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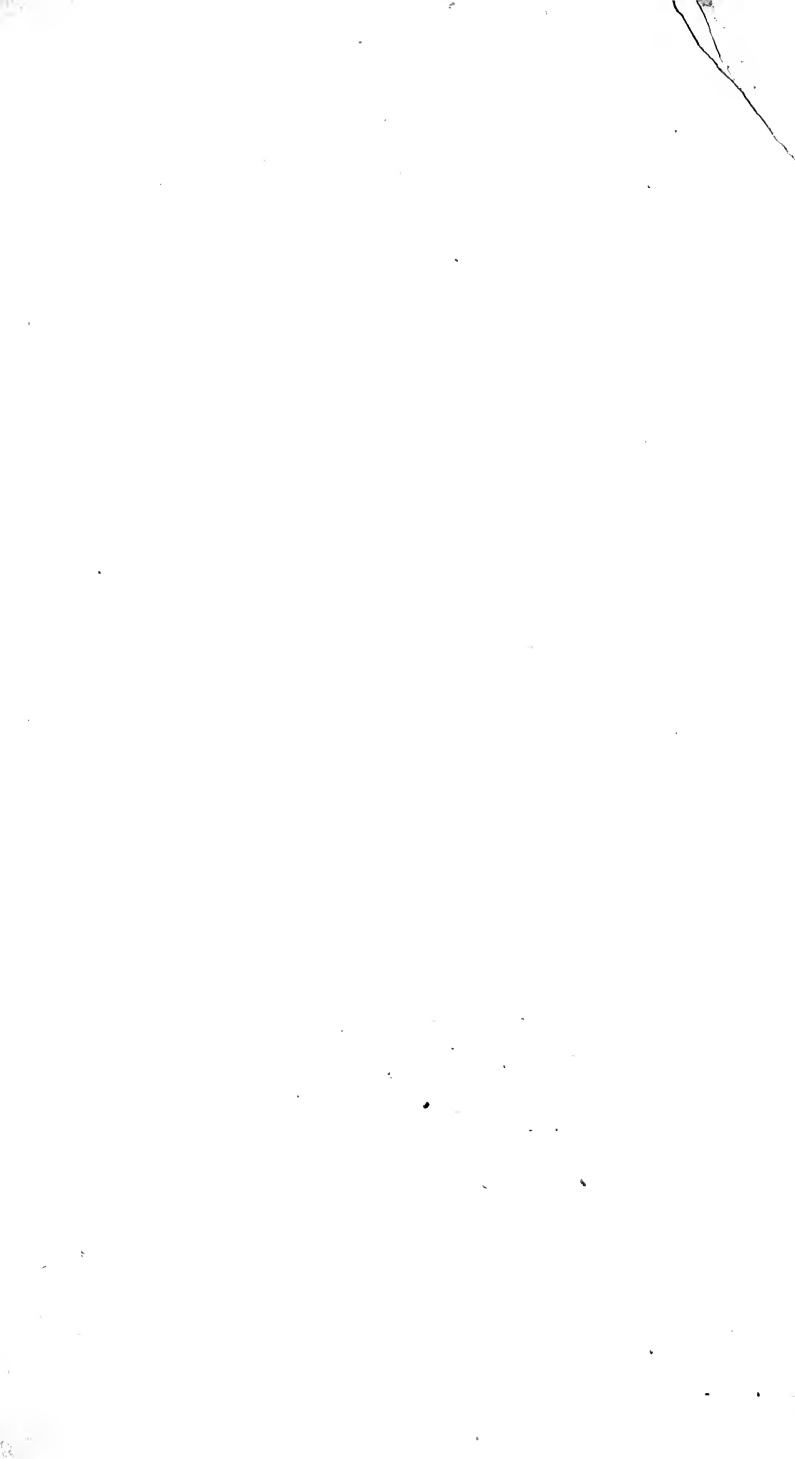
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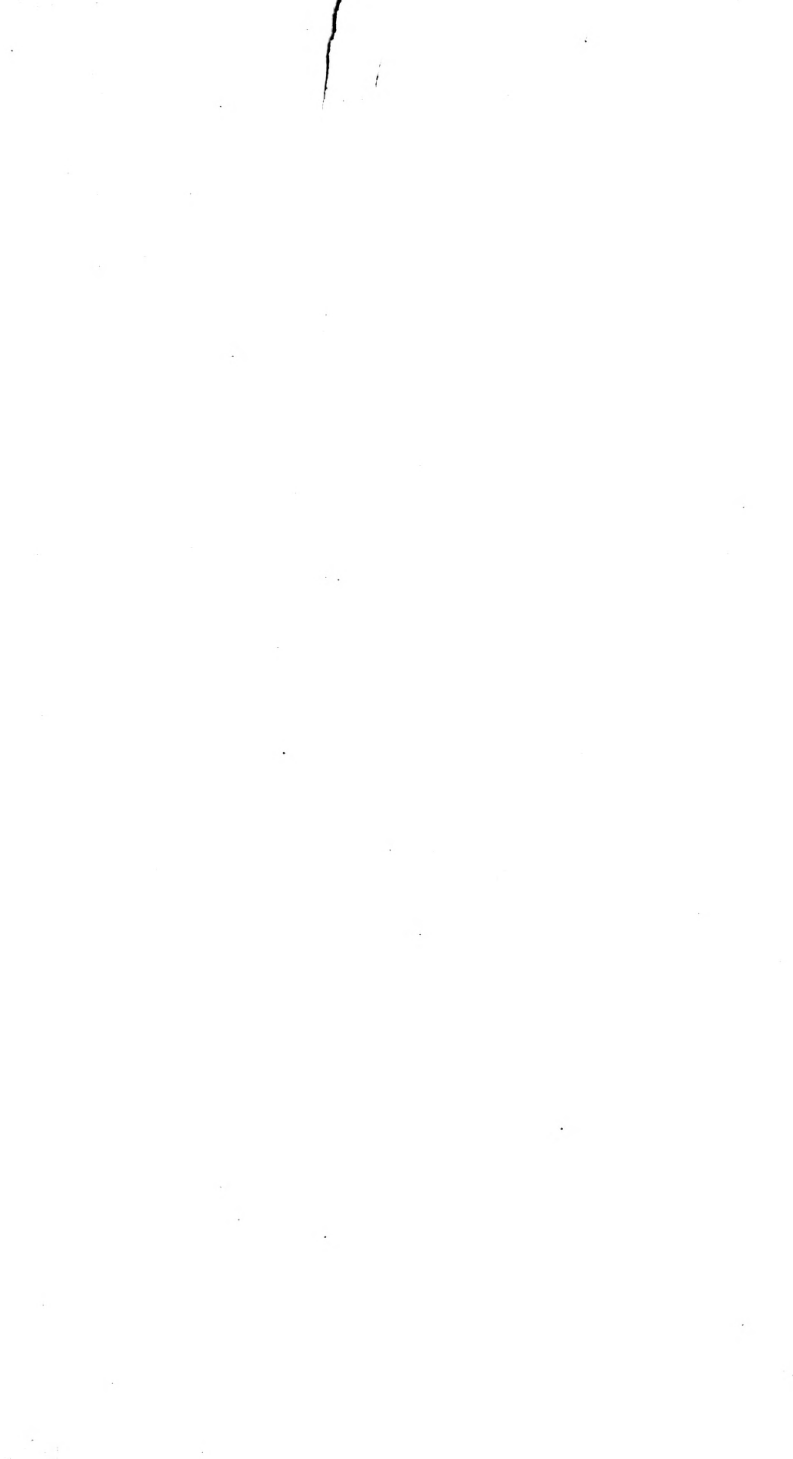
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THE  
PASTORAL CARE.

BY THE LATE  
ALEXANDER GERARD, D.D. F.R.S.E.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY  
AND KING'S COLLEGE OF ABERDEEN;

AND  
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY  
FOR SCOTLAND.

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*PUBLISHED BY HIS SON AND SUCCESSOR,*

GILBERT GERARD, D.D.

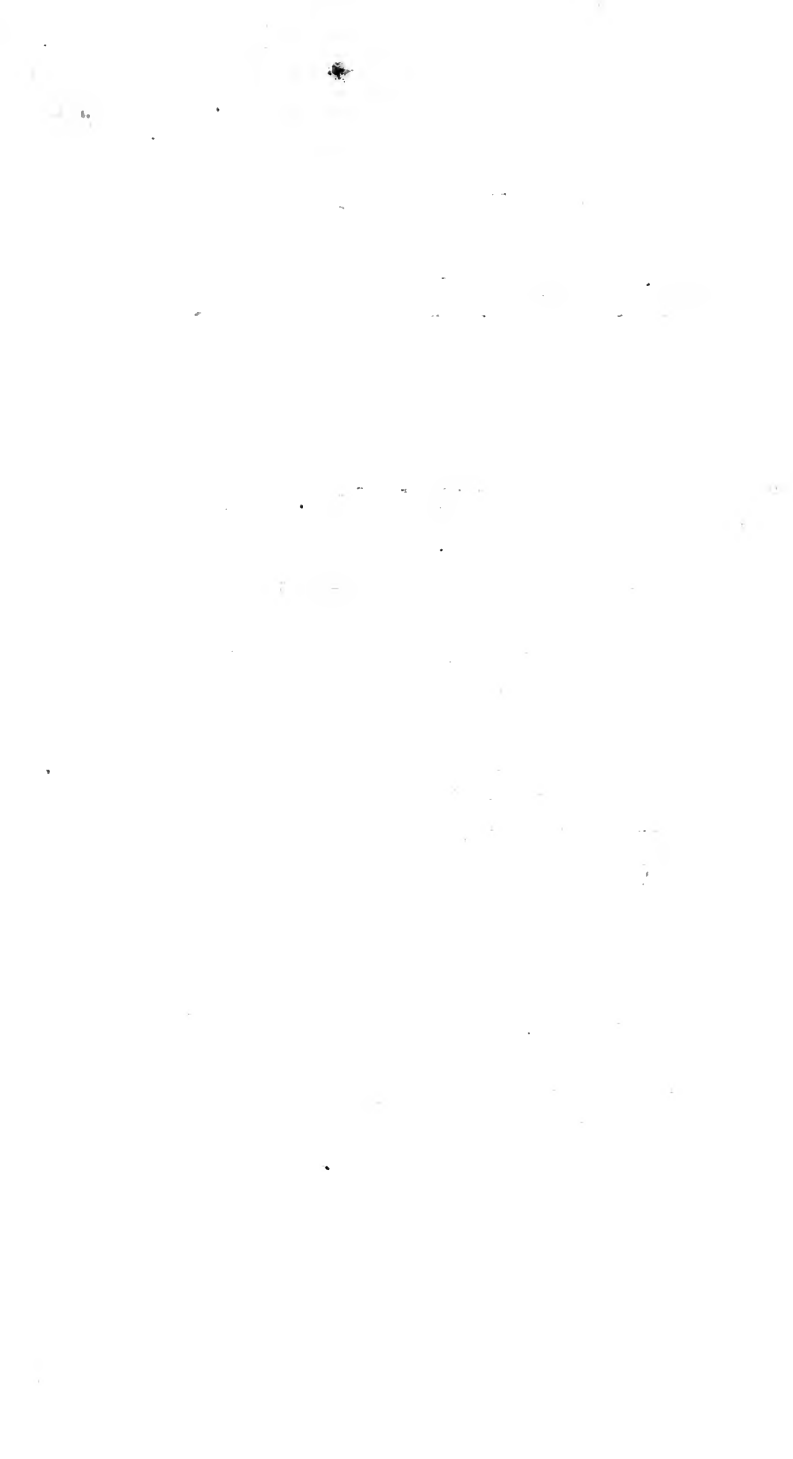
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE following Work was part of my late father's Theological Prelections, as Professor of Divinity. I know not whether he ever intended to publish it ; but had he lived to prepare it for the press, it would have appeared in a much more perfect form than that in which it is now offered to the Public. I found part of it carefully revised and corrected, and transcribed on a different and more extensive plan than what is followed in his original notes on the subject. This plan I have endeavoured to complete, though conscious of its being executed in a very inferior manner to what himself would have done. It is difficult to enter into another's ideas, so as to make them entirely one's own, or to pursue his hints so as to preserve uniformity and consistency. Whatever defects, therefore, there may be in this respect,

or whatever inaccuracies in point of style, must be charged solely on the Editor. Such as it is, it is hoped the Work will be useful. This was the only view of its Author, who composed it for the benefit of those Candidates for the Ministry who were under his care; a long succession of whom issued from his school, and can, doubtless, bear testimony to the pleasure and instruction they derived from this part of his Theological Course: and although it is peculiarly adapted to the situation of Clergymen of the Church of Scotland, yet it may not be unprofitable to those also of other persuasions, who will find it throughout breathing a spirit of rational and elevated piety, and marked with that candour and moderation which distinguished his character.

GIL. GERARD.

King's College,  
Aberdeen, Feb. 7, 1799.

# C O N T E N T S.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION	- - - - -	I
--------------	-----------	---

## P A R T I.

The Importance of the Pastoral Office	-	7
---------------------------------------	---	---

### CHAP. I.

<i>The Dignity of the Pastoral Office</i>	- - -	ib.
---	-------	-----

SECT. I. The true Nature of the Dignity of the Pastoral Office	- - - - -	8
II. Of a just Sense of the Dignity of the Pastoral Office	- - - - -	23
III. Of the Esteem due to the Pastoral Office	- - - - -	36
IV. Of the Contempt of the Clergy	-	42

### CHAP. II.

<i>The Difficulties of the Pastoral Office</i>	- - -	64
--	-------	----

SECT. I. The Nature of its Difficulties	- - -	ib.
II. Of the Obligations respecting the Difficulties of the Pastoral Office	-	76
III. Of the true Spirit of the Pastoral Office	- - - - -	86

PART

## P A R T II.

The Duties of the Pastoral Office	- -	95
-----------------------------------	-----	----

## CHAP. I.

<i>Private Duties respecting Individuals</i>	- -	97
SECT. I. Of Example	- - - -	100
II. Of Private Instruction	- - - -	113
III. Of Private Exhortation	- - - -	137
IV. Of Counselling	- - - -	147
V. Of Visiting the Afflicted	- - - -	163
VI. Of Reproving	- - - -	185
VII. Of Convincing	- - - -	199
VIII. Of reconciling Differences	- - - -	205
IX. Of Care of the Poor	- - - -	207

## CHAP. II.

<i>Private Duties respecting lesser Societies</i>	- -	212
SECT. I. Of Visitation of Families	- - - -	ib.
II. Of Catechizing	- - - -	217
III. Of Fellowship Meetings	- - - -	223
IV. Of Marrying	- - - -	227
V. Of subordinate Duties	- - - -	228

## CHAP. III.

<i>Public Duties respecting a whole Parish</i>	-	235
SECT. I. Of Preaching	- - - -	ib.
ART. I. Of Instructive or Explicatory Discourses	- - - -	245
II. Of Convictive or Probatory Discourses	- - - -	272
		ART.



CONTENTS.

vii

PAGE

ART. III. Of Panegyrical or Demonstra- tive Discourses - - -	284
IV. Of Suafory Discourses - - -	289
V. Of Invention - - -	306
VI. Of Difpofition - - -	343
VII. Of Elocution - - -	346
VIII. Of Memory - - -	348
IX. Of Pronunciation or Aftion -	355
SECT. II. Of prefiding in the ordinary Public Worship of God, adminiftering the Sacraments, and conducting Public Worship on extraordinary Occafions	365
CHAP. IV.	
<i>Ecclefiastical Duties refpefting the Church in general - - - - -</i>	388

P A R T III.

The Requisites for performing the Duties of the Paftoral Office - -	404
--	-----

CHAP. I.

<i>The Qualifications for the Paftoral Office</i> -	ib.
---	-----

CHAP. II.

<i>Of Preparation for the Paftoral Office</i> - -	418
---	-----

THE

17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
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186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198  
199  
200

THE  
*PASTORAL CARE.*

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INTRODUCTION.

**I**N every pursuit, it is of great importance, first of all, to fix a proper end: for the nature of the end determines the means which are suitable, and the course which we must take, in order to attain it; and, if we fix a wrong end, it cannot fail to mislead us into an improper track. The end of every part of education, and every kind of study, ought to be, to fit men either for the general duties of life incumbent upon all, or for some of those particular employments which, for the common convenience, are distributed to different men. Whatever contributes to neither of these purposes, is unprofitable or perverted: nothing can be of real value, but so far as it promotes one or the other of them.

Every employment requires some education or preparation for it: and this must always be adapted to the nature of that employment. It must always include two things:—instructions concerning the principles and functions of the art;—and exercises fit for begetting a habit of acting according to these principles, and executing these functions. In a mechanical art, for example, a person must first learn the nature of the several materials and instruments belonging to it, and the manner of using them; and next he must be accustomed to use them, till he gradually acquire dexterity. Both these are necessary: without knowledge, practice would be undirected, lame, and blundering; and without exercise, the greatest knowledge could not prevent our being awkward, and at a loss in attempting to perform.

Different employments require different methods of education. Instructions and exercises necessary in an apprenticeship for one art, would be useless, or even absurd, in an apprenticeship for another. The peculiar education proper for any art, can be ascertained only by attention to the nature of that art. Its nature ought to be constantly kept in view, that the proper studies and exercises may be selected, and conducted in such a manner as to become most effectually subservient to it. This is in some degree requisite even in the mechanical employments: but it is more indispensably necessary in those professions which hold of the sciences.

In the former, a great deal may be learned merely by habit, and performed mechanically, by those who are almost totally ignorant of the principles from which the practice is derived. The philosopher explains these principles—the ingenious artist reduces them to practice; but the ordinary mechanic acquires the practice without understanding the principles on which he works. The mechanical powers, with their several combinations, are every day employed by persons who know nothing of the theory of them. Yet even in these arts, knowledge of the principles gives a great advantage for practice: it distinguishes the inventor, the improver, the workman of ingenuity and taste, from the mere artificer. But in scientific professions, no part of the practice is wholly mechanical; no step can be taken but in consequence of knowledge of the principles: and the practice will always be more or less proper in proportion to the accuracy of that knowledge. A physician, for instance, cannot practise his art without understanding medicine; wherever his knowledge fails, his practice must be deficient; and without a previous idea of what the business of a physician is, he could not with any degree of success prepare himself for it.

The pastoral office is of this kind. It cannot be properly exercised by a person who knows not the several duties belonging to it, who is not acquaint-

ed with the principles and sentiments requisite in discharging them, and who has not learned the proper manner of teaching and treating mankind, so as to accomplish the end of his office. The nature of the pastoral office is therefore a subject very necessary to be examined in the course of your theological studies. The right discharge of its functions is the very end to which all your private studies, all the instructions delivered from this place, and all the exercises prescribed to you, ought to be subordinate. So far only as they qualify you for that, they are useful, or at least peculiar to you as students of theology. A just conception of the pastoral office will enable you to perceive, what studies are necessary to prepare you for it, and to distinguish in what degree they are necessary, that your attention to them may be in proportion to their utility. It will enable you to discern, how every part of study is applicable to the execution of that office, and to learn the proper use of the several parts of science, while you are acquiring the knowledge of their principles. In whatever period of your theological studies you happen now to be, the pastoral office may very profitably engage your attention. If you are but beginning them, it will fix a proper aim, at your first setting out. If you are nearly finishing them, it is high time to think seriously of the office which you may be soon called to undertake. At every step, a just idea of it will afford a light by which  
you

you may review your past, and direct your future studies.

Every person who considers the present state of things, must be sensible that there is great need to insist on the real nature of the pastoral office. In all ages the best men have complained, that the generality entered on it too forwardly, and without sufficient preparation. At present, many seem to think scarcely any preparation necessary. They bestow very few years upon it: and they must be conscious, how small a part even of these they employ for the very purpose of qualifying themselves for it. While a long apprenticeship is required for every ordinary trade, while intense study and application are acknowledged to be necessary for every other learned or liberal profession, little study or application is imagined to be needful for the business of a clergyman. This cannot fail to render many unfit for performing it with satisfaction to themselves, or with honour in the eyes of the world: and it plainly tends to bring the office into discredit, and to make men think that any person is sufficiently qualified for being entrusted with it. An effectual check to this evil, by public authority, would be highly desirable: but, I fear, it can scarcely be expected. It is for this reason the more necessary to endeavour to impress you with a sense of the genuine nature of the pastoral office, for which you are candidates. This will assist you in your preparation for it: and this will leave it on

every one's own conscience to determine, how far he is really fit to enter on it.

This subject may be reduced to three general heads;—the importance of the pastoral office,—the duties belonging to it,—and the requisites for performing them.



THE  
 PASTORAL CARE.

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## PART I.

*The Importance of the Pastoral Office.*

**T**HE importance of the pastoral office may be considered as arising from two circumstances:—its dignity, and its difficulty; which it will be proper to examine separately.

## CHAP. I.

*The Dignity of the Pastoral Office.*

**I**N examining the dignity of the pastoral office, we shall point out—the real nature of its dignity; and the sentiments suitable to it, which it requires, both in those who hold that office, and in others.

## SECT. I.

*The true Nature of the Dignity of the Pastoral Office.*

IT is on many accounts necessary and proper to ascertain the true nature and grounds of that dignity which belongs to the pastoral office. By some, its dignity has been, not described and delineated, but displayed in all the pomp of eloquence, and exaggerated by an accumulation of the boldest figures<sup>a</sup>. A florid imagination prompted them to represent it in this manner: the taste and bias of the times bore it, or even invited it. The principles of the present age would give no indulgence to declamation of that kind. It is indeed improper in itself. Magnificent figures, if they be not strictly just, convey no precise ideas: they may amaze, but they infuse no permanent sentiments: they may produce an unmeaning emotion for a moment, but they form no determinate and durable temper. To raise the dignity of the pastoral office above the naked truth, by vague images and indefinite amplifications, is not useless only; I am afraid, it is hurtful also. Did it really obtain credit, it would lead every modest, serious, conscientious person to consider that office as too sublime for any mortal man, and too pure for any imperfect creature to venture on; as not desirable, but tremendous,  
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<sup>a</sup> Gregor. Nazianz. Apologet. Chryostom. de Sacerdot.

and by all means to be avoided. They who have delighted in giving such representations of it, have likewise thought themselves obliged to affect declining it, to flee into desarts, and to seem to be dragged thence by violence to the acceptance of it. They shewed, however, that their fancy had a greater share in these representations than their judgment, and that they did not fully give credit to them: for without attempting to confute them, they afterwards suffered themselves to be invested with that very office. None who sincerely regarded it in that point of view, could think of undertaking it, except they were so worthless as to have no conscience, no sense of obligation, no concern to fulfil their duty<sup>b</sup>. They who ventured to occupy it, would be elated with pride and arrogance: others would either pay them excessive and perverted veneration, or ridicule the extravagance of their claims. What has real dignity and importance, stands not in need of exaggeration: and it must suffer by it. A simple exposition of its intrinsic moment, is sufficient for procuring it that kind and degree of honour which it merits, and will most effectually procure it.

It has been common to represent the pastoral office as holy, as placing those who hold it in a peculiar relation to God. There is a foundation  
both

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<sup>b</sup> Stillingfleet, Ecclesiastical Cases, Part I. charge ii. p. 116, &c.

both in scripture and in reason, for the representation, provided it be properly understood. Under the Old Testament, not only Aaron and his sons, but the priests also, and the Levites, were declared to be “holy unto their God,” and to be “sanctified,” and “consecrated to stand before the Lord, “and to minister to him<sup>c</sup>.” Solemn rites, very circumstantially defined, were expressly appointed by God himself, for their separation to their offices. The gospel not being, like the law, a dispensation of ceremonies, God has not, with equal precision, fixed rites for the separation of persons to the Christian ministry: nor do the writers of the New Testament apply to this office all the same terms which are used concerning the ancient priesthood; and which had, perhaps, a reference to the manner of separation for it. But Christian ministers are spoken of in terms which plainly imply, that their office places them in a peculiar relation to God. It is, I doubt not, partly with a respect to their inspiration and their immediate commission from Christ, that the Apostles are called “ambassadors “for” him<sup>d</sup>: but uninspired teachers are called by a name nearly equivalent, “angels<sup>e</sup>,” or messengers. The inspired apostles were in a peculiar sense, “stewards of the mysteries of God<sup>f</sup>,” which  
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<sup>c</sup> Exod. xxviii. 1. 3, 4. 36. 41. Lev. xxi. 6, 7, 8. Num. iii. 12, 13. 41.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Rev. ii. 1.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 1.

were revealed to them : but every Christian pastor is likewise a “ steward of God’s,” in a place of trust and authority in his family, appointed to dispense instruction to others. The teachers of the gospel are all, in a sense in which other Christians are not, the servants and ministers of God ; peculiarly appropriated to him, and set apart for presenting the devotions of others to him, and publishing his will to them.

It cannot, however, be denied, that the idea of the sanctity of the pastoral office has been often misunderstood and abused. Confused and improper notions of it have been propagated, and perverted to the basest purposes of superstition. That idea has been so much overstretched and distorted, as to be made to imply an exemption from the authority and jurisdiction of magistrates, from subjection to all human laws, and from the common obligations of men in society ; a power of giving, in a greater or a less extent, according to the different degrees of the clerical character, a virtue and efficacy, a kind of magical charm, to the ordinances of religion ; a privilege of obtaining a higher measure of the favour of God, than other men, or of obtaining it on different and easier terms ; a sort of interest with God ; to engage him in all their views, to render every cause of theirs his cause, to make it impious to oppose them,

them, or to punish their crimes, and to draw down his judgments on all whom they reckon their enemies. Such unholy claims cannot possibly be founded on the holiness of the ministry: they are the offspring of ignorance and arrogance; they are by turns the nurfes and the nurselings of superstition. The Christian ministry is truly an holy office: but it is so, only in this sense, that it is occupied about holy things, that its object is religion. They who exercise this office, are holy only in this sense, that they “minister about holy things,” and that they are strictly obliged to real holiness, to moral goodness, without which their character must be repugnant to the subject of their profession. The consideration, therefore, of the nature of the pastoral office, will lead us to the very same view of its dignity, to which we should be led by a just conception of its sanctity: and it will render the exhibition of it more distinct and precise, and less liable to misconstruction or abuse, as well as more agreeable to the stile of the New Testament. Following this track, we shall ascertain the real dignity of the pastoral office, by the consideration of its acknowledged end, and of its natural functions.

In every case, the dignity of an occupation depends, in a great degree, upon its end. From this source, the Christian ministry, of all occupations, derives the greatest dignity. The gospel of Christ, which it is the business of that office to preach,

preach, “ is the power of God unto salvation <sup>h</sup>.” All the kinds of teachers in the Christian church, are given for this purpose, “ for the perfecting of “ the faints, for the edifying of the body of “ Christ <sup>i</sup>, that, warning every man, and teaching “ every man, in all wisdom, they may present “ every man perfect in Christ Jesus <sup>k</sup>.” The consequence of the right discharge of this office will be, that they shall “ both save themselves, “ and them that hear them <sup>l</sup>.” It is its direct aim, to carry forward, in a certain degree, that dispensation of grace, which has, through all ages, been the grand and favourite object of God’s providence in this lower world ; in promoting which all the hosts of angels are employed ; in the execution of which the Son of God was incarnate and crucified, and the Holy Spirit given ; and which terminates in conferring eternal life on as many as comply with it. While thus employed, ministers are not only “ fellow-servants” of the angels <sup>m</sup>, but also “ workers together with God, “ beseeching men, as though God did beseech “ men by them, praying them in Christ’s stead, “ that they be reconciled to God, and that they “ receive not the grace of God in vain <sup>n</sup>.” The pastoral office is concerned, not about the fortunes of men, not about their lives, but about what is infinitely nobler, about their souls : it is concerned about

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<sup>h</sup> Rom. i. 16.

<sup>i</sup> Eph. iv. 12.

<sup>k</sup> Col. i. 28.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 16.

<sup>m</sup> Rev. xxii. 9.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20. vi. 1.

about the interests, not of time, but of eternity. In a far sublimer sense than that in which the ancient painter gloried, the Christian minister works for immortality. If the lawyer succeed not in his cause, his client may be reduced to poverty; if the skill of the physician prove ineffectual, his patient will die: but, in whatever case the end of the pastoral office is defeated, everlasting destruction is the consequence. Such being the end of that office, to suppose any insensible of its importance, would be to suppose them befotted by the vanities of time, and blind to the interests of eternity. And does this end reflect no dignity on the office which is adapted to it? Can it but be an honourable employment, to promote so great a design?

The pastoral office derives dignity and importance from the nature of its functions, as well as from the sublimity of its end. For our perceiving this, it will not be necessary to enter into a minute detail of these functions; they will be explained afterwards. At present it will be sufficient to observe in general, that they consist in “teaching<sup>o</sup>” pure religion, “instructing<sup>p</sup>” men in the nature of it, “convincing<sup>q</sup>” men of its principles and obligations, “exhorting<sup>r</sup>” men to the belief and practice of it, “reproving and rebuking<sup>s</sup>” every  
 fin,

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<sup>o</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 11. vi. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Eph. iv. 11. Rom. xii. 7.

2 Tim. ii. 15.

<sup>q</sup> Acts, xviii. 23. Tit. i. 9.

1 Tim. vi. 2. Tit. i. 9. ii. 15.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 2.



fin, “warning<sup>t</sup>” men of the temptations to which they are exposed, and of the danger of yielding to them; in “watching<sup>v</sup>” for men, and “over-seeing<sup>u</sup>” them for these purposes, taking every proper opportunity, in public and in private, of promoting them; in “being ensamples to the flock<sup>w</sup>”, in all things shewing themselves partakers of good works<sup>x</sup> ;” in endeavouring without intermission to qualify themselves more and more for all this, and then exerting themselves indefatigably in it; in a word, in using every means that can be used by one man for infusing knowledge and goodness into other men. That these functions confer dignity on the office to which they belong, will be evident, whether we consider them in themselves in relation to their end, or in respect of their necessity and usefulness to the people.

