumptions alone: and that will bring upon a pastor the scandal of partiality and unrighteous dealing, which will make all his reproofs and censures become contemptible.

2. Let there be therefore a private meeting of chosen persons (the officers, and some delegates of the church on their behalf) to have the hearing of all such cases, before they are made public. They may meet together once a month, at some certain place, that (among other ends) they may be ready to receive what charge shall be brought against any member of the church; that it may be considered whether it be just, and that the offender may be dealt with there first. If the fault be not of a public heinous nature, and the party shall there profess repentance, that may suffice. But if it be otherwise, and the person remain impenitent, he must 'be reprov'd before all.'

3. Great caution and prudence must be exercised in such proceedings, lest we do more harm than good. But let it be such christian prudence as orders duties aright, and directs them to their proper ends, and not such carnal prudence as shall
enervate

enervate or exclude them. It may therefore be proper for young ministers to consult with others, for the more cautious proceeding in such work.

4. In the performance of it, we should always deal humbly, even when we deal most sharply; that we may make it appear it is not from any lordly disposition, nor an act of revenge, but a necessary duty, which we cannot in conscience avoid. It will therefore be proper publicly to disclaim all animosities, and shew the people the commands of God obliging us to what we do.

II. With public reproof must be joined an exhortation of the person to repentance, and to a public profession of it for the satisfaction of the church.

As the church is bound to avoid communion with scandalous impenitent sinners, so when they have had evidence of their sin, they must also see some evidence of their repentance; for we cannot know them to be penitent without evidence. And what evidence is the church capable of, but their profession of repentance first, and their actual reformation afterwards? Both which must be expected and demanded of them. Both in our public reproofs and exhortations we should be very cautious of giving offence: in order to avoid which we should proceed in some such manner as this:

“ Friends and brethren, Sin is so evil and dangerous

gerous a thing, that God has commanded us to
 ‘ exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened
 ‘ through the deceitfulness of it ;’ and not ‘ hate
 ‘ our brother in our heart, but in any wise rebuke
 ‘ our neighbour and not suffer sin upon him.’ Our
 Lord exhorts us, “ if our brother offend us, to tell
 ‘ him of his fault ; and if he will not hear us, to
 ‘ take two or three’ persons with us to reprove
 him ; ‘ and if he will not hear them, to tell the
 ‘ church ; and if he will not hear the church, to
 ‘ esteem him as a heathen or publican.’ Those
 ‘ that sin,’ we are commanded to ‘ rebuke before
 ‘ all, that others also may fear,’ and ‘ if they re-
 ‘ pent not, to avoid them, and not so much as eat
 ‘ with them.*’ Accordingly, having heard of the
 scandalous practice of M. N. of this church, and
 having received sufficient proof that he hath com-
 mitted the odious sin of ***. We have seriously
 dealt with him in private to bring him to repent-
 ance : but to the grief of our hearts perceive that
 he still remains impenitent, (or lives in the same
 sin.) We therefore judge it our necessary duty to
 use this further remedy which Christ hath com-
 manded us to try. And I do earnestly beseech him
 for the sake of his own soul, and require it of him,
 as a messenger of Jesus Christ, as he will answer
 the contrary at the bar of God, to remain no longer

* Lev. xix. 17. Matt. xviii. 15—17. 1 Tim. v. 20.

2 Theff. iii. 6, 12, 14. 1 Cor. v. 11, 13.

112 *Prayer to be joined with public Reproof.* Part II.

stout and impenitent, but unfeignedly to confess and lament his sin before God and this congregation. This desire I here publish, not out of any ill will to his person, (as the Lord knows) but in obedience to Christ, and in love to his soul; wishing that, if possible, he may be saved from his sin, from the power of Satan, and the everlasting wrath of God; and that he may be speedily reconciled to him, and his church." To this purpose should our public admonition proceed: and in some cases, where the sinner esteems his sin to be small, it will be necessary to set it in its proper light, and especially to quote some texts of scripture which aggravate and threaten it.

III. To our reproofs and exhortations should be added the Prayers of the church.

We should pray both for those that have been reprov'd, and those that have been reject'd, that they may repent and be restor'd. We are commanded 'to pray always, and in all things; for all men, and in all places;' so great a business as this, therefore, ought not to be done without it. We should earnestly join together in prayer to God that he would open the sinner's eyes; that he would soften his heart, and save him from impenitency and eternal death. That we have not his request or consent, is no reason against it; for that is his
very

very disease, and the malignity of it. If the person refuses to be present to receive our admonition, it will be proper to desire the prayers of the congregation for him. And let us be very earnest in our prayers, that the congregation may be excited to join with us. Who knows but God may hear such prayers, and that they may be more effectual than our exhortations? However, the people will thereby perceive that we did not make light of sin, and that we do not preach to them in mere custom or form.—When the sinner is thus admonished and prayed for, if it please the Lord to open his eyes and give him repentance, our next duty is,

IV. To proceed for his full recovery: where these things must be observed,

We must not discourage him by too much severity, nor yet by too much haste and lenity palliate the offence, and sink the ideas of discipline. We must urge him to be serious in his humiliation, till he be truly sensible of his sin; for it is not a vain formality that we are to expect, but the recovering and saving of the soul.—We should endeavour to bring him to beg the communion and prayers of the church; and to promise that he will most carefully avoid the sin into which he has fallen, for the time to come. After this we must tell him
of

of the riches of God's love, and the sufficiency of Christ's blood, for the pardon of his sin ; and acquaint him that we are authorized, as the messengers of the Lord, to assure him that, if his repentance be sincere, he is pardoned.—We should then charge him to persevere, and perform his promises ; to avoid temptations, and continue begging mercy and strengthening grace.—Hereupon we should exhort the church, that they imitate Christ in forgiving, and that they retain the person in (or receive him again into) communion ; that they never reproach him with his sin, but forgive and forget as Christ does. We have no warrant to rip up old matters, or to make that public again which has ceased to be so.—After this we should give God thanks for the offender's recovery so far, and pray for his confirmation and future preservation.—The next part of discipline is

V. Rejecting from the churches communion those who, after sufficient trial, remain impenitent.

Exclusion from church communion is of divers kinds and degrees, of which I shall not here treat. That which is most commonly to be practised among us, is only to forbid an offender communion with us, or to inflict a temporary exclusion, called suspension, till it shall please the Lord to give him
repentance

repentance [or till he shall discover very evident marks of impenitence.] We have, indeed, no express directions in scripture how long we should stay to try whether the sinner be so impenitent as to be necessarily and entirely excluded; we must therefore follow the general directions, with such diversity as the case and character of the person, and former proceeding shall require; this being left to the discretion of the church, who must always continue to pray for, and exercise patience towards the offender, till he manifest himself obstinate in his sin. Where a person has openly sinned but once or twice, a profession of repentance may suffice; but if he be accustomed to sin, and has often broken his promises of amendment, then we must require an actual reformation. He that will refuse either to reform, or to make a profession of repentance, must be considered as living in the sin; for a heinous sin, but once committed, is morally continued in till it be repented of; and a mere forbearing of the act is not sufficient.—[If the church, after having waited a proper time, cannot discern in the person any signs of genuine repentance,] they must then proceed to excommunication. The minister must pronounce him unworthy of communion, and authoritatively charge the people in the name of the Lord, to avoid communion with such a person; and must deny him those ordinances and privileges which do not belong to him. And as far as this
act

act of the pastor is not contrary to the word of God, the people are in duty bound to fall in with it.—However, it will be proper to pray for the repentance and restoration even of the excommunicate; and, if God should give them repentance, they are gladly to be received into the communion of the church again.—So much for the nature of church-discipline: and sure I am, if well understood, much of the pastoral work and authority consists in it.

There are many, I know, who would set open the doors of the church, would pluck up the hedge, and lay the vineyard common to the wilderness. Nay, (which is very amazing) some who are esteemed godly divines, reproach, as a sect, those faithful pastors who will not give the sacrament to all the parish, and who maintain discipline in their churches, under the name of Sacramentarians and Disciplinarians; as the impure used to reproach the godly by the name of Puritans. But was not Christ himself the leader of these Disciplinarians? He instituted discipline, and commanded the particular acts of it, [as hath already been proved, from Matt. xviii. See p. 111.] Christ made his ministers the rulers of his church, and put the keys of the kingdom into their hands; and he requires the people to ‘submit to them, and obey them in the Lord.’ *Heb. xiii. 17.*

Agreeable to these scriptures, was the practice of
the

the ancient church for many years after Christ; in which discipline was exercised much more vigorously than among any of us, even in the heat of heathen persecutions, as well as under christian magistrates, till selfishness and formality caused them to be remiss in this and other duties together; as may be seen in the ancient canons and *Cyprian's* epistles. Discipline was not then taken to be a useless thing*; nor would it appear such now, if it were shewed in its strength and beauty, by a vigorous practice.—I know that when the church began to be tainted with vain inventions, the word *Discipline* changed its signification for various of their own rules of life, and austere impositions; but it is for the ancient and truly christian discipline alone that I am contending. There is no room to doubt whether this be our duty, nor whether we are unfaithful as to the performance of it. It is certainly no less our duty because our brethren of late have made so little conscience of it.—And what are the hinderances that now keep the ministers of England from the discharge of it?

1. Some object “ That we shall be guilty of

* *Discipline est custos spei, retinaculum fidei, dux itineris salutaris, fomes ac nutrimentum bonæ indolis, magistra virtutis; facit in Christo manere semper, ac jugitor Deo vivere, ad promissa cœlestia et divina præmia pervenire: Hanc et seclari salubre est, et adversari ac negligere lethale. Cypr. de Discip. p. 265. See Calvin's Instit. Lib. IV. cap. 12. § 1, 2.*

“ defaming

“ defaming men, by thus publishing their crimes.”
 I answer in the words of *Bernard*, “ Cum car-
 “ puntur vitia, et inde scandalum oritur, ipsi sibi
 “ scandali causa est, qui fecit quod argui debet ;
 “ non ille qui arguit. Non ergo timeas contra
 “ charitatem esse, si unius scandalum multorum
 “ recompensaveris pace. Melius est enim ut pe-
 “ reat unus quam uniras.” *Bernard sup. Cantic.*
 Many of us who would be ashamed to omit preach-
 ing or praying half so much, have not considered
 what we do in wilfully neglecting this duty. We
 draw down the guilt of men’s crimes upon our own
 heads, when we do not use God’s means for the
 cure of them*.

2. Others will say “ There is little likelihood
 that public personal reprehension should do any
 good to offenders, because they will be but enraged
 by the shame.” I answer in the words of *Philo* a
 Jew, “ We must endeavour as far as we are able
 “ to save those from their sins who will certainly
 “ perish by them ; imitating good physicians, who
 “ when they cannot save a sick man, do yet wil-
 “ lingly try all means for cure, lest they seem to
 “ want success through their own negligencet.”
 I further answer, It ill becomes the ignorant crea-

* Qui non corrigit refecanda committit.

GREG.

Si quid me scis fecisse incite aut improbe, si id non accusas,
 tu ipse objurgandus es.

PLAUT.

† *Philo* de sacrif. Abel et Cain.

ture

ture to implead the ordinances of God as useless. God can render his own ordinances successful, or else he would never have appointed them. Besides, church-discipline seems to be well calculated for usefulness. It tends to the shaming of sin, and the humbling of the sinner; to manifest the holiness of Christ, of his doctrine, and his church before all the world.—What method should be taken with offenders if not this? Must they be given up as hopeless? That were cruel: and other means are supposed to have been used without success.—The church of Christ has found this method to be successful, even in times of persecution, when, if ever, carnal reason would have told them to forbear it, for fear of driving away their converts.—But besides all that has been said, let it be remembered, that the principal use of this public discipline, is not for the offender himself, but for the church. It tends greatly to deter others from the like crimes, and so to keep our churches and worship pure*.

3. Some will say, “That this method will but restrain men as hypocrites and not convert them.” I answer, Who knows how God may bless his ordinances? It is true repentance to which offenders are exhorted, and which they profess: whether they *truly* profess it or not, who can tell but God?

* *Vitia transmittit ad posteros, qui presentibus culpis ignoscit.*—*Bonis nocet qui malis parcit.* SENECA.

However

However if it only restrains persons, that is a benefit not to be contemned. It is of some importance that sin be disgraced; and so far the church acquit themselves. But the grand objection against discipline, as far as I can learn, is

4. The difficulty of the work, and the trouble or suffering you are likely to bring upon yourselves by it. “We cannot, say you, publicly reprehend one sinner, but he will highly resent it, and bear us malice for it. We can prevail with very few to make a public profession of repentance; and if we excommunicate them, that will enrage them the more. If we were to deal with all the obstinate sinners in the parish, in the manner you advise, it would be dangerous living among them: or we should be so hated, that our labours would become quite unprofitable to them. Duty therefore ceases to be duty, because the hurt that would follow would be greater than the good.”—But are not these reasons as valid against professing and defending Christianity in some times and places, as *now* against discipline? Christ has told us ‘that he ‘came not to send peace?’ and that ‘the world will ‘hate us.’—Many of his servants have met with more difficulty in doing their duty than we can expect; which yet did not prevent their faithful discharge of it. If we did our duty faithfully as ministers, we should now find much the same lot among professed christians, as our predecessors did among infidels.

infidels.—But if you cannot suffer for Christ, why did you ‘put your hands to his plough?’ You ought ‘first to have sat down and counted the ‘cost.’ This makes the ministerial work so unfaithfully done, because it is so carnally undertaken. Many enter upon it as a life of ease and honour from men, and therefore they resolve to attain their ends, whether right or wrong.—As for your making yourselves incapable of doing men any good, if you thus publicly admonish them; I answer, that reason is as valid against plain preaching, or private reproof, or any other duty for which wicked men will hate us. God will bless his own ordinances to do good, or else he would not have appointed them. By this means good may possibly be done to the offender, and even to the excommunicate. I am sure it is God’s means; and the last means we can use; it were therefore perverse to neglect it. However, other persons, both within and without the church, may receive good by it, though the offender himself receive none: and God will certainly have the honour when his church is thus manifestly distinguished from the world. But let me tell you, there is not such ‘a lion in the ‘way,’ as you may imagine; nor is discipline so useless a thing. I bless God, upon the small, and too late, trial I have made of it myself, I can say by experience it is not vain; nor are the hazards

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of

of it such as may excuse our neglect.—To the last objection many have added,

5. “That it is a vain thing to attempt the use of discipline in the church, unless it were established by secular power, and all the people were forced, under a penalty, to submit to it; whereas every man has liberty to despise our censures, and to absent himself when he should appear before the church.”—Here let me ask, How did the church of Christ subsist before the days of *Constantine*, without the help of the civil magistrate? And how was discipline exercised for three hundred years together, when the prince did not so much as give protection or toleration to christians, but even persecuted them to death? Yet then was the church in its best state, and its discipline the most pure and powerful. Are the keys of Christ’s church so unfit and useless, that they will not open and shut without the magistrate’s help! If they have contracted any rust, we may thank ourselves, who have let them lie so long without use. But let me add, that the interposition of the civil magistrate with our discipline, would do more hurt than good: it would but corrupt it by the mixture, and make it become a mere human thing. Your government is all to work upon the Conscience; and the sword cannot reach that. It is not a desirable thing to have repentance so obscured by mere forced confessions, that
you

you cannot know when persons mean as they speak. I confess, if the civil power had forced men to those public confessions of sin and professions of repentance, to which I have persuaded them by the light of God's word, it would have left me, and I believe the church too, very much dissatisfied with them; imagining they only complied because they were compelled.—I am the less sorry that the magistrate doth not interpose, on account of that blind zeal which so much prevails amongst us. Persons of every party lay such a stress upon many opinions of their own, as if life or death depended upon them; making such a great outcry against whatever are called errors by their own sect, without knowing what they are, that if the sword were in such envious, angry hands, there would be little quiet to the church. This may possibly make the magistrate think fit to let us fight it out with our naked fists, and not to put swords into our hands till we know better how to use them. As long as he does not prevent our exercising that kind of discipline which has now been recommended, I fear not but, by the blessing of God, a prudent, resolute, unanimous ministry will, in general, be able to bring persons to submit to it, so as to answer very important purposes.

I shall conclude this subject with earnestly requesting my brethren in the ministry speedily and faithfully to put in execution all the unquestionable

part of the discipline for which I have been contending.