Some exercises are in their nature low and mean; to be engaged in them, sinks a person in the eyes of others. The gospel engages its ministers in no exercises of this kind. It lays them under peculiar obligations to practise and improve in all piety and virtue; if they fulfil the obligations, they acquire that righteousness which renders

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<sup>t</sup> Acts, xx. 31. Col. i. 28. 1 Theff. v. 14.

<sup>v</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 5. Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>u</sup> Acts, xx. 28. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2. Tit. i. 7.

<sup>w</sup> 1 Pet. v. 3.

<sup>x</sup> Tit. ii. 7.

ders a man “ more excellent than his neighbour <sup>7</sup>.” It engages them in the search of truth, and in communicating knowlege: and if it be any part of the dignity of man, that he is a reasonable creature, it must be honourable to be employed in searching after truth, and diffusing it among men. To discover truth in that extent which belongs to the pastoral office, requires, besides a considerable compass of previous knowlege, the exertion both of the acuteness of the philosopher, and of the judgment of the critic. In communicating it successfully to others, the talents of the orator must be, in some degree, employed. Each of these characters has always been acknowledged respectable: to deny, therefore, that the pastoral office, which requires the union of them all, is respectable, would be to judge of this one case, in contradiction to the natural sentiments of all mankind in every other case. To promote any kind of useful knowlege, has some merit; the name of a teacher gives a person some elevation, in that one respect at least, in comparison of those who are taught by him: and the elevation bears always a proportion to the subject which a person is qualified to teach, and engaged in teaching. It is the very office of ministers of the gospel, to teach others: and the subject of their teaching is the sublimest, the most important, the most interesting: it is honourable to be occupied in teaching it; it is  
 very

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<sup>7</sup> Prov. xii. 26.

very honourable to be fit to teach it. It is the very business of ministers, to inculcate the noblest truths, those which regard God and divine things; to recommend universal goodness, the glory of human nature; to form the souls of men to that divine temper which will fit them for the everlasting society of God; to “feed” and “oversee” with care, that church on which the Lord set so high a value, as to “purchase it with his own blood<sup>z</sup>.” The office of a teacher implies authority, the kind and degree of authority which suits its nature. The teachers of Christianity have authority in the church; they “are over you,” says the apostle, they “have the rule over you in “the Lord<sup>a</sup>.” Their authority is of the kind which is congruous to their work: they neither are “Lords over God’s heritage<sup>b</sup>,” nor “have “dominion over men’s faith<sup>c</sup>.” They often have claimed temporal power, political authority, and civil dignities: but the claim is usurpation; these are the pre-eminences of the kingdoms of this world, but their office is solely in the kingdom of Christ, which “is not of this world<sup>d</sup> :” these have a relation to the secular affairs of men, but this office only to their spiritual concerns. Even in their spiritual concerns, the authority of ministers

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<sup>z</sup> Acts, xx. 28.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Theff. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. v. 3.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. i. 24.

<sup>d</sup> John, xviii. 36.

nisters is very far from being absolute or unlimited. It includes no power over the consciences of men; no right to impose upon them, any principles of belief, or rules of conduct, but those which the scripture has imposed; no right to obtrude upon them our explications of scripture or deductions from it. The claim or exercise of such rights, is not the government of Christ, but the tyranny of Antichrist: both to the people and to ministers, the scripture is the only standard of religion: ministers have authority to teach only what it teaches; and by it, and by it alone, it is the right of the people, and their duty also, to examine what is taught. Even those doctrines and those precepts which are clearly contained in scripture, the pastoral office gives no authority to enforce by methods of violence: these are the instruments of political authority, the authority of pastors is purely spiritual. Religious belief and practice are of no value if they be not voluntary, if they proceed not from conviction and conscience. Whenever civil penalties are applied to force them, they are misapplied. This is, impotently to attempt promoting the kingdom of Christ, by an unnatural alliance with the kingdoms of the world. Persecution never can be but improper; but in a minister of the gospel it is most improper. When irreligion, vice, or superstition, so directly affect the proper interests of society, as to render it most just to check them by laws, as civil crimes, the  
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enacting and executing these laws, is the province of the rulers of the state, not of the rulers of the church. Their authority is only a right to teach the truths which the scriptures teach, to inculcate the duties which they require, to rebuke and censure the sins which they forbid, and to be listened to while they do so: and they are entitled to support this authority by no other engines, but the power of persuasion and the influence of exemplary virtue. It is the dignity which results from this kind of authority, and it alone, that belongs to the pastoral office.

The functions of the pastoral office, thus worthy in themselves, will appear still more worthy and important, when they are considered in relation to their end. It is so sublime, that it reflects honour and importance on whatever has any, even the remotest, connexion with it; but the closer the connexion of any functions is with it, and the stronger their tendency to promote it, the greater in proportion will be their moment. Exercises mean in themselves, cease to be mean when they are undertaken for some great or good end: then men will glory in them, who in any other situation would have blushed to have been found employed in them. The functions of the pastoral office are the natural, the direct, and proper means of promoting the most important of all ends: this is sufficient to ennoble such of them as are meanest in appearance. Pastors are “watch-

“men<sup>e</sup> :” but it is for “the soul<sup>f</sup>,” the immortal part, that they watch. They are “soldiers<sup>g</sup> :” but it is in “the good fight of faith<sup>h</sup>.” They are “labourers,” but it is “together with “God,” and in “his vineyard, his husbandry, “his harvest<sup>i</sup>.” They are “builders ;” but it is of the “temple of God<sup>k</sup>.” Such metaphors, though some of them should be supposed to be taken from mean employments, rise in their signification, when they are applied to the exercises of an office which has eternity for its aim ; as an insignificant piece of canvas comes to be of great price when it is made the ground of a capital picture. They are intended only to express the difficulties and the labours of that profession. These lessen not its dignity : they add to it. Some of the most eminent offices are very laborious ; but their toils are honourable. Whenever they are of great utility, and extensive consequence, it is noble to encounter them, it is worthy to be indefatigable in undergoing them, it is glorious to vanquish them.

Finally, the pastoral office is important, and ought to be reckoned honourable by the people, because to them it is needful. The end of all its functions is their salvation ; and in proportion to  
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<sup>e</sup> Jer. vi. 17. Ezek. iii. 17. xxxiii. 7.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. Phil. ii. 25.

<sup>i</sup> Mat. ix. 37, 38. 1 Cor. iii. 6.—9.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 12.

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 9, 10, 12, 16.

its necessity for this end, it is interesting to them. It is solely for the sake of the people, that God has appointed pastors in his church; and to the people all their functions have an immediate relation. It belongs indeed to every individual, to “work out his own salvation<sup>1</sup> :” without his own care, as well as the grace of God, all the labours of the minister cannot enlighten his understanding, sanctify his heart, or save his soul. Yet the labours of the minister are strictly necessary to the people. With abhorrence we disclaim the false pretension, that religious knowledge is, or ought to be confined to the clergy: God has established no such base or slavish dependence of reason and conscience upon fallible men. The people, as well as their pastors, have access to the scriptures; it is equally their right and their duty to “search” and “know them<sup>m</sup> :” and they “are able to make them wise unto salvation<sup>n</sup>.” But the bulk of mankind are, and will always necessarily be, much occupied about worldly affairs; and, thus occupied, will want the inclination, the leisure, the opportunities, the capacity, the education, or the means, requisite for collecting religious knowledge, and fixing good impressions on their hearts. The weak, the ignorant, the thoughtless, the dissipated, the busy, the corrupted, have absolute need of one to instruct

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 12.

<sup>m</sup> John, v. 39.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 15.

instruct them, to direct them, to remind them of spiritual things, to excite them to their duty. Without this, very many will infallibly neglect it, and lose their souls by the neglect. It is no exaggeration to say, that the future happiness or misery of at least some of the people, depends on the proper or the improper conduct of their teachers. We justly complain that the pastoral office, even when its functions are performed with the greatest skill and care, produces not so great or happy effects as it seems to be fit for producing: but were that office to cease, the ignorance and wickedness of the world would soon demonstrate, that it does produce very great and very happy effects. It cannot be a mean employment, which is both so necessary and so profitable to mankind. The care of immortal souls is the most important of all trusts: the training of them for heaven is the most excellent of all occupations °.

Thus I have evinced the importance of the pastoral office, by shewing its dignity and excellence. Avoiding all vague panegyric, declining indefinite declamation concerning its sanctity, I have satisfied myself with coolly ascertaining the real kind and degree of dignity, which it evidently derives from the sublimity of its end, and the worthy and interesting nature of its functions.

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° Burnet's Pastoral Care, chap. i. Scougal's Synod Serm.



## SECT. II.

*Of a just Sense of the Dignity of the Pastoral Office.*

SUCH as we have described being the dignity of the pastoral office, let us next inquire, what sentiments its dignity ought to impress, both on those who occupy it, and on those who aspire to it. It certainly becomes them to cultivate and preserve a sense of its importance, and likewise to render that sense just and properly directed. It is necessary to do both; a failure in either will be productive of pernicious consequences.

The want of all sense of its dignity, will lead men to consider it in the low and paltry light of only a trade or living. This would demonstrate a very abject spirit, and it would render it every day more abject. Considered in that light, it must appear one of the meanest of all employments; for there are few whose profits are not more considerable. Men would, however, enter on it with merely interested views. They would long for it, as a provision. They would not be much concerned either to qualify themselves for its duties, or to exert themselves in performing them. They would be satisfied with receiving the profits, though they were negligent or little capable of doing the work. In the language of scripture, emphatically expressive of the baseness of this mercenary spirit, they would “ feed  
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“ themselves,” and “ not feed the flock <sup>p</sup>,” but leave it to be “ stolen, killed, and destroyed <sup>q</sup>.” It is your setting out with a high sense of the dignity and importance of your profession, and your constantly maintaining that sense, that will best preserve you from thinking or acting beneath it, and will form you to such elevation of views, such exertion, and such dignity of conduct, as become it.

Your sense of its dignity must not only be high, but likewise just. As the nature of its dignity may be misconceived, so the sense of its dignity may be perverted: and every perversion of it will produce correspondent ill effects on the temper and the conduct.

A general and indefinite conception of the pastoral office, as merely an honourable employment, especially if it were at the same time exaggerated and extravagant, would excite an unhallowed ambition and impatience for it as a pre-eminence, till it were obtained; and would afterwards elate the heart with arrogance, pride, and insolence. These passions are naturally enough produced by the honours which consist only in distinguished rank and titles, and which are founded wholly in imagination: but by the dignity of the Christian ministry, they

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<sup>p</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 2, &c.

<sup>q</sup> John, x. 10.

they cannot be produced, except it be totally misunderstood; for its dignity results solely from the real utility of its functions. These are passions the most unbecoming in the servants of the humble Jesus, fit only to render themselves odious, and to pervert the whole spirit and tenor of their ministrations. Therefore, the apostle directs, that a bishop be not an uninstructed, inconsiderate “no-vice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the accuser<sup>r</sup>.”

A vague and ill-digested opinion of the sanctity of the pastoral office, would beget the most presumptuous kind of pride: it would give it the blackest of all its forms: it would forge a claim to superstitious respect and blind veneration from the people. This is the temper which Christ reproves so severely in the Pharisees, who “loved the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-places, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi<sup>s</sup>.” But the teachers of his religion he commands, “Be not ye called Rabbi, neither be ye called Masters<sup>t</sup> :” exact not the admiration of the multitude, as if you were, in consequence of your holding an holy office, holier than they, higher in God’s favour, or possessed of any mysterious power in matters of religion. An ill-defined

<sup>r</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 6.

<sup>s</sup> Mat. xxiii. 6, 7.

<sup>t</sup> Ver. 8. 10.

defined sense of the sanctity of the pastoral office would lead us, it has led the priests of another church, to a demand of privileges most foreign to its real sanctity, and a licence in practices most repugnant to every conception of holiness. It is undoubtedly proper that we be sensible of its being an holy office: but our sense of this must be formed and defined by a distinct conception of the real nature of its holiness. It is not a notion that the mere occupation of it can render us holy; but a settled persuasion that it will lay us under the strictest obligation to labour to become holy, and still more holy. It is a fixed persuasion, that unhallowed hands and an un sanctified heart are unfit to be employed in its holy functions. It is a lively sense, that all impurity is more incongruous to the subject of the Christian ministry, than the most vulgar manners, the most sordid spirit, and the coarsest sentiments, would be to the highest rank. It is a conviction that that office gives those who exercise it, great advantages for becoming holy; united with a conviction that, except they be careful to improve them, they will not make them holy, but will on the contrary confirm and harden them in wickedness; and that the strength of their obligations, and the greatness of their advantages, will render the guilt of neglecting holiness heinous, and its punishment severe. In a word, a sense that the pastoral office will place you in a near and peculiar relation to God, should make you to look upon yourselves as bound to approach as near to  
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him as you can, in your temper, by strict purity, exalted virtue, and fervent piety.

A just sense of the dignity of the pastoral office must be formed and directed by a precise idea of the nature and grounds of that dignity, and be rendered perfectly correspondent to it. It is a sense, that the duties of that office are of the most excellent nature, and of the most sacred obligation, and that it is of infinite moment that they be discharged aright. Such a sense of its dignity, however high it be, will produce none of those evil passions which spring so naturally from a vague or perverted conception of it. It can give no encouragement to false ambition, pride, or haughtiness: it will be the most powerful antidote against them. It will lead you often to compare the "treasure" of the gospel, with the "earthen vessels," in which "we have" it<sup>u</sup>; the weight of the functions, with your unworthiness and the slenderness of your abilities; the eternal consequences which are suspended on your performance of them, with the weakness of the means which you can use. The comparison forced the great apostle of the gentiles to exclaim, "And who is sufficient for these things?"<sup>v</sup> The comparison, seriously made, will lead you to undertake this office with diffidence, to be conversant in it with awe,

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<sup>u</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 7.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. ii. 16.

awe, and in all its duties to “serve the Lord with “all humility of mind.”” Such a sense of the dignity of your profession, carefully formed, steadily maintained, studiously cherished, and invariably acted upon, will have the happiest influence on your views, on your exertions, and on your whole character: and that the more effectually, the higher it is raised.

A well-formed sense of the importance of your profession will refine and elevate your views and aims in choosing, in undertaking, and in executing it. It necessarily includes an impression of the importance of the end of your profession. To promote that end, will be your principal view in entering upon it, and your leading aim in exercising it. You will think of entering on it, with a considerable degree of deliberation; and when you determine to undertake it, it will be with a sincere and supreme desire, and an ardent concern, to contribute all you can to the improvement and the salvation of the souls of men. Liable as all men are to indisposition, depression, and distraction of thought, it will require pains to keep so sublime an end constantly in view, and to act with a steady regard to it. A lively sense of its moment is the only means of surmounting the difficulty. This will lead you to think explicitly of it very frequently;

ly; and it will enable you to have an habitual eye to it, even when you do not actually think of it. It will be in perpetual readiness to occur to you, and that with such force as to determine you to contrive how every ministration may be performed in the way fittest to promote it. Attention to so sublime an end will prevent your ever subordinating any of the pastoral functions to bye-ends, to worldly interest, or to the gratification of a favourite passion. It will prevent your directing any of your performances merely to the display of your own talents, to courting the favour of the great, or to scrambling for popularity among the multitude. It will excite you to exert your powers, only that you may do the greater good; to "please" others only for their "edification<sup>x</sup>," only when it is right to please them, and would be wrong not to please them. Concern to accomplish the end of your profession, is too noble a principle to admit any partnership with mean designs. It implies love to God, affection to Christ, the highest species of benevolence, benevolence to the souls of men, zeal for the advancement of religion, a conviction of the incomparable importance of eternity, all united together, deriving power from, and imparting it to, one another. These will be in some degree the principles and views of every ingenuous candidate; whoever is wholly destitute of them, must be unworthy to bear the sacred character:

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<sup>x</sup> Rom. xv. 2.

these will be the principles and views of all who are duly affected with the importance of the office, and the great springs and regulators of all their exertions in their profession.

A sense of the importance of the pastoral office, enlightened by a distinct apprehension of the nature of that importance, will add spirit to all your endeavours, both in preparing yourselves for it, and in executing it. Not dreaming that it has such sanctity as can of itself confer virtue on the ordinances which it is employed in dispensing, you cannot expect that they will have virtue and efficacy, if you be incapable of dispensing them aright, or if you be not careful to do so. Important functions should not be performed negligently, and cannot be performed without the proper abilities. Sensible of the importance of yours, if you have any regard to duty or propriety, you will decline no application that is necessary to accomplish you for them, however laborious it may be, or whatever length of time it may require. Till you be conscious that you are sufficiently accomplished for them, you will by no means think of undertaking them. Without diligent application, no man can excel, or even make a tolerable figure in the very meanest profession: and can a man be fit for so excellent an occupation, without being indefatigable in acquiring the knowledge and habits requisite for exercising it? The teacher of all truth and goodness, cannot be formed in a day.



The importance of his office demands that he be assiduous in rendering himself fitter for it every day, and ready to undergo any labour that can be conducive to his discharging it in the best manner. It may be easy to go through all the duties of that office, so as not to incur the imputation of omitting them, without entering into the true spirit of any one of them: but to be satisfied with this, is inconsistent with your either valuing or loving your profession. The sense that its duties are in their very nature worthy and honourable employments, will not only prompt you to bring to them the requisite accomplishments, but also support and enliven you in the performance of them. Mean exercises a man enters on with reluctance, and performs with regret and languor: he is ashamed of them, and by shame his efforts are repressed, and his industry enervated. But you need not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, or of the office of preaching it: you may glory in preaching it, and with conscious elevation stretch all your faculties in preaching it. The sense that all the pastoral functions are directly subservient to the greatest of all ends, the purity, perfection, and happiness of immortal beings, will determine you to adapt all your studies and exercises to that end; to avoid barren speculations, frivolous controversies, subtle and unedifying questions; not to seek after what may please the imagination, gratify the curiosity, or humour the prejudices of the people: but to inculcate only the simple doctrine of the gospel,  
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which tends wholly to sanctification, and to set every part of it in those points of view, in which it has the strongest tendency to affect the heart, improve the temper, influence the practice, and thus fit men for eternal life. From a lively impression of the connexion of your functions with this end, and of their necessity to the people, what ardor, zeal, alacrity, and diligence in performing them, must arise? It will make you cheerfully continue and increase your labours, and never give them over, till you have accomplished their end, at least till you have freed yourselves from blame, though they should fail of actually reaching it.

A lively sense of the genuine importance of the pastoral office will have a great influence on the whole of your character. It will powerfully instigate you to all goodness. It implies a sense of the importance of eternal salvation, which is the end of all the functions of that office. And with this in your view, can you be but concerned for your own salvation, and careful to secure it? Can you indulge yourselves in sin, which must forfeit it, or neglect that holiness without which it cannot be obtained? Salvation is the most commanding object that you can hold forth to others, for counteracting the temptations of the world, for baffling the power of sin, for surmounting the difficulties of religion, for encouraging them to climb the heights of virtue: and if you yourselves have a constant sense of it, it is impossible that it should  
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have no influence on your own temper and conduct. It will be your very business, to teach men, in all possible ways, “the doctrine which is according to godliness:” can you teach it without studying it? and can you make it the business of your lives to study it, without feeling any thing of its power in forming yourselves to godliness? It is doubtless possible to go through the functions of the pastoral office, without their having any effect on your own souls: but it is not possible to perform them with due attention to their nature, or a real consciousness of their tendency, without their having a great effect. They are the means which infinite wisdom has ordained for reforming and sanctifying the world: and can you uprightly employ yourselves in applying them to this purpose, and yet yourselves remain totally unreformed and un sanctified? A sense of the just importance of the pastoral office, impressed on the heart, will form you, not only to goodness, but to dignity of character and demeanour. A station of dignity requires dignity of character: and it is the truest dignity of character, that the station of ministers requires. This is widely different from that stateliness and haughtiness which highly misbecome them, but which some have affected in its stead: it is perfectly consistent with the lowliest humility; nay,

may, in the exertions of genuine humility, it is often most conspicuous. It exalts the soul, but elates it not; it produces condescension, not assuming; affability, not distance: it disgusts not the most jealous spectator; it forces approbation, and commands esteem. The apostle certainly had it in his eye, when he directed, not to the people, but to the minister, the exhortation, "Let no man despise thee<sup>z</sup>." It is nothing else but eminence of virtue. It is founded on a strong perception of the excellence of virtue and the baseness of vice, and on a permanent sense of the vanity of present outward things, and the unspeakable moment of things spiritual and eternal. It shews itself in a superiority to all the allurements of sense and interest, whenever they are inconsistent with strict virtue; in liberty from the dominion of vice, which is the lowest degradation of a reasonable soul; in the possession and vigorous exercise of a high degree of piety, benevolence, and every worthy affection; in disdaining to speak or do any thing which betrays mean sentiments, little views, or wrong passions; in being above blushing to perform offices seemingly the lowest, whenever they are useful to the body or the soul of any man, or conducive to the interests of religion. This is true dignity of character: and this is the dignity, and the only dignity, to which  
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<sup>z</sup> Tit. ii. 15. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

your profession can naturally prompt you to aspire. A proper conception of the end of that profession will kindle your ambition for it; acquaintance with the subject of your profession, will form you to it; assiduity in the duties of your profession, will draw it out into constant exertion, and by constant exertion will confirm and perfect it. But the foundation both of goodness and of dignity of character must be laid early. A person under the full power of those sentiments which flow from a sense of the excellence of the pastoral office, will, from the first moment that he thinks of choosing it, study to act in every respect suitably to its true genius. He will study to preserve that manner from the very first, which would be graceful and becoming if he were already invested with the sacred character of a minister of religion, in his actions, in his words, in his whole behaviour. Whatever would be declared by the general sense of mankind indecent in a clergyman, can never be altogether decent in a person who intends to be a clergyman. Any behaviour unsuitable to the character which you hope soon to bear, can proceed only, either from blameable thoughtlessness, from a turn of mind ill corresponding to it, or from a desire not to have it known that you are designed for that profession. All these are inconsistent with a due sense of its dignity and importance; which will produce in you a constant solicitude to speak and act worthy of it; and will

effectually prevent your running into any species of conduct which can imply, that you are ashamed of it, or that you do not reckon it your greatest honour to be preparing for it, or engaged in it.

### SECT. III.

#### *Of the Esteem due to the Pastoral Office.*

It is incumbent, not only on those who occupy or aspire to the pastoral office, but likewise on all others, to have a just sense of its dignity and importance. Because it is both excellent in itself, and highly beneficial to the people, they are obliged to esteem it, and to think highly of it. We are affected towards all offices, according to our opinion of their nature: we look with contempt on those which we reckon mean; we respect those which we reckon honourable or important: we feel these sentiments though we ourselves have no connexion with such offices. If the moment of the pastoral office be measured by the rank which it gives in the present world, or the emoluments which it yields, men can have but a low opinion of it. But these are not the standards by which its dignity should be estimated. Its business is to teach religion; its end is to promote the eternal happiness of mankind: its intrinsic dignity is in proportion to these purposes; and in proportion to men's sense of the excellence of these,

these, their esteem of it will always be. If these appear to men, as they really are, infinitely nobler and more momentous than all earthly riches and honours, they cannot entertain a low idea of the pastoral office. This would be to think meanly of the gospel, which is the subject of it, and to set little value on eternal happiness, which is its aim. This is inconsistent with men's being Christians. It demonstrates a base perversion and depravation of sentiment. It would be inexcusable, though the pastoral office had no immediate relation to themselves. But when it has the nearest relation to themselves; when it is for teaching them the gospel, and promoting their salvation, that this office is instituted; when, considering their want of leisure and opportunities, they could scarce at all obtain these purposes without it; when they are so deeply interested in it, and that for purposes of such unspeakable consequence to their souls; not to hold it in high esteem, shows not merely insensibility to its nature, but also indifference about their own most valuable interests; those eternal interests, indifference about which is a complication of the grossest folly and the basest degeneracy of soul. Such extravagant or mistaken notions of the dignity or the sanctity of the pastoral office, as were formerly mentioned, would produce a blind and superstitious veneration of it, as pernicious in its consequences as the want of all respect for it. It is only a value for it, founded on a distinct conception of its real utility, and cor-

respondent to it, that either is due, or can be profitable.

The importance of the pastoral office demands likewise from the people, respect for those who bear it. These two sentiments, a value for the office, and esteem of those who exercise it worthily, are inseparable, and must in every man be in exact proportion to one another: they who are sensible of the importance of the work, and of its utility to them, will “for the work’s sake esteem “them very highly in love,” who labour in it<sup>a</sup>. In whatever belongs to their office, they are superior to the people and have an authority over them; this implies a right to correspondent respect and deference, the refusal of which is a failure in duty. Whenever ministers are exercising their office, they are doing something for the instruction, the sanctification, or the salvation of the people: and by being employed for purposes so beneficial to them, they cannot but be entitled to their affection and gratitude. To refuse these attachments, is to declare that they reckon these no services. Love and esteem will add force to one another, and will lead them to treat ministers both with respect and kindness, and to do them all the good offices in their power, with an acknowledged sense that they are due to them. An implicit dependence

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Theff. v. 13.



pendence on the opinions and sentiments of ministers, a superstitious dread of punishing their crimes, or of vindicating the rights of other men against them, a silly admiration of them, as if they were beings of an higher order or endued with supernatural powers, are no parts of the deference that is due to them ; they will be paid only by the ignorant or the deluded, and accepted only by the weak or the designing ; they are warranted by nothing in the real nature of the pastoral office : but it does demand that rational esteem and love for those who discharge it uprightly, which is proportioned to its moment, and congruous to its functions.

A person may, doubtless, by behaving unworthily in his office, forfeit the esteem to which it would have otherwise entitled him. In this case, the very importance of the office which he holds, will render him the more contemptible, or the more detestable. But a real value for the pastoral office will give some check to the severity of men's censures, and will often even prevent them. It is plain that they who have least respect to the office, are generally the most forward to find fault with individuals belonging to it, and the readiest to pronounce that they have forfeited their title to esteem. And by the manner of expressing their contempt or indignation against individuals, they betray the principles by which they are actuated : they express it with pleasure or exultation,

with slight or acrimony against the office itself, or sometimes even with a sort of triumph over religion. Indeed, persons of very opposite pretensions sometimes shew the same propensity to undervalue or to censure individuals of the clergy. It is often observable in those who profess a high sense of the importance and sanctity of the office, and great zeal for the interests of religion. Their idea of the office is so overstrained as to make them exact from those that hold it more than is reasonable, and expect more than is practicable: or their zeal for religion is of a false and fiery kind, embittering their spirits, and ranking them into malevolence: or their religion itself is of a spurious kind, disposing them to consider indifferent things as wrong, and trivial things as momentous: or their pretences to religion are hypocritical, and overdone in order to conceal the imposition. A real and just sense of the importance of the pastoral office, will extinguish the propensity to seek for faults in ministers; and, when faults are conspicuous, will mix the censure of them with regret, concern, and tenderness. It is not every failing, or every imperfection in virtue, that can forfeit any part of the esteem due to a minister on account of his office: for fallibility and imperfection are the characteristics of human nature in this mortal state. If it could, God would never have commanded to esteem them. Men's consciousness of their own faults should lead them to expect some in ministers, dispose them to bear with them, and not easily

easily to contract prejudices against them. They are men like other men; they live in the world, beset with the like temptations; it is not reasonable to expect from mortals the innocence or the perfection of angels<sup>b</sup>.

A just and well-regulated esteem of the pastoral office, and of those who occupy it, will render men well affected to all their ministrations in it. In whatever degree that office is important, in the very same degree it is of consequence for men to attend upon the functions of it. If it be designed for promoting their most important interests, and if they think highly of it on this account, they must attend upon its functions; for without this it can be of no advantage to them. An opinion that the pastoral functions operate as it were magically, merely by being performed and attended upon, produces, in those who entertain it, a high value for them, and a scrupulous punctuality in attending on them: but as it springs from a wrong principle, it must likewise have a wrong direction. If a rational persuasion of their real utility produce not as great an esteem of them, and assiduity in them, it must be owing to its being too weak, or too little reflected upon. But the degree of regard to them, which springs from such a persuasion, whatever it is, will at least be properly directed.

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<sup>b</sup> Stillingfleet, *Ecclesiast. Cases*, vol. i. p. 105.

rected. It will not be merely formal; it will be bestowed with a single view to apply them all to themselves, and with care to render them profitable for their instruction and improvement. Every instance of disregard to the functions of ministers betrays a defect in men's value for their office; and every failure in improving by their functions, shews some perversion in the manner of conceiving the importance of their office.

#### SECT. IV.

##### *Of the Contempt of the Clergy.*

THOUGH the pastoral office be in its very nature worthy and important, and entitle those who occupy it to honour and esteem, it is too plain that it is nevertheless very generally undervalued, and they who hold it, spoken of with contempt or rancour. This spirit shews itself in different ways.

Sometimes it breaks out directly against the pastoral office itself. This office is thought and spoken of with disrespect. It is accounted mean, and deserving of very little honour. In establishments where it leads to riches or political pre-eminence, it is reproached as prostituted to worldly views; and in others where it can scarcely raise the occupiers of it above poverty, it is despised as on that account low and unrespectable. By some it is ridiculed,

culed, as excluding those who hold it from that external polish, easiness of manner, and gracefulness of deportment, which are found in some other orders of men. It is sometimes even held up to the detestation of mankind, as tending to corrupt the moral character of those who are invested with it. By artfully confounding its natural and primary tendency, with the abuses of it after this tendency has been resisted and defeated; by exaggerating these abuses, and the ill effects resulting from them; and by overlooking every circumstance in the office, which can counterbalance them; it has been misrepresented as having a fixed and unalterable tendency to promote in ministers the gross vices of hypocrisy, superstition, ambition, vanity, party-spirit, rancour, and revenge<sup>c</sup>.

The same spirit leads men to seek out the faults of individuals of the clergy, to exaggerate and set them in the most invidious lights, and to publish them with a malicious eagerness and exultation. Imaginary faults are converted into real vices; small failings are exalted into atrocious crimes; and great blemishes are condemned with the most spiteful bitterness, and without making the least allowance for the weakness of human nature, or the temptations of the world. They often are not satisfied with bitterness against the individuals who  
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<sup>c</sup> Hume's Essay on National Characters. Gerard, vol. ii. Sermon. 2. Carlyle's Synod Sermon.

are guilty: they impute them to the whole order; they take every occasion of ridiculing and reproaching all who belong to it. It cannot be denied that there is a real propensity in human nature, to ascribe the character of some individuals with whom we are best acquainted, to the whole society of which they are members. This is a species of inference which it is impossible wholly to avoid; for it is derived from that mental principle which disposes us to form general rules of judging, and from which many of our most important intellectual operations proceed. But whenever we form a general rule hastily, without having experience in a sufficient number of instances; whenever we apply the conclusion to individuals dissimilar to those of whom we had experience, in the circumstances on which the conclusion was originally founded, however like they may be in other circumstances; whenever we do not exercise judgment in allowing the necessary exceptions; that principle leads us into mere prejudices, instead of just conclusions. From whatever cause the unfairness proceeds, it is certain that our general rules concerning characters, are much oftener founded on the faults than on the virtues of men, that we are readier to describe a society or nation, by the blemishes than by the excellences of such individuals belonging to it as we are acquainted with. It is obvious too, that men impute the faults of individual clergymen to the whole order, more generally, more confidently, and with less

care to make exceptions, than in the case of any other profession<sup>d</sup>.

But the spirit of disaffection rests not even here. The faults of the clergy are charged on religion itself: the contempt of their office grows into contempt of religion. If men be dissatisfied with a particular lawyer or physician, they commonly content themselves at the utmost with blaming all who are of the profession; they seldom go so far as, on account of the faults of the practitioners, to call in question the virtues of medicines, or the utility of curing diseases, to revile the laws of the land, or the institution of civil government. But, not satisfied with despising or reproaching the whole clerical order for the vices of a few individuals, they would make the religion which they teach answerable for them, and express suspicions concerning the truth, the excellence, the importance, or the practicability of the gospel. There may be circumstances which give a speciousness to this partiality, and betray men thoughtlessly into it: but still it is an unreasonable partiality, and seems to proceed in a great measure from this, that the depravity of men makes them more eager to find out something to the discredit of religion, than to that of the subject of any other profession.

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<sup>d</sup> Stillingfl. *Eccles. Caf.* vol. i. p. 176. Secker's 1st Charge, Oxf. Gerard, vol. ii. Sermon. 2.

When men's contempt of the clergy proceeds not so far as to the contempt of all religion, yet it often shews itself in a contempt of their ministrations, and indifference for attendance on them. These two things, contempt of their persons and neglect of their ministrations, are nearly connected: the transition is easy from the one to the other. Both imply an insensibility to the importance of the end and functions of the office. When men are in any way prejudiced against the person, they cannot have a great respect to his labours, nor the expectation of much advantage from them.

Contempt of the pastoral office is very common in all these forms. Whence can sentiments proceed so repugnant to those that are naturally due to its excellence and importance? They proceed, in different cases, from different causes.

Infidelity is one very natural cause of sentiments either of contempt or of rancour against the pastoral office and those who exercise it. Atheists, who regard all religion as weakness and superstition, and infidels, who look on revelation as an imposture, a false and pernicious superaddition to natural religion, cannot have a great esteem for the office of the teachers of religion. They must of course either despise them as weakly credulous, or dislike them as deceivers, carrying on a dishonest craft, imposing upon men doctrines which themselves believe not, and rules of conduct which  
themselves



themselves know to be of no obligation. These are the only sentiments which they can consistently entertain. But in them alone they can appear consistent or reasonable. In all who profess to believe the gospel, to regard it as a divine revelation of true religion, of a stupendous dispensation carried on by God, from the foundation of the world, for the salvation of mankind, and executed by the most wonderful means; it never can be reasonable to slight the office of teaching religion, of propagating the principles and inculcating the practice of Christianity, or to undervalue those who are employed in it. To despise the order in general, is to despise the work, and to despise the gospel which they themselves believe; for the gospel is both the source and the subject of the employment of that order. This is absurdity and inconsistency in the extreme: but it is very far from being uncommon<sup>e</sup>.

In such, the contempt of the clergy sometimes arises from the contagion of the spirit of infidelity. The prevalence of infidelity often corrupts the sentiments and practice of those whose faith it cannot absolutely subvert. Men adopt the maxims of infidels without perceiving their consequences; they catch something of their spirit, while they reject their principles. While speculative tenets often  
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<sup>e</sup> Gerard, vol. ii. Serm. 2.

have not a great or constant influence on the behaviour, sympathy is so strong in human nature, that it leads us to enter readily into the sentiments and opinions of others, and to receive them by a kind of infection, without considering how far they are consistent with our own real belief. By this means, the contempt and ridicule which infidels are naturally led by their tenets to pour out upon the ministers of religion, diffuses itself and spreads the same spirit among those who, by their own principles, ought to honour them<sup>f</sup>.

Attachment to vicious habits and practices, notwithstanding a belief of the Christian religion, is another very natural cause of disrespect or aversion to the Christian ministry. It is not surprising that they who are addicted to wickedness, should dislike those who endeavour to check wickedness; or that they who hate to be reformed, should hate those whose very business it is to labour to reform them. Corruption of manners is often both a cause and an effect of the contempt of the ministers of religion. Men's acknowledgement of the religion which they teach, cannot be expected to prevent their contempt, any more than it has prevented their own depravity; for it is not more contradictory to the former than to the latter. Persons of abandoned morals cannot set a proper value

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<sup>f</sup> Gerard, vol. ii. Serm. 2.

value on the persons or the office of ministers, except they conceived a virtue in their functions, to secure their salvation without their being obliged to relinquish their vices; and this mistaken conception has sometimes led men of such morals to an extravagant adulation or admiration of the clergy, and a superstitious dependence on their functions; as dangerous to themselves, and as disgusting to them, as the most open contempt or disrespect.

Even too low a sense of the excellence and moment of religion, though not accompanied by gross immorality, will sink men's esteem of the pastoral office. As long as men are so inattentive to the importance of eternity, as to be drawn off from a due regard to it by every prevailing passion or present interest, it is impossible that they can have a just sense of the importance of an office, which is dignified chiefly by its being calculated for training men up for eternity. Accustomed to estimate every thing according to its value in this world, they will respect the pastoral office only in proportion to the degree of rank, or weight, or influence, which it gives the possessor in civil society; and consequently their respect will be both too low, and of a kind that is improper and incongruous to the real nature of the office.

Differences of opinion in matters of religion sometimes contribute very powerfully to some sort of contempt of the clergy. The adherents to one sect, bigotedly attached to its peculiarities, and violently set against all who differ from them, direct their spite principally against the ministers of other sects ; reproach them as irreligious or enthusiasts, as loose or over-rigid, as fools or hypocrites, according as circumstances give the easiest handle for one charge or another. Such abuses have been reciprocally heaped by different parties and different churches on the teachers of each other. Every difference in the situation of these teachers has been turned by the rest into a reproach against them : their faults have been searched out, discovered with joy, exaggerated without mercy, and turned into reasons for contempt or aversion towards all the teachers of the same persuasion. The dissensions of those who ought to have considered themselves as brethren, have been greedily laid hold of by the enemies of religion, received with an eager faith, retorted upon them all, and improved into a confession, that the ministers of any denomination cannot be entitled to much esteem. Some sects of Christians, being misled by some of their peculiar principles to disclaim the ministry as a separate office or profession, have, in consequence of this, professedly despised all who have devoted themselves to the exercise of it ; and in their ridicule or invective against them, have  
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sometimes equalled, or even surpassed, the open enemies of all religion<sup>z</sup>. On the other hand, the raising the measures of the pastoral duty too high, though owing to an exalted idea of the importance of the office, tends directly to produce contempt or disaffection towards those who occupy it. Fostering in men an expectation of more from ministers, than is in their power to do, they will never think that they have done enough, and will be dissatisfied with them after they have done all they can.

When these or other causes have in any degree introduced a contempt of our order, it can scarcely fail to spread. The giddy and inconsiderate will run into it by imitation, without examination of its justice, without reflection on its tendency, without any settled ill design. The gay and sprightly will choose it as an easy way of displaying their wit and humour. The bearish will lay hold of it, as offering a desirable opportunity of venting their rudeness without giving general offence. Some will affect it as a mark of politeness, of freedom of sentiment, of superiority to vulgar prejudices, of exemption from superstition: and some, by depreciating the clergy, and disregarding their functions, hope to exalt themselves as above the need of any instruction or direction from them.

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<sup>z</sup> Barclay's Apology. Letters on Theron and Aspasia.

When the spirit of contempt of ministers, and of their office, has become prevalent, no situation, no behaviour can procure them that honour and respect to which it entitles them. If by the establishment of religion to which they belong, honours and riches be annexed to their office, they are reproached as proud, ambitious, and covetous. If their provision be scanty, they are despised for their poverty, and charged with meanness of spirit, and ungentleness of appearance. If they are serious and grave, it is construed into grimace, hypocrisy, or moroseness. If they are cheerful and lively, it is misrepresented as unbecoming levity, or even an indication of their having no sense of religion. The causes of all this lie not in themselves; else, by removing them, they might avoid it: but they lie in the giddiness, the vices, or the prejudices of others, which they have it not in their power to correct, and which these unfavourable sentiments of them, in a great measure, cut them off from opportunity of endeavouring to correct. These causes too are so various and even opposite in different men, that if they escape contempt from one quarter, they may lay their account with censure from another, and perhaps the more for the very means by which they have contrived to make that escape. All that they have in their power is, to prepare themselves for bearing it, and to behave with propriety under it.

In this situation of things, it is highly necessary that, to a sense of the dignity and importance of the pastoral office, you should unite a sense of the contempt to which it is in fact exposed: and it is no less necessary to give the sense of this contempt a right direction and a proper regulation. If you be not careful to direct and regulate it, it will have a very bad effect on your temper and behaviour. Catching by sympathy the sentiments of those who entertain, and are forward to express, contempt for your profession, you may contract a disposition to despise it yourselves, and be led to speak or act as if you were ashamed of it. Amidst a torrent of ridicule or abuse poured out against it, the first motions of this disposition may, from the influence which the sentiments of others involuntarily have upon us, be nearly unavoidable. But you should attentively observe every tendency to it, as it begins to rise, and immediately check it. The seeming to dissemble your profession, the imitation of the manners of the laity, the attempting to throw off the clergyman, the speaking or acting in any manner unsuitably to it, the appearing not to have an habitual impression of its business and its design; by suggesting that yourselves look upon it as despicable or unrespectable, will, by their sympathy with your sentiments, increase their contempt of it, and direct their contempt particularly against you. Whatever can infuse a suspicion that you do not love it for its own sake, and for the sake of its employments, will lead them to consider

you in the pitiful light of exercising it only as a trade for a livelihood.

To speak with seeming pleasure of the gaieties, amusements, and dissipations of fashionable life, to enter into them as far as you think decency can at all permit you, or occasionally to go a little farther than is consistent with the common maxims of decorum, may procure you some external caresses, or even some inward liking from such as delight in them; but it will sink you even in their esteem, and make others despise you as totally unfit for the profession which you have chosen. Were you to affect disclaiming your profession, by appearing to think favourably of any vice, or slightly of any thing which truly belongs to religion, it might prevent the wicked, the irreligious, and the unbelieving, from hating you, for the same reason that they revile your office: but it would raise their indignation against you, and their contempt of you, as low, deceitful wretches, who live by religion, and yet betray it. Let never your consciousness of the undeserved contempt with which your profession is commonly treated, induce you to speak a word, or do an action, which can be considered as insinuating that you have a mean opinion of it, or little value for it. This would increase their contempt of you, and render you deserving of it. This additional contempt you have great reason to be solicitous to avoid; and you will most successfully avoid it by making the worthy clergyman



man always conspicuous in your demeanour. But that contempt which is directed primarily against your profession, and only rebounds on you as belonging to it, when you recollect the causes from which it proceeds, you certainly cannot be solicitous to avoid; for if it were possible, it could be avoided only by your being assimilated to the infidel, the profane, the vicious, and the worldling<sup>h</sup>.

Instead of vainly endeavouring to avoid it by improper means, turn it to your advantage. If properly considered, it may be rendered productive of very beneficial effects on your temper and behaviour. A just and well-formed sense of the contempt with which you and your office are liable to be treated, will teach you not to expect all that honour which the importance of the sacred functions might claim; and by preventing the expectation of it, will prevent the pain and mortification of disappointment, when you miss it. It will forbid your laying claim to excessive respect or authority, by making you certain that it would be refused, perhaps with redoubled slight and ridicule. You should never indeed allow, or seem to allow, that your profession is trivial or despicable; for this  
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<sup>h</sup> Stillingfleet, *Eccl. Cases*, vol. i. p. 176. Secker's 1st Charge, Cant. and 1st Charge, Oxf. Warburton, *Doct. of Grace*, part iii. c. 1. p. 202, 203.

would be to betray its rights : and it is doubtless proper at some times explicitly to vindicate it, and avow its dignity. This is permitted to persons of all other professions. The meanest artificer is not blamed for speaking of the real degree of utility which his trade possesses : a magistrate or judge may, without incurring censure, claim and enforce the honour that is due to his office. It is only when men would give dignity to mean employments, or challenge, to such as are honourable, a respect in its nature unsuitable, or in its measure extravagant, that they meet with either ridicule or disapprobation. It cannot therefore be reasonable to insist, that ministers alone should leave mankind to throw undeserved contempt, not only upon themselves, but upon their office also, without daring to tell them that they are in the wrong. It is even less reasonable to expect it from them than from men of any other profession : it is directly their business to point out the various duties of men ; and it cannot be incumbent on them, or even allowable in them, to pass by those duties of which the pastoral office is the object. Regard to the gospel forbids it ; it would be to suffer, without reproof, an office to be vilified, which has its foundation in the gospel. Regard to men's own souls forbids it ; it would be to suffer an office, which was intended for their edification, to become of no advantage to them, by their learning to despise it. The most important interests of men, their spiritual improvement and their everlasting happiness,

happinefs, may be very much affected by the sentiments which they entertain of their Christian teachers. Yet it is certain, however unreasonable, that fuch a vindication of our profefion as would be readily allowed to others, would by many be censured as priestly pride and affuming haughtinefs. On this account, even when it becomes moft neceffary, it muft be undertaken with great caution and prudence. You muft not claim any honour, either improper and undue in its kind, or extravagant in its degree; nor even any honour that can, with plaufibility, be fufpected of being fuch. You muft exprefs your demands with great care and precision, avoiding every term that is pompous or indefinite. You muft rather keep confiderably below what truth and juftice evidently warrant. And with all this referve, you muft fhew no anxiety to enter upon the fubject, but touch it very fparingly, and only when a proper occafion invites it. You will moft effectually gain refpect by not being over-eager to claim it. A proper fenfe of the contempt with which the paftoral office is too commonly treated, will likewise check the pride and vanity which the confideration of its importance might excite in light and inconfiderate perfons, who do not fufficiently reflect on the true nature of that importance. Serving as a counterbalance to thefe, it will have a direct and powerful tendency to form you to a temper of humility. It will accustom you neither to court nor to fet a high value on the opinions and applaufes of men; not to act  
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with a view to them, but from a regard to what is right in itself, to the approbation of your own minds, and the unerring judgment of God. By constantly laying your account with it, that you shall incur part of the contempt which is so liberally cast on your profession, you will be prepared for bearing unjust reproach and obloquy without being provoked or exasperated, and to submit to it with patience and meekness. It will give you ample scope for exercising these virtues, and rendering them more and more habitual. Haughtiness or resentment would be so far from screening you from the contempt of those who are disposed to bestow it, that they would only superadd their hatred. By receiving it with dignity tempered by mildness, you will most effectually convert it into respect <sup>i</sup>.

Contempt is necessarily disagreeable. However much you are prepared for bearing it properly when you meet it, it must be natural for you to wish to avoid it; and therefore a due sense of the prevailing contempt of the clergy cannot but excite you to use every proper means of avoiding it, or at least of mitigating it as much as possible. It will excite you to avoid all such faults and failings in your character and behaviour, as are the natural objects of contempt; for by indulging these, you must increase the contempt of the whole order, and  
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<sup>i</sup> Secker, Ch. 1, Oxf. Ch. 2, 3. Cant. Stillingfleet, Eccl. Cases, vol. i. p. 179.

together with it incur likewise personal contempt drawn upon you justly by yourselves. It will excite you to acquire and to endeavour to excel in those qualifications which are acknowledged to be respectable: for these will procure you a degree of personal respect and honour, which may, in men's behaviour to you, in a great measure, counterbalance their disposition to despise or revile your profession. From your education, and from the very nature of your profession, a competent degree of knowledge is justly expected: if you have it not, you will soon be detected by the discerning, and thought deficient even by the ignorant: gross ignorance exposes any person to contempt, and it must expose you to double contempt, for in you it will appear highly shameful. Knowledge is universally accounted estimable and ornamental: and useful knowledge cannot fail to do you credit in the eyes of men. A desire therefore not to stand low in their opinion, will be a spur to you in acquiring such a degree of it as may adorn your profession. The acquisition of knowledge necessarily supposes application and study: a life in a considerable degree studious, befits your character and business, and is necessary for preserving you from the degrading suspicion of mis-spending your time in idleness or trifles. Imprudence of every kind necessarily leads to follies, which must sink you in the estimation of mankind, and render you sometimes ridiculous, and sometimes despicable: your aversion to these humiliating situations cannot fail to

prompt you to that prudence, circumspection, and wisdom of behaviour, which will place you out of the reach of them. Whatever is looked upon as mean, inevitably provokes contempt. So much regard has been paid to this, that bodily defects and remarkable meannesses of appearance have been deemed sufficient to exclude men from the priesthood in some religions: and they certainly have so great an influence on the sentiments of mankind, that they who have the misfortune to lie under them, will need, and should employ, the greater pains to acquire such respectable qualities, conspicuous accomplishments, and shining virtues, as may overcome that influence, and force mankind to forget their exterior defects. But whatever betrays a littleness of mind, narrow and contracted sentiments, or low and grovelling views, is much more justly despicable, and will more certainly and generally be despised. A regard to reputation should therefore dispose you to avoid even vulgarity and rusticity of manners, and not to reckon the common rules of good breeding below your attention; but much more to keep at a great distance from all mean practices, selfish designs, and attachment to trivial points of interest; and to display a superiority even to considerable worldly objects, and such disinterestedness as may convince men that you prefer doing your duty, and saving their souls, to any profit of your own. Not only such vices as are reckoned degrading to the character of every man, will subject you to  
infallible

infallible contempt, but every vice whatever; and by no means can you so effectually guard against the contempt which you must naturally wish to avoid, as by showing yourselves to be free from every vice, and possessed of every virtue. In particular, that wish will prove a strong preservative against all faultiness in your own profession; for negligence in its proper duties is one of the most obvious grounds of contempt, and will soonest bring it upon you; or if the irreligious and the wicked should seem to be the better pleased with you, the less you do in your own business, yet even they will inwardly both disapprove and despise you, and you must lose the good opinion of all who have the truest value for your office, and the warmest love to virtue and religion, and whose good opinion alone can be really honourable to you. That wish will be the strongest incentive to conscientious diligence in the peculiar duties of your profession; for such diligence will force men to see that you are useful, and set you out of the reach of at least many of the reproaches which they delight in casting upon the order<sup>k</sup>.

I have now endeavoured to represent, in a proper light, the importance of the pastoral office as resulting from its dignity; and to point out the sentiments and temper with which that importance requires

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<sup>k</sup> Stillingfleet, *Eccl. Cases*, p. 178. Secker, *Ch. 1. Oxf. Ch. 1, 2. Cant.*

requires that you enter on it, and which will predispose you to its several duties. Its importance ought to produce esteem of it in the people; but as it is nevertheless very generally treated with contempt, I have inquired into the causes of this contempt, and shewn how you should be affected by it, and to what purposes you should improve it. I neither designed nor pretend to have exhausted the subject, but only to have given such hints as may prompt you to think of it, and pursue it for yourselves. It will be of great advantage that you think of it often, and seriously. It suggests many exercises on which you may very properly put yourselves. You may consider what are the means by which you may best excite in yourselves a due sense of the excellence of your profession. You may contrive beforehand, how you could, in different supposed situations, act up to it, and support your character with propriety. You may reflect on the several expressions of slight or reproach which you have observed or known to be cast upon the clergy; and you may examine in what manner you ought to behave if you met with them, and by what means you might most effectually escape or confute them. By frequent meditation on such topics, or even by putting your thoughts in writing, you will render the proper sentiments familiar to you, and will enter on your office deeply possessed with them. Your temper will be both congenial to your employment, and adapted to your situation. For this purpose all the sentiments



ments which I have mentioned must be cherished in conjunction : the expectation of contempt must not suppress the sense of the dignity of your profession, else it would either depress or mislead you : it must only be united to it, that this sense may not elate you, and that you may be disposed to rest contented with the degree of respect which you can obtain by the virtues proper to your profession, and not court a spurious respect for qualities foreign to your character, or perhaps misbecoming it.

## C H A P. II.

*The Difficulties of the Pastoral Office.*

**T**HE pastoral office is rendered important, not only by the dignity of its functions, but also by their difficulty. As it is of great moment that they be performed well, it is likewise no easy matter to perform them well. To be acquainted with its difficulties, is necessary for your knowing how to combat and surmount them; and it will confirm those sentiments which ought to be entertained by all who enter on that office, and which, if they be heartily entertained, will have an extensive influence on the right discharge of all its functions.

## S E C T. I.

*The Nature of its Difficulties.*

**T**HAT the difficulties of the pastoral office are very great, is evident from the very names by which the scripture describes those who exercise it. It is remarkable that there is scarcely one of these that does not imply either skill, or labour, or both; not even those which are most expressive of their dignity. They are called "rulers," and said to  
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“ have rule” over Christians. Every office of government is attended with no inconsiderable difficulty : but their’s is a government of souls, the hardest of all arts ; it is the government of men, not in respect of external behaviour and overt acts, but likewise of the habits and dispositions of their hearts ; and that too carried on, not by violent or coercive methods, by which temporal rulers may force obedience to the civil laws, but solely by the gentler methods of persuasion, which men, if they be determined on it, may more easily resist. They are called the “ ambassadors” of God, by a metaphorical application of the name of an employment, very honourable indeed as implying an important trust ; but which cannot be executed without great abilities, or without the faithful and indefatigable application of those abilities to promote the end of the embassy, to prevent whatever can obstruct it, to contrive every method of forwarding it, and to maintain the dignity and the rights of the prince whose commission they bear. They are termed “ the stewards “ of God ;” which implies their being employed in the difficult task of caring for all the members of that great family of which Christ is the head, of dispensing to them their spiritual food, and directing their practice in their several provinces. By a name of the like import, they are called “ bishops,” overseers, or inspectors ; to intimate the obligation which they are under, to take heed to the conduct and the spiritual interests of those who are com-

mitted to their charge. They are called "pastors," or "shepherds;" by the name of an employment very respectable in the simple and earlier ages, but which exposed those who exercised it to great toils and hardships, some of which Jacob describes from his own experience, when he says, "In the day  
 " the drought consumed me, and the frost by  
 " night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes." Our Saviour, in describing himself under this character, represents the occupation as both difficult and dangerous: "I am the good shepherd: the  
 " good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But  
 " he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, seeth  
 " the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and  
 " fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth  
 " the sheep. But I am the good shepherd, and  
 " know my sheep, and am known of them, and I  
 " lay down my life for the sheep." The epithet is often in scripture applied to God, and is meant to intimate his tenderest care of his church, in respect of which he represents himself as "feeding  
 " his flock like a shepherd, gathering the lambs  
 " with his arm, and carrying them in his bosom,  
 " and gently leading those that are with young." Such being the ideas connected with the name in holy writ, it is plainly given to the ministers of religion, on purpose to intimate the assiduity and tenderness of that care which they are required to take, of those who are entrusted to them by Christ Jesus, "the great shepherd of the sheep;" in feeding or teaching them, in looking after and  
 defending

defending them, in guarding them from every sin and error, in applying remedies to all their spiritual diseases, and in encountering every danger in discharging these several duties towards them. The teachers of religion are denominated the "ministers or servants of God;" implying that they must labour in serving him in that work which, by his authority and under his direction, they are employed to carry forward in his church. They are particularly called "labourers" in his husbandry and his vineyard; and this designation, borrowed from those who earn their bread by their daily labour, and must exert themselves diligently and constantly, evidently implies, that the teachers of religion must make it their daily employment, their occupation for life, to promote the instruction and improvement of Christians; that their work is hard and laborious; that it must be applied to with diligence and perseverance; that it will return upon them every day; and that it can never be intermitted or given over as long as they live. They are called "watchmen," by a metaphor taken from those who were placed on high towers, to attend day and night, and to be always ready to give the alarm on every appearance of danger; and therefore plainly intimating, that ministers ought to be alert in observing whatever can hurt the souls of men, and give them warning of it; and that for this purpose incessant vigilance and earnest circumspection are absolutely necessary. They are called "soldiers," expressly to declare

that their employment calls them to “endure hardness,” to encounter difficulties, fatigues, and dangers. Ministers are described in scripture by so many epithets implying various kinds of exertion, on purpose to impress them with a deep sense that their business is difficult and laborious, and demands vigorous application and unwearied diligence. In like manner, the exertion incumbent upon them is described in terms expressive of its intenseness and constancy. They are exhorted to “wait on,” to “study,” to “take heed to,” to “give attendance to,” to “give themselves continually to,” to “be instant in,” to “labour in,” the several duties of their office. Injunctions in such terms would be superfluous, if there were not great difficulty in performing these duties aright. But being the words of the Holy Spirit, they cannot be superfluous; and they are no stronger than the nature of the subject demands<sup>1</sup>.

The end and design of the pastoral office is so purely spiritual, and so sublime, that it cannot be easy for a person clothed with a mortal body, and surrounded with worldly objects, to keep it constantly in view, and to act with a steady regard to it. The purpose of its institution is described by the apostle in this manner: “He gave some, apostles;  
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<sup>1</sup> Stillingfleet, *Eccl. Cases*, vol. i. p. 179. Burnet, *Past. Care*, c. 1.

“ tles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ;  
 “ and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfect-  
 “ ing of the saints, for the work of the ministry,  
 “ for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we  
 “ all come in the unity of the faith, and of the  
 “ knowlege of the Son of God, unto a perfect  
 “ man, unto the measure of the stature of the ful-  
 “ nefs of Christ<sup>m</sup>.” It is the business of a minister  
 to enlighten the understandings of men with all  
 religious knowlege, and to bring them to good  
 practice. It is not enough that he persuade them  
 to external blamelessness, or to abstinence from  
 gross vices ; though often this is found to be  
 difficult enough, and even impracticable. But  
 his aim must be to prevail upon them to forsake  
 every vice, to extirpate all bad habits ; to form  
 them to inward purity, to unfeigned humility, to  
 calm resignation, to the ardent love of God, to  
 that universal charity which will make them regard  
 the interests of others as their own ; to inspire  
 them with the love of virtue, to exalt them to the  
 divine image, to raise them above the world, to  
 spiritualize their temper to such a degree, that  
 they may be fit for ascending to “ Mount Zion,  
 “ and to the city of the living God, the heavenly  
 “ Jerufalem, and to an innumerable company of  
 “ holy angels, to the general assembly of the first-  
 “ born,

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<sup>m</sup> Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13.

“ born, and to God all-pure, the judge of all,  
“ and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and  
“ to Jesus Christ the righteous, the mediator of the  
“ new covenant <sup>n</sup>.” No ministration of the sacred  
office can be performed aright, except it be per-  
formed with a respect to these important ends.  
But men must, without the greatest care, frequently  
lose sight of them. At one time they will be  
ready to go through what they must do, without  
considering whether it be or be not well calculated  
for answering these purposes. At other times a  
regard to their own interest or reputation will mix  
with and sophisticate their aims. Even when they  
keep them most directly in their eye, they will  
find it very difficult to discover<sup>n</sup> how every part of  
their business may be performed in the manner  
fittest for promoting them, to force themselves to  
perform it in that manner, and to continue and  
increase their labour till they have done all in their  
power to accomplish them. Were it incumbent  
on a minister actually to attain these ends, his  
work would be, not merely difficult, but altogether  
impracticable: but it is incumbent on him, both  
sincerely to aim at them, and to omit nothing  
that he can do in order to attain them. To satisfy  
himself of this, he must be conscious that he has  
uniformly employed his utmost abilities and in-  
dustry in the duties of his office. How difficult it  
is

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<sup>n</sup> Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.



is to promote these ends, with any tolerable success, in a parish, a man may perceive by only reflecting how difficult it is to accomplish them in himself, or by making trial of forming any one to whom he has the nearest and most constant access, to such a temper and behaviour as he would wish him to acquire.