1. Consider how sinful the neglect of it is, and how dangerous with respect to yourselves. It is indeed a sad case that good men, under so much liberty, should satisfy themselves so long in the neglect of so great a duty. It is, I own, a troublesome and painful work, and calls for some self-denial, as it will expose us to the displeasure of the wicked. But dare we prefer our carnal ease, or the love of wicked men, before our duty to Christ our master? Can such slothful servants look for a good reward?

2. The neglect of discipline has a strong tendency to the deluding of souls; by making men think that they are christians when they are not, because they are not separated from such as are; and by making scandalous sinners think their sin tolerable because it is so tolerated by the pastors of the church. We hereby corrupt Christianity itself in the eyes of the world, and do our part to make them believe, that to be a christian is only to be of such or such an opinion, and that the christian religion requires holiness no more than the false religions of the world.

3. By the neglect of discipline you encourage separation. If you will not by this means distinguish between 'the precious and the vile,' the people will do it by withdrawing from you; which
many

many honest christians will think they are necessitated to do. Nor can you wonder, if you keep a number of scandalous sinners in your churches, that some timorous souls should run out of them, as out of an edifice which they apprehend ready to fall. I have known many who have separated merely on this account.

4. By this neglect we do much to bring the wrath of God upon ourselves and our congregation, and so to blast the fruit of our labours. If 'the angel of the church of *Thyatira*,' was reprov'd for suffering seducers in it, and those who joined with them were so severely threatened, surely we deserve reproof on the same ground, for suffering open, scandalous, impenitent sinners among us, and have reason to fear the execution of this threatening upon our churches.

But against all that I have said in behalf of discipline you will plead, "Our people are not ready for it: they will not yet bear it." But is not the meaning of this, that you will not bear the trouble and hatred which it will occasion? I beseech you, in order that you may make a comfortable account to the chief shepherd, and that you may not be found unfaithful in the house of God, that you do not shrink from duty because of the trouble that may attend it. Remember for your encouragement, that the most costly duties are usually the most comfortable; and you may be sure that Christ will bear the cost.

C H A P. VII.

Of the MOTIVES to Pastoral Fidelity in general.

HAVING pointed out and recommended the several parts of the ministerial office, we proceed to consider the MOTIVES to a diligent performance of them. The Lord grant that they may work upon us all according to their truth and importance!

I. The nature of our Office obliges us to take heed to all the flock: we are styled OVERSEERS.

And for what else are we overseers*? To be a bishop or pastor is not to be set up as an idol for the people to bow to; or to be (what the apostle calls the Cretians) 'evil beasts, slow bellies;' to live to our fleshly delight and ease; but it is to be the guide of sinners to salvation. It is a sad thing that men should undertake a calling of which they know not the nature. Do those persons know and consider what they have undertaken, who live in ease and pleasure? who have time to take their superfluous recreations, and spend it in loitering, or in vain discourses, when so much work lies upon their hands? Brethren, do you consider where you

* *Episcopus est nomen quod plus oneris quam honoris significat.* Polyd. Virg. p. 240.

stand,

stand, and what you have taken upon you? You have, under Christ, undertaken a band of his soldiers 'against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places.' You must lead them on in the sharpest conflicts; you must acquaint them with the enemy's stratagems and assaults; you must watch yourselves, and keep them watching. If you miscarry, they and you may perish. You have a subtle enemy; and therefore you must be wise: you have a vigilant enemy, therefore you must be vigilant: you have a malicious, violent, and unwearied enemy; and therefore you must be resolute, courageous, and unwearied. You are in a crowd of enemies, encompassed with them on every side; so that if you do not take particular heed to every one of them, you will quickly fall.

Oh! what a world of Work have you to do! Had you but *one* ignorant person to teach, though willing to learn, what an arduous task would it be! How much more if that person were as unwilling as ignorant! But to have such multitudes of these as most of us have, will find us work indeed! How much wickedness have we sometimes to contend against in one soul! and what a number of such wicked persons have we to deal with! What deep rooting have their sins taken, and under what disadvantage must truth come to them! What strangers are they to the heavenly message we bring them! They frequently know not what you

say, though you speak to them in the plainest language. And when you think you have done them some good, you leave your seed among the 'fowls of the air.' Wicked men are at hand to contradict all that you have said; who will cavil at and slander you that they may disgrace your message, and that they may deride and scorn them away from Christ: thus they quickly extinguish the good beginnings which you hoped you had seen. They use indeed weaker reasons than yours; but such as come with more advantage, being taken from things which they see and feel, and which are befriended by the flesh. Besides, they are more familiarly and importunately urged. You speak but once to a sinner for ten or twenty times that the messengers of Satan do. Moreover, how easily do the 'cares and businesses of the world choke and devour the seed,' which you had sown, and how easily will a frozen carnal heart, though it had no external enemies, extinguish those sparks which you have been long in kindling! Yea, for want of fuel and further help, they will go out of themselves. Among what abundance of distempers, lusts, and passions do you cast your words, where they are likely to meet with but a poor entertainment! And when you think your work doth happily succeed, seeing men under trouble, confessing their sins, promising reformation, and living as new creatures and zealous converts, they will often prove unsound; to have been but superficially changed; to have taken
up

up new opinions, and new company, without a new heart. O how many persons, after some considerable change has taken place, are deceived by the profits, the honours, or the pleasures of the world, and 'again entangled in their former lusts!' Nay, how soon do even the graces of the saints themselves languish, if you neglect them; and how easily are they drawn into shameful ways, to the dishonour of the gospel, as well as their own loss and sorrow! O brethren, what a field of labour is before us! there is not a person you can see, but may find you work!—Exert yourselves then with all your might. In order to quicken you the more let me beg you to attend to the following considerations.

1. Consider the office of an *overseer* was your own voluntary undertaking. No man is forced to be an overseer of the church: does not common honesty then require you to be true to your trust?

2. Consider the *honour* connected with your office, as an encouragement to labour. A great honour indeed it is, to be the 'ambassadors of God,' and the instruments of men's conversion and salvation; to 'save souls from death and cover a multitude of sins.' For ministers to strive for precedence, and fill the world with wide contentions, about the dignity and superiority of their office, shews that they forget the nature and work of that office they strive about. The honour is but the

appendix to the work. If ministers would faithfully and humbly lay out themselves for Christ and his church, without thinking of titles and reputation, they would have honour whether they would or not ; whereas by gaping after it they lose it.

3. Consider that you have many *privileges* belonging to your office, which should engage you to diligence in it. It is no small thing that you are maintained by other men's labours. This is for your work, that you may not be taken off from it, but that you may ' give yourselves wholly to these ' things,' and not be forced to neglect men's souls, while you are providing for your own bodies. Either do the work, or take not the maintenance. Besides, it ought to be considered as a great privilege to be bred up to learning, while many others are brought up at the plough and cart ; to be furnished with so much delightful knowledge, when the world lies in ignorance ; and to converse with learned men about sublime and glorious things, while many others are conversant with none but the most vulgar and illiterate. Especially think what an excellent privilege is it, to live in studying and preaching Christ ! to be continually searching into his mysteries, or feeding on them ! to be daily employed in contemplating the blessed nature, works, and ways of God ! Others are glad of the leisure of the Lord's day, and now and then an hour besides, when they can lay hold of it ; but we
may

may keep a continual Sabbath. We may almost do nothing else but study and talk of God and glory; engage in acts of prayer and praise, and drink in sacred and saving truths. Our employment is all sublime and spiritual. Whether we are alone, or in company, our business is for another world. O that our hearts were but more disposed for this work! what a blessed joyful life should we then live! How sweet would the study be to us! how pleasant the pulpit! and what delight would our conferences yield! What excellent helps do our libraries afford; where we have such a variety of wise silent companions, whenever we please! Surely all these, and more such privileges attending the ministry, bespeak our unwearied diligence in the work. Once more,

4. Consider the interest which all the faithful servants of Christ have in their master's regards. You are related to Christ as well as to the flock, and he is related to you. If therefore you are faithful in your work, you are not only advanced, but secured by the relation. You are 'the stewards of his mysteries,' and the rulers of his household: and he that intrusted you with his work will maintain you in it. But then 'it is required of a steward that a man be found faithful.' Be true to him, and never doubt of his being true to you. Do you feed his flock? He will sooner feed you as he did *Elijah*, than forsake you. In the midst of

enemies, he will 'give you a tongue and wisdom which none shall resist.' If you willingly put your hand to his plough, he will wither the hand that is stretched out against you. His faithful ministers have always had large experience of his care. He who knows that he serves a God who will never suffer any man to be a loser by him, needs not fear what hazards he runs in his cause: and he who knows that he is seeking a prize which, if obtained, will infinitely exceed his cost, may boldly engage his whole estate on it, and sell all he has to purchase so rich a pearl. The next

II. Motive to fidelity, is taken from the Person by whom ministers are invested with their office:—'the flock over which the HOLY GHOST hath made you overseers.'

This divine agent is said to make bishops or pastors, not merely because he has determined in his word that there shall be such an office—what the work and power shall be—and what sort of persons shall receive it; but also because he qualifies men for the office; directs those that ordain them to discern their qualifications; and directs them and the people themselves, in fixing them over a particular charge. These were done in the first ages of christianity, in an extraordinary manner by inspiration. But, when men are rightly called, they

they are now as well as then, made overseers of the church by the Holy Ghost, *i. e.* by the ordinary influences of the same Spirit. What an obligation then is laid upon us by our call ! If our commission be from heaven, it is not to be disobeyed. When *Paul* was called by the voice of Christ to preach the gospel, he ‘ was not disobedient to the ‘ heavenly vision.’ When the apostles were called by our Lord, from their secular employments, they immediately left their friends and houses, and trade, and all, and followed him. Though our call be not so immediate or extraordinary, it is from the same Spirit, and therefore ought to be as readily obeyed. It is not a safe course to imitate *Jonah*, in turning our backs upon the commands of God. If we neglect our work, he has a spur to quicken us. If we run from it, he has messengers enow to overtake us, to bring us back and make us do it ; and certainly it is better to do it at first than at last. Another motive is

III. What is derived from the dignity of the Object, *viz.* ‘ the Church of GOD.’

It is that church for which the world is upheld ; which is sanctified by the Holy Ghost ; which is united to Christ ; and which is his mystical body. That church with which angels are present ; and on which they attend as ‘ ministering spirits ;’ whose
 very

very ‘ little ones have their angels beholding the ‘ face of God in heaven.’ O what a charge is it that we have undertaken! And shall we be unfaithful to it? Have we the stewardship of God’s own family, and shall we neglect it? Have we the conduct of those saints who are to live for ever with God in glory, and shall we omit our duty to them? God forbid! Are the souls of men thought meet by God to see his face, and live for ever in his presence? and are they not worthy of your utmost cost and labour? Do not think so meanly of the church of God, as if it deserved not your highest regards. Were you the keepers of swine or sheep, you would scarcely let them go, and say they were not worth looking after; especially if they were your own: dare you then neglect the souls of men, even the church of GOD?—Remember Christ ‘ walks among them: the praises of the most high ‘ God are in the midst of them. They are a chosen ‘ generation; a sanctified, peculiar people; a royal ‘ priesthood, an holy nation; to shew forth the ‘ praises of him that called them.’ What an honour is it to be one of them, though but a ‘ door- ‘ keeper in the house of the Lord!’ Surely then to be the Priest of these priests, and the Ruler of these kings, is such an honour, such a noble employment, as multiplies your obligations to diligence and fidelity.

IV. The

IV. The last motive to take heed to the flock, and feed the church of God, is, the PRICE that was paid for it.

It is spoken of as ‘ purchased by HIS OWN BLOOD:’ *i. e.* by the blood of CHRIST, who is here expressly called GOD. God the Son did purchase the church with his own blood. What an argument is here to quicken the negligent, and to condemn those that will not be quickened! What! shall we despise the blood of Christ? Shall we think it was shed for such as are not worthy our care? The guilt of negligent pastors is certainly great, since, as much as in them lies, they make the blood of Christ to be shed in vain. They would lose him those souls, whom he has so dearly bought. Whenever we feel ourselves grow dull and careless, let us imagine we heard the blessed Saviour arguing with us to this effect: “ Did I die for those souls, and wilt not thou look after them? Were they worth my blood, and are they not worth my care? Did I come down from heaven to earth ‘ to seek and to save them that were ‘ lost,’ and wilt thou not go to the next door or street or village to seek them? How small is thy labour or condescension in comparison with mine? I debased myself to this; but it is thy honour to be so employed. Have I done and suffered so much for the salvation of men, and was I willing to make thee

thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse the little that lies upon thy hands?"

Every time we look upon our congregations, let us remember that they are purchased by the blood of Christ, and regard them accordingly. Let us often think in what confusion a negligent minister will be at the last day, to have the blood of the son of God pleaded against him; and to hear Christ say "Thou didst make light of the purchase of my blood; and canst thou now hope to be saved by it thyself?"—O brethren! since Christ will bring his blood to plead [at God's righteous bar] let it now effectually plead with us to do our duty, lest it should then plead against us to our damnation!

C H A P. VIII.

*Of the OBJECTIONS to this course of ministerial Duty,
particularly personal Instruction.*

IT is a hard case that so good a master as ours, in so good a work, should have servants so bad as to plead against their duty when they should practise it; especially that *good* men should be so backward to it as to need many words to excite them to the diligent performance of it. Yet alas! this is too common a case. I have no great fear of opposition from conscience, or unbiassed reason; but

but only from unwillingness, and from reason bi-
assed by the flesh. To what has been said about
personal instruction some will object,

I. “ That their congregations are so large that
it is impossible for them to know all their hearers ;
much more to take heed to every individual.

But let me ask such persons—Was it necessary
for you to take upon you such a charge ? If not,
how durst you undertake what you knew your-
selves unable to perform ? If it was in a manner
necessary, might you not have procured some assist-
ance ? Have you not, or could not you get a main-
tenance sufficient for yourselves and another to
help you ? What though it would not support
you in affluence, is it not more reasonable that you
should pinch your flesh and families, than neglect
the souls of so many of your flock ? With me it is
unquestionable, that it is your duty, if you can, to
live upon part of your salary, and allow the rest to
a competent assistant. Do not many families in
your parish live on less than you would then have !
Have not many able ministers been glad of less,
with liberty to preach the gospel ? Can your parish-
ioners endure damnation better than you can po-
verty ? What do you call yourselves ministers of
the gospel, and yet esteem the souls of men so little,
as that you had rather they should eternally perish,
than

than that you and your families should live in a low condition? If you have but 'food and raiment,' you ought 'therewith to be content.' Would you have more than is sufficient to enable you for the work of God? 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.' If your clothing be warm, and your food wholesome, you may be as well supported to do God's work, as if you enjoyed the greatest affluence. He that has these, has but a poor excuse for hazarding men's souls, that he may enjoy more of this world's good. Remember how strongly our blessed master recommends self-denial to all his servants. They that will not exercise it, are so far from being his ministers, that they are not his true disciples.—If your circumstances are such that proper assistance cannot be procured, then you should undertake your charge with limitation. But do not omit the work of personal oversight entirely, because you cannot do it with all: take this course with as many as you are able, and put your godly neighbours, especially parents and masters of families, upon doing the more.

II. Some may object that "The course recommended will require too much time, and will not allow so much as is necessary for ministers (young men especially) to follow their studies, and improve their own abilities."

I answer;

I answer; the persons whom I am persuading to this work, are supposed to understand the substance of the christian religion, and to be able to teach others: and the addition of less necessary things, is not to be preferred to the communication of what are fundamentally necessary. I highly value common knowledge, and would not encourage any to set light by it; but I value the saving of souls more. That which is immediately necessary ought to be done whatever else is left undone. It is a very desirable thing for a physician to be well studied in his art; but if he would be inquiring even into the most useful subjects when he should be looking to his patients; and should tell them that he has not time to give them advice, because he must follow his own studies, I should esteem that man a preposterous student, who thus preferred the means to the very end itself. Indeed I should think such a physician to be but a civil kind of a murderer.—Men's souls may be saved without your knowing [many of those things which have been the subject of scholastic debates.] Get well to Heaven, and help your people thither, and you shall know all these things in a moment, and a thousand more, of which now, by all your studies, you cannot gain a certain knowledge.