The functions of the pastoral office, appointed for promoting these ends, are in their very nature attended with considerable difficulty. It may be easy to go over them, and dispatch them in some way or other : but it is a very different matter to execute them constantly in the most useful and improving manner. It is not difficult to discourse fluently enough on different subjects of religion, or to teach people to repeat explications of them by rote : but it is both difficult and irksome to say the same things over and over, to set them in one light after another, to contrive a variety of illustrations, till the dullest can really understand them. With proper preparation and moderate care, a man may compose a very correct discourse : but it is not so easy to preach properly and usefully. To express the truths and duties of religion, so plainly as to be understood by the meanest without disgusting the most knowing ; to represent what they know already and hear often, so as to engage their attention and make an impression upon them ; to fix the measures of duty, so as neither to alarm the scrupulous, nor give undue licence to the lax ; to

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awaken

awaken the hardened finner, without disturbing the timorous with undeserved terrors ; to exprefs every fentiment in the way fitteft to give a ftrong conception of divine truth, and to touch the heart ; to admit no fentiment but what has a real tendency to make men wifer and better ; to reject every thought foreign to this purpofe, however fit it might be for pleafing or gaining applaufe ; to preferve all thefe views, and to be under the influence of them, all the time a perfon is compofing and delivering a difcourfe ; cannot but be arduous : yet it is neceffary to preaching well. It is ftill more difficult to find out the different tempers of all the variety of perfons with whom a minifter is concerned ; to difcover the beft ways of applying to each ; to acquire the extent of knowlege requifite for thefe different applications ; to keep it fo diftinctly in view, as to be able to recollect and make ufe of it as occafion requires ; and after the neceffary knowlege is obtained, it is ftill difficult to learn the addrefs which muft be employed in applying to men in the feveral ways proper for a clergyman, and to conduct his applications with that prudence which will render them moft effectual.

The work of a minifter appears, from this representation of it, to be abundantly difficult, though all things fhould confpire in the moft friendly manner with his endeavours to promote and execute it. But the difficulty is immenfely increafed  
by

by the great and numerous obstructions which are opposed to his endeavours. They arise both from himself, and from the people. Many obstructions must arise from the unavoidable infirmities and imperfections of a man's own nature. It is not easy to throw off the indisposition, which indolence will at times produce, to his employing all the time and pains necessary for the right discharge of all his duties; to overcome the false tenderness which makes it painful to declare disagreeable truths; or the reluctance which modesty must feel against reproving one's seniors or superiors with becoming freedom; to attain the resolution which will enable him to incur whatever inconveniences may arise from his admonishing those on whom his interest depends; or to encounter the ridicule, contempt, and obloquy, to which he will be exposed by fairly condemning prevailing errors, fashionable evils, and polite or popular vices. Obstructions at least equal to these arise from the stupidity, the prejudices, and the vices of other men. In order to perform the business of his calling, a minister must infuse knowledge into those who are so dull as to be scarcely capable of distinct thought. He must teach those who have very little leisure, and very little inclination, perhaps even an aversion, to learn. He must discover the inward vices and depravities of those who do all they can to conceal them from him. He must treat with skill the diseases of the soul, which are more latent and stubborn than many of those  
bodily

bodily distempers which physicians find it very hard to cure. He must make men willing to correct faults which they fondly hug; and to conquer habits which they have strengthened by thousands of acts repeated almost every day. He must give them in an hour good impressions, which may have strength enough to continue and influence them for many days, in opposition to all the objects which tend most strongly to obliterate them. He must bring them to a temper and conduct directly opposite to that which is powerfully recommended to them by the example of the generality of those with whom they converse. He must persuade them to that from which all their corrupt passions draw them off. He must persuade the ambitious to slight power and honours, and to aspire only to the heavenly kingdom; the covetous, to value no riches in comparison with the invisible treasures which are above; the sensualist, to sacrifice the pleasures for which he has always had a relish, for the sake of more refined pleasures, which he is incapable of tasting till he be purified from the love of external gratifications. He must bring faith and hope to prevail over sense; and withdraw all the affections of human nature from those objects which solicit them most directly, and gratify them most immediately, to objects remote or future. He must “wrestle, not against flesh and blood only, “but against principalities, against powers, against “the rulers of the darkness of this world, against “spiritual wickedness in high places:” and in order

order to be successful in his occupation, he must wrestle so as to baffle all their power, and disappoint all their artifices. It is only so far as a minister surmounts these obstacles, and, notwithstanding them, accomplishes the reformation and improvement of mankind, that he attains the end and design of his vocation. Not actually to do so in any instance, would be to be absolutely useless in his station: and so far as he fails by negligence in any part of his duty, he is answerable for the failure. But in order to effect all this in a few instances, in order to perform what is proper for effecting it, in such a degree as not to be really blameable for negligence, very great pains and labour must necessarily be bestowed.

I would not willingly exaggerate the difficulties of the pastoral office: exaggeration could only produce despondence, and, by representing them as insurmountable, might repress every endeavour to surmount them, and occasion an entire neglect of every duty. But it is equally dangerous to extenuate them; it would be to deceive you; and by thinking that you have little to do, you would be tempted to do almost nothing, and incur all the ill consequences of incapacity or idleness. The difficulties which I have described are all real; they are either expressly pointed out in scripture, or they grow out of the very nature of the functions and design of the pastoral office: and therefore you ought not to dissemble them from yourselves.

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If they require a great degree of exertion, and suggest a high standard of duty, by having it in your eye you will at least approach nearer to it, than otherwise you would have even thought of attempting. In what manner the view of them ought to affect and influence you, and what obligations you lie under to do your utmost that you may surmount them, I shall next explain.

## SECT. II.

### *Of the Obligations respecting the Difficulties of the Pastoral Office.*

It is not perhaps altogether uncommon for men to choose the profession of a clergyman as one of the easiest ways of gaining their bread. This view is not more fordid than it is erroneous. If this profession exempt men from the labours of the body, it subjects them to great labours of the mind: if it impose not the drudgeries which require only muscular strength or animal agility, it requires exertions which will at least as much fatigue and exhaust even the body. Its difficulties are evidently such, as ought to deter every man from undertaking it, who is not determined to devote himself to its duties, to make it really his business to labour in it with assiduity. To think or to say, "Put me into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread," betrays a total  
 9 ignorance

ignorance and insensibility of the arduous nature of these offices.

If you imagine that the occupation which you have chosen is attended with little difficulty, the certain consequence is, that you will be at little pains to qualify yourselves for it; for you will think a little pains sufficient. But by being previously well aware of its several difficulties, by often thinking of them, by cultivating an habitual sense of them, you will never want a spur to diligence in your preparation for them. You will think no preparation too much; you will be disposed to exceed if possible, rather than run the risk of falling short of what is necessary. You will never reckon yourselves perfectly prepared, but will continue through your whole lives to become fitter for struggling against them. A difficult work requires both skill and diligence, in order to its being well executed: the foundations of both must be laid in your preparation for entering on the pastoral office. It is not enough that you acquire all the knowledge, a right application of which would contribute to your right discharge of its functions: it is proper likewise that you learn in some measure to apply it to that purpose. You may in various ways have opportunities of performing functions in some degree similar to this office; to pupils, for instance, and younger friends; and the inuring of yourselves to these, and studying to perform them in the most useful manner, will train you for the right execution

tion of like functions in a more extensive sphere. You may likewise suppose to yourselves particular situations of difficulty, which may possibly hereafter occur to you in the business of a minister; or you may observe or get information of such as have occurred to others: and you may consider deliberately how you could most successfully exert yourselves in that situation; and what you determine concerning it at one time, you may examine at another time, and alter, correct, or improve it as you find reason. It will likewise be extremely useful, if you have opportunity, to accompany some minister who performs them well, in the several duties of his parish, to observe his manner, and even to attempt the performance of them in his presence, and by his direction, and to receive and profit by his remarks on your performance. I said that the foundations of diligence, as well as of skill, must be laid during your preparation for the pastoral office: they can be laid only by your accustoming yourselves to diligence in whatever you are employed, whether your private studies, any branch of teaching, or any other business; and particularly by accustoming yourselves readily to obey every call to good offices or active exertion, without suffering indolence, recluseness, or the love of study, to withhold you from them.

A sense of the difficulties of the pastoral office will be a strong incentive to diligence, not only in preparing yourselves for it, but also in performing its duties when you shall be called to it. Under a  
lively



lively sense of the arduous nature of his work, a minister will study, by all the methods of instruction, exhortation, admonition, reproof, terror, consolation, persuasion, in public and in private, in their health and their sickness, amidst the dissipation of prosperity and the depression of adversity, to enlighten the ignorant with religious knowledge, to form the young to impressions of truth and goodness, to fix the unthinking, to awaken the secure, to reclaim the wicked, to resolve the doubting, to confirm the wavering, to strengthen the weak, to perfect the saints. To this he will devote his time, his strength, and all his talents. He considers it as what properly belongs to him; and though he cannot be every hour employed in it, yet all other pursuits, even such as would most laudably gratify his curiosity or his taste, and such as are most indispensably necessary for his temporal concerns, he will reckon only avocations in comparison, subordinate to this, and cheerfully postpone, when he has an urgent call to any part of this.

Under a serious view of the difficulties of the pastoral care, the souls of men would sink, if they were not conscious that it is the work of God, and that God himself is engaged in it. This reflection supports them under all their exertions, by the hope of his assistance, and by the assurance, that if they be not blameably deficient, he will render their exertions successful, as far as the views and plan of his providence permit. It will likewise make every recollection of difficulty in their work,

an irresistibile motive to earnest prayer for his aid, both in qualifying them for it, and in performing it, and for success in all their ministrations. A spirit of devotion is absolutely necessary in all of your profession, and will be the natural consequence of a just sense of its difficulty, together with a due consciousness of your own weakness.

It is needless to enlarge on these topics. The sentiments and dispositions which I have mentioned flow necessarily from a view of the nature of the pastoral office, and are by it rendered indispensably obligatory. But a new and strong obligation to them arises from considering farther, that a failure in these, and the improper or imperfect execution of that office, which will be occasioned by it, are highly criminal, are productive of the most pernicious consequences, and will render such as are chargeable with them obnoxious to the severest punishment. There are two distinct classes of duties incumbent on all persons who occupy a public station; the one, of those duties which belong to them in common with others, as men and Christians; the other, of such as are peculiar to that public station in which they are placed. The latter are no less necessary than the former to complete goodness of character; and the neglect of them is no less blameable, no less hurtful to society, no less severely punishable. It is not enough that a judge be blameless in his private life; it is equally necessary that he execute justice in his  
public

public capacity, and promote the interests of society by his authority and influence; and if he grossly neglect the opportunities of doing so, or wilfully pervert justice, he is as highly blameable as if he had been guilty of similar omissions or injuries in private life, as much hurts society, and can as little expect to escape punishment from God. In like manner, though a minister should be unblameable and virtuous in common life, though he should be chargeable with nothing that would have been faulty if he had been only a private Christian; yet if he have no activity in the business of his office, no zeal for attaining its end; if he spend that time in indolence, in amusement, in worldly business, or even in learned study, which ought to have been employed in preparing him for instructing his people to more advantage, or in doing good offices among them; he is highly faulty and vicious. In his station he cannot be a good man, without being a good minister. The criminal omission or the careless performance of the duties of his public station, will be at least as hurtful to the great interests of men, as positive acts of vice in his private life. If by his negligence he suffer men to lose the impressions of religion, or if by his unskilful and improper methods of instructing them, he sow the seeds of folly, bigotry, superstition, or enthusiasm, the ill effects may continue through many generations. He cannot be free from the blood of these generations, nor innocent from these mischiefs, whose incapacity or negligence gave occasion to  
 G them.

them. So far as these were criminal, they must expose him to severe punishment under the government of a righteous God°. Negligence in the pastoral office reflects more dishonour upon God, than negligence in any other profession, because this profession, more immediately than any other, regards God and religion. It is likewise productive of worse consequences: the improper exercise of other professions may produce particular inconveniences, or promote some vices; but the improper exercise of this tends directly to promote all vice, to obstruct all goodness, to bring religion into discredit, and to ruin, not the greatest temporal interests of mankind, but their eternal salvation. Self-love, benevolence, conscience, every principle of human nature that can have any influence on conduct, must urge a clergyman, with their greatest force, to avoid all negligence and impropriety in the functions of his office. A crime attended with so mischievous consequences, and committed in opposition to so strong obligations, must imply heinous guilt, and infer a dreadful punishment. The scripture warns us of its demerit and its punishment. God declares to Ezekiel, that if he neglected to warn the wicked “man  
 “ from his way,” when God commanded him to give warning, “ the same wicked man should die in  
 “ his iniquity, but his blood would God require at  
 “ his

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° Leechman, Syn. Serm.

“ his hand <sup>p</sup> ;” and that “ the shepherds who fed  
 “ not the flock,” but by their neglect suffered  
 them to be scattered and lost, he would “ require  
 “ his flock at their hand <sup>q</sup> .” The first of these  
 declarations has a peculiar respect to the prophet’s  
 immediate commission from God to reprove parti-  
 cular persons, for their sins, in his name; but  
 certainly implies, that teachers who have a general  
 commission to warn men of all sin, are really  
 chargeable with their guilt, if they neglect to warn  
 them when they are bound to warn them. For  
 this is expressed in the second, which is professedly  
 directed to the ordinary religious instructors of the  
 Israelites <sup>r</sup> . In the New Testament it is threatened,  
 that the unfaithful and unwise steward, who  
 neglects or abuses his trust, shall be “ cut in fun-  
 “ der, and have his portion with the unbe-  
 “ lievers <sup>s</sup> :” they who preach the gospel are  
 “ charged before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,  
 “ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his  
 “ appearing <sup>t</sup> ;” to the greatest diligence in the  
 several parts of their duty; and it is plainly inti-  
 mated, that in order to their being “ pure from  
 “ the blood of all men,” they must be able to  
 “ take them to record, that they ceased not to  
 “ warn every man, that they kept back nothing  
 “ that

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<sup>p</sup> Ezek. iii. 18. xxxiii. 8.      <sup>q</sup> Chap. xxxiv. 2—10.

<sup>r</sup> Stillingfleet, *Eccl. Cafes*, vol. i. p. 109, &c. Burnet, *Past. Care*, c. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Luke, xii. 46.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

“ that was profitable unto them, but have showed  
 “ them, and taught them publicly, and from house  
 “ to house, that they have not shunned to declare  
 “ unto them all the counsel of God<sup>u</sup>,” and that  
 they have declared it in the best manner that their  
 utmost care could enable them to do it<sup>v</sup>.

On the other hand, to execute an office of so  
 great importance with fidelity and diligence, to  
 promote the improvement and perfection of the  
 noblest creature in this lower world, to endeavour  
 to save the souls of men by giving them lessons of  
 knowlege and virtue, to co-operate with God in  
 spreading happiness ; is praise-worthy and glorious,  
 and will be crowned with a reward proportioned  
 to the dignity and difficulty of the work. They  
 who labour carefully in it “ shall at least deliver  
 “ their own souls, though the wicked to whom  
 “ they give warning, turn not from his wicked-  
 “ ness, but die in his iniquity<sup>w</sup>.” They shall,  
 we are assured, “ save their own souls<sup>x</sup> ;” and  
 “ when the chief shepherd shall appear, they shall  
 “ receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away<sup>y</sup>.”  
 Probably too, they shall save many of those that  
 “ hear them<sup>z</sup>,” and shall thence, both by the  
 joyful reflections of their own minds, and by the  
 remuneration of the God whom they served,  
 derive

<sup>u</sup> Acts xx. 19, 26, 27, 31.

<sup>w</sup> Ezek. iii. 19. xxxiii. 9.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Pet. v. 4.

<sup>v</sup> Burnet, Past. Care, c. 3.

<sup>x</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 16.

<sup>z</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 16.

derive a very great accession to their happiness : for  
 “ they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine  
 “ as the brightness of the firmament, and as the  
 “ stars for ever and ever <sup>a</sup>.”

Thus all that application, diligence, and care, which the difficulty of the pastoral office requires, and therefore renders incumbent on those who occupy it, is farther enforced upon them by the most interesting motives, by alarming apprehensions of dreadful punishment in case of failure, and encouraging prospects of a great reward in case of sincere and faithful exertion. A constant respect to these must be maintained ; and if it be, will prevent their ever sinking under the labours of their calling. It should likewise be steadily maintained by you, through the whole course of your preparation for that calling ; for I doubt not that every faulty negligence in your preparation exposes you to some degree of the same danger, and that every conscientious exertion in your preparation will entitle you to some degree of the same reward ; even though you should never have an opportunity of actually exercising it.

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<sup>a</sup> Dan. xii. 3. Leechman, Syn. Serm.

## SECT. III.

*Of the true Spirit of the Pastoral Office.*

WE have considered separately, the dignity and the difficulty of the pastoral office, and pointed out the sentiments which arise from, and are suitable to each. But it is necessary that we accustom ourselves always to view them in conjunction. If we look for no difficulty, the meeting with the smallest will disconcert and dishearten us: and we will not be at much pains to conquer great difficulties, if we do not think it of some importance to conquer them. By being viewed in conjunction, they will suggest and impress upon us some sentiments of very great moment, additional to those which we have hitherto mentioned. All that I mean by this may be expressed in this single article, that they will infuse into us the genuine spirit of our profession. This spirit is the immediate result of a high sense of the importance of the pastoral office in its full extent, as including both excellence and difficulty; rather, perhaps, it is that sense raised to perfection, and exerting itself with vigour in all its proper energies.

Every profession has its proper spirit. All eminent artists have been fired with the spirit of their art, and could not have become eminent without it. You too must be possessed, deeply possessed, with



with the spirit of your profession; otherwise you can never be eminent in it, nor even execute its functions tolerably. The spirit of any profession is, an eager and inextinguishable desire to succeed in it, and a certain ardour of soul, a boldness and enthusiasm in the exercises of it. The spirit of your profession is, a love to its duties, a zeal to perform them in the best manner, a warm ambition to accomplish its end: it is the active operation of love to God, to Christ, to the souls of men, to truth, to goodness, to religion, raised to an exalted pitch, and directed to the one point of animating you, first in qualifying yourselves for the sacred office, and next in devoting yourselves to the performance of the whole business belonging to it.

Nothing of the least consideration can be executed well by a person who does not enter into the spirit of it. If you be destitute of the spirit of your profession, you will be languid in every thing relating to it. While you exert yourselves as often as you are engaged in a favourite study, in amusement, or in business, all exertion will forsake you as soon as you turn to your proper occupations. It will be a force upon you to turn to them. You will be anxious to run over them as soon and as easily as possible. You will content yourselves with executing them in the most superficial manner: and even this will be an unpleasant drudgery. You will be glad when you have got through it: but ere long it must return again; and this thought will damp

damp your joy. The perpetual recurrence of employments for which you have no relish, and which are for that reason irksome, will eat out the comfort of your lives. You will live out of your element, and therefore with constant dissatisfaction and uneasiness to yourselves. Whenever you must do what belongs to your profession, it will be with reluctance, and with regret, for being obliged to interrupt something that is more agreeable to you. With all the pain which it gives you, it will be but ill done. You will exert yourselves feebly, where the greatest vigour is absolutely necessary; and be cold and unconcerned, where you should be fired with ardour and zeal.

On the contrary, your being animated with the spirit of your profession will make you enter with alacrity into whatever belongs to it. It is he only who possesses the spirit of his art, that will ever attempt any thing great and excellent in it; and to such attempts he will never want a powerful impulse. If you have the true spirit of your art, all the difficulties which lie in the way of your becoming fit to exercise it, and of your exercising it with success, will be so far from discouraging or dejecting you, that they will embolden and elevate you. It is a remarkable property of human nature, that, when a man is heartily engaged in a design, and resolved and fit to prosecute it, any difficulty or opposition in the prosecution, instead of sinking him into despondence, raises his ambition, excites

excites his courage, draws forth his strength, and adds force to all his motions : and the greater the difficulty is, provided it appear not to be absolutely insurmountable, the more it invigorates and inspirits the soul ; the bolder and more eager it renders a person to encounter it, and the more strenuously he will exert himself in order to surmount it. As the virtue of the loadstone would have remained unknown, if iron had never been applied to it, so the powers of the human mind could never have fully shewn themselves, if circumstances had not occurred which required the utmost stretch of them. Abilities which have accomplished wonders, would have lain for ever latent, but for opportunities which called them forth, but for difficulties which a more languid exertion of them could not have surmounted. An aptitude and proneness to be in this manner invigorated and exalted by the peculiar difficulties and labours of any profession, is always an essential part of the true spirit of that profession. The true spirit of your profession cannot fail to produce it in the highest degree. To encounter formidable difficulties for a trifling end, would be a romantic folly : but to find difficulty in the pursuit of an end which we justly reckon glorious, and on which our heart is intent, will only animate us to uncommon activity. To find ourselves engaged in an enterprize worthy of our utmost exertion, and which indispensably requires it, cannot but give a greatness to the soul, raise it to an heroic elevation, and enable us to act with a degree

degree of force and vigour of which we should never have suspected ourselves capable, if we had not been thus roused to employ it. If your temper be harmonised with your profession, if your heart be wholly engaged in it, the sense of the greatness of your work will kindle your zeal to do it into a flame; I might almost say, will quicken it into a living principle, pervading all your ministrations, rendering you indefatigable in them, and leading you to perform them well.

By being possessed of the true spirit of your profession, you will not only be rendered diligent in whatever belongs to it, but you will likewise take pleasure in it. It is in exertion and activity that men find their highest enjoyment. There is not a more unhappy or irksome state, than to have nothing to do. Even difficulty is necessary to our enjoyment. When every thing goes on with perfect ease, when we meet with nothing that requires the exertion of our powers, the mind is not sufficiently engaged or employed, it sinks into an uneasy state of languor; it needs something to awaken it, before it can enjoy itself or any thing else. Its life and its enjoyment grow with the obstructions which it is called upon to combat. In consequence of this structure of our nature, when men are engaged in a profession altogether suitable to their genius and inclination, the more constantly they are employed in it, the happier they are. The mechanic has his chief satisfaction in working  
in

in his calling however laborious, and could not live without it; and if he have any ingenuity, a work of some difficulty, out of the ordinary round of his operations, raises him to a state of higher satisfaction. The merchant finds his pleasure in a run of business, and could not bear to be idle. The man who is turned for study, wishes to be employed in it, delights in such researches as require thought and reflection, regrets the interruptions which he meets with, and suffers uneasiness in them. In a word, every man who loves his occupation, willingly and cheerfully labours in it, from morning to evening, day after day. If you therefore sufficiently love your profession, and bring yourselves to the temper which suits it, you will find your natural satisfaction in being wholly taken up with what belongs to it, as your real and proper business. The greatest exertion in its duties will be your delight. Far from appearing weary of them when you are performing them, and longing till they be over, you will joy in them even when you are most fatigued. You will prefer them to every other manner of employing yourselves. A long intermission of them would give you pain. When you are called off by them, from amusements the most agreeable, or from studies the most favourite, you will cheerfully embrace the call as giving you an opportunity of applying yourselves to offices still dearer to you. Its greatest toils, by drawing out your hearty efforts to sustain them, will render your satisfaction more sublime.

If

If the genuine spirit of the pastoral office be not fully conceived by the description which I have given of it, you will perhaps complete your idea by attending to the accounts which the apostle Paul, in various parts of his writings, gives of his own exertions, in all which he was actuated by a large portion of that spirit. Exalted and impelled by it, he “hungered, and thirsted, and was naked, “and was buffeted, and laboured, working with “his own hands<sup>b</sup>: suffering all things, lest he “should hinder the gospel of Christ; becoming “all things to all men, for the gospel’s sake, that “he might by all means save some<sup>c</sup>; enduring all “things for the elects’ sake, that they might “obtain salvation<sup>d</sup>.” He would very gladly have spent and been “spent for them<sup>e</sup>,” for he accounted them his “hope, and joy, and crown “of rejoicing, in the presence of our Lord Jesus “Christ at his coming<sup>f</sup>.” He foreknew that “bonds and afflictions awaited him; but none of “those things,” says he, “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, to testify the “gospel of the grace of God<sup>g</sup>: yea, if I be “offered upon the sacrifice and service of your “faith, I joy and rejoice with you all<sup>h</sup>.”

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<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. ix. 12, 22.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 10.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 15.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Theff. ii. 19.

<sup>g</sup> Acts, xx. 23, 24.

<sup>h</sup> Phil. ii. 17.

The spirit of your profession is a sublime, a celestial spirit. It is of great importance to yourselves, that you be deeply tinged with it; even in respect of the comfort and joy of your present life, it is of very great importance to you. If any be conscious of no spark of this spirit within himself, and be not resolved to cherish it, he ought by all means to relinquish every thought of undertaking an office in which, without it, he can be neither useful nor happy. A minister of religion, who dislikes the business of his calling, who has not even an ardent love to it, must lead a very unpleasant life. He saunters away life in listlessness; he turns to his proper functions with reluctance; he toils through them with distaste; he performs them ill; and is dissatisfied with himself; and from this dissatisfaction, again performs them worse, and is more uneasy in his own feelings and reflections. The consciousness of performing functions so very important, in a wrong or negligent manner, cannot but be galling. Nothing less than the most stupid thoughtlessness, or the most impenetrable obduracy, can prevent its exciting the most uneasy sentiments and the most alarming apprehensions. But if you have the noble spirit of your profession, you will take it for granted from the very beginning, that the duties of your office will give you constant employment; you will dedicate yourselves wholly to them; you will maintain a constant solicitude to perform

perform them in the best manner ; you will rouse yourselves to the exertion necessary for doing so ; you will have high enjoyment in it ; and the consciousness of it will fill you with inward satisfaction and cheerful hope <sup>i</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> Burnet, Past. Care, chap. 7.



## PART II.

*The Duties of the Pastoral Office.*

**A** JUST estimate of the dignity and difficulty of the pastoral office, accompanied by the sentiments and temper naturally resulting from it, cannot fail to produce, in all who have made choice of it, a solicitude to inquire, what are the particular duties belonging to that office, by means of which its difficulties may be combated, and its momentous end attained. The explication of these duties will both confirm the general idea which I have exhibited of its importance, and discover what its importance requires from those who occupy it.

In general, it is the duty of a minister to promote the salvation of Christians, by instructing them in the principles and precepts of Christianity, and leading them to the faith and obedience of them. Whatever is conducive to this purpose, belongs to the business of a minister: and it is plainly a purpose which there cannot be the slightest probability of answering without diligently using a variety of means. A minister bears an immediate relation to the parish in which he is fixed; to it his labours should be particularly and principally

principally devoted; and in this capacity many duties of different kinds are incumbent on him. He likewise bears a relation to the church in general; and from it arise other duties, in some degree different from those which are parochial. To assist you in understanding the pastoral duties, I shall consider them under four heads, to which they may be all reduced:—private duties, respecting individuals;—private duties, respecting lesser societies;—public duties, respecting a whole parish;—and ecclesiastical duties, respecting the church in general.

## C H A P. I.

*Private Duties respecting Individuals.*

**I**T seems to be an opinion too prevalent, that the only essential duty of a minister is preaching and dispensing the sacraments, and that after performing these, and answering a few occasional calls in his parish, he needs do nothing more. It is not reckoned necessary for him to converse with all his parishioners, or to converse with them in another manner than any other person would do. The method of education for the ministry, it must be acknowledged, has some tendency to lead men into this mistake ; for it is directed to their preparation for scarcely any other part of the pastoral functions. To fit them for the more private labours in a parish, no means are ordinarily used. Yet a very little reflection will convince you, that there are many private duties essential to the pastoral office. Merely to appear in public at certain stated times, to deliver a set discourse, to put up prayers, and to preside in the ritual parts of religion, cannot possibly either be adequate to the difficulties of that office, and the importance of its end, or come up to the lowest sense of many of the expressions which the scripture uses in describing it. He who does no more than this, cannot

be said to “take heed to the flock over which he is  
 “overseer<sup>k</sup>,” scarcely at all to “take the over-  
 “fight of it<sup>l</sup>.” He cannot be said to “watch in  
 “all things<sup>m</sup>,” attentive in observing every thing  
 that can obstruct the improvement and salvation of  
 his people, and in readiness to remove it before its  
 ill effects have come to any considerable height. He  
 cannot be said to “watch for their souls as one  
 “that must give account.” He cannot be said  
 to “be instant in season and out of season<sup>o</sup> ;”  
 that is, uninterruptedly and at all times, seizing  
 every favourable opportunity of doing some good,  
 and even attempting to improve such occasions as  
 seem to be less promising. Yet all these are terms  
 employed by the inspired writers in describing the  
 office and duties of a pastor.

His public duties are doubtless of very great  
 importance and utility: but his private duties are  
 of no less, perhaps of greater. Many of the  
 people are so ignorant, and have so little leisure  
 and so few advantages for acquiring knowledge, that  
 it is almost only by private and occasional conver-  
 sation with them, or instructions to them, that they  
 can be prepared for understanding sermons, or  
 deriving benefit from them: and it is by the same  
 means that they can be directed to make a parti-  
 cular

<sup>k</sup> Acts, xx. 28.

<sup>n</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. v. 2.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 2.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 5.

cular improvement of the general instructions which are given in public. Nothing, therefore, can contribute more to the success of your public ministrations, than private addresses, prudently and familiarly pointed to the same end. It is obvious that the teachers of some sects acquire and maintain a surprising influence over their adherents, by a frequent religious intercourse with them in private. It is perhaps the greater on account of the superstition or the enthusiasm which is blended with their intercourse. But certainly a rational and sober religious intercourse, cultivated, with equal assiduity, by a minister with his people, would give him an influence with them, if not so absolute, yet very considerable, and much more useful. The better he is known to them, the greater influence he will have upon them; and the more perfectly he knows them, the more he will be qualified for employing it to good purposes.

The private duties of the pastoral office are likewise more difficult than the public. In order to render them effectual, he must be able to discern the different capacities and tempers of the persons with whom he converses, to distinguish the most successful manner of applying to each; and must acquire a readiness in adapting himself to particular emergencies, which occur suddenly, and which give little time for recollection, and none for preparation. In preaching, great assistance may be had both from the rules of composition, and

from models of sermons : but in his private duties, a minister can have much less assistance. He is almost entirely left to learn the proper manner of performing them, from his own reflection and prudence ; and to correct the mistakes into which he has fallen at first, by slow degrees, from his own growing experience<sup>p</sup>.