Consider further, if by the diligent practice of ministerial duties, you are prevented acquiring an extensive knowledge, you will hereby improve
more

more in that which is most excellent. If you know not so many things as others, you will know the most important matters better than they. And a little of this kind of knowledge, is worth all the other knowledge in the world. When I am looking heaven-ward, gazing towards the inaccessible light, and aspiring after the knowledge of God, and find my soul so dark and distant, and consider how little I know of God, and how much he is out of my reach, I find this the most killing and grievous ignorance. Methinks I could willingly exchange all the other knowledge I have, for one glimpse more of God and the life to come. Now by frequent serious conversation about everlasting things, by diligently instructing and catechising your people, you will gain more of this kind of knowledge, than can be gained by any other means; and thus you will really grow wiser than those that spend their time in any other way whatever. As Theology is a practical science, the knowledge of it thrives best in a practical course. Laying out here, is a means of gathering in; an hearty endeavour to communicate and do good is one of the greatest helps to our own proficiency. So that by this means you are likely to become more able pastors of the church, than private studies alone can make you. Particularly it will be an excellent means to help you in preaching; for when you are well acquainted with your people's cases, you will know what to preach upon.

upon. An hour's conversation will furnish you with as much matter as an hour's study. As he will be the best physician and lawyer, so he also will be the best divine, who adds practice and experience proportionable to his studies; whereas that man will prove a useless drone, who refuses God's service all his life, under a pretence of preparing for it; and lets men's souls pass on to perdition, while he pretends to be studying how to recover them, or getting more ability to help and save them.

However let me add, that though I esteem religious knowledge the chief, I would have you to acquire other knowledge too. The other sciences may be very useful, and indeed subservient to this: and you may have competent time for both. Lose none upon vain recreations and amusements; trifle not away a minute; consume none in needless sleep; do what you do with all your might; and then see what time you may command. If you set apart two days in a week for the work of personal instruction, you may find time enough for your common studies out of all the rest. Duties are to be taken together: none are to be neglected that can be performed, but the greatest should always be preferred. But if there were such a case of necessity, that we could not read or study for ourselves, and instruct the ignorant too, I would throw by all the libraries in the world rather than be guilty of
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of the perdition of one soul; at least I know that this would be my duty.

III. It will be objected by many, "This course will destroy our health, by continually spending our spirits, without allowing time for necessary recreations."

I answer, we may do our duty, and have time for necessary recreations too. An hour or half an hour's walk before meat, is as much recreation as is necessary for the weaker sort of students. I have reason to know something of this by long experience. Though I have a body which has languished under great weaknesses many years, and which requires me to take as much exercise as almost any person in the world, yet I have found the above proportion sufficient. It is undoubtedly our duty to use as much exercise as is necessary for the preservation of our health; so far our work requires it: otherwise, for one day's work we should lose the opportunity of many; and this may be done very consistently with all the duties I have been recommending.

As for those men that limit not their recreations to stated hours; who must have them, not to fit them for their work, but to please their voluptuous humour, such sensualists have need to study the nature

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ture of christianity better ; to learn the danger of ‘ living after the flesh,’ and to get more mortification and self-denial before they preach to others. If you must have your pleasures, you should not have put yourselves into a calling which requires you to make God and his service your pleasure, and which restrains you so much from carnal gratifications. Do you not know that the christian warfare consisteth in the combat between the flesh and the spirit? That the very difference between a christian and a wicked man is, that the one ‘ lives after the spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body,’ and the other ‘ lives after the flesh?’ and that to overcome the flesh is the principal part of that victory, on which the crown of life depends? If notwithstanding this you must have your pleasures, then for shame give over preaching of the gospel and the profession of christianity, and profess yourselves to be what you are ; for as you ‘ sow to the flesh, so of the flesh shall you receive the wages of corruption.’ Does such an one as *Paul* say, ‘ I keep under my body and bring it into subjection lest, that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away?’ And have not such sinners as we are need to do the same? And have not we much more cause to fear being cast away?—Some recreation is undoubtedly lawful, namely such as tends to fit us for our work. But for a man to be so far in love with his pleasures

fures as, for the sake of them to waste his precious time, and neglect the work of God for men's salvation, (especially to plead for this as necessary) is a degree of wickedness inconsistent with the fidelity of a common christian; much more with that of a christian Minister. Such wretches as are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,' are more fit to be cast out of christian communion, than to be the chief in the church; 'from such' we are commanded 'to turn away.'

Recreations for a student, must be especially for the exercise of his Body, since he has continually before him a variety of delights to the Mind: and they must be used, as whetting is by the Mower, only as far as is necessary to his work.

Let it be further considered; The business I am recommending is not of such a nature as is likely much to impair our health. It is true, it must be serious; but it will not so much spend our spirits, as excite and revive them. Men can talk all the day long about other matters, without any prejudice to their health: why then may not we talk with men about their salvation without any great detriment to ours? I only mean on the supposition that we have a tolerable measure of health and strength.—But, supposing the worst; let me ask, What have we our time and strength for but to lay them out for God? What is a candle made for but to be burnt? Burnt and wasted we must be;

be; and is it not more reasonable that it should be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, than in living to the flesh? How little difference is there between the pleasure of a long life and a short one, when both are at an end! What comfort will it be to you at death, that you lengthened your life by shortening your work? Our life is to be estimated according to the end and business of it; not according to the mere duration. He that works much, lives much. What Seneca said of a drone, may be applied to an indolent minister, *Ibi jacet, non ibi vivit; et diu fuit, non diu vixit.* Will it not comfort us more at death to review a short time faithfully spent, than a long life unfaithfully?

As for visits and civilities, if they can answer greater ends than our ministerial employments, you may break the sabbath, or forbear preaching for them. But if not, how dare you make them a pretence for neglecting any other duty? Must God wait on your friends? What though they are Gentlemen or Lords, must they be served before Him? Or is their displeasure or censure more to be feared than HIS? It will be but a poor excuse at the last day for neglecting men's salvation, "that such a gentleman, or such a friend would have taken it ill had you not waited on them." 'If you yet seek to please men, you are no longer the servants of Christ.' He that dares to waste his time

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in compliments, little considers what he has to do with it. Oh that I could but improve my time according to my conviction of its importance! He that hath looked death in the face as often as I have done, will know how to value it. I profess I am astonished at those ministers that can find time to hunt, or shoot, or bowl, or use other recreations two or three hours, yea days together!—that can sit an hour at once in vain discourse, and spend whole days in complimentary visits, or journeys to the same purpose! Good Lord! what do such men think on, when so many souls about them cry for their help, and when the smallest parish has work enough to employ all their diligence, night and day! If you have no sense of the worth of souls; of the value of that blood which was shed for them, of the glory set before them, and of the misery to which they are exposed, then you are no Christians; and therefore very unfit to be Ministers. If you *have*, how dare you, like idle gossips, chat and trifle away your time, when so many and such great works call for it?

O precious time! how swiftly does it pass away! how soon will it be gone! What are the forty years of my life that are past? Were every day as long as a month, methinks it were too short for the work of a day. Have we not lost time enough in the days of our vanity that we have any now to lose? Never do I come to a dying man, who is not utterly

terly stupid, but he better sees the worth of time than others generally do. O then, if they could call time back again, how loud would they call! What would they give for it! Can we then afford to trifle it away? Is it possible that a man of any true compassion and honesty, or any concern about his ministerial duty, or any sense of the strictness of his account, should have time to spare for idleness and vanity? May a physician in the time of the plague take any more relaxation than is necessary for his life and health, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life or death? If his pleasure be not worth men's lives, certainly yours is not worth men's souls.

Do not reply, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it? God does not require ministers to make drudges of themselves." Surely those men are not likely to honour God, and promote his service, who have such base thoughts of it; nor can they delight in holiness who account it a slavish work. Our Lord says, 'He that denieth not himself, and taketh not up his cross to follow him, cannot be his disciple.' But these men count it a slavery to labour hard in his vineyard, at a time when they have all accommodations and encouragements. If they had seen the diligence of Christ in doing good, when he neglected his meat to talk with one woman, and when he was so zealous in preaching as to 'have no time to eat bread,' they

would have been of the same mind with his carnal friends who went to lay hold of him, and said ' he • ' is besides himself.' If they had seen him all day in preaching and healing, and ' all night in prayer ' to God,' they would have told him that he made a slave of himself, and that God did not require so much ado. I cannot but advise such men to search their own hearts, and inquire whether they unfeignedly believe that word they preach. If you do Sirs, how can you think any labour too much for such weighty ends? If you do not, say so, and get you out of the vineyard: go with the prodigal to keep swine, and do not undertake the feeding of Christ's flock.

Do you not know that it is your own benefit you grudge at? The more you do, the more you receive: the more you lay out, the more you have coming in. The exercise of grace increases it. And is it a slavery to be more with God, and to receive more from him, than other men? It is the chief solace of a gracious soul to be doing good, and receiving good by doing it. Hereby also we are preparing for fuller receivings hereafter. We put out our talents to usury, and by improving them, shall make five become ten. They who esteem the service of God as slavery, justify the profane who look upon all diligent godliness in that light, and hereby aggravate their sin: and while they thus debase the work of the Lord, they do but debase themselves,

themselves, and prepare for a greater abasement at last.

IV. Perhaps some may suggest "that if we make such severe laws for ministers, the church will soon be left without them, as few parents will choose such a burden for their children, and many will be discouraged from undertaking it."

I answer; the carnal and self seeking may be discouraged, but not those that thirst after the winning of souls, who are devoted to the service of God and have 'taken up the cross to follow the 'Lamb.' Christ would not forbear telling the world of the absolute necessity of self-denial for fear of discouraging men from his service, but on the contrary declares that he will have none but such as will submit to it, and that those who will not come on these terms may go their way, and see whether he wants their service more than they want his protection and favour.—These laws which you call severe, are not ours, but what Christ has made and imposed. If I should conceal or mis-interpret them, that would not relax them, nor excuse you. He who made them knew why he did it, and will expect the performance of them. And he will take care for a supply of pastors. He has the fulness of the spirit, and therefore can give men hearts to do the duty he has imposed. He that has under-

taken the work of our redemption, will not lose all his labour for want of instruments to carry on his work. He will provide his people with 'pastors after his own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge;' who will 'seek not theirs, but them; and willingly spend and be spent for their sake.' What do you think that Christ can have no servants, if such as you with *Demas* 'forsake him and turn to the present world?' If you dislike his service you may seek a better where you can find it, and boast of your gain in the conclusion; but do not threaten him with the loss. Look to yourselves as well as you can, and tell me at the hour of Death, or at the Judgment-day, who had the better bargain; whether Christ had more need of you, or you of him. It will not serve your turn to run out of the vineyard, on pretence that you cannot do the work; he can follow you and overtake you, as he did *JONAH*, with such a storm as shall lay you 'in the belly of hell.' Totally to cast off duty because you cannot endure to be faithful in the performance of it, will prove but a poor excuse at last.

V. But the strongest objection of all seems to be "that few people will submit to be so freely dealt with by their ministers, but will make a scorn at our motion."

It cannot be denied, that too many people are obstinate in their wickedness; that 'simple ones love simplicity, that scorers delight in scorning, and that fools hate knowledge.' But I wish it were not too much owing to ministers, that a great part of our people are so obstinate and contemptuous. If we did but shine and burn before them as we ought; were our sermons and our lives more convincing; did we set ourselves to do all the good we could do; were we more humble and meek, more loving and charitable; and did we let them see that we do but little esteem any worldly things in comparison with their salvation, much more might be done than is done; the mouths of many would be stopped, and the wicked would be more tractable and calm. — However, the worse they are, the more are they to be pitied, and the more diligent should we be for their recovery. Their wilfulness will not excuse us from our duty. If we do not offer them our help, how do we know who will refuse it? Offering it is our part; accepting is theirs. If we offer it not, we leave them excusable, because then they do not refuse it; but we leave ourselves without excuse. If they refuse our help when it is offered, we have done our part and delivered our own souls. But if some refuse it, others will accept it; and the success, with regard to them, may be such as to reward all our labour, though it were much more. All are not

wrought upon by public preaching; but we must not therefore give it over as unprofitable. In a word, there is nothing from God or from right reason to make us backward to any part of our work; though from the world, the flesh, and the devil, we shall have much, and perhaps more than we yet expect. But if, against all temptations and difficulties, we have recourse to God, and look on his great obligations on one side, and the hopeful effects and rewards on the other, we shall find but little cause to draw back or faint*.

* The author, in his preface to the 2d Edition, has a remarkable passage concerning his own experience on this head. "I find (says he) that we never took the rightest course to demolish the kingdom of darkness till now. I wonder at myself that I was kept from so clear and excellent a duty so long. But the case was with me, as I suppose it is with others: I was convinced of my duty, but my apprehensions of it were too small, and the difficulties of it too great. Thus was I detained in delays, which I beseech the Lord of mercy to forgive. Whereas upon trial, I find the difficulties to be nothing to what I imagined; and I experience the benefits and comforts of the work to be such, that I would not wish to have neglected it, for all the riches in the world. We spend Monday and Tuesday (from the morning almost to night) in the work; taking about fifteen or sixteen families in a week, that we may go through the parish (in which there are above eight hundred) in a year. And I cannot say that one family hath yet refused to come to me; or that many persons have shifted it off. And with regard to most of them that come, I find more outward signs of success than from all my preaching to them."

VI. But

VI. But to all that I have said, many will answer, "You build too much on *Paul's* teaching from house to house, and other passages of the same kind. Those times, when the churches were first planting, required more diligence than ours: shew us some passage of scripture which requires from us all that you have prescribed; and especially which obliges us to set apart two days in the week for it." I reply

1. I do not make it a minister's duty absolutely to go up and down from house to house to each person in the parish, or of his charge; nay, I would not so much as advise you to this without necessity: but first call the people to come to you at your own house, or at the Vestry, or wherever you please, so that you will but give them that personal instruction, on a proper inquiry into their states, which their circumstances require. And then go to those that will not come to you, if they will consent to it, and if you are able. For my own part, I cannot go from house to house without the apparent hazard of my life. And I think it more for the people's benefit to accustom them to attend their pastor, (and it is much more for his) than for him to hunt up and down after them, scarcely knowing where or when. But men's obstinacy may make that necessary which is inconvenient.

2. It is not on these texts in question, or any
H. 5. other,

other, that I wholly ground this duty: though supposing there were no more than the general command of 'taking heed to ALL the flock,' surely this were sufficient to convince you that you should take as particular care of every individual as you can. Must I turn to my Bible to shew a Preacher where it is written that a man's soul is of more worth than a world? Or that both we and all we have are God's? Or that it is inhuman cruelty to let souls go to hell for fear we and our families should live somewhat the harder? In a word, the question is, Whether you are not bound to do the best you can to save the souls of all your people? Do this and I desire no more. But do you think in your conscience that you do the best you can, if you neglect to exhort, instruct, and catechise them?

3. To say the present times require less diligence than the days of the apostles, favours of a man lockt up in a study and unacquainted with the world. Good Lord! Are there such multitudes round about us who are ignorant of the first principles of religion? Are there so many thousands drowned in presumption, security, and sensuality? So many drunkards, worldlings, haters and scoffers of a holy life? So many dull, ignorant, scandalous professors? So many troublers, seducers, and dividers of the church? And yet is the happiness of our times so great that we may excuse ourselves from
personal

personal instruction as unnecessary? Look more without, and I warrant you that you will not see cause to spare your pains for want of work? What conscientious minister finds not work enough to do from one end of the year to the other, though he has not an hundred souls to take care of? It is true there are more professors of christianity in our day than in the apostle's: but are the ungodly the less miserable for that profession, or the more so?

4. As to the objection that relates to the proportion of time to be allotted for this work, I answer, What if God only bids us to 'pray without ceasing,' will you approve of those who neglect prayer, because they are not commanded to pray morning and night, or in the family? Set times are as needful for the constant performance of this duty, as for your private or family duties, your lectures or your studies. When you have shewed me a written precept for these, or for preaching twice on the Lord's-day, then I will shew you more than one for the things in question. However, I presume not to impose an unnecessary task on any, but leave it to your prudence to discern and determine the seasons and other circumstances of your duty.

C H A P. IX.

Miscellaneous Directions respecting the whole ministerial Work.*

HAVING spoken of the MATTER of our work, we are next to speak of the MANNER; not of each part distinctly, but of the whole in general. Here take the following directions.

I. Through the whole course of your ministry insist most upon the greatest, most certain, and most necessary things.

If we can but teach Christ to our people, we teach them all. Get them well to heaven, and they will have knowledge enough. The plainest, and most commonly acknowledged truths, are what men live most upon; these are the great instruments in destroying sin, and in raising the heart to God. We should always have our people's necessities in our eye. To remember that 'One thing is needful,' will take us off from needless ornaments, and unprofitable controversies. Many other things are

* N. B. "The sins of ministers," which the author had pointed out in a distinct series of particulars, are introduced in this; as many of the thoughts in both necessarily coincided.

desirable

desirable to be known, but these *must* be known, or else our people are undone for ever. Necessity should be the great disposer of a minister's studies and labours. If we were sufficient for every thing, we might undertake every thing, and take in order the whole Encyclopedia. But life is short and we are dull. Eternal things are necessary, and the souls which depend on our teaching are precious.