The private duties of the pastoral office will therefore deserve your most careful study. Such of them as most strictly regard individuals, I shall give you some assistance in studying, by considering them under the following heads :—Example ;—Instruction ;—Exhortation ;—Counselling ;—Visiting the afflicted ;—Reproving ;—Convincing ;—Reconciling differences ;—and Care of the poor.

## SECT. I.

### *Of Example.*

I BEGIN with a duty in some respects unlike to all others belonging to the pastoral office, and singular in its kind, but of the greatest importance ; and for both these reasons, fit to introduce the catalogue ; good example. The scripture expressly enjoins this as one of the duties of the office.

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<sup>p</sup> Burnet, Past. Care, c. 8. Secker, Charge 1. Oxf. Charge 2, Cant. Wilson, vol. i. p. 218.

office. Paul commands Timothy to be “an example to the believers; in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity<sup>q</sup> ;” and Titus, to “show himself in all things a pattern of good works<sup>r</sup> ;” and Peter requires, as indispensably incumbent on all elders, to be “examples to the flock<sup>s</sup>.” It cannot require many words to evince, that, though all Christians are under a real obligation to give a good example, yet ministers are under peculiar obligations to it, as specially their duty.

They are under peculiar obligations to it, because their office gives them peculiar advantages for becoming exemplarily good. A great part of the vices of other men arises from the temptations to which they are exposed in the course of their ordinary business. Each of them has a temporal vocation, the direct end of which does not coincide with that of their spiritual calling, and which sometimes therefore leads them off from the duties of it. But ministers have no temporal vocation; their particular as well as their general calling is of a spiritual nature. Their occupation is to teach religion, to enforce a lively sense of it, to inculcate the practice of all virtue. Every attempt of this kind is an act of virtue, which tends directly to their

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<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 12.

<sup>r</sup> Tit. ii. 7.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Pet. v. 3.

their own improvement. They cannot go about their functions, without having religious and moral considerations, precepts, motives, sentiments, examples, or rules of virtue, often presented to their thoughts, and impressed upon them, sometimes with the most interesting and affecting circumstances. Having so many and great advantages arising from the very nature of their profession, they are doubtless, in the sight of God, under a strict obligation to exemplary goodness<sup>t</sup>.

It is the very end and design of their office to recommend goodness to the love and practice of men. A shining example of all real goodness is the most effectual means of reaching this end. It is needless to enlarge here upon its power: its influence, both in directing and in exciting, is universally acknowledged. Ministers are therefore no less indispensably obliged to give a good example, than to aim at the design of their calling<sup>u</sup>.

Such example is, further, absolutely necessary for rendering all the other means that can be used, effectual for answering their purpose. Without being himself virtuous, a minister cannot use any of these means with spirit. If he be irreligious or vicious, he cannot heartily or even sincerely oppose irreligion and vice: he can scarcely have the  
effrontery

<sup>t</sup> Gerard, vol. ii. Sermon. 2. Burnet, Past. Care, c. 8.

<sup>u</sup> Campbell's Syn. Sermon.



effrontery to attempt it. If he could put on this effrontery, and become even so much a master of hypocrisy as to seem to be in earnest, it would have no effect. If his private conduct be not unblameable, his doctrine cannot be regarded. If the people see him immersed in the world all the week, he can scarcely expect to persuade them to renounce the love of it, by all that he can say on the Lord's day. Warnings against sin, or reproofs of other men's faults, come with a very ill grace, and can have very little weight, from the person whom his hearers know to be himself addicted to the same or to any other vice. They will forwardly conclude, that he himself believes not what he says, because his life is nowise suitable to it. They will hear him without attention, with indifference, with prejudice, and despise all his exhortations as mere form, as unfelt declamation. The vicious will take encouragement from his practice, in every thing that is faulty in their own. The best men will hear him with distaste and even with horror, condemning himself in what they know that he allows and does. But when a minister is himself uniformly pious and virtuous, he will be able to deliver whatever regards the faith or practice of men with force and energy. It proceeds from his own heart; and it will be evident that his heart is in it. He will deliver it with boldness and freedom, unrestrained by any apprehension that the hearers may retort upon him, "Thou which  
 "teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

When in his life he gives an example of all the christian virtues which he recommends, it will add weight to all his exhortations to them. Sensible from their effects on his own conduct, that he firmly believes the truths of religion, men will listen to his representations of them with attention, with docility, and with an opinion of their importance. From his lively faith in divine truth, they will catch, by sympathy, a like faith in it; from his vigorous perception of it, a like perception; and from his love of virtue, some degree of affection to it. Convinced that he is sincere in all he says, and that he earnestly desires their good, they will receive it with a favourable ear, and be prepared to allow his arguments, his directions, his admonitions, their full influence upon them<sup>v</sup>.

Bad example in a minister not only renders his own instructions ineffectual, but tends likewise to weaken the force of all religion. Concluding naturally enough from his conduct, that he does not truly believe religion, and prone to justify themselves in their vices, the irreligious will allow themselves to argue, that he whose business it is to examine and to teach it, could not fail to be convinced of its truth and to act accordingly, if it were really true and practicable: and the weak and thoughtless will suffer themselves to be affected by this sort of  
arguing;

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<sup>v</sup> Burnet, Past. Care. Stillingfleet, Eccl. Cases, p. 65, Secker, Ch. 1. Oxf. Ch. 2. Cant.

arguing; and contract, if not a disbelief of religion, at least a total indifference and inattention to it, almost equally fatal to their souls. On the contrary, when a minister exercises exemplary virtue, his conduct cannot but, by the same way of thinking, appear to the generality a strong confirmation of the truth and importance of religion. Observing that such as have had best access and been at greatest pains to examine it, instead of discovering any fallacy in its evidences, believe it so firmly as to yield themselves up wholly to its influence, they are more settled in their conviction that it is perfectly well founded, and ought to regulate their conduct. Perceiving what effects it actually produces in these instances, they are satisfied that it ought to produce them, and that it is their own fault if it produce them not in themselves, and become better disposed to comply with its obligations. Because a good example in ministers thus coincides perfectly in its tendency with the very purpose of their office, it is plainly and indispensably their duty to teach by example.

This duty implies, at the very lowest, careful abstinence, and entire freedom from all real and acknowledged vice. Without this a minister would give an ill example. Some vices are so positive in their nature, and shew themselves in such obvious or determinate acts, that they cannot fail to be observed by men, as intemperance, lewdness, lying, injustice, swearing, expressions of impiety. These  
will

will always appear scandalous in a minister, and cannot but be generally taken notice of. It is not enough that he does not live in these vices; it is his duty to keep at a great distance from all appearance of them. If he be not even noted for temperance, moderation, truth, justice, and decency, his behaviour, instead of being exemplary, will be offensive; instead of improving, corruptive. Some omissions of duty likewise are so palpable, that the observation of them in a minister must give great scandal, and tend to weaken men's sense of the general obligations of religion; as the omission of acts of devotion, or performing them with manifest reluctance and indisposition when occasion plainly requires them. A minister who allows himself in them must do hurt by his example; his character will be odious, and all his labours uselefs. Other vices, the indications of which are more indefinite and equivocal, or which may, by some artful colouring, be passed on the undiscerning for virtues, will not be so generally observed, but whenever they are detected, will be as much detested, and will as much enervate the influence of his ministry, who is found to be addicted to them<sup>w</sup>.

But we must not stop here: we must remark farther, that in order to render his conduct exemplary, a minister must abstain from or be very cautious

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<sup>w</sup> Burnet, Past. Care. Secker, Ch. 1. Oxf. Ch. 2. Cant. Campbell's Syn. Serm. Gerard, vol. ii. Serm. 2.

cautious in using many things which are, considered simply in themselves, in a great measure, indifferent. Of this kind are such overflowings of good humour as approach very near to levity. Excessive mirth will seem to indicate that the important views and affecting sentiments which his functions tend to bring frequently into his mind, and to render habitual to him, have taken little hold of him, and are forgotten and disregarded by him. Cheerful he ought to be; but his cheerfulness should be consistent with seriousness, recollection, and self-possession. Of the same kind are such amusements and public diversions as, though perhaps innocent, are, from an opinion of their indicating levity and dissipation, from a misconception of them as having some immoral tendency, or suppose from mere prejudice, generally pronounced to be unbecoming the character of a clergyman. From his allowing himself in such gaieties, men will consider him as mis-spending the time which his profession calls upon him to apply to much better purposes; they will suspect him to be tainted with an immoderate love of pleasure; and seeing him go considerable lengths in gratifying it, they will think themselves authorised to go greater lengths, till they be lost in thoughtlessness, and divested of all attention to their most valuable interests both in this world and in the next. With respect to all things of this kind, it is by no means a sufficient excuse for a clergyman's indulging himself in them, that it is only an example of real virtue that he is obliged to

to give, and that there is no virtue in abstinence from things indifferent; or that, being convinced of their innocence, he is at liberty to act according to his own conviction, rather than according to the groundless notions of other men. For no man lives merely to himself: every man is obliged to care, not only for his own things, but also in some degree for the things of others; and ought in every part of his conduct to have some thought of how it will affect them: and a minister has a peculiar connection with mankind, which demands from him great consideration of the influence which every part of his conduct may reasonably be expected to have upon their minds. It is certain that levity, dissipation, and the love of pleasure, are unbecoming the character of a minister: it is equally certain that very many will look on his indulging himself in the things which have been mentioned, as an unquestionable mark of these faulty dispositions; and therefore cannot fail to be disgusted with the indulgence, as giving an example of real vice. When he knows this, he cannot be innocent in taking it; he fails in giving a pattern in a very easy and necessary instance of self-denial, which is a real virtue. I will venture to say farther, that indulgences of this kind, though not implying any faulty levity in others, really proceed, in a clergyman, from a levity that is blameable, and a fondness for pleasure which is criminal; and that, if he honestly examine his own heart, he will find these to be the actual principles of his conduct.

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For no other principle could make the gratification arising from these to appear of such value in his eyes, that for the sake of it he will offend multitudes, and very much lessen his own usefulness. Accordingly, it will be found that those clergymen who betray the strongest inclination to disregard the common notions of decency in articles of this kind, are not generally, if ever, the most blameless in other parts of their behaviour, the most eminent for piety and virtue, the most diligent in the duties of their office, or the more zealous for its end; but that on the contrary they shew in other matters some fault either of the heart or of the head. It is sometimes pled, that a minister's abstinence from such innocent and indifferent things will lead the weak to think that he himself condemns them, and will foster their superstition, confirm them in their narrow prejudices, and encourage their censorious humour. But there is no solidity in the plea. For, in the first place, to despise their weakness, and violently to combat their prejudices, is not a probable way of curing them: it tends more to confirm them, than even compliance with them; especially if he who acts in contempt or defiance of them in such particulars, seem likewise exceptionable in other respects. Besides, a minister may abstain from what would offend, and yet let the people know that he does so only from a tenderness to their weakness, and that he himself is fully convinced of the lawfulness of the things from which he abstains. When it is plain that such a declaration

ration is not necessary for a vindication of himself, it will be the better received, and the fittest for removing their groundless prejudices. It is certain that amusements which have at one time been reckoned unreputable in a clergyman, have by a general change of manners ceased to be thought so at another. But such a change of manners must be left to come on gradually and of its own accord; it cannot be forced in an instant even by the authority of laws; the man who attempts it by the obstinacy of his private practice, is sure to hurt himself. In such instances respecting the clergy, they who are readiest to attempt it, the younger and those of the least established and perhaps not the most unexceptionable reputation, are the surest to hurt themselves by it, and the most unlikely to produce any favourable alteration in the sentiments of mankind. But if the attempt should succeed, what mighty advantage is gained? A little more liberty to himself in such trifles as no wise man can reckon of the least importance to his happiness, and no good pastor can think worth his running the risk of losing, for their sake, the smallest grain of his usefulness. Perhaps too some encouragement will be given to others, in that attachment to amusement, frivolity, or shew, which is already too prevalent, and of the most pernicious influence: a consequence to which every sentiment and view becoming a clergyman, should constrain him from contributing. There is no doubt considerable delicacy, in many cases, in determining how a man  
had



had best act, with respect to giving offence by things indifferent or of little moment. The best general rule that can be laid down is, that a minister ought never to do or even seem to approve any thing that is unlawful, in order to avoid displeasing others; but that he ought willingly to abstain from many things which are lawful or which would be agreeable to him, rather than give offence to any. Such decency is truly necessary for his teaching and edifying by example.

But it is not enough that he give no bad example: it is likewise necessary that he be a pattern of good works to the people. In order to this it is first of all necessary that he really be a good man. Insincere appearances of goodness, however artfully affected, will always be unnatural. However studiously they be kept up, the mask will fall off at some time or another; the detected hypocrite will be despised or detested by all men: and though he should never be detected by men, he is abominable in the sight of God. A temper of Christian virtue consists of many parts; a minister must cultivate them all: were it possible that he could possess some virtues without the rest, they could neither atone for his defects in the judgment of God, nor prevent scandal from them in the judgment of the world. Virtue really prevailing in the heart will naturally lead to good practice; and that it may be exemplary, the proper exertions of it must not be suppressed or dissembled. Vir-

tuous dispositions which are sincere, often fail of recommending themselves to imitation, by being imperfectly exerted. It is only by being exerted that they can be perceived by others; and till they perceive them, they cannot copy after them. It is of the most diligent practice of virtue and of the strictest regard to religion, that ministers are bound to be patterns. But to neglect or to disguise the exercise of any virtue, when there is a proper opportunity for it, is to neglect the virtue in that instance, and often implies even a positive transgression of the obligations which it lays them under. They ought, in every situation, boldly to avow and prosecute the conduct which religion requires from them. At the same time, they must carefully avoid ostentation in the exertion of their virtues. This could not fail to disgust, and would very probably raise a suspicion of hypocrisy. They must leave their light to shine before men by its own splendour, without either studying to obscure it, or endeavouring to render it glaring. It is by possessing virtue in sincerity and in strength, that they will best preserve this happy medium. To render their virtue exemplary, it is likewise necessary that their manner of practising it be such as will render it attractive. For this purpose they must keep at a distance from forbidding austerity, and study to shew its native loveliness by accompanying it with cheerfulness, courtesy, and condescension. They must preserve the several virtues from those excesses or adulterations which would  
fully

fully their beauty. Their piety must be alike remote from superstition and from enthusiasm; their integrity, though inflexible, must be free from severity; their humility, from meanness; their gravity, from moroseness; their cheerfulness, from levity; their zeal, from bitterness. By acting in this manner, ministers will exhibit an insinuating example of every good quality that can adorn the soul, and will in some measure gain both the love and the imitation of their people.

## SECT. II.

### *Of Private Instruction.*

BECAUSE knowlege is the only foundation of religious and virtuous practice, and must be conveyed to men before they can be excited to a becoming conduct, it is the primary duty of the pastoral office to instruct men in the doctrines and duties of religion. Pastors are therefore called “teachers<sup>x</sup> ;” and their whole office is often described by “teaching.” Christ’s charge to his disciples, after his resurrection, was, “Teach all nations; teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you<sup>y</sup>.” In consequence of this charge, his apostles “went forth,  
“ and

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<sup>x</sup> Eph. iv. 11.

<sup>y</sup> Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.

“ and preached every where <sup>z</sup>,” and “ ceased not  
 “ to teach and preach Jesus Christ <sup>a</sup>.” The same  
 practice they expressly require from all ministers of  
 the gospel. “ A bishop,” says Paul, “ must be  
 “ apt to teach <sup>b</sup> :” “ these things command and  
 “ teach <sup>c</sup> :” “ these things teach and exhort <sup>d</sup>.”  
 By the practice of the apostles themselves, whom we  
 should regard as our examples, it is clearly ascer-  
 tained, that these and the many similar precepts  
 require not only public preaching, but also private  
 instruction. The apostles at Jerusalem, not only  
 “ daily in the temple,” but likewise “ in every  
 “ house, ceased not to teach <sup>e</sup> :” and Paul appeals  
 to the Ephesians, that, during the three years he  
 had lived among them, not only publicly, but also  
 “ from house to house, he had taught them, and  
 “ shewed them, and kept back nothing that was  
 “ profitable, and had not ceased to warn every  
 “ man night and day with tears <sup>f</sup>.”

As these observations evidently shew that private  
 instruction is a duty of the pastoral office, so the  
 slightest attention to its nature and its consequences  
 is sufficient to prove that it is a very important duty.  
 Whoever makes the trial will soon discover that  
 there is, in the bulk of every parish, ignorance and  
 inattention enough to render it necessary. Public  
 discourses

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<sup>z</sup> Mark, xvi. 20.

<sup>a</sup> Acts, v. 42.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 2.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Acts, v. 42.

<sup>f</sup> Acts, xx. 20. 31.

discourses delivered in a promiscuous audience are almost unavoidably too uniform and general to suit the various capacities and situations of all the hearers. In discourses studied by a man of liberal education, there can scarcely fail to be a degree of composition, requisite likewise, it may be, for preventing disgust in the more knowing, which must render a great part of every sermon of little use to the ignorant, who bear no inconsiderable proportion in all ordinary congregations. Amends can be made only by a minister's entering frequently into private conversation, on religious subjects, with some or other of his people.

He may in some measure, with little trouble to himself, contribute to the instruction of all who can read, by recommending proper books to them. Only such books as are cheap, and written in the plainest manner, can answer the purpose. The greatest part of those that fall under this description are very exceptionable, not only being in a style indecently mean, but abounding in flighty, improper, or enthusiastic sentiments. It is to be regretted that such are most generally current among the lower ranks, and most acceptable to them. It were much to be wished that there were a variety of others at least equally plain, intelligible, and familiar, but sober and wholly practical. No compositions could be more really or extensively useful. Were there, however, the greatest

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abundance

abundance of such, it could not supersede the obligation which lies on ministers to give their own private instructions to their people: but the paucity of them must strengthen the obligation.

There is no doctrine or duty of religion, which a minister may not find proper occasions of explaining or enforcing in private, or with individuals of his parish separately. He may give them instruction concerning many things which they know not, and directions for particulars in their conduct, which could scarcely be introduced into a public discourse: he may express and illustrate them in a more familiar manner, and set them in a greater variety of lights, than would be allowable in preaching, till he find that the person with whom he converses, comprehends them perfectly: he may descend to minuter instances of behaviour, and to advices concerning more trivial actions, than would be consistent with the dignity of the pulpit. In private teaching, a minister has so great advantage for adapting himself to the various capacities and turns of the different persons to whom he addresses himself, that the lower sort will reap more benefit from half an hour of such conversation prudently conducted, than from the sermons of a whole year<sup>g</sup>.

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<sup>g</sup> Wilson, vol. i. p. 215, 218, 279.

Whatever is of greatest importance in religion, ought to be most frequently introduced, and most studiously insisted on, by a minister, in his private instructions to his people. For this reason, what is practical will claim his chief attention. He will soon discover that, when some of the common people affect more knowledge than their neighbours, it is generally of a very false and perverted kind. They consider knowledge as best displayed in deciding questions of curiosity and difficulty: and by reading and venting absurdities on such points, they seem to themselves and to others of their own rank, to be very learned, and, as they term it, great scholars. It is not uncommon to meet with persons in a country parish inquisitive about such questions as these: At what season of the year the world was created? How long the state of innocence continued? Of what species was the fruit of the forbidden tree? Whether original or actual sin was first? What was the mark set upon Cain? &c. And in comparison with such trifling, useless, or absurd questions, they despise the plain doctrines and duties of religion, as things so easy, that acquaintance with them requires no ingenuity, and confers little merit. The prevalence of this disposition renders it necessary for a minister to take every opportunity, in private as well as in public, to draw them off from frivolous and unprofitable subtleties and speculations, and to inculcate on them, that the only valuable knowledge is that which tends to influence the practice. The sort of

people of whom we are speaking, are always conceited, and will be abundantly forward to obtrude their vain questions on their minister. Some of these are perfectly unintelligible, and more of them wholly indeterminable. In this case, the best way is, to interrogate those who pretend to be acquainted with them, to lead them on by posing them, till they involve themselves in contradiction and nonsense, that thus they may be brought to convince themselves of their absurdity. When the questions about which they dote are intelligible, and perhaps curious in themselves, but, like all abstruse disquisitions, have no connection with practice, it will be prudent for a minister, not altogether to decline answering them; for the conceitedness of the proposers would impute this to his ignorance. Let him enter upon the subject; suggest the arguments on both sides, if it be a matter of uncertainty, or the proofs of it, if it be only abstruse. After having thus shewn them that he understands it better than themselves, he may with safety, and probably not without success, represent such inquiries as of no moment, and inculcate upon them, that true knowledge is only what tends to make men better, and that religion consists in the goodness which naturally proceeds from such knowledge, not in the mere knowledge separated from that effect. In both these cases, such conduct is conformable to that of Christ, the great pattern of Christian ministers. Sometimes he puzzled those who attacked him, by putting apposite questions,



questions, or making unanswerable remarks. “ Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk <sup>h</sup>?” “ If Satan cast out Satan, how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out <sup>i</sup>?” “ He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her <sup>k</sup>.” “ The baptism of John, whence was it? from Heaven, or of men <sup>l</sup>?” “ Render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s <sup>m</sup>.” “ If David call him Lord, how is he his son <sup>n</sup>?” On almost all the occasions to which these retorts belong, and indeed on every occasion, and whatever was the subject introduced, he was careful to turn his discourse to matters of practice. Not content with pointing out the absurdity of ascribing his miracles to Beelzebub, he subjoins an alarming warning of their danger, and important maxims and directions for their conduct, particularly as respecting their words and conversation <sup>o</sup>. Having confounded them by his question concerning John’s baptism, he subjoined two most instructive parables, and applied them forcibly to their practice <sup>p</sup>. By the very decision which he gave in the question concern-

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<sup>h</sup> Mat. ix. 5.<sup>i</sup> Mat. xii. 26, 27.<sup>k</sup> John, viii. 7.<sup>l</sup> Mat. xxi. 25.<sup>m</sup> Mat. xxii. 21.<sup>n</sup> Mat. xxii. 45.<sup>o</sup> Mat. xii. 31, &c.<sup>p</sup> Mat. xxi. 28, &c.

ing the paying of tribute, he inculcated submission to civil government. The question concerning the greatest of the commandments, as disputed among the rabbis, was frivolous, regarding only the preference of one ceremony to another : when it was captiously proposed to Jesus, he seized the opportunity of fixing their attention on the love of God and of mankind, in preference to all ceremonies<sup>9</sup>. A disciple asked him, “ Are there few “ that be saved ? ” a question often moved by mere curiosity, and that not of the most liberal or benevolent kind : instead of gratifying curiosity, his answer only points out the difficulties of religion, and urges all present to that diligence in combating them, without which they themselves could not be saved : “ Strive to enter in at the strait gate<sup>r</sup>. ” When Peter asked Jesus concerning John, “ And “ what shall this man do ? ” he both checked his useless curiosity, and pointed out his own business : “ What is that to thee ? Follow thou me<sup>s</sup>. ” In like manner, when his disciples asked him, “ Wilt “ thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel ? ” he first intimated his disapprobation of their putting the question ; “ It is not for you to know the “ times or the seasons : ” and next made it a handle for giving them very important information, that they should “ receive power ” by “ the Holy “ Ghost coming upon ” them, and for turning  
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<sup>9</sup> Mat. xxii. 37.

<sup>r</sup> Luke, xiii. 24.

<sup>s</sup> John, xxi. 22.

their attention to their peculiar duty, which was, to "be witnesses unto him" every where<sup>t</sup>. But the instances of Christ's pursuing this conduct, are innumerable. His uniform practice shews that one of the principal subjects of private instruction, indeed of all instruction, ought to be, to inculcate upon men that all true religion is practical; and that the instruction should always ultimately aim at practice, and tend to infill such sentiments as are fit to influence practice.

All private instructions are in a great measure occasional: and it will add to their weight, that they spring naturally from the occasion, and that they be suitable to it. Christ has given Christian teachers an example of address, both in seizing every proper occasion, and in adapting their instructions to it. The instances just now produced might alone prove this: and there are many other instances. From the common occurrences and incidental conversations which he met with, he took an opportunity of proposing his divine instructions to such as happened to be present. Some persons talked "of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices;" it would seem as a piece of ordinary news: he used it as a natural occasion, both for discouraging the spirit of rash and presumptuous judgment, and for asserting the necessity

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<sup>t</sup> Acts, i. 6, &c.

necessity of repentance and enforcing the exercise of it<sup>u</sup>. Indeed, almost all his instructions were drawn from the objects that surrounded him, or the situations and events which occurred, at the time. With regard to many of them, this is evident from the relations of the evangelists; with regard to others, it may be deduced from a comparison of circumstances; and it holds so generally, that some writers have reckoned attention to the occasion of his discourses, as indicated by the subject or the turn of them, sufficient for adjusting, in many cases, the time and order of them, and of the actions connected with them<sup>v</sup>. His divine knowledge qualified him for doing this with perfect ease and propriety. Inspiration fitted his apostles for copying this manner of teaching; and they copied it so much that, not only such of their discourses as are recorded, but their writings also, grow out of particular occasions. To uninspired teachers, it cannot fail to be attended with considerable difficulty; and they must be liable to go sometimes wrong in the execution of it. This should only lead them to employ the greater pains and study in preparing themselves for it. It cannot extinguish their obligation to attempt it. It is the most easy, natural, and striking mode of instruction that can be imagined; and the only proper

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<sup>u</sup> Luke, xiii. 1, &c.

<sup>v</sup> Law's Theory, p. 302—315. Lamy Harmon. *passim*. Cleri a Harm. Jortin's Discourses, p. 201, &c.

proper mode of private instruction. By means of it, every thing is improved into an useful moral; it touches the more by its congruity to the present situation and circumstances of the hearer; and it will be more easily retained and more affectingly recollected, by the commonest objects and events, as having been originally connected with it, becoming ever after monitors and remembrancers of it<sup>w</sup>.

It is not, however, alike easy to introduce occasional instructions, to all sorts of people. Were a minister to attempt suggesting them to most people of rank and fashion, on as slender an occasion as would procure them attention from the well-disposed, and at least a hearing from the common people in general, or to pursue them with as much freedom, he would run a great risk of being despised as a person totally ignorant of good breeding, ridiculed as a pedant, and perhaps, in exemplification of their boasted politeness, abused as impertinent and pragmatical. It is only for the sake of doing good, that religious instructions should be occasionally suggested: when it is certain that they can do no good, or most probable that they will do harm, a minister can be under no obligation to throw them away. But it is only where the case  
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<sup>w</sup> Law's Theory, p. 302—315.

is very plain, that he can be excused from every essay: opportunities, which seem to be very unfavourable, may, by the prudent improvement of them, turn out to real advantage. It would be pernicious, rather than beneficial, to be constantly obtruding religious sentiments, grave reflections, and maxims of morality, on the conversation of the higher ranks. A minister should be careful not to attempt it in such a way as will prevent those good effects, for the sake of which alone it is incumbent on him: and in the present state of the world, it will require very great prudence and delicacy to manage it so, that there shall be a probability of its producing good effects. Serious instructions should be brought in sparingly: seldom, except when a very natural occasion offers, and in a manner invites them. They should not be expressed in a sententious and authoritative way, which carries with it a forbidding air of solemnity and affectation. They should not be insisted on at large, so as to turn them into formal or tedious harangues; but just hinted at, and suggested with the appearance of undesigned ease and good humour. By this means they may be, on some occasions, introduced to any person, not only without giving offence, but even so as to be agreeable, and so as to be recollected afterwards, pursued perhaps by the person himself, and applied to their proper use. The more difficult this is, the more solicitous we should be to contrive a proper method

of doing it, and the more careful to learn the requisite address<sup>x</sup>.

There is much less difficulty in introducing religious and moral subjects among the lower ranks. Though they have often no great concern about such subjects, yet their minds are not debauched with false politeness, nor are they withheld by any capricious ideas of fashion from proposing or listening to them. They will think it very natural, and very right, for a minister to pass from ordinary talk upon common subjects, to religious observations. He may make the transition with little ceremony; and he can never want occasions of doing so. Whatever be the conversation into which he happens to enter with any of his parishioners, he may find a handle for introducing some instructive topic, without even seeming to design it, and of suggesting remarks which will either improve their knowledge or influence their practice. And if it be once observed, as it very soon will be, that a minister is ready to enter into conversation of this kind, the people will willingly give him opportunities of instructing them, and even ask his assistance in explaining something which they find it difficult to understand, or directing them in something about which they are at a loss. When any topic is introduced, he may,  
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<sup>x</sup> Secker, Ch. 2. Cant.

without giving any offence to the common people, dwell upon it longer, inculcate it more professedly, and illustrate it more formally and fully, than would be proper with those of higher rank. But in what cases he should do so, and to what degree; and in what cases he should simply propose, or only insinuate instruction, will depend on many particular circumstances, and must be left to every man's own prudence.

There are very many religious subjects which the most ordinary conversation with his people gives a minister a natural opportunity of introducing. Since all nature is the work of God, and all its operations are carried on by him as the first cause, a mountain or a valley, a river or a lake, a barren or a fertile field, the season of the year, the progress of vegetables, the nature and effects of the weather, and a thousand other objects the most common, with the conversation concerning them, into which persons fall of course every day, naturally suggest to every thoughtful and well-disposed person, sentiments of the divine perfections and providence; and therefore give a minister the most natural opportunity of speaking to any person on these important subjects, and of making such reflections as may give the ignorant juster conceptions and farther knowledge of them, render the thoughtless more attentive to them, or at any rate excite a livelier and a more practical sense of them. By a transition no wise forced, he may likewise  
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take occasion, from such common objects, for entering on other subjects of religion, bearing some analogy to them, though not so intimately connected with them. Many of the sentiments of Christ's sermon on the mount, are drawn from the objects which that situation put into his view: a city on a hill; persons manuring the fields with salt; the sun shining on all the fields and gardens, without distinction, which fell within his extensive prospect; the fowls flying in the air, and the lilies growing around him: he spoke of good trees and corrupt trees, of knowing men by their fruits, of grapes not growing upon thorns, nor figs on thistles. The gospels contain many other instances.