I confess that necessity has been the conductor of my studies, and my life. It chooses what books I shall read, and when, and how long. It chooses my text and makes my sermon, both for matter and manner, as far as I can keep out my own corruptions. Though I know that the constant expectation of death has been a great cause of this with regard to myself, yet I see no reason why the most healthful man should not make sure of the necessaries first; considering the shortness and uncertainty of all men's lives. Who can, either in study, preaching, or life, be employed about foreign matters, when he knows that this or that must be done? As the soldier says, *Non diu disputandum, sed celeriter et fortiter dimicandum ubi urget necessitas*, so much more may we, as our business is more important. Doubtless this is the best way to redeem time, to spend it only on necessary things: and I think it is the way to be most profitable to others; though not always to be most pleasing and applauded; because through men's frailty, that is too true
which

which Seneca complains of, *Nova potius miramur quam magna.*

A preacher must be often upon the same things, because the matters of necessity are few. This we should not avoid, to satisfy such as look for novelties, though we should clothe the same necessities with a grateful variety, in the manner of our delivering them. Necessaries are common and obvious; for superfluities we may waste our time and labour, and often to no purpose. The great volumes and tedious controversies that so much trouble us and waste our time, are usually made up more of opinion than necessary truths*. — You would choose those authors to read for yourselves, which tell you what you know not, and treat of the most necessary things in the clearest manner, though it be in the most barbarous language, rather than those which most learnedly, and in the most elegant language, tell you that which is false and vain, *et magno conatu nihil dicere †?* And surely you

* *Necessitas brevibus clauditur terminis; Opinio nullis.*
MARSIL. FICINUS.

† *Sunt qui scire volunt eo fine tantum ut sciant, et turpis curiositas est: et sunt qui scire volunt ut scientiam suam vendant; et turpis quæstus est: sunt qui scire volunt ut sciantur ipsi, et turpis vanitas est: sed sunt qui scire volunt ut ædificentur; et prudentia est: et sunt quoque qui scire volunt ut ædificent; et CHARITAS est.*

BERNARD, *Serm. in Cant.* 26.

should

should act on the same principle in teaching other men, as in studying for yourself. They are commonly empty, ignorant men, destitute of the matter and substance of true learning, who are over curious about words and ornaments; who affect to be esteemed what they are not, having no other way to procure that esteem; whereas the oldest, most experienced, and most learned men, abound in substantial verities, usually delivered in the plainest drefs.

II. All our teaching should be as PLAIN and intelligible as we can make it.

This best suits a teacher's ends. He that would be understood, must make it his *business* to be understood, by speaking to the capacities of his hearers. Truth loves the light, and is most beautiful when most naked. He is an enemy that hides the truth; and he is a hypocrite who does this under a pretence of revealing it. Highly ornamented sermons are like painted glafs in windows, which keeps out the light, and are too often the marks of hypocrisy. If you would not teach men, what do you in the pulpit? If you would, why do you not speak so as to be understood? For a man purposefully to cloud his matter in strange words, and hide his mind from the people whom he pretends to instruct, is the way to make fools admire his profound

found learning, but wise men, his folly, pride, and hypocrify.—Some persons purposely conceal their sentiments, through a pretence of necessity, because of men's prejudices, and the unpreparedness of common understandings to receive the truth. But truth overcomes prejudice by mere light of evidence. There is no better way to make a good cause prevail, than to make it as plain and as thoroughly understood as we can; this will properly dispose an unprepared mind. He that is not able to deliver his matter plainly to others (I mean as plainly as the nature of it will bear, and supposing them to have capacities for understanding it) shews that he has not well digested it himself.

III. We should always suit our instructions, and our behaviour, to the capacities and circumstances of those with whom we have to do.

Our work must be carried on prudently, orderly, and by degrees. Milk must go before strong meat. The foundation must be laid before we can build upon it. Children must not be dealt with as men at age. A person must be brought into a state of grace before we can expect from him the works of grace. The stewards of God's household must 'give to each their portion in due season.' We must not go beyond the capacities of our people, nor teach them the perfection, who have not learnt
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the principles.—There must be a prudent mixture of severity and mildness, both in our preaching and discipline: each must be predominant according to the quality of the person, or the matter we have in hand. If there be no severity, our reproofs will be despised; if it be all severity, we shall be esteemed usurpers of dominion.

IV. Every part of our work must be managed with great HUMILITY.

Pride is one of the most heinous, and yet one of our most palpable sins. It discovers itself in many by their dress: it chooses their cloth and their fashion, and dresses their hair and their habit according to the taste. And I wish this were all, or the worst: but alas how frequently does it go with us to our studies! How often does it choose our subject, and how much oftener our words and ornaments! Sometimes it puts in toys and trifles under a pretence of laudable embellishments, and often pollutes instead of polishing. It makes us speak to our people what they do not understand, [merely to display our learning.] It takes off the edge of a discourse under a pretence of filing off the roughness and superfluity. If we have a plain and cutting passage, it throws it away as too rustical or ungrateful. Now though our matter be of God, if our dressing and manner and end be from Satan (as
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is the case when pride has the ordering of it) we have no great reason to expect success. Yet thus does pride make many a man's sermon. And when they have composed the discourse, it goes with them into the pulpit; it forms their tone, it animates their delivery, it takes them off from what would be displeasing, and directs them in the pursuit of vain applause. In short, instead of seeking God's glory, and denying themselves, it makes them, both in studying and preaching, to seek themselves and deny God. When they should ask, "What shall I say, and how shall I say it, to please God best, and do most good," pride makes them ask, "What shall I say, and how shall I deliver it, to be thought a learned, able preacher, and to be applauded by all that hear me?" When the sermon is done, pride goes home with them, and makes them more eager to know whether they were applauded, than whether they did any good to the souls of men. Were it not for shame, they could willingly ask people how they liked them, to extort their commendations. If they perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoice as having attained their end: if not, they are displeased, as having lost the prize.

But this is not all: some ministers are so set upon a popular air, and having the highest place in the esteem of men, that they envy the abilities and names of their brethren who are preferred to them; as if all were taken from their praise, that is given

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to another's, and as if God had bestowed his gifts upon them as the mere ornaments of their persons, that they might walk as men of reputation in the world; and as if all the gifts of other ministers were to be trodden down and vilified, if they should stand in the way of their honour. Strange! that one workman should malign another, because he helps him to do his master's work! Yet how common is this heinous crime among men of ability and eminence in the church! They will secretly blot the reputation of such as oppose their own, and will at least raise suspicions, where they cannot fasten accusations. Nay, some go so far as to be unwilling that any ministers abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be applauded above themselves. It is a surprising thing that any man who has the least fear of God, should so envy his gifts in others, as that he had rather his carnal hearers should remain unconverted, than that they should be converted by another person who may be preferred to himself. Yet this sin does so prevail, that it is difficult to get two ministers to live together in love and quietness, unanimously to carry on the work of God: unless one of them be greatly inferior to the other, and content to be so esteemed, and to be governed by him, they are contending for precedency, envying each other's interest, and behaving with strangeness and jealousy towards one another, to the shame of their profession, and the injury of their congregations. Nay,
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so great is the pride of some ministers, that when they might have an equal assistant, to further the work of God, they had rather take all the burden upon themselves, though more than they can bear, than that any should share with them in their honour, or lest they should diminish their own interest in the people.

It is owing to pride that many ministers make so little proficiency: they are too proud to learn. It is through pride also that men so magnify their own opinions, and are as censorious of any that differ from them in lesser things, as if their sentiments were the rules of the churches faith. While we cry down papal infallibility, too many of us would be Popes ourselves, and would have every thing determined by our judgments, as if we were infallible. And so high are our spirits, that when any reprove or contradict us, (though not without sufficient reason) we are commonly impatient both of the matter and the manner. We love the man that will say as we say, and promote our reputation, though in other respects he be less worthy our esteem: but he is ungrateful to us, who differs from us, and contradicts us, and plainly tell us of our faults; especially in relation to our public performances. Many, through their pride, imagine that all those persons despise them who do not admire all they say, and submit to their judgments in the most palpable mistakes. Thus have they dishonoured themselves by idolizing their honour, and
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publicly proclaimed their own shame. From pride proceed all the envy, contention, and unpeaceableness of ministers, which are the hinderances to all reformation: all would lead, but few will follow or concur. Yea, hence proceed schisms and apostacies, as did former persecutions, arrogant usurpations, and impositions. In short, it is pride at the root that nourishes all our other sins, and this virtually contains them all.

Give me leave, brethren, to expostulate with you and my own heart with regard to this sin, that we may see the evil of it and be reformed. Pride is the sin of devils; the first born of hell; it is that wherein the devil's image does principally consist. It is an intolerable evil in a man that is so much engaged against him as we are. Pride ill becomes those that are to lead men in such an humble way to heaven. We had need to take care, lest when we have brought others thither, the gate should prove too straight for ourselves. God, who thrust out a proud angel, will not there entertain a proud preacher as such.—The very design of the gospel tends to self-abasement. The work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation. Humility is not the mere ornament of a christian, but it is an essential part of the new creature. All that will be Christ's disciples must come to him and learn of him; their lesson is, to be 'meek and lowly in heart.' How many admirable precepts and examples has our

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our Lord and master given us to this end! Can we once conceive of him as washing and wiping his servants feet, and yet be haughty and domineering! Shall he converse with the meanest, and shall we avoid them as contemptible, and think none but the rich and honourable fit for our society! Many of us are oftener found in the houses of gentlemen, than in the poor cottages of such as most need our help; as if we had taken the charge only of the souls of the rich. Methinks we should remember our title as **MINISTERS**, [which signifies *servants*.] We should not speak proudly or disrespectfully to any, but should carry ourselves meekly and courteously to all, remembering that we are obliged to be ‘the servants of all.’ We should not be strange to the poorest and meanest of the flock, but should ‘condescend to men of low estate,’ as our equals in Christ. Familiarity improved to holy ends is necessary, and may do abundance of good; and surely a kind winning carriage is a very cheap way of doing it. We should so teach others, as to be ready to learn of any; thus we may both teach and learn at once*: not proudly venting

* We may say of ministers in general what *Augustine* said of the aged of them; “Etsi magis decet docere quam discere, magis tamen decet discere quam ignotare.”

“Ab omnibus libenter discere quod tu nescis: quia humilitas commune tibi facere potest, quod natura cuique proprium fecit, sapienter omnibus eris, si ab omnibus discere volueris: qui ab omnibus accipiunt, omnibus ditiores sunt.” **HUGO.**

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our own conceits, and disdain all that any way contradict them, as if we, having attained the height of knowledge, were destined to the chair, and all other men were to sit at our feet.

Alas, brethren! what is it that we have to be so proud of? Of our bodies? They are made of the same materials as the meanest of our fellow-creatures. Is it of our graces? The more we are proud of them, the less have we to be proud of, since much of the nature of grace is in humility. Is it of our learning and abilities? Surely, if we have any knowledge at all, we must know much reason to be humble. If we know more than others, we must know more reason to be humble than they do. But how little is it that the most learned know, in comparison with what they are ignorant of! And to know how ignorant we are, and how far things are beyond our reach, one would imagine, could be no great cause of pride.

It is our very business to preach humility; it is therefore very unfit that we should be proud. Must we study and preach humility, and must we not possess and practice it? A proud preacher of humility, is at least a self-condemning man. And I beseech you to consider, whether it will save us to speak well of the grace we do not possess; whether sincerity can consist with allowed pride, and whether we can be saved without humility, any more than without temperance or chastity.

Consider

Consider further, brethren, I beseech you, what baits there are in the ministerial office, to entice to vanity, and what temptations to pride lie in our way, that you may be more upon your guard against it. What a snare may it prove, to have the fame of godly men, and of learned zealous preachers! How pleasing is it to have the people crowd to hear us, and to be able to command their judgments and affections! Especially to be renowned through the land for the highest spiritual excellencies! To have the people plead for us as their felicity, and call us the pillars of the church of God, and their fathers, ‘the chariots and horse-men of Israel!’ Alas! brethren, a little grace will serve to make you join with the forwardest of those men that have these inducements; nay pride may do it without any special grace*. O therefore be jealous of yourselves, and in all your studies be sure to study humility. ‘He that exalteth himself shall be brought low: whereas

* A Jesuit, who had been employed twenty years in the missions of Canada, owned privately to his friend, that, while he did not believe in the being of a God, he had faced death twenty times for the sake of the religion which he preached to the savages with great success. His friend, hereupon, represented to him the inconsistency of his zeal: “Ah!” replied the missionary, “you have no idea of the pleasure which is felt “in commanding the attention of twenty thousand people, “and in persuading them to what we believe not ourselves.” D’ALEMBET’S Account of the Jesuits. Ed.

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‘ he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’ I commonly observe, that almost all men, both good and bad, loathe the proud; and love the humble; so far does pride defeat its own ends. We have cause to be the more jealous of ourselves, because pride is a vice which is most deeply rooted in us, and with as much difficulty as any extirpated from the soul.

V. In every part of our work, we should be serious, affectionate, zealous, and reverent.

The importance of our matter condemns coldness and sleepy dulness. Our spirits should be well awakened, that we may be fit to awaken others. If our words be not sharp and piercing, they will hardly be felt by stony hearts. To speak slightly and coldly about heavenly things, is as bad as to say nothing of them.

All our work must be managed **REVERENTLY**, as becomes them that believe the presence of God; not treating holy things as if they were common. The more of God appears in our duties, the more authority will they have with men. Reverence is that affection of the soul which proceeds from deep apprehensions of God, and denotes that the mind is much conversant with him. To manifest irreverence about the things of God, is so far to manifest hypocrisy, and that the heart

agrees not with the tongue. I know not how it is with other persons; but the most reverent preacher, who speaks as if he saw the face of God, does more affect my heart, though with common words, than an irreverent man with the most accurate preparations, though he bawl it out with ever so much seeming earnestness. If reverence be not equal to fervency, it has but little effect. Of all preaching in the world I hate that most which tends to make the hearers LAUGH, or to affect their minds with such levity as STAGE-PLAYS do, instead of affecting them with an holy reverence of the name of God*. We should suppose, when we draw near him in holy things, that we saw the throne of God, and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we may be awed with his majesty, lest we profane his service and take his name in vain.

VI. All our work should be done SPIRITUALLY; as by men possessed of the Holy Ghost, and actuated by him.

* *Docente in ecclesiâ te, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitetur: Lacrymæ auditorum laudes tuæ sunt. JEROM.*

“It will spoil all our admonitions to speak of things immoral in a ludicrous jesting way. They judge very ill that think the progress of sin is to be stopped by a laugh or a jest. This is certainly a *jesting which is not convenient.*”
Eph. v. 4. WRIGHT *on the Deceitfulness of Sin*, p. 203.

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We should be men that 'favour the things of the spirit.' There is in some men's preaching a spiritual strain which spiritual hearers can discern and relish; whereas in others, this sacred tincture is so wanting, that even when they speak of spiritual things, the manner is such as if they were common matters. Our evidence and ornaments ought to be spiritual: rather borrowed from the scriptures (with a cautious subservient use of human writings) than from the authority of *Aristotle*, or any other men. 'The wisdom of the world' must not be magnified against 'the wisdom of God.' Philosophy must be taught to stoop and serve, while faith bears the principal sway. The great scholars in *Aristotle's* school, must take heed of glorying too much in their master, and despising those who are beneath them, lest they themselves prove lower in the school of Christ, and 'least in the kingdom of God,' while they would appear great in the eyes of men. As wise a man as any of them 'would glory in nothing but in the cross of Christ, and determined to know nothing but him crucified*.' The most learned men should think of this. Let all writers have their due esteem, but compare none of them with the word of God. We

* Deus primo collegit indoctos: post modum philosophos, et non per oratores docuit piscatores, sed per piscatores, subegit oratores. GREG. M. Moral. L. 33.

will not refuse their service, but we must abhor them as competitors. God is the best teacher of his own nature and will. It is the sign of a dis-tempered heart, when a person loses the relish for scripture excellency. There is in a spiritual heart a connaturality to the word of God, because this was the means of his regeneration. The word is that seal which made all the holy impressions that are in the hearts of true believers, and stamp the image of God upon them; they must therefore love that word as long as they live.

VII. The whole of our ministry must be carried on in a tender LOVE to our people.

We must let them see that nothing pleases us but what profits them; that what does them good, does us good, and that nothing troubles us more than their hurt. “Bishops (as *Jerom* says) are “not lords, but fathers;” and therefore must be affected towards their people as their children: yea the tenderest love of the mother should not surpass theirs. We must even ‘travail in birth for ‘them till Christ be formed in them.’ We should convince them that we care for no outward thing, not money, nor liberty, nor credit, nor life itself, in comparison with their salvation. When your people see that you unfeignedly love them, they will

will hear any thing, and bear any thing*. We ourselves should put up with a blow given us in love, sooner than with a hard word given us in anger and malice. Most men judge of advice, as they judge of the affection of him who gives it. O therefore see to it that you feel a tender love to your people in your breasts, and let them feel it in your speeches, and see it in your conduct. Let them see that you 'spend and are spent for their 'sakes;' that all you do is not for any ends of your own, but for them. To this end, works of charity will be necessary, as far as your circumstances allow. [Of which more hereafter.]

Be sure that your love be not carnal, flowing from pride, and that you do not appear as one that is a suitor for himself, rather than for Christ; who loves because he is beloved, or pretends it that he may be. Take heed that you do not connive at men's sins under a pretence of love; for that were to contradict the very nature and ends of it †. Friendship must be cemented by piety. A wicked man can be no true friend. If you befriend the sins of the wicked, you shew that you are such yourselves. By favouring their sin you discover your enmity to God; and then how can you love your brother. If you be their best friends, help

* Dilige et dic quodcumque voles. AUG.

† Amici vitia si feras, facis tua. SENECA.

them against their worst enemies. Pretend not to love them if you favour their sins, and do not seek their salvation. Do not think all sharpness inconsistent with love. Parents will correct their children, and God himself, will ‘chasten every son ‘that he loveth*.

VIII. Take care that your worldly and fleshly interests, do not too much prevail against the interest of Christ and the good of souls.

Never be guilty of temporizing for the sake of gain. It is one of the greatest reproaches upon the ministry, that so many of us do so much suit themselves to the party that is most likely to suit their ends, and promote their worldly advantage. This often occasions our enemies to say, that reputation and preferment are our religion and our reward. Never let a regard to your worldly interest prevent your discharge of any part of your duty, even though the most disagreeable to your people, and though it should hinder them from paying their dues. I find, alas! that money is too strong an argument for some ministers to answer, who can proclaim ‘the love of it to be the root of all evil,’ and can make long orations on the danger of covet-

* *Melius est cum severitate diligere, quam cum lenitate decipere.* AUG.

ousness.

ousness. If it were so heinous a sin in *Simon Magus* to offer to BUY the gifts of God with money, what must it be to SELL his gifts, his cause, and the souls of men for money! and what reason have such to fear, lest 'their money perish with them!'

Be sure that your concern about your temporal interest, does not prevent your Works of Charity. Bare Words will hardly convince men that you have any love to them. Works of charity do most powerfully remove men's prejudices, and open their ears to the words of piety. If they see that you are addicted to *do good*, they will more easily believe that you *are good*, and that it is good to which you would persuade them. Go to the poor to see what they want, and at once shew your compassion to soul and body. Buy them catechisms and other small books that are likely to do them good. Stretch your purse to the utmost of your power, and do all the good you can. I would put no one upon extremes: it is doubtless every man's duty to 'provide for those of his own house.' But ministers should educate their children as other persons in low circumstances do, that they may be able to get their own livings in some honest trade or employment, without other great provision. You are bound to educate them so as they may be capable of doing the most service for God; but not to leave them rich. You should not forbear necessary works of charity, merely to make a larger

provision for them. A truly charitable self-denying heart, that hath devoted itself and all it hath to God, would be the best judge of due proportions; would see which way of expence is likely to do God the greatest service, and would cheerfully take that.

I would not have men lie under temptations to incontinency*;—but if ministers must marry, they should marry such as can maintain themselves and their children, and so devote as much as they can of the churches means, to the churches service. But in this case, flesh and blood make even good men so partial, that they sometimes look upon duties, and duties of great importance, to be extremes. The flesh will tell us that we must have a competency: and many pious men's competency is but little below the rich man's rates. If they be not clothed with the best, and fare not 'sumptuously every day,' they have not a competency. Brethren, think not of being rich. 'Seek not great things for yourselves,' or your posterity. A man that preaches an immortal crown of glory, must not seek much after transitory vanity. He that teaches others the contempt of riches, must himself contemn them, and shew it by his life. He that

* The author here has a passage in favour of celibacy, which was thought indefensible, and therefore is in this edition omitted.

recommends

recommends self-denial and mortification, must practise these himself in the eyes of the world, if he would have his doctrine prosper. All christians, with all they have, are consecrated to their 'master's use:' but Ministers, as they are doubly devoted to God, are doubly obliged to 'honour ' him with their substance.' That man who has any thing in the world so dear to him that he cannot spare it for Christ, if he calls for it, is no true christian. What if you impoverish yourselves to do others good, will it be loss or gain? If you believe that God is your safest purse-bearer, and that to expend in his service is the greatest usury, shew your people that you do believe it. Do not take it as an undoing to 'make to you friends of the ' Mammon of unrighteousness, and to lay up for ' yourselves treasures in heaven,' though you leave yourselves but little on earth.

O what abundance of good might ministers do, if they would but live in a contempt of the world; the riches, and glories of it, and expend all they have for their master's use! This would unlock more hearts for the reception of their doctrine than all their oratory will do. Without this, singularity in religion will seem but hypocrisy, and perhaps is nothing more. Though we need not do as the Papists, who betake themselves to monasteries, and cast away all their property, yet we must have nothing but what we have for God. The world

perhaps will expect more from us than we have ; but if we cannot answer the expectations of the unreasonable, let us do what we can to answer the expectations of God, and to satisfy conscience and good men. Those that have a large income must increase their charity in proportion. If you are not able to do many acts of charity, shew that you are willing, if you had ability, by doing that sort of good you can.

IX. Let me recommend to you the cultivation and exercise of PATIENCE as a necessary concomitant of your work.

We must bear with many abuses and injuries from those for whom we are doing good. When we have studied for them and prayed for them ; when we have exhorted and besought them with all condescension ; when we have given them all we are able ; have spent ourselves for them, and tendered them as if they had been our children, we must expect that many will requite us with scorn, hatred, and contempt ; that they will cast our kindness in our faces with disdain, and take us for their ‘ enemies because we tell them the truth ;’ and that ‘ the more we love them, the less shall we be loved.’ All this must be patiently endured, and still we must unweariedly hold out in doing them good ; ‘ in meekness instructing those that oppose
‘ themselves,

‘ themselves, if peradventure God will give them ‘ repentance.’ Though they scornfully reject our teaching, and bid us look to ourselves, still we must persevere. We have to deal with distracted men, who will fly in the face of their physician; but we must not therefore neglect the cure. He is very unfit to be a physician who will be driven away from a frantic patient by foul words. It is not to be expected that fools should make us as grateful returns for our care over them as wise men. But, alas! how sadly do most ministers come off in this part of their trial! When sinners reproach and slander them for their love, what heart-rifings will there be! How will the remnants of the old Adam (pride and passion) struggle against the meekness and patience of the new man!

X. In all our work we should be as PEACE-ABLE as we can: we should studiously promote union and communion among ourselves, and the unity and peace of the churches committed to our care.

We must be sensible how necessary this is to the prosperity of the whole church; the strengthening of the common cause; the good of the particular members of our flock, and the further enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. Ministers therefore should feel very sensibly when the church is wounded, and

should be so far from being leaders in divisions, that they should consider it as an important part of their work to prevent and heal them. They should not only hearken to motions for unity, but should study day and night to find out means to close breaches; and should also propose and prosecute them. Instead of quarrelling with our brethren, we should combine against the common enemy.

Most ministers will speak for unity and peace; but how seldom do we see them addicted to promote it! Too commonly they are jealous of it, and are even the instruments of division. The Papists have so long abused the name of *Catholic Church*, that in opposition to them, many either put it out of their creed, or only retain the name, while they understand not, or consider not the nature of the thing, and behave not as members of that body. Of the multitude that say they are of the catholic church, it is rare to meet with men of a catholic spirit. They do not duly regard the *whole* church, but look upon their own party as if that were the whole. Most of them will pray hard for the prosperity of their sect, and rejoice and give thanks when it goes well with them, thinking that the happiness of the rest consists only in turning to them: but if any other party suffer, they little regard it; as if it were no loss to the church at all. Nay, because they are not of their mind, they wish for, and are glad to hear of their fall, imagining that is the
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the way to the churches rising. If they differ not among themselves, they are but little troubled at differing from others, though it be from almost all the christian world. The peace of their party they take for the peace of the church; no wonder therefore if they are concerned to carry it no further.

Few grow zealous of peace, till they grow old, or have much experience of men's spirits and principles, when they see better the true state of the church and the several differences in it; and then they begin to write their *Irenicums*, to leave behind them when they are dead, as witnesses against a wilful, self-conceited, unpeaceable world. Many of these are extant at this day*. It often brings a man under a suspicion either of favouring some heresy, and of needing an indulgence to his own errors; or of having abated his zeal for the truth, if he does but attempt a pacificatory work: as if there were no zeal necessary for the great fundamental truths, and for the unity and peace of the church, but only for parties, and for some particular doctrines.

We have as sad divisions among us in England, as most nations have known: but is the

* See especially HALL's excellent treatise called "The Peace-maker," and his "Pax Terris," which deserve to be transcribed upon all our hearts.—To these the Editor begs leave to add, *Bennet's Irenicum*; written by the author of *The Christian Oratory*.

difference

difference between the several denominations of Protestants so great that we might not come to an agreement? Were we but heartily willing, I know we might. I have conversed with some moderate men of all parties, and I perceive by their concessions, that a union were an easy work. If we could not in every point agree, we might easily lessen our differences, and hold communion upon our agreement in the main; determining on the safest way for managing our few and small differences, without the danger or trouble of the church. To the shame of all our faces be it spoken that this is not done. Let each party flatter themselves as they please, this will be recorded to the shame of the ministers of England as long as the gospel abides in the world.

We confess the worth of peace; we read and preach on those texts, that command us to 'follow peace with all men,' &c. and yet we sit still and neglect it as if it was not worth looking after; and too many will censure and reproach any that endeavour it, as if holiness and peace were so fallen out that there were no reconciling them; when yet we have found by long experience that concord is a sure friend to piety, and that piety always tends to concord. We have seen to our sorrow, that where the servants of God should have lived together as of one heart and voice, promoting each other's faith and holiness; and rejoicing together in
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the hope of future glory, they have, on the contrary, lived in mutual jealousies, drowned holy love, in bitter contentions, and studied to disgrace and undermine one another, and to increase their own parties, by right or by wrong.

This sin of discord among ministers is accompanied with many heinous aggravations. We have seen how errors and heresies breed by it, as discord is bred and fed by them. Nor have we ourselves only scorched in this flame, but we have also drawn our people into it, so that they are fallen into several parties, and have turned much of their ancient piety into vain opinions, disputes, and animosities. And (which is worst of all) the common ignorant people take notice of it, and not only deride us, but become hardened against religion. If we go about to persuade them to be religious, they see so many parties, that they know not which to join with, and think that it is as well to belong to none at all as to join any, since they know not which is the right. Many poor carnal wretches think themselves in the better case, while they hold to their old formalities, and we hold to nothing. Did we but agree among ourselves in the main, and do as much of God's work as we could in concurrent unanimity, our words would have some authority with them, and we should be in a greater capacity to do them good. But if our tongues and hearts be divided, no wonder if our work prove
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more like a *Babel* than the Temple of God. It is not strange that the people should despise us, if we despise one another. Some ministers, by their bitter opprobrious speeches of others, have more effectually done the devil's service, under the name of **ORTHODOXY** and **ZEAL FOR THE TRUTH**, than the malignant scorers of godliness could possibly have done. The matter is come to this pass, that there are few men of note, of any party, but who are so publicly reproached by the other parties, that the ignorant and wicked rabble, who should be converted by them, have learnt to be orthodox, and to vilify and scorn them.

Mistake me not: I do not slight **ORTHODOXY**, or jeer at the name, but only expose the pretences of devilish zeal in pious, or seemingly pious men. I know that many of these reverend calumniators think that they laudably discover that soundness in the faith, and that zeal for the truth, which others want; but I will resolve the case in the words of the Holy Ghost: 'Who is a wise man, and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. But if you have bitter envying or strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth; this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. The wisdom
' that

‘ that is from above is first pure, and then peace-
‘ able, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of
‘ mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and
‘ without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteous-
‘ ness is sown in peace for them that make peace.’

James iii. 13—18. I beseech you read these words again and again, and study them well.

The most common cause of our divisions and unpeaceableness is, men’s high esteem of their own opinions. This works various ways: *e. g.* by setting them upon seeking after novelties. Some are as busy in their inquiries after new doctrines as if the scriptures were not perfect, and are for making new articles of faith, and finding out new ways to heaven. The body of Popery came in at this door.—Pride occasions divisions likewise, by putting a higher rate upon some truths than the church of Christ had ever done; by making that to be of absolute certainty, and of necessity to salvation, which had not before been received, or but as a doubtful point, and of a lower nature, which some were for, and some were against, without any great mutual censure. But divisions are more especially occasioned, when the pride of men’s hearts makes them so over-value their own conceptions, and to be so confident that they and their own sect are in the right, as to expect all others to be of their mind, and so censorious as to condemn all that differ from their party. Hereupon
arise

arise such breaches in affection and communion as there are. And it usually happens that this confidence does but betray men's ignorance, and shew that many make up in passion what they want in reason; zealously condemning what they little understand. It is far easier to say that another man is erroneous and rail at him as a deceiver, than to give a just account of our own belief. And I have observed it is the trick of some that can scarcely give a reason for any controverted part of their creed (nor it may be of the fundamentals) to reproach those that differ from them as *unsound*, in order to get the name of *orthodox* divines.

Many take up their opinions only in compliance with their several parties; looking more *who* believes them, than *what* they believe, or on what grounds; and too many take up even the truth itself in a faction; and therefore they must speak against those that they hear speak against their party. How many hot disputes have I heard, which the disputants have been forced to manifest they understood nothing about! Nay, they will often drive all to damnatory conclusions, when they do not understand one another's meaning, and are unable, if you call upon them for it, to give a definition of [the terms they themselves use.] Thus do we proceed, in a contentious zeal, to censure our brethren, and divide the church.

I entreat of you brethren, be very tender of the
unity

unity and peace, not only of your own parties, but of the whole church. To this end, keep close to the ancient simplicity of the christian faith, the foundation and centre of catholic unity. Do not easily introduce any novelties in the church either in faith or practice. Some have already introduced such phrases, at least, even about the great points of faith, that there may be reason to reduce them to the primitive patterns.

A great stir is made in the world about the Test of a true christian church, with which we may hold communion. And indeed the true cause of our continued unhappy divisions, is the want of discerning the centre of our unity, and the terms on which we may unite; which is a great pity, since this was once so easy a matter, till the ancient Test was thought insufficient. The faith of the Papists is too large for all men to agree upon, or indeed for themselves, if it were not enforced with arguments drawn from the fire and the halter. And many Protestants do too much imitate them in the tedious length of their subscribed Confessions, and new impositions. We may talk of peace as long as we live, but we shall never obtain it till we return to the apostolical simplicity. We must abhor the arrogance of them that frame new engines to wrack and tear the church of God, under pretence of obviating errors and maintaining the truth. We must let no man's writings, or the judgment
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of any party, be made the Test of truth. If we thrust into it all the canons of former councils about matters of order, discipline, and ceremonies, or gather up all the opinions of the Fathers for the three or four first ages, none of these will ever serve to found a catholic union upon. The Scripture-sufficiency must be maintained, and nothing beyond it imposed on any. If Papists, or others, call upon us for the standard of our religion, we must shew them the BIBLE rather than any Confessions of churches, or writings of men. More lines would meet in this centre than are likely to meet in any other.

I know it is said "That a man may subscribe the Scripture and the ancient creeds, and yet maintain Heresies:" To which I answer, so he may any other test which you yourselves shall contrive; and while you make a snare to catch Heretics, instead of a test for the churches communion, you will miss your end: the Heretic, by the slipperiness of his conscience, will get through, and the tender christian may possibly be ensnared. Two things are necessary to obviate Heresies, viz. the Law, and the good execution of it. God hath made the former, which, both for sense and phrase, is sufficient: let us but do our part in the due execution of it, and we shall do all that belongs to us.