There are religious subjects suited to many of the most common incidents, and which may therefore be introduced on occasion of them. Almost every thing that can furnish a piece of news, has some connexion with human conduct, or with the ways of Providence; and may be easily turned to insinuations or remarks, concerning prudence or imprudence, faults or excellences of behaviour, the causes or the consequences of them, the several phenomena of God's present government, the abuse or the right improvement of them. The actions of men, or accidental and trivial emergences in company, may be improved to useful purposes. From seeing some persons solicitous for the most  
honourable

honourable places at an entertainment, Christ made an easy transition to the propriety and advantages of humility; from the hospitality of the entertainer, to the superior excellence of deeds of compassion; and the feast leading one of the company to reflect on the value of spiritual enjoyments, Christ thence took occasion to warn them of the danger of their excluding themselves from these by rejecting the gospel<sup>y</sup>. The situation of any person whom a minister meets with, or who happens to be spoken of, gives an opportunity for familiar observations concerning the duties and the temptations of prosperity or adversity, or of some peculiarity of circumstances.

A time of sickness or of any kind of distress, a season or an instance of mortality, the rise or the fall of a known individual, suggest even to the generality some thoughts of the vanity of the world, the vicissitudes of human affairs, the shortness and uncertainty of life, the approach of death: and thus give a minister the most obvious and natural occasions, very frequently recurring, of instilling into any of his people who happen to fall in his way, such sentiments on these subjects as may awaken attention to them, and have the best influence on practice.

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<sup>y</sup> Luke, xiv. 7, &c.

The birth of a child, or the sight of a family of children, gives a direct occasion of suggesting observations concerning the proper methods of education, the duties of parents, the nature of baptism, its design, and the obligations which it lays men under to holiness.

There are subjects belonging to religion, and of great importance, which a minister will not perhaps find either so frequent or so direct occasions of sliding insensibly into, and in which it is, notwithstanding, necessary sometimes to give instruction: such as, the whole dispensation of man's redemption, and all the peculiar doctrines of revelation. These, whenever he judges it necessary, he may very properly introduce without seeking for any occasion, or on a very slender occasion. But even these he will find occasions of introducing so naturally as to take off the appearance of design, when that appearance might do harm. Such objects or occurrences as would serve for apt illustrations of such subjects, may, by a little skill and address, be so managed as to furnish a handle for passing to them. On little children being brought to him, Christ very naturally entered on the innocence, humility, and docility, which became his disciples, or prepared men for becoming such, and the privileges belonging to those who possess these qualities<sup>z</sup>. From meat and drink, he led the  
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<sup>z</sup> Mark, x. 13, &c.

people's thoughts to spiritual nourishment by means of his doctrine, and participation in the blessings of his kingdom, expressed in metaphors rising out of the occasion <sup>a</sup>. From the washing of the body, he led them to the purification of the heart <sup>b</sup>. Seeing his disciples catching fish, he passed to the employment of bringing men to his religion, to the intermixture of good and bad men in his church, and to the final separation of them at the day of judgment <sup>c</sup>. On observing the indications of approaching summer in the trees before him, he intimated the approach of his kingdom, and the signs of it <sup>d</sup>. On seeing the fields ripe for harvest, he speaks of the spiritual harvest in which his disciples were to be employed <sup>e</sup>. From Herod's imprudent expedition against the superior forces of the king of Arabia, and his consequent defeat, he takes occasion to shew the danger of not considering beforehand the difficulties of religion <sup>f</sup>. On the frequency of robberies in a particular place and period, he builds the beautiful and apposite parable of the benevolent Samaritan <sup>g</sup>.

Among religious and moral subjects, that should be preferred which is most suitable to the situation of the particular person to whom instructions concerning

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<sup>a</sup> John, vi. 47, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. xiii. 47, &c.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. ix. 37, &c.

<sup>g</sup> Luke, x. 30, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Luke, xi. 38, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Luke, xxi. 29, &c.

<sup>f</sup> Luke, xiv. 31, &c.

cerning them are addressed: and among subjects equally fuitable to his situation, that should at any time be chosen, which there is the most natural occasion of introducing. The manner both of introducing and of inculcating instructions, should likewise be adapted to the character and circumstances of the person for whose benefit they are intended. Some private instruction a minister ought to give to all who are committed to his care: but to some he will have access, and may with propriety give it more frequently than to others. It will be peculiarly useful to take every opportunity of giving it to the young: their modesty will dispose them to listen to it; and the pliability of their minds will contribute to its having a great influence upon them<sup>h</sup>.

Private instruction may be given to persons at their work, by the road, or in any situation. If a minister only keep it in his view as a part of his duty, he may apply to some person or other of his parish almost every day, without any trouble or inconvenience to himself. He may turn it into little more than amusement. A walk or a ride may be made the means of holding some useful conversation with some of his people. This, he should lay it down as a rule to himself not to omit altogether

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<sup>h</sup> Secker, Ch. 2. Cant.

altogether for any day, without a good reason. I mean not, that a minister should converse with his people upon none but religious subjects: what has been said concerning his seizing occasions for introducing them implies, on the contrary, that he should often talk with them on other subjects; and it is by entering freely into them, and pursuing them, that he will be best able to give them such a turn as may most favour the easy and natural introduction of his instructions. Neither do I mean, that he ought at all times to turn his ordinary conversation with them into a religious strain, or to moralize on whatever occurs or happens to be said. This would be stiff and affected; and it would be forbidding and disgusting. But between this extreme and the other extreme of neglecting all serious conversation, all application of common and incidental things to purposes of piety and morality, there is certainly a proper mean: and this mean is, to do so on every fit occasion, and to watch for occasions of doing so where it is necessary or likely to prove useful.

A person may do a great deal, through the course of his education and studies, in qualifying himself for this method of private instruction. In order to this, he should be careful to store his mind with just and striking sentiments on all religious and moral subjects; and to digest them so well, as to be able to recollect them quickly when occasion calls for them, and to express them with ease and perspicuity.

perspicuity. He may likewise receive considerable assistance from books, even with respect to the particular instructions suitable to common objects and incidents, and the proper manner of taking occasion from these to introduce them. There are many excellent books<sup>i</sup> on the works of nature considered precisely as displaying the perfections and providence of God; in which there are likewise some instances of transitions from these to other subjects of religion. Acquaintance with such books will furnish you with a variety of instructive sentiments adapted to many common occasions, and point out natural methods of applying them when such occasions occur. There are also<sup>k</sup> books written with a professed design to spiritualize or to moralize the functions and occurrences of particular occupations, or particular situations. Most of these are exceptionable in respect of the nature of the instructions deduced, which are too often accommodated to the peculiarities of some one party system, and even that none of the best; and such instructions you should wholly and carefully avoid borrowing. Most of them likewise are often too fanciful, forcing an application of things to purposes to which they are not apposite; in this they

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<sup>i</sup> Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Creation*. Derham's *Physico-theology*, and *Astro-theology*. Niewentyt's *Religious Philosopher*. *Spectacle de la Nature*.

<sup>k</sup> Flavel's *Husbandry and Navigation spiritualized*.

they ought not to be imitated: at the same time, a remoter relation or a less perfect analogy will justify a transition from one subject to another in the case of private conversation, than could render it allowable or prevent its appearing far-fetched in a written composition. From such books, notwithstanding all their faults, much assistance may, by a judicious and wary selection, be procured. In most books on religious and moral subjects, sentiments are frequently illustrated by images and comparisons drawn from familiar natural objects or from the incidents of common life; and from every instance of this, one may receive a hint for some occasional instruction: he has only to invert the order of the train of thought, to begin with that which furnishes the image of comparison, and from it to pass to the religious sentiment; whatever is an apt illustration of any subject, may be improved into an occasion of naturally enough introducing that subject into conversation. You have access not only to such assistances in preparing yourselves for giving private instructions, but likewise to exercises fit for beginning and forming a habit of skill in giving them. You may take notice of any thing which falls in your way that would afford a minister an opportunity for it, or you may suppose any situation, any incident, or any conversation that you please; and you may consider deliberately in what manner, if you should really meet with it, you could turn it into a religious channel, or in a familiar and easy strain deduce useful instructions from



from it : you may commit the whole to writing just as you think it ought to pass or would naturally pass in the circumstances supposed : you may make trials of this sort on a great variety of subjects, and in different manners ; sometimes only expressing the supposed situation, and hinting the instruction for which you would take occasion from it ; sometimes extending the instruction at greater length ; and sometimes carrying on the whole minutely in the way of dialogue. Such exercises, however unusual, may be very properly introduced into schools of Theology, and will be very useful. Each of you may attempt something of this kind ; the choice of the occasion, the subject, and the manner of prosecution, I leave entirely to yourselves, but desire that you may all give some specimen. It will require attention to, or reflection on, common objects and ordinary incidents ; and in your first essays it may require a good deal of thought and study, and even repeated efforts, before you succeed ; but accuracy of composition is totally unnecessary, and would rather be improper. You may write down many such specimens in private, when you have leisure or inclination for it, or when you meet with any striking occasion ; and you may revise them afterwards both for correction or improvement, and for fixing them in your thoughts. By this means you will soon be in possession of abundance of materials for private instruction on most of the occasions that can occur in a parish ; and you will become gradually accus-

tomed to discern the proper occasions for giving such instruction, the nature of the instructions which will suit them, and the best ways of passing from the one to the other. You may do more; you may sometimes have an opportunity of actually giving instruction to such as are younger or less knowing than yourselves; and will readily acknowledge themselves your inferiors; and you may find the most natural and favourable opportunities of giving it explicitly, or at least of suggesting it, without any risk of incurring an imputation of pedantry, affectation, or assuming. What it is the duty of a minister frequently to seek out occasions of doing, it cannot be improper that a candidate for the ministry should with modesty and delicacy attempt doing when the occasion invites it.

Thus qualified, in the first place, for giving private and occasional instructions; and, next, diligent in giving them in the manner, at least on the principles, which I have pointed out; a minister shall be always doing something for promoting the happiness of mankind, by diffusing impressions of truth and goodness; and may conclude every day with the pleasing reflection, that he has not lost it. This employment will likewise have the strongest tendency to his own improvement in all goodness: for by means of it, those moral and religious sentiments, maxims, motives, and considerations, an habitual sense of which is the spring whence all  
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virtuous affections and actions flow, will be rendered familiar to him, will be always in readiness to come into his thoughts, to make a strong impression on his heart, and to exert their influence in regulating his whole conduct.

### SECT. III.

#### *Of Private Exhortation.*

EXHORTATION is often joined, in scripture, with teaching or instruction; and often separately recommended as a duty incumbent upon pastors. "Give attendance to exhortation<sup>l</sup>. Exhort with "all long-suffering<sup>m</sup>. These things speak and "exhort<sup>n</sup>." There is the same evidence from scripture that it should be performed privately as well as publicly; and the same reasons of necessity and of utility hold good for the performance of it.

To exhort men, is to excite them to the practice of their several duties. Teaching and exhortation, though different in idea, will run insensibly into each other; and it will be impossible to perform the one aright, without intermixing the other. As all the principles of true religion are of a practical nature,

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<sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 13.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Tit. ii. 15.

nature, they cannot be properly illustrated without pointing out their influence on practice; and men cannot be urged to perform their duties, but by insisting on those principles of religion which are the proper motives to the performance of them. On this account, all the general observations which have been made, concerning the manner of introducing and conducting private instruction, are equally applicable to private exhortation, and need not be repeated. But still these two duties are in some respects different, and therefore some peculiar observations may be made concerning this latter. A minister should endeavour almost every day to meet with some or other of his people, and take occasion to admonish and exhort them, to stir them up to the practice of some duty, to give them some plain directions for their conduct.

In order to perform this duty properly, it is first of all necessary that a minister discover the particular situation and character of the person to whom he addresses himself, and that he adapt his admonitions carefully to them: for the same sort of exhortations does not suit all; and that may be useless or hurtful to one, which is profitable to another. As no two men are absolutely undistinguishable in their faces, though every face be composed of the same features; so, though the powers of human nature, which are the ingredients in character, be possessed in common by all men, yet by means of the different degrees in which they are

possessed, of the different form which they assume, and of the different ways in which they are combined, they produce such an infinite variety of characters, that no two are perfectly alike. This renders it difficult to become acquainted with human characters, and requires the deepest insight into human nature. But without this it is impossible to apply to men with propriety or success. One kind of vegetables requires one sort of culture, and another a sort totally different. One kind of food suits the constitution of one animal, but not that of another. What is wholesome to a man of one temperament, would be almost poisonous to a person of an opposite habit. In like manner, that may be a proper direction to one, which is entirely useless to another; and that may be a prevailing motive to one, which would have no weight with another. To pay a due regard to this, and to be assiduous in giving each person admonitions and directions peculiarly suited to himself, is to come up to the scripture characters of a pastor. It is to be “a faithful and wise steward, ruling  
“over God’s household, and giving them their  
“portion of meat in due season.” It is to be  
“a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,  
“rightly dividing the word of truth P.”

It is impossible, in discourses of this kind, to point out all the variety of characters and situations that

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° Luke, xii. 42.

P 2 Tim. ii. 15.

that you will meet with in a parish, or to explain the proper method of applying to each. That I may not however leave you quite at a loss, but at least give you some hints to excite your own minds to pursue this subject in a proper manner, I shall mention a few instances.

You must admonish young and old persons in different ways. With respect to the former, you may reasonably assume a considerable degree of authority, and urge them, with a sort of severity, to virtue and improvement. Age claims a respect which is scarcely consistent with this in ordinary cases, and will be most effectually wrought upon by intreaty, and mild unassuming addresses; and therefore the apostle himself directs Timothy not to “rebuke an elder, but to intreat him as a “father.” You must admonish the poor so as to shew them that you do not despise them for their poverty, and so as not to give them an uneasy feeling of it; and you must endeavour to comfort them under it, to guard them against the dejection, discontent, peevishness, and dishonesty, which are apt to arise from that state. The rich, on the other hand, are to be addressed, so as to shew that you have no admiration or awe of their wealth; they are to be warned freely against the luxury, pride, and confidence, to which their  
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† 1 Tim. v. 1.

situation leads, and urged strongly to that generosity, beneficence, and alms-giving, for which their circumstances afford opportunities; and therefore the apostle, giving Timothy directions concerning his behaviour to them, does not say *intreat*, but “*charge* them that are rich in this “ world, that they be not high-minded ’,” &c. It can never be right to stand in awe of their riches, or to address them in a manner that would seem to imply this; but it may be often prudent to soothe them by the softness of your exhortations, as David calmed the evil spirit of Saul by the charms of music. Some men are naturally disposed to giddiness, levity, and thoughtless mirth; to these the language of scripture is, “ Wo unto you that “ laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep’.” In conformity to this, a minister must often propose to such the importance, the difficulties, and the threatenings of religion, that they may be excited to seriousness. Others are naturally of a sorrowful and melancholy cast; the pleasures and the rewards of religion must be frequently exhibited to them, that they may be encouraged in well-doing. Some are naturally forward and even impudent, others are modest and bashful; these must be treated in very different ways. The former can be affected only by severe and peremptory injunctions; the latter will be touched with the mildest

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† 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

\* Luke, vi. 25.

mildest insinuations. Some men are of a sanguine and confident temper; others, of a timorous and diffident turn: the former are to be made sensible of their weakness, that their presumption may not precipitate them into sin; the latter must be rendered less sensible of it before they will so much as attempt their duty. All motives which tend to depress the mind are proper for the former; those which rouse and invigorate it, for the latter. In a word, the patient and impatient, the benevolent and the envious, the meek and the passionate, the humble and the proud, the resolute and the wavering, the active and the indolent, the peaceable and the turbulent, the prosperous and the afflicted, the master and the servant, the parent and the child, the man who sins deliberately and he who is surpris'd into sin by a sudden passion or the power of temptation, must be all treated in very different manners. Both the nature of the admonitions and exhortations which are given, and the manner in which they are given, must be varied according to every variety of temper and situation in persons. In order to be able thus to vary them, a minister must observe carefully what directions each of his people stands most in need of, and how they are wrought upon and affected in the ordinary concerns of life. Natural prudence joined with careful experience will enable him by degrees to give them all such exhortations as they stand in need of, in a proper manner. He should spare no pains in studying the diversity of human characters,



characters, and the manner of application which each requires. The best assistance that you can obtain in this, is to attend carefully to the particular directions which the scriptures any where give to different classes of people, and to the manner in which they give them. By the careful study of these, you will be able to make out for yourselves rules for all the variety of matter and manner that can be needful in your private exhortations in any parish; and if you endeavour to render the rules which you thus deduce, familiar to yourselves, especially by writing them down and reading them frequently over, you will not be wholly at a loss for executing this part of your duty, even at your first settlement in a parish, and a little experience will enable you to apply them to all particular cases, readily and becomingly.

It will be proper to observe farther, that though each peculiarity of character and situation may require one manner of address as most suitable to it, yet a minister should not confine himself entirely to that one manner, but should imitate the apostles, whom we find often soothing, intreating, beseeching, exhorting, commanding, threatening, those to whom they write, almost in the same breath and on the same subject. In like manner, a minister should try every way with those with whom he converses, touch as it were every string, use every topic and every manner of address, till at last he hit on one which shall be effectual. It will be peculiarly necessary for a minister to try this  
method

method at first, till he become pretty well acquainted with the characters of his parishioners; and the making frequent trials in this way will enable him by degrees to discover their characters and the proper way of dealing with them. But even after he has discovered this, it will be often very proper to try the same variety of method; for men are so capricious, and liable to so many different humours, that what has great influence with them at one time, will have none at another.

It will be of great importance for the right discharge of this duty, private exhortation, that a minister obtain from people themselves an account of their peculiar temper, and of the difficulties which they meet with in the virtuous conduct of life. It is no easy matter to obtain this; for since the particular confession established in the Popish church, and productive of very ill effects, was laid aside, Christians have run into an opposite extreme, productive of almost as ill effects. Instead of laying open the state of their souls to their ministers, they endeavour all they can to conceal it from them; so far are they from acquainting them with the vices to which they find themselves exposed, or the temptations which they find it difficult to resist; from telling them, for instance, that they find themselves covetous, passionate, revengeful, envious, or the like; and from asking their advice concerning the means by which they may withstand these vices, and cultivate

vate the opposite virtues. In order to avoid the inconvenience of this, a minister should keep an eye on the conduct of his parishioners in ordinary life, that he may observe every opening that he can find into their characters. He should likewise encourage them in all the ways he can, to lay their hearts open to him, to consult him, to ask his advice in matters of practice. Besides, when he is engaged in conversation with them, if he possess the address which is necessary for the execution of his office (and this address it is certainly his duty to study), he will, by asking questions, and by innumerable methods which occasion will suggest to him, discover their character and situation, in a great measure whether they will or not. But if a minister be really intent on discovering the varieties of temper and circumstances among his people, he will perhaps find that it is owing as much to the minister as to the people, that they are generally so averse, or at least so careless in asking the advice of their pastor concerning every important step of their lives. If he should find this to be the case, if he should find them ready to inform him of their situation, and to ask his advice, by his giving them proper encouragement to do it, he will thus obtain a very great advantage for admonishing and exhorting them, so as to promote their real improvement and salvation.

It was necessary to consider these two duties, teaching and exhortation separately, that you  
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might the better understand their nature; but I repeat, that they are not to be in fact disjoined in practice; every instruction should end in exhortations or admonitions; and every exhortation should be supported with proper instructions. The apostles command ministers both to “teach and to exhort *with all authority.*” A minister should always behave so as to command the respect of his people, and he should maintain all the authority to which that entitles him, in his whole intercourse with them. The exertion of some degree of this authority will often be necessary for keeping those with whom he converses, from declining the subjects which he chooses to introduce, and running off to others which better suit their relish. The most effectual way to support this authority, so as to gain attention to a man’s private instructions and admonitions, is to shew that they proceed from a warm love to them, and a deep concern for their eternal interests.

I will conclude this subject with repeating, that a minister should lay it down as a rule to spend some part of every day, except when a good reason prevents it, in giving private instructions and exhortations in this manner to some or other of his people, as he can meet with them. It will really be very little labour to him; it will rather be a pleasure, if he be fired with the true spirit of his calling, and find his people docile and tractable, which if they should not be at first, this method

method will probably very soon render them. But if any man think the spending a part of most days in this manner an insupportable drudgery, let him recollect that the end of the ministry is to render men fit for heaven; let him judge whether all that we have prescribed be more than sufficient for the attainment of this end. If he think it is, he has never considered the difficulty and importance of the end; and if he be not willing for the sake of it to take all the trouble that we have mentioned, he is not, till he change his sentiments, capable of fulfilling the ministry of the gospel, so as to save either himself or others.

#### SECT. IV.

##### *Of Counselling.*

ANOTHER private duty of the pastoral office, which may indeed be regarded as a branch of the former, but is at the same time so peculiar in its nature as to deserve a separate illustration, is counselling, or giving people advice in cases of conscience, which they may propose to their minister. We have the example of the apostles for this duty, particularly of the apostle Paul, with respect to distinctions of meats and days<sup>t</sup>, and with respect to marriage.

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<sup>t</sup> Rom. xiv.

riage<sup>u</sup>. We shall content ourselves with making a very few observations on it, such chiefly as may prevent the abuses of it.

When conscience or the moral faculty is exercised about a man's own actions and temper, it makes him solicitous to know beforehand how he may act aright in particular circumstances, and anxious afterwards to discover whether he has acted right; whether he ought to approve or condemn himself, and what judgment he may justly form concerning the general temper and state of his soul. The representation of the circumstances on which this decision depends, is termed a case of conscience; a case in which a man wants to have his conscience informed and directed. To counsel, is to give safe and seasonable advice in such a case, to deal aright with men's consciences as to the guilt of their sins. Before the Reformation, there was a court for this very purpose, called the Penitential court, as well as another, the Ecclesiastical court, for judicial cases. The latter had for its object public offences, and for its end the enjoining of public penances for the satisfaction of the church, and had rules adapted to these; the former regarded such cases as were not public, aimed at the private direction of penitents, and had rules different from those of the other court, and adapted  
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<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. vii.

to the peculiarity of its own object and end, but chiefly calculated for proportioning the kind and degree of private penances to the nature of offences, the circumstances of persons and actions, and the measure of contrition. In the reformed churches, such courts are with good reason abolished; and in ours, any formal absolution by the minister is in such cases discharged. But for every minister it is necessary to be able to settle doubting consciences, to compose the troubled, and to put men into the best method of repenting, and avoiding sin for the future\*. Cases of conscience may be reduced to two general classes; such as regard a man's conduct in a particular instance, and such as regard the general state of a man's soul.

First, a man's conscience may be at a loss to determine, what ought to be his conduct in some particular situation, or to decide upon reflection, whether he has acted right in that situation. There is often real occasion for doubts on this subject: for it is observable, that justice is almost the only virtue which admits of absolutely precise and accurate rules. The rules of almost all the rest are much more loose and indeterminate; they admit of many exceptions, and require a variety of modifications, almost as numerous as the circumstances

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\* Stillingfleet, vol. i. c. 3. p. 211.

cumstances in which they are to be reduced to practice. The former are therefore compared, by an ingenious author, to the rules of grammar, which are determinate, and may be learned so as to be infallibly observed in every case; the latter, to those rules which critics lay down for the attainment of what is sublime and elegant in composition, and which present us rather with a general idea of the perfection we ought to aim at, than afford us any certain and infallible directions for acquiring it. A person therefore honestly disposed to do his duty, may often be at a loss to know what piety, generosity, friendship, gratitude, requires of him in a particular situation. The difficulty is increased by this circumstance, that written laws, whether divine or human, must be expressed in general terms, and the application of them to particular cases must be left to men themselves. There is perhaps no virtue except justice, which admits of more precise rules than gratitude; yet a very little reflection will make the difficulty that we have hinted at, obvious. If a benefactor, suppose, attended you in your sickness, ought you to attend him in his? or can you fulfil the obligation of gratitude, by making a return of a different kind? If you ought to attend him, how long ought you to attend him? The same time that he attended you, or longer, and how much longer? If your friend lent you money in your distress, ought you to lend him money in his? How much ought you to lend him? When ought you  
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to lend it to him? and for how long a time? It is evident that no general rule can be laid down, by which a precise answer can, in all cases, be given to any of these questions. The difference between his character and yours, between his circumstances and yours, may be such, that you may be perfectly grateful, and yet justly refuse to lend him any thing; and on the contrary, you may be willing to lend, or even to give him ten times the sum which he lent you, and yet justly be accused of the blackest ingratitude, and of not having fulfilled the hundredth part of the obligation you lie under. This want of precision in the rules of most moral and christian virtues has disposed persons of tender consciences to desire determinate directions for their conduct in particular instances, and has disposed others to turn casuistry into a science for their direction. The cultivation of this science was greatly promoted in the middle and latter ages of the church, by the established custom of auricular confession. By that institution the most secret actions, and even the thoughts of every person, which could be suspected of receding, in the smallest degree, from the rules of christian purity and virtue, were to be revealed to the confessor. The confessor informed his penitents, whether, and in what respect they had violated their duty, and what penance it behoved them to undergo, before he could absolve them in the name of the offended Deity. To be qualified to be a confessor, was a necessary part of the study of divines; and

they were thence led to collect cases of nice and delicate situations, in which it is hard to determine how to act. Such collections they thought might be of use, both to the directors of consciences, and to those who were to be directed.

It happened, however, as might have been expected, that the want of precision in the rules for the exercise of most virtues in particular situations, which seemed to render casuistry necessary, rendered it at the same time imperfect, and in a great measure useless; for it made it impossible to lay down exact and precise rules for the direction of every circumstance of men's behaviour. It was hinted before, that one virtue, justice, admits of very exact rules. These are subject to no exceptions or modifications, but such as may be ascertained as accurately as the rules themselves, and generally indeed flow from the very same principles. What we ought in strict justice to perform, how much we ought to perform, when and where we ought to perform it, the whole nature and circumstances of the action prescribed, are all precisely fixed and determined. Accordingly, the whole of jurisprudence is employed in determining the particular laws of justice; and as long as we keep to the precise principles and views of jurisprudence, it is easy to determine them with absolute certainty and perfect exactness. The principles of jurisprudence lead a person to consider, only what the man to whom the obligation

obligation is due ought to think himself entitled to exact by force, what every impartial spectator would approve of him for exacting, what a judge or arbiter, to whom he had submitted his cause, and who had undertaken to do him justice, ought to oblige the other person to suffer or to perform. But even with respect to justice, casuistry does not give so clear decisions; it is not its aim to teach a man how he must act so as to avoid deserving external punishment, but how he must act so as to be a good man, and to deserve praise by his exact and scrupulous behaviour. Casuists do not consider so much what it is that might properly be exacted by force, as what it is that the person who owes the obligation ought to think himself bound to perform from the most sacred and scrupulous regard to the general rules of justice, and from the most conscientious dread, either of wronging his neighbour, or of violating the integrity of his own character. To decide matters of conduct in this point of view is of much greater delicacy, and the decision must be more indeterminate. An instance that is very commonly debated will illustrate this. A highwayman, by the fear of death, obliges a traveller to promise him a sum of money. Is such a promise, extorted in this manner by unjust force, to be regarded as obligatory? Consider it merely as a question of jurisprudence, the decision can admit of no doubt. It would be absurd to suppose that the highwayman can be entitled to use force to constrain the other to perform. To extort the  
promise

promise was a crime that deserved severe punishment; and to extort the performance of it would only be adding a new crime to the former. To suppose that a judge ought to enforce the obligation of such promises, or that a magistrate ought to allow them to sustain action at law, would be the most ridiculous of all absurdities. But if we consider it as a question of casuistry, as a case of conscience in which a good man wants direction, it will not be so easily determined. Whether a man does not owe some regard even to a promise thus unjustly extorted, from a respect to his own dignity and honour, from abhorrence of all treachery and falsehood, may very readily be made a question, and has divided the opinions of casuists. According to the sentiments of good men, some regard is due to such a promise: but it is impossible to determine how much, by any general rule that will apply to all cases without exception. If the decisions of casuists, even concerning cases of justice, are thus necessarily indeterminate, they must be much more so with respect to other virtues, which, from their very nature, scarcely admit of any precise and accurate rules. But though this circumstance renders casuistry, when formed into a science, and reduced to a system, in a great measure precarious and useless, yet still it would be of great use that people consulted their minister in all points of conduct that are of importance. They could represent to him the present case in all its circumstances; and however difficult it is to form a  
general

general rule of conduct, yet it is easy to give particular directions for one case. Though the decisions of casuists were just, weak people could gain little advantage by consulting them, because though multitudes of cases are collected in them, yet there is an infinite variety of possible circumstances, and it is a chance if one be found exactly parallel to the present. But a minister of prudence and virtue may give them always a decision precisely suited to the present case, and can vary it according to every the minutest variety of situation; and thus accommodate it even to those virtues which admit least of precise and accurate general rules.

When a minister is consulted beforehand, he should most carefully avoid whatever can have the remotest tendency to teach men to chicanery with their own consciences, or to authorise by vain subtleties innumerable evasive refinements with regard to the several articles of duty. In fact, this is the end to which casuistry has been often applied, not to direct the well-meaning to real virtue, but to enable the dishonest to explain away their duty. He should make it his aim, not to inform men of the lowest degree of virtue that they may take up with, but to animate them to what is sublime and noble in goodness. He should not attempt to determine with a frivolous accuracy, but endeavour to excite commanding emotions, and to infuse a strong spirit of virtue.

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But, as the world goes, a minister cannot expect to be often consulted by his parishioners, how they ought to act in particular cases which are yet before them. Men are not very ready even to examine their own conduct before they act, much less to consult another about it. It is at that time of greatest importance, that we should have just views of our actions; but passion seldom allows us then to consider what we are doing, candidly and impartially. It is when the action is over, when the passions which prompted to it have subsided, that men begin candidly to consider their conduct. Then they often reflect on their violation of the laws of virtue, with remorse, dread, and terror: and sometimes the consciousness of having done wrong is such a load upon their minds, that they are eager to disburden themselves to their minister, and to know his opinion concerning that conduct which fills them with severe compunction. In this case a minister ought to represent their past conduct to them in its true light, without either exaggerating or extenuating it. The former would only either irritate them to defend it, or sink them into despair; and the latter would favour the partial views of it, which they are too apt to entertain of their own accord. It should be his chief business to prevent their consciousness of guilt from producing vain regret, and to instil such principles and resolutions as may secure them from the like errors for the future. When they  
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feel keen remorse for some heinous sin which they have committed, it must be cherished by the minister till it produce thorough repentance proportioned to the crime, and so directed that it may most effectually produce this. If their remorse be in danger of degenerating into despair it is his business, without disguising the real heinousness of their sin, to inculcate the assurance which, notwithstanding that, they have of pardon on their amendment.

The second kind of cases of conscience are those which regard the general state of men's souls. It is natural that men should be solicitous to obtain some degree of certainty, whether they be in a state of grace and reconciliation with God or not. But it is not always easy, either for themselves or others, to determine this. Though some men may, on account of the great uniformity of their holiness, obtain a considerable degree of *assurance*, yet most men, by reason of the inconstancy of their good conduct, of the frequent repetition of sins which they have resolved to forsake, and of other causes, can entertain only different degrees of *hope*, and ought not to be encouraged to more. There are several circumstances which increase the difficulty of dealing with persons who propose cases of this kind. We shall mention a few of these, and make some general observations on the subject.

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The doubts of men concerning their state are generally very much heightened by a system of principles, exaggerated beyond the truth, with which they are all connected, and on which they depend. Some of the most considerable of them are these. They carry the doctrine of original sin so far, as to imagine that all men are, for many years of their lives, in a state of damnation, and wholly destitute of all grace; they think that this state continues, till they be at a certain period in a sensible manner converted; by straining some scripture metaphors; they represent conversion to themselves as attended with violent inward pangs; and terrors of considerable duration; they judge of the sincerity of their conversion and regeneration by the violence of these, more than by the general tenor of their temper and conduct; when these wear off, they are either filled with joy in the confidence of their being already regenerated, or else plunged in doubts whether they do not still continue in a state of nature. It is necessary that a minister know perfectly the set of principles with which a person's doubts are connected, before he can argue with him; and that he do not attempt directly to call them in question, even though he should not be satisfied of their truth, but rather reason upon them as much as he can. His chief business should be, insensibly to correct the extravagancies of these principles; to direct men not to judge by their inward pangs and sorrows, which  
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are fallacious marks; to turn their attention to their habitual conduct and temper, as the only sure criterion. When he finds that their perplexity arises from their wanting to find in themselves some mysterious marks of grace, it should be his business to inculcate on them, that christian and moral virtues are both the only genuine fruits, and the only infallible marks of grace. By bringing men to estimate their state by this criterion, he will render the trial much less liable to ambiguity. It is likewise of importance that a minister, in cases of this kind, endeavour to give men right notions of conversion; for from wrong conceptions of it, many of their perplexities arise. In consequence of their exaggerations of the set of principles before-mentioned, they consider regeneration as if it were a line, on the one side of which lies a state of damnation, but crossing it in a moment as it were, they are immediately in a state of grace and salvation, from which they can never fall. Regeneration must therefore be represented to them as a work that is not accomplished all at once, but carried on by slow degrees; so that it may be begun where it is yet very imperfect, and must be completed by strenuous diligence and the uniform practice of holiness. It must be urged, that they can never be sure of their conversion, till it has produced this effect; but that every degree of this effect is a sufficient ground of hope that it is begun. It is only by such a representation of things, that they can be guarded, on the one hand, against  
despair,

despair, from thinking themselves wholly in a state of nature; or, on the other hand, against security or presumption, from imagining that they are all at once translated into that state of grace, from which they are in no danger of apostatizing. It would be endless to mention all the difficulties which arise from the perversion of different principles of religion, or all the varieties which, from this perversion, occur in the cases which will be proposed to ministers. Prudence and reflection, joined with experience, will be the best help for these.

It was already hinted, that one will not receive a great deal of assistance from the writings of casuists, for the discharge of this duty. But still he may receive some. He will however receive greatly more from a thorough knowledge of the scriptures, from a distinct comprehension of the terms of the gospel covenant, from an extensive view and a strong sense of the measures of conduct and the propriety of behaviour.

But we must mention one circumstance, which greatly increases the difficulty of this part of a minister's business. It is this, that doubts or fears are often joined with bodily distemper, with melancholy. When this is the case, a doubt about the nature of one action, sometimes comes to coincide with a doubt about one's general state, as in the instance which is very common among melancholy persons,

persons ; their suspecting that they have been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and therefore incapable of forgiveness. When persons are subject to a melancholy habit, it is not easy to talk to them in any way that will have any good effect. I have been sometimes disposed to suspect, that it would be best not to talk with them on religious subjects at all : for their distemper makes them misunderstand every thing that is said, and wrest even what is most comfortable to a sense unfavourable to themselves. Imagination is so strong in that disease, that they will be often fully convinced that a man has said just the reverse of what he has said, and that the most harmless things were intended as a plain hint to them that they are in a hopeless state. There is nothing from which they will not take a handle to feed their distemper, and support their apprehensions. By this means, a minister may increase their disorder, while he is most desirous to allay it. But, on the whole, I am inclined to the contrary opinion, that a minister may, not often indeed, but when either the disordered persons, or even those about them, express a solicitude for it, converse with them with some benefit. From his declining it, they might take occasion to draw conclusions more to their own disadvantage, than they could draw from any thing he would say ; as, that he thought them unworthy of instruction or advice, that he knew their state to be hopeless, or the like. Though they will very probably wrest all that he says into

a sense unfavourable to themselves, still this is no worse than would happen, though he abstained from conversing with them; for the same turn of imagination will lead them to run into similar conclusions from their own thoughts, or from the most indifferent conversation. As there is always some mistaken notion or another which breeds them uneasiness, a minister should endeavour to rectify it. This will very probably have little or no influence on them at the time; but it may give them a handle for rectifying their own notions, when their disease begins to wear off. The talking with them on this subject may seem to have a tendency to feed their distemper; but there is really a necessity for humouring it in some degree; and the ease which they receive from giving it some vent at times, contributes more to wear it off, than keeping it always under restraint. At the same time, a minister ought to endeavour to draw them off insensibly from those subjects which distress and terrify them, to others more indifferent. It will not be easy to do this; for a melancholy imagination has a great degree of obstinacy in adhering to the subjects which give it uneasiness, and even persists in believing things that never had an existence, and in persuading a person that he has been guilty of crimes which he never once thought of. It may, however, be in some degree effected, by showing great sympathy with them, by humouring their caprices a little, and by other prudent methods. But when  
persons

persons are in this disorder, which arises chiefly from the body, it is above all of importance, that they be kept from being much alone, that they be diverted from thinking, and that they be prevailed upon to take moderate exercise. A minister may be of use to them, by directing those about them to put them upon these: and by his authority with them from his character, and the influence which he may gain over them by insinuating conversation, a minister may often be more successful in persuading them to use these means of restoring their health, than others could be.

To be often thus employed in directing the conduct of others in difficult emergencies, in teaching them what judgment they ought to form of their past behaviour and their state, in distinguishing needless scruples from conscientious care, in stripping off false disguises from what is really evil, has a plain tendency to dispose a minister himself to act with a constant regard to the rules of duty, to live correctly, and frequently to review and examine his own temper and actions.

#### SECT. V.

##### *Of visiting the Afflicted.*

THE consideration of that one kind of distemper just mentioned, naturally leads us to another duty

of the pastoral care, Visiting the afflicted, particularly the sick. Nature itself prompts all men so strongly to this, as might of itself convince us that it is peculiarly the duty of a minister. But the scripture likewise expressly makes it a part of his duty, and directs Christians to call for him in this situation. "Is any sick among you?" says the apostle James, "let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him."<sup>y</sup> It is a duty of common humanity to sympathize with persons in distress, and to give them all the relief which our presence and the expression of our sympathy can give; a minister may likewise give them still more important relief by his instructions and advices. Not only sickness, but every kind of affliction, temporal losses, or the death of relations, is an occasion which merits the presence and assistance of a minister. Adversity of every kind demands both sympathy and consolation; and to "weep with those who weep," and to comfort them if possible, is a noble employment. Prosperity has a natural tendency to produce thoughtlessness and an unfeeling temper of mind, which render men indisposed for receiving good impressions. Adversity tends to correct this stubbornness, to render the heart soft and pliable, to dispose it to serious and useful reflections, and to fit it for receiving a deep impression from religious instructions

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<sup>y</sup> James, v. 14.

tions and exhortations. A minister should therefore regard the time of adversity as a favourable opportunity, which he should not fail to seize, of doing some good to those on whom all he could say formerly had very little influence. He may employ this opportunity in giving them any useful instructions, relating to the whole of their christian duty; for they will then be more inclined to listen to them, and to be suitably affected with them, than at other times. But it is more peculiarly proper to show that all afflictions are appointed by the powerful, wise, and good providence of God, and that none of them can possibly befall any man without his permission; to explain the wise ends for which they are appointed, and the useful purposes to which men may render them subservient to themselves. These are trite topics; it is taken for granted that all men are acquainted with them, and all imagine that they believe them. But it is plain that they do not produce those effects upon the temper of men, which they are naturally fitted to produce; and therefore a minister should inculcate them in such a way as is fittest to make them touch the heart. Adversity of every kind contains temptations to some particular vices; a minister should make it a great part of his business, in conversing with the afflicted, to guard them against these vices, against discontent, repining, impatience, peevishness. Adversity demands some duties in a peculiar manner, and either disposes to, or gives opportunity for, the exertion of several

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virtues;

virtues; it is the natural season of consideration, seriousness, prayer, self-examination, patience, resignation. To these a minister should particularly exhort and excite those afflicted persons whom he visits. It must however be remarked, that though it is the duty of a minister to inculcate these things as much as possible, yet great prudence is often necessary in the manner of introducing them. When an affliction is of such a nature as to occasion violent sorrow or great disquiet of mind, this must be in some degree abated, before men are capable of listening to any thing. The weakness of nature seems to require some vent for the first transports of violent passions; but its demand is much increased by this circumstance, that the generality of men never think of restraining any passion, but accustom themselves to indulge the present impulse or inclination, especially when it is strong and vehement. On this account, when a minister has frequent and ready access to afflicted persons, it will often be best at first to allow them to give scope to their uneasiness, only gently checking such expressions of it as are quite extravagant, highly indecent, or plainly sinful; and afterwards, as they become more composed, to insinuate gradually useful instructions and religious reflections, which may both contribute to compose them more, and, by taking fast hold of their minds in their present pliable temper, remain with them, and actuate their future conduct. But he must still take care, before that softness and docility of mind  
which



which springs from affliction be worn off, or considerably abated, to propose to them, in the strongest manner, all the instructions which he thinks they stand in need of, and will now receive with greater advantage than at another time. If a minister will perform this part of his duty, he must generally do it without being asked; for it is not entirely customary to send for a minister on such occasions: but, by going of his own accord, he may furnish his people with useful materials for meditation in the time of their distress, which may likewise exert themselves in directing their whole future conduct.

Almost the only species of distress in which the generality think of desiring the presence or advice of their minister, is sickness; and then too, they are often very late of desiring it. They sometimes defer it till they have lost all hopes of recovery, and then send for him, either to fit them for heaven, as it were, by a charm, or to see if he can allay the terrors which have seized upon them in the prospect of death. It is, at any rate, a difficult work to deal with those who are just stepping into eternity; but when this circumstance attends it, it renders it much more difficult. In order to prevent it, a minister should not stay till he be sent for; but as soon as he hears that any in his parish are sick, he should immediately go to them of his own accord. By this means, he will have an opportunity of examining and exhorting them,

while they are yet capable of some compofure of thought, and have fome time before them ; and he will contribute to wear out an opinion which feems to be too prevalent, that they need only a prayer from a minifter in their laft moments. By this means too, he will moft effectually confult his own eafe ; for by vifiting the fick when he can render it convenient for him, he will in fome meafure prevent his being fent for when it is lefs convenient.

In other churches, there is a particular office for this duty prefcribed by authority : but even this does not exhaust the duty. “ To run over “ fome prayers, and to take leave,” is eafy, but comes not up to the defign of thefe churches in prefcribing it ; and the form itfelf fupposes particular and fuitable addreffes by the minifter himfelf. In all thefe addreffes he fhould apply himfelf particularly to the ftate and condition of the perfon whom he vifits.

In every thing that a minifter fays to a fick perfon, he ought to keep three things fteadily in view ; the influence which it may have on the perfon, if dying ; the influence which it may have on him, if he fhould recover ; and the influence which it may have upon perfons in health, who are about him. Every thing that can have a bad influence in any of thefe ways, muft be carefully avoided. A minifter muft guard the perfon himfelf againft  
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ill-grounded hopes of mercy on the one hand, and against despair on the other ; he must avoid giving him any notions that could tempt him to carelessness and security, if he should recover, or encourage him to trust again to a death-bed repentance ; and he must be anxiously on his guard against dropping any thing that can lead spectators in the least to flatter themselves, that after having spent their life in sin, they may set all to rights by a few tears, or confessions, or prayers, in their last hours. Any man will very often find it difficult to guard his thoughts and expressions so as to avoid all these hazards ; and therefore every one should employ the most intense and deliberate meditation about it.

There are many subjects on which a minister may properly insist in all his exhortations to sick or dying persons. He should inculcate on them, that diseases are ordered, not by chance, but by Divine Providence, either for punishment, for correction, or for our exercise in virtue ; and in consequence of this, encourage them to patience, persuade them to resignation, exhort them to examine their conduct, and to resolve to amend what has been faulty in it. He should instruct them in the nature of death, and instill into them those sentiments of the vanity of present things, of the folly of anxiety about them, of immoderate love to them, of endless endeavours or unlawful methods to procure them, of abusing them to bad purposes,

purposes, of sinking ourselves in sensual pleasures, which obviously arise from the consideration of the nature of death, and which, if he can thoroughly instill them, will enable them either to leave these things without regret if they should happen to die, or to live above them if they should recover. He should lead their view to the important consequences of death, as it is our entrance into an eternal world; that when they have now a near prospect of it, they may be more sensibly struck with the solemnity of judgment, with the glories of heaven, and with the terrors of hell, and feel all their power. He should instruct them in that preparation which it will appear, from the view of its nature, that death requires; an habitual superiority to things external, disengagement from the body and from sensual pleasures, and such a conduct as naturally springs from a firm faith in the unseen world. He should also explain to them fully, and illustrate with force, the nature of the gospel covenant; the blessings which God on his part proposes to us, both those which he has bestowed on us in this life as privileges which we ought to improve, and by which we ought to be excited to the practice of every christian virtue, and those which he promises in the future world as the reward of christian obedience, and the improvement of grace already received; and likewise the terms which God requires from us on our part. As it is of the greatest consequence to preserve a full view of these through the whole of life,

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fo it is of particular importance that perfons have a full and lively fenfe of them in the profpect of death, as they alone can direct their judgment concerning themfelves, and be a foundation either of fuch hopes as may comfort and encourage them, or of fuch fears as may rouse them to do all that is yet poffible for their fouls. If fick perfons difcover any thing which perplexes their minds, or any cafes in which they want to be refolved, a minifter ought to give them his counfel and affiftance honeftly; but he ought to avoid giving a pofitive determination about the final ftate of their fouls: as he cannot know the heart, he fhould content himfelf with calling upon them to finifh their duty, to do all the good they can in the time that remains, and to pray for pardon and acceptance, and with explaining the terms of falvation, fo as to give them the principles on which they themfelves may, from a careful and confcientious review of their temper and conduct, be enabled to judge concerning themfelves; but he has nothing to do to meddle with paffing a final fentence.

Sometimes a minifter is called to vifit a fick perfon, of whom he knows very little, and of whole character and converfation he can obtain no information beforehand. In this cafe, all he can do is, “ to lay before him what he ought to be, “ and remind him to confult his confcience what  
“ he

“ he has been ;” to represent, in a plain and striking manner, the general considerations which have been already mentioned, and particularly the terms of the gospel covenant ; to urge him to apply these things to himself, according as his conscience witnesses concerning the state of his soul ; and to exhort him to examine himself, to begin or perfect his repentance, to confess his sins, resolve against indulging them hereafter, and implore forgiveness ; to be reconciled to his neighbours, and forgive his enemies, to make restitution to any whom he has wronged, to do all the acts of piety and virtue for which he finds opportunity, and above all, to take care not to sin towards the end of life ; for if repentance on a death-bed be very late for the sins of life, what time is left to repent of sins committed on a death-bed ? Sometimes a minister, who knew nothing of a person before he went to visit him, will, by conversing with him, perceive some openings into his character, and, by pursuing these, may draw out of him a more thorough knowledge of his temper ; and to this he should accommodate both his instructions and exhortations. But as this may not always happen, and as every one has not the readiness that is necessary for suiting himself to what he discovers concerning a man’s character immediately and wholly off hand, a minister should do every thing he can to obtain information concerning the character and conduct of persons,

persons, before he go to them in their sickness, that he may be able to apply himself suitably to them.

Sometimes a minister meets with sick persons the whole tenor of whose life gives him ground to believe that they are truly good. Some of these reap in their last hours the fruits of a well-spent life; he finds them rejoicing in the approbation of a good conscience, and in the hope of heaven. In this case, when there is reason to judge that their joy and hope are well founded, a minister has little to do but to rejoice with them, and to encourage them to thankfulness, and to that great act of faith and trust which must be exerted in resigning the soul to its faithful Creator, as its guide into an unknown state. It will not however be improper, even in this case, to exhort them to examine themselves over and over again, that they may be rendered still more certain of their state; to repent still again particularly of all the sins which they can recollect; to pray for the pardon of their daily infirmities, and of the secret faults which they cannot recollect; and to fill up the remainder of their lives with all the acts of virtue which they can crowd into it. But even of good persons a minister will find some who are full of uneasiness and fears. He should examine into the grounds of their fears. If he find that they do not proceed from the consciousness of any habitual sins, or of inconstancy in religious practice, but only from a  
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strong sense of the importance of the change of state at death, and of the possibility of their being mistaken in their judgment of themselves (and this alone will often occasion great uneasiness and discomposure in persons of timorous constitutions); then he ought to set himself particularly to strengthen their faith, and encourage their resignation, by representing to them the goodness, compassion, and mercy of the divine nature, the display of it already made in the gospel dispensation, the tender care of God's providence, which they have experienced through life, the promises which he has made to his sincere servants of pardon and salvation, the security for the performance of these which arises both from the veracity of God, and from the blessings being already purchased by Christ. In this manner he should raise them to hope, and endeavour to calm and compose them for the great change which they are soon to undergo. At the same time, it is proper to give them those exhortations which we have already hinted at with regard to other good men. All good men should be exhorted in sickness, to apply particularly to such exercises as are peculiarly fit to prepare them for death. Indeed, a good life is the only preparation for death. But though it is by far too late to begin our preparation for death when sickness is come on, and though such preparation can scarcely answer any good purpose; yet even they who have lived best will not find it unnecessary to apply more particularly to prepare for death  
when



when it seems to be approaching. They should therefore be exhorted to draw off their thoughts and affections from present things, to converse with themselves more intensely and uninterruptedly than they had done before, that they may get possession of themselves, that they may become more acquainted and intimate with themselves, that they may see whether there be any sin which they have not yet thoroughly reformed, any injury which they have not repaired, any quarrel which they have not made up, any part of their duty in which they have been negligent, any virtue which they find weak; and that they may set about putting all these things more perfectly to rights. They should be exhorted to spend a great part of their time in acts of devotion, in prayer, in meditation, in praise, that they may thus be raised above the world, and formed to the temper and employment of heaven.

But the work of a minister is both most disagreeable and most difficult when he finds those upon a sick bed whose past conduct and temper make it extremely probable, or next to certain, that they are vicious and wicked, that they have the work of their salvation yet to begin. There is scarcely any ground to hope for their perfecting their repentance, or securing their salvation; and yet it would be a melancholy work for a minister barely to tell them this and leave them; and it might render them desperate, and make them,  
through

through despair, die obstinate in their sins. “ If  
“ he find them so ignorant as not to know what  
“ faith and repentance mean ; if they have led so  
“ careless lives in this world, as scarce ever to  
“ have had a serious thought of another ; what is  
“ to be done ? can he do nothing but pray by  
“ them, and so dismiss them into their eternal  
“ state ? It is certainly a very unpromising  
“ attempt, to teach men how to begin to live,  
“ when they are ready to die, or to make them  
“ sensible of their sins in the moment of death,  
“ when they never before bestowed a thought upon  
“ them ; yet a minister should do what he can, by  
“ his warm and serious discourse, to inform and  
“ awaken the consciences even of such<sup>z</sup>.” He  
will find some great sinners insensible and unconcerned even in the views of death. They will only acknowledge that they are sinners, as well as all other men, but they trust to the mercies of God and the merits of Christ. To such he must represent the terrors of the wrath to come, and impress them with lively apprehensions of it. In order to make them sensible that they are in danger of it, he must endeavour to make them sensible of their particular sins, by leading them to discover them themselves, and by charging them with such as he knows they have been guilty of ; and he must expose the false grounds of hope on which they build

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<sup>z</sup> Stillingfleet, vol. i. p. 54, &c.

build their confidence, and show them the indispensable necessity of repentance and holiness. But if he should even succeed in awakening the consciences of habitual sinners, or if he should find such sinners, as he sometimes will, seized with terror in the prospect of death, and the minister called to give them comfort, what can he then do? He sees confusion in their faces, and can discern the violent throes of a guilty conscience, and the torturing fears of a sad hereafter; he knows that all their terrors are too just, and that it is scarcely possible that they can now sincerely repent. But with what reluctance must he speak the severe truths which yet are fit for them to hear? Shall he, therefore, immediately apply to them all the promises of the gospel, merely because they are alarmed at the near approach of death and judgment? Whatever pain it give himself, he must beware of speaking peace too hastily to their souls. He should endeavour to prevent absolute despair, but he must do no more to comfort them; for the more they hope, it may for the most part be justly said, the worse they are. With regard to all wicked persons, it is the business of a minister, to press them to repent upon a sick bed as the best thing they can do, though the success of it be far from certain; to point out the acts of repentance of which they are still capable, and put them upon performing them; to exhort them to sorrow for their sins, to confess them to God, to resolve against continuing in them if they should

recover; to pray earnestly for mercy and for true repentance; to neglect no act of virtue for which they have opportunity; in a word, to do all that they can in the short time that yet remains. He should inform them, that if their salvation be yet possible, it can be only in this way.

Sometimes a sickness is of so long duration, that persons have time, during the course of it, to give strong marks of their repentance, patience, and piety. These may be encouraged to some degree of humble hope, though not without a mixture of fear. But in every other case, a minister ought not to give a person who has lived a wicked life, any positive ground of hope, on account of the forced and imperfect repentance which takes its rise only on a sick bed from the fears of hell. Nothing can have more pernicious consequences; it makes the persons themselves, if they die, perish in security; it encourages them, if they recover, to return to their sins, in hopes of receiving as quick and easy an absolution when they come again to be laid on a sick bed; and it leads all who witness it, to what they are too prone to of themselves, to put off religion to the last, when they see that all may be made up so easily by a few sighs or tears in the concluding hours of life, when they are not fit for sinning. All the promises of the gospel-covenant are made only to them who lead a holy life; and since these promises are the only foundation of our faith and hope in Christ, we  
cannot

cannot give encouragement beyond them to those who have lived a wicked life, and only begin to repent of it in the hour of death. A minister, therefore, can warrantably only do some of the following things. He may urge a sinner to all the repentance that he can perform, as the only possible, though now a very uncertain remedy, and to resign the event to the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, since he has not ground for trust or confidence. Or, he may represent to him the terms of the gospel-covenant, and leave the application to himself; but tell him withal, that the application must be difficult and uncertain. Or, he may tell him, that his repentance will be accepted if it be sincere and genuine; but inform him at the same time, that whether it be, in his circumstances, sincere or not, neither the minister, nor the person himself, but God alone, can certainly know. How can it be ascertained that a person is sincere in his repentance, who is out of a capacity of giving proof of its sincerity by amendment of life? How can it be ascertained either to himself or others, without its being at all tried? And how can it be tried, when he is just going out of the state of trial? When we reflect how small a proportion of those who make a show of repentance on a sick bed, and afterwards recover, live like penitents, and lead truly holy lives, we may be convinced that a death-bed repentance gives no ground for higher hopes than we have represented. But though a minister can give so little comfort, and

though it be so extremely doubtful whether all the repentance to which he can bring wicked men upon a sick bed will be available to their salvation, yet his visits to such are not altogether useless. If they should recover, the sense of the dangerous state in which they were, and the sentiments which have been rendered familiar to them during their sickness, may, perhaps, be the beginnings of a new life, and the principles of a thorough amendment. In order to promote this the more, a minister should urge the sick persons whom he visits, to make solemn vows of amending the vices to which they have been formerly addicted, of practising the duties which they have hitherto neglected; and he should exact particular promises on these heads. Whenever they recover, he should put them in mind of these, oblige them to renew them, recommend it to them to repeat them often. If he observe them transgressing them in any instance, he should reprove them for it. If they appear to throw off all regard to them, as is too often the case, then he may safely assure them, that if they had died in their sickness, as their repentance was not sincere, they must infallibly have perished; and he ought to warn them beforehand, that if they persist in a course of vice till they again fall upon a sick bed, all the strongest show of repentance and seriousness which they can then put on, will be of no advantage to their salvation. Such awful denunciations may, perhaps, awaken them; but though they should not, the minister has done his

his duty by making them, and their guilt rests upon their own heads.

There is a middle class of persons, the inconstant and wavering. With these, also, it is not easy to know how to deal, in sickness and the prospect of death. It is not easy to judge, whether all the infirmities which have attended them, be consistent with sincerity on the whole; whether their frequent relapses after repentance be consistent with the truth of that repentance; whether their sins be consistent with a state of grace and the hope of heaven; whether they are failings, or were committed in opposition to such a measure of conviction and power of resistance as makes them wilful and presumptuous<sup>a</sup>? All that a minister can do in this case, is to represent the real doctrine of scripture concerning universal and stedfast obedience, and to enforce the deep repentance confessedly requisite, in such a manner as neither on the one hand to discourage hope, nor on the other to encourage confidence.

It is customary, not only to admonish sick persons, but also to pray with them; and it is indeed proper, though the prayers of a minister be often regarded too much in a superstitious light. Any of the proper materials of devotion are, no doubt, proper

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<sup>a</sup> Stillingfleet, *Eccl. Cases*, vol. i. p. 57.

proper materials of prayer on such occasions; but some subjects of devotion have a peculiar propriety; as expressions of the holiness and the mercy of God; of his perfection, and superiority to all evil; of his eternal and immutable happiness; of his universal authority and providence, by which he disposes all things, and without which nothing can befall us, nor a hair of our heads fall to the ground; of our dependence upon him, and of the frailty of our nature; of his tender care, pity, and indulgence to good men; of the merciful ends for which he afflicts, and the good fruits which we may derive from afflictions, by bearing and improving them aright; expressions of gratitude to God for the mercies which he continually bestows, even in the midst of adversity, but especially for the mediation of Christ and the gospel covenant, which is the only foundation of hope to fallen creatures; for the glorious blessings that are promised in it; and for the reasonable and easy terms which are required; joined with expressions of our full persuasion, that we can be accepted only on these terms, and that neither the mercies of God, nor the purchase of Christ, will be extended to any who remain unpenitent in sin; petitions for a deep sense of our obligations as Christians; for patience to bear afflictions; for grace to make a proper use of them; for the pardon of sin according to the gospel terms; for the recovery of the sick person; for bringing him to repentance, or for perfecting his sanctification; for mercy to his soul if he die,



for the peculiar care of God in the moment of death, and in conducting him into the unseen world; for grace to lead all to a sense of the certainty and importance of death, and to a constant preparation for it. These and other similar sentiments, which will naturally occur, have plainly a particular propriety in prayers for sick persons.

It has been already remarked, that in all admonitions to sick persons, a regard should be had to spectators. And it is often one of the most useful purposes of visiting sick persons, to give those that are about them such admonitions as naturally arise from the occasion. They may very probably have a peculiar degree of force, when they are preached from a sick bed as a text. It will be very proper to impress them with a sense of their mortality, of the uncertainty of life, and to press them to a speedy and timeous preparation for death. The particular situation of the sick person will suggest particular considerations which may be proposed to them. A good man, composed and joyful in the view of death, may be represented to them as a living and striking example of the blessedness of religion and goodness. From seeing a good man in some degree of fear, they may be warned, how much juster ground of fear they have, whose consciences tell them that they have led worse lives. The agonies of a dying sinner supply a strong picture of the misery of vice, which may alarm the most insensible. The vain hopes of a wicked man

give a proper handle to represent the obduracy which springs from continuance in sin, depriving men of all sense both of guilt and of danger. Every other peculiarity in the situation of a sick person will, in like manner, suggest some suitable exhortation to spectators. In every case, it is proper for a minister to comfort the relations, and to inculcate on them resignation.