This I would recommend to all my brethren, as
necessary

necessary to the churches peace ; that you learn to distinguish between certainties and uncertainties ; between necessaries and unnecessaries ; between catholic truths and private opinions ; and lay the stress upon the former instead of the latter. Unite in necessary truths, and tolerate tolerable failings. Bear with one another in things that may be borne with, and do not make larger Creeds or more necessaries than God has done. In order to this, learn to see the true state of controversies, and reduce them to the point where the difference lies, instead of making them greater than they are.

Lay not too great stress upon those controverted opinions, which have good men, and especially which have whole churches, on both sides ; much less on such controversies as are ultimately resolved into philosophical uncertainties ; as some unprofitable disputes about Free-will ; the manner of the Spirit's operation on the mind ; the divine decrees, &c. &c. But especially lay not any stress upon controversies which are of no importance ; which, if they were anatomized, would appear to be merely verbal : of which sort (I speak confidently upon certain knowledge) are many that now make a great noise in the world, and rend the church ; though the eager contenders do not discern, and will not believe it.

He that shall live in that happy day when God will heal his broken churches, will see all that I
am

am pleading for reduced to practice. Moderation will take place of dividing zeal; the Scripture-sufficiency will be maintained; and all human Confessions and comments will be valued only as subservient helps. Till that time comes, we cannot expect healing truth will be entertained, since there are not healing spirits in the leaders of the church; but when the work is to be done, the work-men will be fitted for it; and blessed will be the agents in so glorious a cause!

But because the love of unity and truth, of peace and purity, should go together, we must avoid the two extremes, both in doctrine and discipline. One extreme in Doctrine is making new additions: [this we have already considered.] The other is, hindering the progress of knowledge: this we commonly run into by avoiding the former. It must be considered, therefore, how far we may improve, and not be culpable innovators. And (1.) our knowledge must increase *extensively*. We must endeavour to know more truth, though we must not feign more. Much of scripture will remain unknown to us when we have done our best. Though we shall find out no more Articles of faith which must be explicitly believed by all that will be saved, yet we may find out the sense of more texts, and some doctrinal truths not contrary to the former, but such as befriend them and are connected with them. And we may find out more
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the order of truths, and how they stand in respect to one another ; and so we may see more of the true method of theology than we did, which will give us a great light into the thing itself. (2.) Our knowledge must also grow *subjectively* and *intensively*. And this is the principal growth to be sought after. We should endeavour to know the same great and necessary truths with a sounder and clearer understanding ; by getting more and stronger evidences of them, and a clearer and deeper apprehension of the same evidence : for one that is strong in knowledge sees the same truth as in the daylight, which the weak see as in the twilight. To all this must be added, the fuller Improvement of the truth received, to its proper object.

With respect to Church-communion also, we should carefully avoid extremes, and endeavour to preserve purity as well as peace. As on the one hand we should discourage the unnecessary separations of proud men, (either because the churches do not fall in with their opinion, or because they are not so reformed in discipline as they would have them, or so strict as they should be) so on the other hand we should guard against the neglect or relaxation of discipline, to the corrupting of the church, the encouragement of wickedness, and the confounding of the kingdom of Christ with that of Satan.

XI. In order to promote unity and concord in
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the churches, and to further each other in the work of the Lord, let me beseech you to maintain Meetings for *communion* among yourselves.

Do not grow strange to one another, but incorporate and hold all christian correspondence. Distance breeds strangeness, and fomenting flames and jealousies, which communion will prevent or cure. It is the chief plot of our enemies to divide us in order to weaken us: let us not conspire with them. Cherish not heart-burnings, nor continue uncharitable distances. If dividing has weakened you, uniting must recover your authority and strength. Get together then and consult for peace. If you have any dislike to any of your brethren, or to their conduct, manifest it by a free debate with them. If you will but keep together, you may come to a better understanding of each other, or at least correct yourselves. The scripture commands all christians to be ‘of one mind, and to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,’ and obliges ministers to ‘be one even as Christ and the Father are one.’ You cannot be ignorant that the unity of ministers is their honour, as well as their duty, and that much of their strength with the people lies in it; nor, that constant communion and correspondence is necessary in order to it. Ministerial communion is as much a duty as christian communion.

Indeed

Indeed ministers have need of one another, and must improve the gifts of God in one another. If you are humble men, you will think that you have need of the advice and assistance of your brethren. The self-sufficient are the most deficient: the proud are commonly empty men. There are many young, raw ministers who especially need the help that such communion may afford them, and the advice of more grave experienced men, for carrying on the work of their ministry. And many others are so humble and sensible of their deficiencies, that they would be loth to be deprived of it. That may sometimes be spoken by a man of inferior parts which came not into the minds of wiser men. Few ministers are so weak but they may sometimes improve those that are wiser than themselves. And those that are endowed with greater parts, will have an opportunity to do greater good with them [in such associations] than they could otherwise do. If you are above advice or any help to yourselves [that will not excuse your absence, for] your brethren have the more need of you by how much the less you have of them.

But remember these assemblies are not merely for your own benefit and mutual edification, but the church and the common good require them. You owe duty to your neighbour churches, as well as ministers; and by carrying on lectures, or conferences, you will have an opportunity of consult-

ing for the common good, and of promoting your common work. Do not shew yourselves contempters or neglecters of such a necessary business.

Let none draw back that accord in the substantial of faith and godliness. Yea though some should think themselves necessitated to separate in public worship from the rest, methinks if they be christians indeed, they should be willing to hold as much communion with each other as they can, and to consult how to manage their differences to the least disadvantage to the christian cause, and the common truths which they all profess to own and prefer. Though they cannot change their minds about those opinions which hinder their union, it might reasonably be expected of every party among us which profess themselves christians, that they should value the Whole before a Part, and therefore not so perversely seek to promote their own parties as to hinder the common good of the church. And methinks a little humility should make men ashamed of that common conceit of unquiet spirits, That the welfare of the churches depends upon their opinions. If they are indeed a living part of the body, the hurt of the whole will be so much their own, that they cannot desire it for the sake of any party or opinion whatever. If that evil spirit 'whose name is Legion' has such power over the hearts of any that they will quarrel at the pacificatory endeavours of others, who hunger after
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the healing of the church, and rather hinder them than help them on, I must say, how diligently soever they may preach, and how pious soever they may seem to be, If this way tends to their everlasting peace, and if they be not preparing sorrow for themselves, I am a stranger to the way of peace.

It is past doubt that differing brethren may well join in recommending to the ignorant people the truths that they are agreed in. Archbishop *Usher* made a motion for this in *Ireland* even to the Papists themselves. “ But (says he) through the jealousies which distractions in matters of religion have bred amongst us, the motion had small effect, and so between us both, the poor people are still kept in miserable ignorance, knowing the grounds neither of the one religion nor the other*.” This is very much the case among us in England. It is rare to find any, though differing only in the point of Infant-baptism, that will calmly, and without fraudulent designs of secretly promoting their own opinions by it, entertain and prosecute such a motion for the common good; as if they had rather christianity should be thrust out of the world, or kept under, [than that their own notions should not be propagated.] Well, let any person or party pretend what they will of zeal and

* Sermon before King James at Wanstead, on the unity of the church.

holiness, I will ever take the *Dividatur* for an ill sign. The true mother abhors the division of the child; and the true christian prefers the common interest of christianity to that of a faction or opinion, and would not have the whole building endangered rather than that one peg should be driven in otherwise than as he would have it.—Do not then neglect these brotherly meetings for the ends that have been mentioned, nor yet attend them unprofitably, but improve them to your mutual edification, and for the effectual carrying on the good of the churches.

Do not ask why you cannot do your duty to God and your people at home, without travelling many miles to a meeting of ministers; nor plead that you have business of your own to do, when you should be doing the work of God; nor under a pretence of loving to live privately, prefer your own ease to God's service.—Some of those indeed that excuse themselves are careless and scandalous men: we should have no desire of their company, nor admit it, but upon their repentance and reformation.—Some are empty men, and are afraid their weakness should be known: but they cannot conceal it by their solitude, whereas they might do much to heal it by communion with their brethren.—As for those that are averse to associating with us because we are not of their party, let it be considered that by such communication they might give or receive

receive better information; or at least carry on so much of God's work in unity as we are agreed in. Let us resolve, by the grace of God, to adhere to more catholic principles and practices, and to have communion with all godly christians that will have communion with us. But some object to attending these associations,

1. Because, they say, "A few men commonly do all, and the rest do but follow them."—I answer; There is no one in our associations that pretends to any authority over his brethren; either civil coercive power, or ecclesiastical directive power. If any have so much power as you speak of, it seems to be but the power of Truth in them, and such as light hath against darknes. And perhaps those that you call the leaders of the rest, find themselves to need the help of those whom you say they lead, more than you do theirs. But if you do indeed think that these leading ministers mislead the rest, there is the more need of the presence of such as you who discern it, and who may do much to undeceive them.

2. I hear many say, "Under pretence of associating, you will but fall into a multitude of factions. Not two counties can agree upon the same terms; and why should we join with any of them till there be a greater likelihood of union among themselves?"—An unreasonable and self-condemning objection. Are they more divided who associ-

ate, than you who are single and go every man his own way? But wherein does this diversity consist, which you complain of? I see none [that should prevent communion.] The truth is, this objection is commonly made by men that place the unity of the church in what God never placed it in. We must not be united because we subscribe not the same form of words, and agree not in every circumstance or expression; nor shall we ever be united while unity is placed in such indifferent things. There are no greater dividers of the church in the world than those that over-do it in pretending to *unity*, and lay the unity of the church upon that which will not bear it. There is no possibility of bringing all to be of every formalist's opinion, and to use every gesture or form of words that he shall impose. Unnecessary impositions will occasion contention; whereas, where all are left to their liberty, I never hear of contention or offence. In the present case we do not intend, by our associating, to tie one another to new forms and ceremonies, nor to make new terms of union for the churches: all parties may join with us without deserting their principles*.

If any associations subscribe to such things as

* What was added here relating to the agreement subscribed by the ministers in the Worcestershire Association, is now omitted, as being too local, and hardly consistent with the author's plan of union.

you

you cannot in conscience agree to, propose the reasons of your dissent, and beg leave to except those articles with which you are dissatisfied, without unnecessarily withdrawing from your brethren's communion; of which, if they be peaceable men, they will readily admit. But if they would force you to subscribe against your judgment, or else hold no communion with you, then *they* exclude you, and you do not exclude yourselves. But I hope no associations among us will be guilty of such a practice.

XII. [Let all endeavour to make these associations as useful as possible to each other, and subservient to the interest of religion in general.]

Quarrel not, my friends, upon points of precedence, or reputation, or any interest of your own. No man will have settled peace in his mind, or be peaceable in his place, that proudly envies the precedence of others, and secretly grudges at them that seem to cloud his parts and name. One or other will ever be an eye-sore to such men. There is too much of the Devil's image in this sin, for a humble servant of Christ to entertain.—Be not too sensible of injuries, nor make too great a matter of every offensive word or deed. At least do not let it interrupt your concord in God's work: that were to wrong Christ and his church because another has

wronged you. If you be of this impatient humour you will never be quiet: for we are all faulty, and cannot live together without wronging one another. Proud, over tender men are often hurt by their own conceits; like a man that has a fore, who thinks that it smarts the more when he imagines some body hits it. They will often think that a man jeers them or means them ill, when it never came into his thoughts.—Till this SELF be taken down, we shall every man have a private interest of his own, which will lead us all into separate ways, and spoil the peace and welfare of the church. While every man is for himself and his own reputation, and ‘all mind their own things,’ no wonder if they ‘mind not the things of Christ.’ [Concur together as brethren to promote the common cause, and be ready to do good when ever you have an opportunity for it.] If we are heartily devoted to the work of the Lord, let us compassionate the congregations about us that are unprovided for, and endeavour to help them to able ministers, [consulting with each other for this purpose.] In the mean time, we should step out now and then to their assistance, when the business of our own particular charge will give us leave. A lecture in the more ignorant places, purposely for the work of conversion, carried on by the most lively, affectionate preachers, might be very useful where constant means are wanting. [In these
associations,

affociations, plans might be advantageously formed for such a purpose.]

XIII. In your whole ministerial work keep up constant desires and expectations of SUCCESS.

If your hearts be not set on the end of your labours, if you do not long to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and study and preach in hope, you are not likely to see much success. It is a sign of a false self-seeking heart, when a person is contented to be still doing, without seeing any fruit of his labour. I have observed that God seldom blesses any man's work so much as his whose heart is set upon the success of it. Let it be the property of a *Judas* to have more regard to *the bag* than to the business. Leave it to such worldings as he to be satisfied, if they have their salary, and the applause of the people; but let all that preach for Christ and the salvation of men, be dissatisfied till they have the thing they preach for. He never had the right ends of a preacher in view, who is indifferent whether he obtain them or not; who is not grieved when he misses them, and rejoiced when he can see the desired issue. When a man only studies what to say, and how to spend the hour with commendation, without looking any more after it, but to know what the people think of his abilities, and holds on thus from

year to year, I must needs think that he preaches for himself; that he drives on a private trade of his own; and that when he preaches Christ, he preaches not *for* Christ, how excellently soever he may seem to do it.

I know that a faithful minister may have comfort when he wants success. 'Though Israel be not gathered, our reward is with the Lord,' Our acceptance is not according to our fruit, but according to our labour. But then he who longs not for the success of his labours, can have none of this comfort, because he is not a faithful labourer. This is only for them whose hearts are set upon the end, and are grieved if they miss it. This is not the full comfort that we must desire, but only what may quiet us if, notwithstanding our utmost care, we fail of the rest. What if God will accept the physician though the patient die? He must still work in compassion, and do his utmost to save his life. We labour not for our own reward, but for other men's salvation.—I confess, for my part, that I wonder at some ancient reverend men, who have lived thirty, or forty, or fifty years with an unprofitable people, where they have been scarcely able to discern any fruit of their labours, that they can with so much patience continue there. I should not be easily satisfied to spend my days in such a manner, but should suspect that it was the will of God I should go some where else, that another

ther person might come there, better suited to them, and more useful among them. Once more,

XIV. Our whole work must be carried on under a deep sense of our own insufficiency, and in a pious, believing dependance upon CHRIST.

We must go to Him for light, and life, and strength, who sends us on our work. When we feel our faith weak, and our hearts grown dull, and unfuitable to so great a work as that we have to do, we must have recourse to the Lord, and pray that we may not go to persuade others to believe, with an unbelieving heart of our own; or to plead with sinners about everlasting life and death, while we have but a faint belief and feeling of these things ourselves; but that, as he has sent us forth to his work, he would furnish us with a spirit suitable to it. Prayer must carry on our work as well as preaching. He preaches not heartily to his people, who doth not often pray for them. If we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we are unlikely to prevail with them to believe and repent. PAUL gives us his example in this respect, who tells us that he prayed for his hearers 'night and day exceedingly.' Since our own hearts and those of our people are so far out of order as they be, if

we prevail not with God to help and mend them, we are likely to make but unsuccessful work.

C H A P. X.

The Conclusion of the Work; being a particular Application of the whole.

REVEREND and dear brethren; let us now humble our souls before the Lord for our past negligence, and implore his assistance for the time to come. Indeed we cannot expect the latter without the former. If God will help us in our future duty, he will certainly first humble us for our past sin. He that has not so much sense of his faults as unfeignedly to lament them, will hardly have sufficient to make him reform them.—Shall we deny, or excuse, or extenuate our sins while we call our people to such free confessions? It is too common with us to expect that from them which we do little or nothing of ourselves. Too many labour for other men's souls while they seem to forget that they have any of their own to regard. They act as if their part lay only in calling for repentance, and the hearer's in repenting: theirs in crying down sin, and the people's in forsaking it;

it : theirs in preaching duty, and the hearer's in performing it. If we did but study half so much to affect and mend our own hearts, as we do to affect and mend those of our people, it would not be with many of us as it is. It is much too little that we do for their humiliation, but I fear it is much less that we do for our own. It is a sad thing that so many of us have preached our hearers asleep ; but it is worse still if we have studied and preached ourselves asleep ; and have talked so long against hardness of heart, till our hearts are grown hard under the noise of our own reproofs !—Is it not better to give God glory by a full and humble confession, than in tenderness of our own glory to seek for fig-leaves to cover our nakedness ? and to put God upon building that glory which we have denied him, on the ruins of our own which we have preferred to his ?

It is certainly our duty to call to remembrance our manifold sins, especially those that are most obvious, and set them in order before God and our own faces, that he may ' cast them behind his ' back : ' to deal plainly and faithfully with ourselves, in a free confession, that he who is ' faithful and just may forgive us our sins ; and to judge ' ourselves that we may not be judged of the Lord : ' for they only, whether pastors or people, who ' confess and forsake their sins shall find mercy ; he ' that hardeneth his neck shall fall into mischief. '

Sins

Sins openly committed are more dishonourable to us when we hide them than when we confess them. It is the Sin, and not the confession of it that is our dishonour. We have committed them before the sun, so that they cannot be hid: attempts to cloak them increase the guilt and shame. Truly humble ministers, will rather be disposed to lament their guilt in the face of their congregations. It will not be amiss to look back, and imitate the servants of God in ancient times, in their confessions. We find in scripture that the Guides of the church did confess their own sins as well as those of the people. See the example of *Ezra*; he confessed the sins of the priests, 'casting himself down before the house of God.' So did the Levites. So did *Daniel*. And God expressly required 'the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord to weep' as well as others*.

I think if we consider well the duties that have been explained and recommended, and at the same time, the manner in which we have performed them, we cannot doubt whether we have cause for humiliation. He that reads this one exhortation of Paul from whence the text is taken, and compares his life with it, is stupid and hardened indeed if he be not laid in the dust before God,

* *Ezra* ix. 6, 7, 10. *Neh.* ix. 32—34. *Dan.* ix. 20.
Joel ii. 15—17.

bewailing

bewailing his great omissions; and forced to fly to the blood of Christ, and his pardoning grace. O! What cause have we all to bleed before the Lord, that we have been ministers so many years, and yet have done so little, especially by private conference, for the saving of men's souls! Had we done our duty, who knows how many souls might have been brought to Christ, and how much happier we might have been in our parishes? And why did we not do it? Many impediments were doubtless in our way; but if the greatest had not been in ourselves,—in our darkness and dulness, our indisposition to duty, and our divisions, much more might have been done for God than has yet been done. We have sinned, and have no just excuse for our sin. The sin is great because our duties were great. We should therefore be afraid of excusing ourselves too much. The Lord of mercy forgive us, and all his ministers, and lay not any of our ministerial negligence to our charge! Oh that he would cover all our unfaithfulness, and by 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' wash away our guilt of the blood of souls! that 'when the chief shepherd shall appear, we may stand before him in peace,' and may not be condemned for scattering of his flock.

And now, brethren, what have we to do for the time to come, but to deny our lazy contradicting flesh, and rouse up ourselves to the great business
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in which we are employed? 'The harvest is great, 'the labourers are too few'—the loiterers and contentious hinderers are many—The souls of men are precious—The misery of sinners is great—The future torment to which they are near is greater—The joy to which we ought to help them is inconceivable—The beauty and glory of the church is desirable—Our difficulties and dangers are many and great—The comfort that attends a faithful stewardship is greater—But that which attends a full success is inexpressible—And the honour conferred upon us who are called to be co-workers with God, and to subserve the blood-shed of Christ for the salvation of men, is illustrious beyond comparison—'The fields now seem white for harvest;' for the preparations that have been made for us are great—The season for working is now more warm and calm than most ages have been—We have carelessly loitered in our work too long—The present time is passing away: while we are trifling, men are dying, and passing in haste to the eternal world!—And is there nothing in all this to awaken us to our duty, and to engage us to speedy and unwearied diligence? Is it possible for a man to be too careful and laborious under all these motives and engagements?

Were but our souls clearly and deeply impressed with the very important truths we preach, especially those that relate to a future world, O what
a change

a change would it make in our sermons, and in our private discourse! If we did but know what it is for the soul to pass out of the flesh, to go before a righteous God, and enter on a state of unchangeable joy or torment, and with what amazing thoughts dying men apprehend these things, how differently would such matters be discoursed of! Oh the gravity, the seriousness, the incessant diligence these things require! I know not what others think of them; but for my own part, I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself that I deal no more with my own and other men's souls, as becomes one that looks for the great day of the Lord; — that I can leave room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly take me up! I seldom come out of the pulpit, but my conscience smites me that I have been no more serious and fervent. It accuses me not so much for want of elegance or human ornaments, nor for letting fall an unhandsome word; but it asks me—“How couldest thou speak of everlasting life and death with such a heart? How couldest thou preach about heaven and hell in so careless and sleepy a manner? Dost thou believe what thou sayest? Art thou in earnest or in jest? How canst thou tell people that sin is so evil a thing, and that its consequences are so dreadful, without being more affected with it? Shouldst thou not weep over sinners, even till thy tears in-

interrupt

interrupt thy words? Shouldst thou not ‘cry aloud, ‘and shew them their transgressions,’ and shouldst thou not entreat them to repent and believe, with the utmost importunity?’—Such is the peal that conscience rings in my ears, and yet my drowsy soul will not be awakened. What a dreadful thing is a senseless, hardened heart! Lord save us from the plague of infidelity, and hardness of heart! or how shall we be fit instruments of saving others from it? and do thou that on *our* souls, which thou wouldst have us do on the souls of others!

I am even confounded to think what difference there is between my apprehensions of the life to come in a time of sickness and at other seasons. O brethren, if you had conversed with death as often as I have done, and as often received the sentence in yourselves, you would have an unquiet conscience, if not a reformed life with regard to ministerial diligence. You would have something within you that would often ask you such questions as these: “Is this all thy compassion for lost sinners? Wilt thou do no more ‘to seek and save them?’ Is there not such and such an one — are there not many round about thee, who are yet the visible sons of death? What hast thou said to them, or done for their recovery? Shall thousands die and go to hell before thou wilt speak one serious word to prevent it? Will they not there curse thee for ever that thou didst no more
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in time to save them?" Such cries of conscience are daily in my ears, though the Lord knows I have too little obeyed them. I confess that I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asks me, "What hadst thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone into eternity; what didst thou do to prepare him for it?"—When you are laying a corpse in the grave, how can you help reflecting with yourselves to this purpose: "Here lies the body, but where is the soul? What did I do for it before it departed? It was part of my charge; what account can I give of it?"

O sirs! is it a small matter to answer such questions as these? It may seem so now; but the hour is coming when it will appear otherwise. 'If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts,' and will condemn us more. We may plead the cause with conscience, and either bribe it, or endure its sentence; but God is not so easily dealt with, nor his sentence so easily borne. 'Wherefore we receiving (and preaching) a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.'

Let me beseech you, brethren, on the behalf of Christ, for the sake of the church, of the immortal souls of men, and for your own souls sake, that
 you

you presently and effectually set about the work which I have been principally recommending. Harken to God and the calls of duty, if you would have peace of conscience. I know that carnal wit never wants words, nor a shew of reason, to gain-say that truth and duty which it abhors. It is easier to cavil against duty than to perform it. But consider how the matter will appear on a death-bed, and what account you will give to God at the great day. Conscience will not own those reasons in a dying hour, which now it seems to admit. There is not that comfort to be had for a departing soul in the view of neglected duty, as of a life wholly devoted to the service of God; and I am confident my arguments will appear strongest at last, whatever they may do now.

O think how dreadful and aggravated our final condemnation will be, if we live and die wilful neglecters of the great work we have undertaken! Our parents that destined us to the ministry—our tutors that educated us for it—our learning and ministerial gifts—our voluntarily undertaking the care of souls—all the care of God for his church—all that Christ has done and suffered for it—all the precepts, promises, and threatenings of the holy scriptures—all the examples of prophets, apostles, and preachers there recorded—and all the books in our studies that tell us of our duty, or any way assist us in it, will rise in judgment against us!—All the
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the sermons that we have preached, to convince men of the danger of sin, of the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; to quicken them in their duty, or to reprove their neglect—all the maintenance we take for our service—all the honour we receive from the people—and the ministerial privileges we enjoy—all the witness we have borne against the neglects of ministers—all the judgments and mercies of God with which we have been acquainted—all the fervent prayers of God's people that have been offered on our account—and finally, all our vows, promises, and resolutions for diligence in our work, will at the last great day aggravate our condemnation, if we are found unfaithful in our master's service.

Truly, brethren, if I did not apprehend the matter to be of exceeding great moment to yourselves, to your people, and to the honour of God, I would not have troubled you with so many words about it, nor have presumed to speak so sharply as I have done. But in an affair of life and death, men are apt to forget their reverence, courtesy, and compliments, commonly called good manners. For my part, I apprehend this to be one of the greatest and best works that I ever put my hand to in my whole life. I verily believe you will agree with me herein; and if you do, you will not think me too prolix, or too plain and severe. As for *myself*, spare not; tread me as dirt in the streets; let

let me be as vile in your eyes as you please, so that you will but hearken to God and reason, and do your duty for the salvation of men. What am I but a servant of Christ? and what is my life worth, but to do him service? Whose favour can recompence for the ruins of the church? And who can be silent while souls are undone? Not I for my part, while God is my master, his word my rule, his work my business; and the success of it, for the saving of souls, my end. I know myself unworthy to be your monitor; but a monitor you must have; and it is better to hear of our sin and our duty from any body, than not at all. Receive the admonition, and you will see no cause, in the monitor's unworthiness, to repent of it. But remember, if you reject it, the unworthiest messenger may bear that witness against you which will shame and condemn you.

To conclude*: Let us set before us the exhortation, and the example given us in our text and context, and learn our duty from thence. This one passage of Scripture better deserves a whole year's study, than most things about which students are apt to spend their time. O brethren, write it on your study doors, or set it as your copy in capital letters continually before your eyes. Could we but learn

* This last excellent passage is transposed from the midst of the original work, as it seemed best adapted to form the best possible conclusion.

two or three lines of it, what preachers should we be! Here we are taught—Our general business; **SERVING THE LORD**—Our special work; **TAKING HEED TO OURSELVES AND ALL THE FLOCK**—The substance of our doctrine; **REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD, AND FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**—The places and manner of our teaching; **PUBLICLY, AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE**—The object and internal manner; **WARNING EVERY ONE, NIGHT AND DAY, WITH ALL HUMILITY OF MIND, AND WITH TEARS**—[The faithfulness and integrity that are requisite; **I HAVE KEPT BACK NOTHING THAT WAS PROFITABLE UNTO YOU; I AM PURE FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN, FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD**]—The innocence and self-denial to be used; **I HAVE COVETED NO MAN'S SILVER OR GOLD**—The patience and resolution to be exercised; **NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR UNTO MYSELF, SO THAT I MIGHT FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD JESUS.**—And once more, The motives to engage us to all this; **THE HOLY GHOST HAS MADE US OVERSEERS; the church we feed is THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.**

Write

Write this upon your hearts, and it will do yourselves and the church more good than twenty years study of those lower things which often employ your thoughts; which, though they get you greater applause in the world, yet, if separated from these, will make you ‘but sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals.’

THE END OF THE REFORMED PASTOR.



APPENDIX ;

A P P E N D I X ;

CONTAINING

Hints of Advice to STUDENTS * for
the Ministry, and to TUTORS of
Academies.

OF what great importance the character of the clergy is to the church and the salvation of men, thousands have found to their joy and happiness; and I fear, thousands more to their sorrow and destruction. Of what consequence, then, the disposition of CANDIDATES for the ministry is, needs not many words to shew. It is of unspeakable importance, whether they prove good or bad.

God, who has instituted the sacred office, and who, by his Spirit, qualifies men for it, usually works according to their qualifications. As in the natural world he operates according to the fitness of natural second causes, so in the moral world, ac-

* Much more on the same subject, may be found in other of our Author's writings: See particularly Vol. I. p. 254 & 714, et seq. where may be seen a long catalogue of books.

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according to the suitableness of moral causes. Holiness, though in many respects it be a supernatural work, is usually wrought by holy means. Able and faithful ministers therefore are very great blessings. They are the 'lights of the world, and the salt of the earth.' Never was the gospel well propagated or continued in any country but by their means. God uses them as his instruments for convincing, converting, edifying, comforting, and saving of souls. Herein they are co-workers with Christ the great Saviour of souls, and with the Holy Spirit, who regenerates and sanctifies them. How many thousands of happy spirits in heaven will for ever rejoice in the effects of their labours, and bless God for them! In a word, churches, states, and kingdoms are chiefly blessed and preserved by the faithful part of the ministry. They are the means of subduing 'sin which is the destruction of a people,' and promoting 'righteousness which exalteth a nation.'

On the other hand, unfaithful and wicked ministers are the worst and most hurtful men. Though they may be furnished with the same notions and words as godly teachers are, (though this is not usually the case) yet they will be greatly wanting in that serious delivery, which is ordinarily necessary to make the hearers serious christians. That seldom reaches the heart of the hearer, which comes not from the heart of the speaker. Con-
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stant experience tells us how different is the success of reading or saying a pulpit lesson, in a dull, or merely affected manner; and that of the judicious, serious explication and application of well chosen matter, which the experienced preacher well understands, and which he utters from the feeling of his soul. Neither the love of a benefice, nor of applause, will make a man preach in that manner which the love of God, the lively belief of heaven and hell, and the desire of saving souls, will do. If a stage-hypocrite should learn the art of preaching with an affected fervency and seeming zeal, yet art and paint will not reach the power and beauty of nature; nor will it hold out so long. Affectation usually betrays itself; and when it is discerned, the hypocrite is lothed. But if he should carry on his stage-affectation with plausible art, the rest of his ministerial work will not be discharged in a manner answerable to it. Since it is from men that he expects his reward, in their sight only he appears in his borrowed glory; in his private conversation and conduct, he makes a different figure. He will not set himself to instruct the ignorant, to save men from their sins, and raise their minds to heaven, by praying with them, by holy discourse, and heavenly deportment: he will not be at much cost or labour to do any kind of real good.

But alas! by far the greatest part of unexperi-

enced preachers have not so much as the hypocrite's seeming zeal and appearance of religion to cloke their sins, and profit their people. The mis-behaviour of such, is likely to make them exceedingly hurtful. By their ignorance, ambition, covetousness, and other sins, they render themselves contemptible in the eyes of many, and by that means render the church and all religion so too. A scandalous clergy will be a scorned clergy; and a scorned clergy will prepare for the scorning and destruction of true religion. Alas! what wretched work have hypocritical, unexperienced, proud, worldly, voluptuous, ignorant ministers been making in most christian nations, these fourteen hundred years! Wo! wo! wo! to the church that hath such pastors! that hath wolves instead of shepherds! Wo to the land that hath such! Wo to the princes and states that follow such counsellors! Wo to the souls that are subverted by them! From a corrupt clergy have sprung the greatest calamities of the church in all places to this day.

And let it be remembered, the sins of such men will not prove less mischievous to themselves than to others. Their guilt is aggravated by their perfidious violation of their baptismal and ordination vows, as well as by their nearness to God in their office; and they are condemned out of their own mouths. Such persons are with greater difficulty brought to repentance than others; because by wit
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and study they have bended that doctrine to defend their sin, which should be used to bring them to repentance; or because pride will not suffer such persons as they are, employed in so holy an office, and possessed of such titles, learning, and reputation, to suppose themselves in an unholy state; and whoever accuses them of sin or reproves them for it will be represented as an enemy to the church. Their ulcers are as a *noli me tangere*, and fret as a gangreen unremedied. Their profanation of holy things makes them worse, and more impenitent than other men; partly as they have more notoriously forfeited the grace of God which should work repentance in them, and have caused him in righteous judgment to forsake them; and partly as they have hardened their own hearts, by long abuse of that truth which should have sanctified them. For when persons have long 'imprisoned the truth in 'unrighteousness,' and long played, as hypocrites, with what they professed to believe, custom will so harden them, that their knowledge will have little power on their hearts.

And now do I need say any more to shew young men designed for the ministry, of what importance it is that they be well qualified for it? God can, and sometimes does, turn wolves into faithful shepherds, and convert those, who while they were unconverted themselves, undertook to convert others; but this is not ordinarily to be expected. First notions lie

deepest, and make way for others that are connected with them. False opinions, as well as true, are usually linked together, and the chain is not easily cast off or broken. Those that have received errors have also received their defensatives. These are like the shell-fish, which carry their house about with them. They that have received them, have studied what to say for them, but not what can be said against them. But supposing that you have ever so true notions in your heads, if they come not with power upon your *hearts*, and do not make you new, spiritual, and holy men, they will not qualify you to propagate faith and holiness. Now it is that you must get those eminent qualifications of knowledge and holiness, which you are afterwards to use; for how can you use what you have not? Though some prudent hearers will encourage such young men as they think are hopeful, yet most will judge of persons and things as they find them. The ignorant, dry, and lifeless orations of unexperienced preachers, will not be esteemed by such as know what judgment and seriousness that sacred work requires. Few will praise, or feed on unfavoury food, merely to flatter and praise the cook. Then when you find yourselves slighted, your resentment will rise against those that slight you because they are not contented with your unholy trifling, but all your enmity will turn against yourselves, and, like that

that of Satan against the members of Christ, will be but self-tormenting.

Let me then seriously caution all persons against being too hasty in resolving for the sacred ministry. I would not discourage pious, prudent desires and purposes, but I must say, that many parents, in this respect, prove greatly injurious to the church. I do not mean only worldly men, who look upon the ministry merely as a trade to live by, and send their sons to the university in order to their worldly maintenance and preferment; but even honest godly parents, who ignorantly think it a good work to design their children for the ministry, and call it "devoting them to God," without duly considering whether they are likely to be fit for it or not. When the children of such persons have been some years at the university, they think a living is their due. Ordained they must be; what else have they studied for? It is now too late to change their purpose, when they have been at so many years cost and labour to prepare for the ministry. They are too old, or too proud, or too idle, to go to any manual labour, and have not time or opportunity to prepare for any other learned profession. So that there is no way left but, for a benefice, to become church-mountebanks, or spiritual quacks, and undertake the pastoral charge of souls; though they scarcely know what souls are, for what they were made, or whither they are going; at least,

how they must be conducted and prepared for their endless state. And bad as they are, they can find persons bad enough to recommend and ordain them. How deplorable is the case of the poor people's souls over whom they are to preside !

In order to prevent any from intending the work of the ministry who are not qualified, I will briefly mention the necessary qualifications for it. The work is so high, and miscarrying in it is of such dreadful consequence, that no one should be resolvedly devoted to the ministry who hath not the following endowments.

1. A good natural capacity. It should be somewhat above the ordinary degree. Grace supposes nature ; and by sanctifying it, turns it the right way ; but does not use to make wise teachers of natural drones, or weak-headed lads who have not sense enough to learn.

2. A competent readiness of speech. One who cannot readily speak his mind in common things, is not likely to have that fluent delivery which is necessary to a preacher.

3. He must be hopeful for godliness. He must be captivated by no gross sin. He must not only have a love to learning, but religion ; to the word of God, and good company ; to prayer, and good books. He must shew that he has a serious concern about his soul, and the life to come ; that his conscience is under some effectual convictions
of

of the evil of sin, and the excellence and necessity of a godly life. The youth that hath not these qualifications, should not be devoted to the ministry. To devote an incapable, ungodly person to such an holy work, is worse than of old to have offered to God the unclean for sacrifice. To do it under pretence of hoping that he may have grace' hereafter, is a presumptuous profanation, and worse than to design a coward to be a soldier, or a wicked, unsuitable person for a partner in life, in hope that they may become fit afterwards.

If therefore your parents have been so unwise as to dedicate that to God which was unfit for his acceptance, it concerns you quickly to look better to yourselves, and not to run into the consuming fire. You ought to be conscious of your own condition. If you know that you want either natural capacity, or readiness of speech, or serious piety and heart-devotedness to God, do not meddle with that calling which requires all these.

Perhaps you will say, "What shall we do with ourselves? We have gone so far, that we are fit for nothing else." I answer; You are less fit for the ministry than for any thing. That which requires the highest qualifications, will most shame and condemn you if you want them. If you are not fit for Physic or Law, seek for something else. You had better become Servants, or turn to the basest employments, than to run into the sad case

of *Hophni* and *Phineas*; or of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, to the utter undoing of yourselves, and to the loss and danger of many others.—But remember, if your unfitness be your *Ungodliness*, whether you are ministers or not, you will be for ever miserable, unless your hearts and lives be changed. When that is done, I would not discourage you; but (believe me) it is far better to be a cobbler or a chimney-sweeper, or to beg your bread, than to be an ungodly minister, though with the greatest preferments, riches, and applause.

Perhaps parents will say, “If we devote none to the ministry till godliness appears in them, few will be so devoted, since children seldom discover much favour of religion; and some turn out bad, who when young, promised exceeding well.” I answer; Children cannot be expected to shew that understanding in religion which men may; but if they discover not a love to it, a conscientious regard to God’s authority, and the life to come, and a dislike of ungodliness and sin, you have no reason to presume they will be fit for the ministry. You can judge but upon probabilities; if they prove bad after an hopeful profession, it will not be chargeable upon you. But we all know that a hopeful youth is a great preparation to an honest age.

Let me now drop a few hints of advice to such young men, as have ground to hope they are qualified for the sacred office.

I. Be

I. Be careful [as far as depends upon yourselves *] in the choice of your Tutors.

Choose not a teacher who prefers human wisdom to divine, or who is of a worldly, ambitious mind ; who is factious and uncharitable, or violent for any party ; but one that bears a good report among the sober and impartial, as a person of a christian catholic charity ; who loves good men ; who is willing to do good to all, and is desirous of maintaining unity and peace ; one that will make it his business to explain the Scripture, to teach you the will of God, and how you may please him and be saved.

II. Abhor sloth and idleness.

When you are at common schools, your master drives you on by fear ; but when you are in a University, and are at riper age, you are trusted more with yourselves ; so that if you will not be carried on with constant pleasure and the love of knowledge, the flesh will prefer its ease, and you will proceed so slowly as to arrive at no high degree of learning. Then when you have gone through your studies, and are called out to the use of your knowledge, your emptiness and ignorance will soon appear. It is not your canonical habit, nor seven, nor seventeen

* This advice more particularly belongs to Parents and others, who have the care of youth.

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years

years spent in the University, nor the title of Master of Arts, or Doctor in Divinity, or Bishop, which will pass with men of sense for knowledge, diligence, humility, patience, and charity; nor that (without these) will do the work to which you are devoted. Believe it, the high and necessary accomplishments of a true divine, are not easily or speedily attained.

III. Fear and fly from sensuality and fleshly Lufts.

While your bodies are not fatigued with labours, nor your thoughts taken up with wants and cares; while you are entirely at ease, and your studies are arbitrary, fleshly appetites have time and opportunity to solicit your fancies, to incline you to interrupt your business and think about matters of sensual delight; either with what to please the palate in eating or drinking, or needless and hurtful recreations, or to read romances, play-books, and other corrupting vanities. Let me add, idle scholars are far more strongly haunted, than poor labouring, and afflicted persons are, with temptations to self-pollution and other filthy lusts. And if these should prevail, alas! you are undone! They will offend God, dispel his grace, wound and scare your consciences, destroy all spiritual affections and delights, and turn down your hearts
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from heaven and holiness to filth and folly. Beasts will not be fit for the pleasures or the work of saints. Away therefore from idleness. Pamper not the flesh with fulness or delights. Abhor all time-wasting needless recreations. Away especially from the baits of fleshly lusts. Be no more indifferent or unresolved herein, than you would be about drinking poison, or wilfully going among thieves and murderers. Presume not on your own strength: he is safest that is furthest from danger. Gunpowder must not stand near the fire.

IV. Make a prudent choice of your companions: especially your bosom-friends.

Love and familiarity will give them great advantage over you. If they are wise, they will teach you wisdom. If they are holy and spiritual, they will be drawing you towards God, and settling your aversion from sin and love to holiness. But if they are worldly and ambitious, they will be filling your heads with ambitious and worldly projects. If they are ungodly hypocrites, having only the name of christians, they will be opposing or deriding serious godliness; and will plead for the formalities of religion as better than spiritual devotion. If they be hardened sinners, they will try to make you such, by revilings or plausible cavils against the things and persons that are contrary to their carnal inclinations

nations and interests ; and by endeavouring to possess your minds with false opinions of God's people. Ill company is a dangerous snare ; but wise and religious companions are great blessings. Though the merciful providence of God does usually choose them for us, it is only so as that we must be faithful choosers for ourselves.

V. Watch with great fear against ambition and worldly ends.

The roots of these mortal sins are bred in us, and lie very deep. They often live, and even reign, where they are little suspected ; but wo to him that is conquered by them. ' Ye cannot serve God and ' Mammon. The love of the world is enmity ' against God.' How many, having escaped the temptations of sloth and sensuality, have been overcome by this ! Alas ! how does this stream carry down the most pregnant wits, into the gulf of perdition ! Yea some, who seemed very humble and mortified, while they had no great temptation, when wealth and honour have been set before them, have lost their virtue before they were aware. Worldly interest has so biased their understandings, that they have taken truth for error, and error for truth ; duty for sin, and sin for duty. If you be the servants of the flesh and the world, wo be to you

you when your masters turn you off, and you receive your wages!

VI. Another earnest warning which I must give you, and all young men, is to guard against an unhumbled understanding, rashly confident of its own apprehensions.

This is the offspring of ignorance and pride, and is one of the most common and pernicious maladies of mankind. Among a multitude of persons that differ from each other, how few are not obstinately confident that they are in the right; even youths of twenty years of age. Oh dread this vice, and suspect your own understandings. Be humble; take time; try and hear before you judge. Labour for knowledge; but take not upon you to be sure where you are not; doubt and try till you are. Thoroughly study the nature and evidences of the christian faith and doctrine. Do not hasten too soon or too confidently over these hard controversies, as if your judgment of them at maturity would certainly have no change; but still suppose that greater light, by longer study, may cause you to alter your opinions about such matters of difficulty.

VII. With regard to your studies, let me exhort you to begin with practical divinity.

First

First settle your souls in a safe condition for life and death, and take God and heaven for your hope and all. If you do not so, you are not christians indeed. But if you be here fixed by the grace of God, you will know what to choose and what to do. It will teach you to refer all worldly things to spiritual and heavenly ends, and to 'count all things but loss for Christ,' and for that 'one thing needful, which shall never be taken from you.' This will save you from the greatest evils, and give your minds continual peace; even that 'peace of God which passes all understanding.' Deal not so foolishly as to waste many years in inferior arts and sciences, before you have studied how to please God and be saved.

I unfeignedly thank God, that by sickness and his grace, he taught me early how to DIE; and by that means, how to LIVE: that he inclined me to study the holy scriptures, and many practical, spiritual, *English* books, till I had somewhat settled the resolution and peace of my own soul, before I had gone far in human learning. I then found more leisure and capacity to take in subservient knowledge in its proper time and place. Indeed I had lost most of my studies of philosophy and controversial divinity, if I had fallen on them too young; or else should have formed very crude notions about those things, which require a riper judgment.

Read

Read such books as contain the essential principles of religion, and treat of them in the most plain, affectionate, and practical manner ; tending to deep impressions, renovation of the soul, and spiritual experience ; without which you will want the essential qualifications for your future work. The art of theology, without the power, consisting of holy life, light, and love, is the very constitution of the hypocrite.

Oh that all our students for the christian ministry would think of these things ? What a poor business is it to spend their time in knowing a little of the Works of God, and some of those names that the divided tongues of the nations have imposed on them, and not know the LORD himself, nor exalt him in their hearts, nor be acquainted with that one renewing work which would make them happy. They do but 'walk in a vain shew,' and spend their lives like dreaming men, while they so busy their wits and tongues about an abundance of names and notions, and are strangers to God and the life of saints. This they will acknowledge, if ever God awakens them by saving grace. They make themselves a world of business about nothing, while they are wilful strangers to the primitive, independent, necessary Being, who is 'all in all.' Nothing can be rightly known, if God be not known, nor is any study managed to any great purpose while God is not studied. We know little of the creature, till we know it as it respects its Creator.

Single

Single letters and syllables uncomposed are nonsense. Such broken syllables are all creatures: as separated from God they signify nothing. He that overlooks the 'Alpha and Omega,' and sees not him in all, sees nothing at all. It is one thing to know the creatures as *Aristotle*, and another to know them as a christian.

To see God in his works, and to love and converse with him, was the employment of man in his state of innocence; and this is so far from ceasing to be our duty now, that it was the work of Christ to bring us back to it. The most holy men are the most excellent students of God's works; nay none but the holy can rightly know or study them. 'His works are great, and sought out of all such persons, who have pleasure therein: not for themselves, but for him that made them. To see and admire, to reverence and adore, to love and delight in God as appearing to us in his works, and purposely to peruse them for these ends, this is the true and only philosophy: this is the right sanctification of your studies. Theology * (when you are sufficiently acquainted with words and things, to understand the principles of it) must lay the foundation of all your studies, and must lead the way in them all.—Once more,

* That is, *practical* divinity. Controversial is studied with most advantage after other sciences, logic, mathematics, &c. ED.

VIII. Let me advise you not to begin the exercise of your ministry too boldly, in large or judicious auditories.

Overmuch confidence indicates pride, ignorance of your imperfections, of the greatness of your work, and the dreadful majesty of God. Settle at first, if you can, a competent time, in the house of some ancient experienced pastor, who has a small chapel in the country and wants assistance. There you may learn as well as teach; and learn, by his practice, what *you* must practise. By preaching a few years to a small, ignorant people, where you need not fear critical judgments, you will acquire boldness of speech, and freedom of utterance, without that servile study of words, and committing your notes to memory, which will be tiresome, time-wasting, and lifeless. Thus you will be better prepared for more public places, if you should be called to them, than you are ever likely to be by continuing among scholars in the university, or by serving as chaplains in great men's houses.

After these directions to STUDENTS for the ministry, it may not be amiss to add a few brief hints

TO TUTORs of ACADEMIES.

And I do in zeal for the good of the church, and their own success in their most necessary labours,
propose

propose it to the consideration of all pious Tutors, whether they should not, as early and as diligently read to their pupils, or cause them to read, the principal parts of practical divinity, as any of the sciences? And whether these should not go together from the very first? It is well that they hear sermons; but that is not enough. If they have need of private help in Philosophy, besides public lectures, much more in Theology. I must presume to tell you (pardon the censure from one so unfit for it, considering the necessity of the case) that it is a grand error, and of dangerous consequence, in our christian Academies, that young men study the Creature before the Redeemer, and set themselves to Metaphysics and Mathematics before Theology; since no one who has not the vitals of Theology is capable of going beyond a fool in Philosophy; and all that such persons do, is but 'doting about questions, and opposition of science, falsely so called*.' If Tutors would make it their principal business to acquaint their pupils with the doctrine of life, and labour to set it home upon their hearts; and so conduct the rest of their instructions, that it may appear they are intended only as subservient to this, it might be the means of great happiness to the souls of men, the church of Christ, and the common weal. But

* 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

when

when languages and philosophy ingross almost all their time and thought, and instead of reading philosophy like divines, they read divinity like philosophers, this it is that blasts so many in the bud, and pesters the church with un sanctified teachers. Hence it is that we have so many worldlings to preach the invisible felicity, and so many carnal men to declare the mysteries of the spirit: I wish I might not add,—and so many Infidels to preach Christ, or so many Atheists to preach the living God.

Let tutors then begin and end with the things of God; reading God to their pupils in every thing. Let them speak daily to their hearts, about those things which must be wrought in their hearts, or they are undone. You are preparing them for the special service of God; and must they not first have the saving knowledge of him whom they are to serve? Oh! think with yourselves what a dreadful thing it will be to their own souls, and what a mischief to the church of God, if they come out from you with carnal hearts, to so spiritual and so great a work! If you should send but one half of them forth on a business for which they are unfit, what grievous work will they make in the church and in the world! Whereas if you are the means of their true conversion*, not only they themselves,
but

* The author considered himself as addressing tutors of colleges,

but many souls to whom they shall preach, will have occasion to bless you, and to bless God for your zeal and diligence; yea perhaps for one reasonable word. When once their hearts are suitably affected with the doctrine which they study and preach, they will both study and preach it more heartily, than could otherwise be expected. Their own experience will direct them to the fittest subjects; will furnish them with the best matter; and will quicken them to set it home. And let me observe, that the best of our hearers will feel and favour such experimental preachers; who usually less regard others, whatever may be their other accomplishments.

leges, where he knew many unconverted youths were admitted as students; which, it is hoped, in private academies is not the case.

THE END.

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The Writers of *The British Critic*, in the No. for March 1808, p. 210, after a very high encomium on Mr. Orton, mention a former volume of his Letters [*viz.* to a *Young Clergyman*] with great commendation, and observe, "The present volumes may be considered as a Supplement." After noticing some of these Letters as containing "many curious" as well as "important particulars," they add, "The remaining Letters are full of notices of opinions, persons, and books, more curious, perhaps, to us, than to the Dissenters themselves. The Notes and biographical Sketches, added by the Editor, are judicious, and such as the reader will naturally wish to find. When we take up the writings of Dissenters, so generally found in Christian principles, we feel a sensible pain in the reflection, that such persons should be kept apart from the church," &c. &c.

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