This duty of the pastoral office is both important and of a very delicate nature. We have, therefore, been the more particular in explaining it. But, after all, there will so many minute varieties arise in particular cases, that, notwithstanding all the directions that can be given, there will remain great need for prudence and attention. Not only the usefulness of these labours to others should recommend them to the careful practice of a minister, but likewise the influence which the right performance of them will have on the improvement of his own heart. Nothing can have a stronger tendency to excite men to all holiness, than the frequent occasions which ministers have of going into the house of mourning, and conversing with the sick. They are a continual preservative against the infection and corruptions of prosperity. To see virtue supporting those who have been steady in the practice of it, in their latest moments, under the agonies of pain, and enabling them to triumph in the prospect of death, is naturally a strong incitement to virtue. To see a  
small

small degree of conscious vice disquieting a good man, must excite a minister to the greatest vigilance. To see the horrors of vice taking fast hold on the sturdiest sinners, can scarcely fail of deterring him from sin. Opportunities of this kind returning so often to a minister, that the impression made by one instance can scarce decay, till it be revived and strengthened by another, must form him to virtue, if he be not destitute of all principles of reformation. And every minister should be careful to execute these duties in such a manner as not to lose the advantages which they afford for his own improvement.

## SECT. VI.

### *Of Reproving.*

ANOTHER duty of the pastoral office is to reprove and rebuke such as are faulty in their moral conduct. This is always disagreeable to a man of modesty and goodness; but reproofs and rebukes are often necessary and useful for reforming sinners; and whenever they are so, the scripture makes it the indispensable duty of a minister to tender them. Thus the apostle commands Timothy to “reprove  
“and rebuke with all long-suffering and doctrine<sup>b</sup>,”  
to

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<sup>b</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 2.

to expose to wicked persons the baseness of their conduct, and admonish them to amend. And he commands Titus to "rebuke sharply" certain unruly persons, and in general to "rebuke," as well as to "speak and exhort with all authority."

To rebuke in such a manner as may give a probability of its answering a good end, will generally require a considerable degree of prudence and address, and will always require care to suit it both to the nature of the offence, and to the circumstances in which the rebuke is given.

Sometimes things worthy of rebuke are done by persons in the presence of a minister. Oaths and imprecations are sometimes uttered; sentiments are expressed and avowed, that tend to pollute the imaginations, or corrupt the hearts of men; and sometimes even topics are enlarged upon, which are irreligious, immoral, or indecent. It is always necessary for a minister, in this case, to show his disapprobation; but great prudence is necessary in choosing the proper way of showing it.

There are some cases of this kind, in which a grave rebuke, and serious arguments, to show the  
badness

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\* Tit. i. 13.

\* Tit. ii. 15.

badness of the conduct, will be both proper and effectual. When the offenders are of the lower sort, so that they and all others must acknowledge the minister's superiority to them; or when they are not hardened in vice, but appear to have run into the indecency more through inadvertence than bad disposition, this method of disapprobation is generally proper. A man of prudence will, from his knowledge of the circumstances of each particular case, judge when it is proper to apply it, that is, when it is likely to do good. But it is plain that there are many cases, in which this method would do harm instead of good; and as rebukes are useful only for the end they answer, it can never be incumbent on a minister to use them in these cases. Yet still, as a subordinate end of them is to warn others, and prevent their being infected, a minister should use some other method of showing his dissatisfaction. Sometimes a hint dropped with good humour, from which the person himself may easily infer the indecency of his conduct, and the minister's sense of it, or a story serving this purpose, will have a very good effect. At the same time that it shows a man's sense of the indecency of the conduct, it shows an unwillingness to find fault, and a tenderness and deference for the person, which cannot fail to touch those who have any degree of ingenuity, though they would have perhaps been irritated, and rendered obstinate in defending themselves, by a plain reproof. Sometimes a minister may plainly perceive,

ceive, that even this would provoke the offender to proceed to greater outrages. In that case he may sometimes succeed, by turning the conversation to some more innocent and useful topic. By this means, he will at least prevent the repetition and continuance of the offence; and very probably the offender may, if not immediately, yet afterwards, perceive the meaning of the transition, and be gained by the gentleness which attended it. If a person be so obdurate, that none of these methods can influence him, a minister may sufficiently show his disapprobation of the indecency to the rest of the company, by preserving silence of an expressive kind. But if the indecency rise high, and cannot be checked by any of these methods, a minister should withdraw from the company, and not give even the degree of seeming approbation, which might perhaps be inferred merely from his presence. There is another way which may sometimes be tried with good success. If the indecency be such, that a minister can at all bear to witness it, he may seem to let it pass in the company unobserved, and take the first opportunity which occurs conveniently to mention it to the offender in private. In this situation he will not be so ready to grow obstinate in defending it; he will be more easily convinced of its impropriety; he will be apter to acknowledge the fault, and may possibly afterwards himself inform the company of the disapprobation he met with; at any rate, the tenderness which is in this way shown to his reputation,

reputation, must, if he have any degree either of sense or goodness, prevent his being provoked by the admonition.

It must be left wholly to a minister's own prudence to discover which of these methods of reproof suits every particular case. But still it must be remembered, that a minister ought in no case to show the least appearance of approving any thing that is indecent or immoral, or even an unconcernedness about it. A great degree of modesty may tempt a minister to this ; but it is a false and excessive modesty : and however amiable this quality is in itself, yet whenever it hinders a man from doing his duty, or makes him ashamed of adhering to strict virtue, it becomes a real vice. A minister should set himself to conquer it, and to obtain such a degree of assurance, as may both enable him to do his duty when the interests of virtue and religion are concerned, and to do it with that ease and address which may render it successful. If an excess of modesty cannot excuse a minister from performing this part of his duty, much less can a servile complaisance to rank and fortune, which is vicious in itself. Indeed, a neglect of this duty can never fail to bring upon a minister suspicion of his being indifferent about virtue, to diminish his authority and influence, to expose him to contempt, and to bring the whole order into disrepute. I shall only remark farther, that as rebuking seems in its very nature to imply  
a claim

a claim to superiority, the greatest care must be used to take off, as much as possible, this appearance, by the manner of giving it, without the most distant approach to passion, pertness, insolence, or assuming, with the strongest marks of meekness and respect.

But it is not only offences committed in a minister's company, that are the proper subjects of rebuke. A minister must admonish his parishioners, for whatever faults he either learns from others, or discovers by his own conversation with them, to prevail in their temper or their conduct. Heinous crimes require severe rebukes; and even slighter deviations from virtue must be reprov'd, that both the persons themselves may be reclaimed from them, and the contagion kept from seizing others. But these two different sorts of faults must not be treated in the same way. The apostle Jude points out the distinction which should be made between them: "of some have compassion, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Gentler remedies must be applied to the lesser irregularities of the soul. But the deeper pollutions of the soul, like the more dangerous wounds of the body, must be searched and probed, and have more painful remedies applied to them. Again, all sorts of persons must be admonished

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• Jude, xxii. 23.



nished and rebuked, when their conduct deserves it, but not all in the same manner. The same apostle Paul, who commands Timothy and Titus so often to reprove, yet directs the former, "rebuke [not an elder, but intreat him as a father ']."<sup>†</sup> This direction is applicable to all superiors, whether in age, education, rank, or fortune. According to the natural sentiments of mankind, all these qualities produce a kind of superiority; and deference and respect is our duty to all superiors; a duty the obligation of which their faults cannot extinguish. When the offender is plainly our inferior, we have a natural authority which gives us a right to address him without much ceremony. It is generally sufficient with such to profess our concern for them, our sincere intention of their good, and immediately to enter on the part of their conduct that is blameable: their sense of their inferiority will keep them from taking offence at the freedom. It is generally necessary to represent the fault to them fully and in strong colours; for their want of improvement would prevent their understanding your meaning, if you should touch it more slightly, or endeavour to point out its evil by hints. It is often likewise proper to condemn it with strong expressions of authority and displeasure, though always without anger or passion; for the lower sorts of men have  
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<sup>†</sup> 1 Tim. v. 1.

so little of delicate feeling, that without this they will scarce think you in earnest. But it will easily appear that this method of address would be often improper to persons of superior quality or abilities. It would scarcely be consistent with the deference and respect due to them ; and therefore, in reproving their faults in this manner, a minister would really transgress his own duty. Rebukes are not enjoined for their own sake, but for the sake of the good effects which they produce ; and there is the greatest probability of their being useful to superiors, by their being managed in another way. It is often proper to wait or to seek for an occasion which will naturally introduce a rebuke, that you may not seem to be fond of finding fault. It is often proper not to dwell long on the fault, but to give a few hints of its baseness ; for superior parts always, and often even the improvement which arises from the conversation of the higher ranks, give a penetration and acuteness which enable men to take a hint ; and if they do, it will have this advantage, that their conviction will spring chiefly from their own reflections in pursuing it. It is generally proper to avoid an appearance of displeasure, because persons of better rank will probably be offended with it ; and therefore it will defeat the end of the rebuke. And that can never be justified by the dignity or authority of a minister, which arises only from the good and important end of his office. He never descends from his dignity, nay he supports it most truly, when

When he submits to the likeliest means of doing good. It will be sometimes the best way, especially with regard to lesser faults, to express a general censure, or to give an oblique insinuation against them, without directly charging them upon the person. This will be sufficient with some discerning and ingenuous persons; and whenever it is sufficient, it is the most eligible, and will be the most successful method. Sometimes also, a man's vices may be reprov'd, by condemning the same or similar ones in another person. The parable by which Nathan reprov'd David, is an instance of this. Many of our Saviour's parables too are reproofs of his hearers. This method is always inoffensive, and will often be extremely convincing and effectual. The guilty person will often feel strong sentiments of disapprobation against his own vices, when they are represented as belonging to another; and, by showing him that his own conduct is similar, these sentiments, when they are already rais'd, may be easily transferred to himself, and converted into remorse.

It has been already remarked, that the only end of rebukes is amendment; therefore a minister must not think that he has discharged his duty, merely by telling a person his faults. He must observe what effect the rebuke produces; if it produce not amendment, he must repeat it; if it produce this, he should encourage the person to persist and to improve. Attention to the design and use of reproof will likewise direct a minister

considerably in many circumstances relating to the manner of rebuking. One should give cautions oftener than rebukes; always, when they are likely to answer the purpose. When a rebuke is necessary, it should not be given harshly; with concern, not with anger. Some persons might be apt to find fault, merely to give vent to their own spleen and ill-nature; and when reproof proceeds from this principle, it can scarcely fail to be given in a haughty, supercilious, or passionate manner. Attention to its design will effectually check this; for a suspicion of pique, or spleen, or humour is so sure to render reproof ineffectual, that it is generally eligible to let it alone altogether, when it is likely, from particular circumstances, to give rise to this suspicion. Every reproof ought, on the contrary, to bear all the marks of tenderness, meekness, and friendship, and even to be accompanied with warm expressions of benevolence and concern. It is generally best that rebukes be given secretly and kept secret; for this will give them a strong appearance of softness and meekness, will show a tenderness to the person's reputation, and, by this means, will gain upon him. A man dislikes to be condemned in the presence of others, and often thinks himself obliged in honour to attempt to justify himself, though he be really sensible of his faults. The disposition to this will be prevented, or at least diminished, by the secrecy of the rebuke. This spirit will, indeed, so far prevail sometimes, that an offender will attempt to excuse his fault even to a minister alone, when he

is notwithstanding sensible of it. On this account, a minister cannot always conclude that his reproof has been entirely uselefs, even when the person's pride would not suffer him to acknowledge his fault; for it may, notwithstanding, be remembered afterwards, and produce some effect upon him. It is of importance to choose fit times for admonishing and rebuking; for a person will often bear at one time what he would not at another. A person may be bettered by a rebuke given when he is easy and in good humour, who would have been provoked by it, if it had been given when he was perplexed or out of humour with something which discomposed him. A person will listen to a rebuke, when, by any emergence, he is put into a serious, and thoughtful temper, who would have paid no regard to it in an hour of gaiety and dissipation. Sometimes the approach of a communion will give a minister a favourable opportunity of reproofing men for their vices, and of urging them to forsake them, that he may not be obliged to exclude them. Sometimes he may take occasion, from their desiring to have their children baptized, to admonish them of some faults, particularly of such as look like a renouncing of their Christian profession, and represent the necessity of amending them, in order to their being reckoned Christians themselves, or having their children intitled to baptism. However delicate a matter it is to give reproof, yet, if a minister have prudence, and bestow the necessary reflection, he may almost

always fall on some method so soft and inoffensive, as even to affect the worst men, at least as not to irritate and do harm. This is often the ill effect of rebukes indiscreetly managed. Some men, whose zeal is greater than their prudence, think themselves obliged to treat all in precisely the same way, and imagine that any other conduct would show a faulty respect of persons. Pride and conceit are, sometimes, in this case mistaken for zeal. But even when the conduct proceeds from real zeal, it is from zeal ill-conducted, and defeating itself. I therefore repeat, that reproof is only useful on account of its end, and therefore should be always managed in the way that is fittest for producing reformation.

A minister ought to maintain an exact impartiality to all, and to show no respect to the great and rich, more than to the meanest. But this does not require that he should behave to them in precisely the same way. On the contrary, to treat them in the same way would be absolutely wrong. It must be remembered, that the great and primary end of rebuking men is always their reformation, and that, of consequence, it is strictly the duty of a minister to rebuke only in such a way, as is most likely to answer this end. Now not only the different tempers, but also the different educations, ranks, and circumstances of men, render different methods of reproof fittest to reform them, and render a method of reproof, which will have great  
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force with one, absolutely unfit to work on another. A minister who is careful to find out the proper manner, and to apply it, not only is not guilty of partiality, though it be very opposite to the kind which he sometimes uses on similar occasions, but really could not discharge his duty without it. A minister should rebuke all ranks impartially and without respect of persons; but he is impartial only then, when he rebukes each in the way that is likeliest to work on him, however different that way be from what he finds it proper to use to another; and not to make this difference, would really be a species of partiality. It is in vain to say that a minister cannot exoner his conscience, without using an uniform method of reproof with all different ranks; for conscience requires, not only that he should warn all, but likewise that he should be careful to do it in the most effectual way. But still, a minister is under a real and indispensable obligation to rebuke all offenders, as long as there is any hope of them, in that way which he judges will be most effectual with each. There may be some, indeed, so very profligate, that to reprove them will only make us the objects of their scorn and hatred. When we are sure that this is the case, our Saviour has excused us from meddling with them, when he says, “ Give  
“ not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither  
“ cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they tram-  
“ ple them under their feet, and turn again and

“rend you<sup>s</sup>.” But a minister ought not hastily and rashly to take it for granted, that men are thus abandoned; indolence or indifference will often plead this excuse, when there is no real ground for it; but before men be thus given over as incorrigible, a minister must have the strongest and most satisfying and incontestable proofs of their being really so; if he has not these, he is inexcusable for neglecting to watch all opportunities to reprove them. When it is plain that they are incorrigible, a minister should, as much as possible, shun their company; whenever he does not think himself obliged to this, he should reckon himself obliged to rebuke them. It may be likewise proper, sometimes to warn others to beware of the infection of their example; this may set them a thinking, and produce their amendment.

It is a natural remark on this subject, that a minister ought not to frequent the company of any, whose conduct contains many things worthy of rebuke. Not to rebuke them, will deservedly destroy his authority; and if he rebuke them always when there is occasion, he cannot continue long fond of their company, nor they of his.



## SECT. VII.

*Of Convincing.*

THERE is another duty of the pastoral office somewhat a-kin to reprov<sup>ing</sup>, I mean Convincing. Rebuking regards the practice of men; Convincing regards their principles. Paul exhorts a minister to “hold fast the faithful word, that he “may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort “and to convince the gainsayers<sup>h</sup>.” To the same purpose is what he writes to Timothy: “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be “gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in “meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them “repentance to the acknowledging of the truth<sup>i</sup>.” A minister may sometimes have occasion to convince those of our own communion, of particular errors which they may have embraced; and sometimes he will have occasion to confute and convince those who are not of our persuasion. We need not consider these two separately; for they are distinguished only by a greater or a less degree of difference of opinion; and the means of convincing

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<sup>h</sup> Tit. i. 9.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

convincing both are the same; for a minister has no dictatorial power over the former any more than the latter; he is no lord over God's heritage, nor has any right to dominion over the faith of Christians. His whole power is ministerial; the only instruments he must use for accomplishing any of the ends of his office, are instruction, reasoning, persuasion. A minister should take every fit opportunity of endeavouring to convince those whom he knows to entertain errors. The more dangerous any error is, that is, the more immediately it influences practice, the more earnest and assiduous he should be in endeavouring to reclaim people from it. In order to be able to attempt this, it is necessary that a minister be thoroughly acquainted with the subject in dispute, and with the principles and spirit of those whom he endeavours to convince. In the present distracted state of Christianity, there are many different sorts who are involved in error, as infidels, papists, seceders, methodists, quakers, &c. some of which a minister will most readily meet with in some situations, and others in another. He ought to qualify himself for dealing particularly with those who are to be found in his parish. In endeavouring to convince them, he should use only solid argument and calm reasoning; for unfair arts in making proselytes are perfectly unjustifiable; they may sometimes entrap the weak, but if they are detected, they will only confirm men in their own way, and expose the person who used them to just abhorrence; and any

degree of heat and passion will look either as if a man had an ill cause, or as if his desire to convince them arose only from his own humour and desire of conquest. Before a minister can expect to gain on those who differ from him, he must show them that he loves them and wishes them sincerely well, by using them with all kindness, by doing them obliging offices, by betraying no disposition to put them to any inconvenience on account of their difference of sentiment, by rejoicing in the toleration they enjoy, and the liberty they have of professing their belief according to their consciences; in a word, by all the methods of charity, meekness, and moderation. This will dispose them to listen to his arguments. To give these their full weight, he must first study to combat the perverseness of their wills, their prejudices, the desire of victory and applause, their pre-engagement in a party, and their shame and unwillingness to yield; and strive to render them meek and pliable, and sincerely desirous to know the truth. When this is obtained, they will either be more easily convinced, or more excusable, if through weakness they still continue in [their errors<sup>k</sup>. He should, by friendly discourse, discover what led them into their errors, and then he will know better how to lead them out again. A minister ought not to despair of convincing dissenters, or  
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<sup>k</sup> Scougal.

persons in an error, upon a few unsuccessful attempts. Men's principles really depend so much on their education, that it is not to be expected that a hasty conference or a short dispute should prevail with those who have been long habituated to false principles, and sucked them in with their nurse's milk, to abandon them all at once. They must be treated with great patience and long-suffering, and wrought upon by arguments frequently repeated. A minister must visit them often in a spirit of love, and offer them conferences. He may likewise direct them to such books as are fittest for rectifying their mistakes, that they may read and weigh them at leisure.

The emissaries of the church of Rome sometimes make an impression on those whom they want to convert, by this argument, that it is safest to join their church, because Protestants themselves allow the possibility of salvation in it, whereas Papists allow no possibility of salvation out of it. This may have weight with very weak persons; but a small degree of understanding may satisfy a man, that an uncharitable, judging, damning spirit, is no probable mark of the true Christian church. A minister ought not to adopt this conduct, or to attempt to magnify the differences between sects and parties, in order to make proselytes. Indeed, the errors of some parties are so gross, and have so direct an influence on practice, that it needs no exaggeration to show persons the necessity of quitting

ting them. Infidelity, for instance, implies a total rejection of Christianity, and therefore must be attended with the most dreadful hazard. In Popery, Christianity is so corrupted and overclouded with idolatry, superstition, and tyranny, as renders it very difficult for those of that communion to direct their endeavours to true holiness. Quakers reject many of the essential institutions of the gospel. Some parties, as seceders and independents, adopt antinomianism, and thus make void the law by faith. Some parties too are ruled by a bitter spirit, inconsistent with that love which is the end of the commandment, which is our Saviour's new and peculiar commandment, which is greater than faith and hope; and they thus destroy Christian charity. A minister may justly represent such errors as these as highly dangerous, and should set himself with a proportionable zeal to correct them in those in his parish who may be infected with them. There are other differences among Protestants, which have not so great influence on practice, and therefore are of less consequence. A minister should not attempt to magnify these. On the contrary, he should show how insufficient they are to interrupt the course of Christian love, or to produce division; how justly, notwithstanding them, Christians may live in communion together; and therefore urge them to maintain the unity of the church, not to rent it, not unnecessarily to make a schism or separation from that profession which is established in the country.

country. But he must always carefully avoid laying great stress on party distinctions, and inculcate the far superior importance of real holiness and goodness. While he allows that they may be saved, notwithstanding their present errors, which they hold honestly and mistake for truth, if they be really holy; he must inculcate on them, that though they renounce these errors, though their opinions be true in all respects, yet they cannot be saved without holiness. Though he should profelyte a thousand to his own party, he must think that he has done nothing, till he make them likewise truly religious and holy; for without this, no man can be saved in any religion. Better persuade one person to be truly holy, than bring over ten thousand to the purest sect among Christians.

There are some cases, in which convincing, as well as rebuking, ceases to be a minister's duty. He must always strenuously oppose all notions which directly tend to promote licentiousness and vice, that if he cannot reclaim those who have embraced them, he may at least prevent others from being infected with them. But there are many differences of opinion about lesser matters, which, as they are unavoidable, can scarce be said to deserve great regard. Besides, whenever persons are so much under the power of prejudice, as to be bigotted in their own way, all a minister's pains would be in vain. It will often happen, that  
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all his arguments cannot convince those with whom he disputes. When they are honest in their belief, and live as becomes Christians, he should not, on this account, cease to treat them with the greatest kindness and regard; he will thus show them, that the love of truth, not desire of conquest, was his motive in endeavouring to convince them.

### SECT. VIII.

#### *Of reconciling Differences.*

IT is often another duty incumbent on a minister to endeavour to reconcile differences, and extinguish animosities among his parishioners. Warm benevolence will lead every good man to do his utmost to promote peace and concord; and our Saviour has strongly recommended this exercise of benevolence, by pronouncing “the peace-makers blessed, for they,” says he, “shall be called the children of God<sup>1</sup>.” It is indeed necessary for all men, but especially for a minister, because the consequences of his giving such offence will be worse, not to be forward or over-busy in meddling in the affairs or quarrels of others. It often happens, that a person by this offends one, or, it may  
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<sup>1</sup> Mat. v. 9.

be, both parties ; and if a minister offend a person by being thought to be partial against him, it will probably be for ever out of his power to be useful to him. For this reason, a minister should always avoid deciding the differences of his people, as a judge or arbiter ; for if either party should be displeased with his sentence, it will produce reflections on his character for integrity ; and these must always diminish his esteem. All his endeavours to reconcile differences must be of a more private nature, and in a way more suited to his profession. In addressing himself to either party, without blaming him as if he were absolutely in the wrong, or even supposing him to be as much injured as he thinks himself, he may yet inculcate the obligation of forgiveness, and display the beauty of placability. And resentment tends so much to aggravate the faults which are the objects of it, and makes men so unwilling to consider things in a fair light, that we may almost promise, that if a minister can once convince the persons who are at variance, that it is their duty to forgive, and bring them to wish that they were able to practise it, and thus awaken that general benevolence which resentment had extinguished, they will of themselves perceive, that their passions have represented the grounds of their difference as much more considerable than they really are, and be almost ashamed of their dissension. Men often come to this when their resentment cools ; and the only thing which prevents their reconciliation is a shyness to make the first



first advances, or an uncertainty in each, whether the other party be as much disposed to it as himself. A minister may often be of use to them in this situation, by assuring them of each other's good disposition, and by using other prudent means of bringing them together.

## SECT. IX.

*Of Care of the Poor.*

It is incumbent on a minister, to search out the poor and indigent in his parish, and to contrive means for supplying them. While the idle, the impudent, and clamorous poor make their necessities known, and obtain relief, there are many honest, modest, and industrious persons, who are contented to pine in poverty and straits, rather than make their situation known. These are the properest objects of charity, whom every pious Christian should search out, and relieve according to his ability: but this is peculiarly the duty of a minister.

In the beginning of the Christian church, when the rich sold their possessions for the common support of the brethren, they brought the price to the apostles, who took care of the distribution, according to every man's need<sup>m</sup>; and one of them, Peter, inflicted

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<sup>m</sup> Acts, iv. 35.

inflicted death on Ananias and Sapphira, for defrauding the poor<sup>n</sup>. And though afterwards, when the number of the disciples increased, the apostles appointed deacons to have the immediate care of the poor, while they gave themselves up wholly “to prayer and to the ministry of the word<sup>o</sup> ;” yet we find that the apostles thought themselves still obliged to interest themselves very particularly in obtaining provision for the poor, on many different occasions. Paul and Barnabas were careful to carry relief, from the church at Antioch, to the Christians in Judea, in the prospect of the great dearth of which Agabus had prophesied<sup>p</sup>. Paul had not only undertaken the distribution of the liberal charity, which the Macedonians had given for the relief of the saints at Jerusalem, but likewise by their example, and by many other arguments, he excites the Corinthians to contribute largely for the same purpose<sup>q</sup>.

If a minister be assiduous in the practice of the several duties which have been already explained, he will thence derive great advantages for the discharge of this duty. His conversing with his people and instructing them in private, will give him many opportunities of discovering their situation, without his seeming to inquire into it. And his  
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<sup>n</sup> Acts, v.

<sup>o</sup> Acts, vi. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Acts, xi. 27, &c.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 1, &c.

showing all the concern he can, to supply their wants and mend their situation, will increase their confidence in him, and add new authority and weight to all his instructions and advices. They will easily believe that he sincerely wishes well to their souls, who is anxious for their bodies, and that all his exhortations proceed from his real sense of their being absolutely necessary for them.

There are many different ways which a minister may take, for supplying the poor in his parish, according to the variety of their rank and circumstances. These he must attend to with prudence; otherwise, what he designs well, may offend and irritate, by the manner in which it is bestowed. There are some, whom he may all at once, without any ceremony, either supply out of his own charity, as he is able, or recommend to the charitable funds of the parish. Many, who would have been backward to apply for relief, will yet readily and thankfully accept of it, even in this ordinary way, when it is procured to them without its being asked. But many stand really in need of relief, who yet, on account of their rank or other circumstances, will not care to receive it in this public way. To these, a minister may sometimes convey his own charity privately. Sometimes he may obtain for them relief, from persons who are disposed to bestow, and able to bestow more liberally than he himself can afford, and who will, either by him, or by other means, convey it to  
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them in a private and inoffensive way. When a minister can neither afford himself to give, nor procure from other private persons for them, that relief which their situation demands; and when, at the same time, they could not bear to be regarded as objects of public charity, it may be possible, in some cases, for him to procure something from the public charitable funds, to be privately bestowed by himself. But this should not be often attempted. Men are so apt to misconstrue the actions of ministers, and it is of so great moment that they should not lie open to any suspicion of misapplying charitable funds, that it will be generally most prudent for them not to desire to distribute any part of them, but to persons whom they expressly name. Individuals may, perhaps, sometimes suffer by this reserve; but by neglecting it, a minister's own reputation, and consequently his usefulness, may be wholly ruined. There are often persons in a parish who cannot be said to be indigent, or to stand in need of alms, who yet would often receive great advantage by having the use of a little money at particular junctures. A minister may sometimes do important service to whole families, by lending small sums, without interest, to such honest and industrious persons, to assist them in particular emergencies, or to enable them to catch occasions of profit. A man ought not indeed to straiten his own family in order to do this, and many ministers are in so narrow circumstances, that they can scarcely do it at all, without straitening them. But, if a minister

nifter have a little money, he may, in this way, at the expence of a very few fhillings, and with the risk of a very few pounds, riot only make feveral families happy, but obtain both the love and eſteem of many in his pariſh, and greatly increaſe his power of being uſeful.

It is certainly the duty of a miniſter, to take care of the charitable funds of the pariſh, both that they be preſerved, and that they be well applied. The want of knowlege in buſineſs may ſometimes lead to errors in the former caſe; but conſcience requires that all poſſible pains ſhould be taken to ſupply that want by proper advice: to expoſe what is given for the ſupport of the poor, knowingly to any riſk of being loſt, would be baſe. In applying them, the leading principle ſhould be, to cauſe them to do as much good, relieve as much diſtreſs, and promote as much happineſs, as poſſible. If this be kept in view, it will give direction in moſt of the particular caſes which occur.

## C H A P. II.

*Private Duties respecting lesser Societies.*

THE duties of a minister which we have hitherto considered are, in the strictest sense, private, because separate and distinct individuals are the objects of them. There are other duties of the pastoral office which are of a private nature, yet have bodies of men for their objects, or, at least, are, from their nature, performed in the presence of families, or of a number together. We shall now proceed to these which are of a middle kind between the most private and the most public duties of the ministerial office.

## SECT. I.

*Of Visitation of Families.*

THE first duty of this kind is Visitation of families, when a minister goes through his parish, assembling each family by themselves, or two or three families together. In this round through his parish, a minister may do several things which are extremely useful, and which this is the best opportunity of doing. At this time, a minister forms a roll or catalogue of his parishioners, according  
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to which he calls them to be catechised, and by which he may know whether they all attend him. This, of itself, is far from being usefess, as it will be a check on those who, through a consciousness of ignorance, an averfeness to learn, or any other bad principle, might be prone to avoid examination. At this time, likewise, a minister may most conveniently obtain the knowlege of strangers who have come into his parish from other places, and enquire into their characters and their attestations. This will be often of use for preventing disorderly persons, who might corrupt others by their vices, from settling in a parish. As our Saviour, when he sent forth, first, his twelve apostles, and afterwards, the seventy disciples, to preach the gospel, commanded them, into whatever house they went, to say, "Peace be to this house;" so a minister ought to join with his visit to any family, sincere devotion and earnest prayer, particularly for the spiritual and temporal happiness of that family. A minister may likewise render this part of his labour subservient to other good purposes, particularly to recommending such duties as are properly economical, or relative to a family. This will be a proper opportunity of instructing them in the nature, and exciting them to the practice, of all the relative duties. He may enquire how the husband and wife behave to each other, give them directions for the practice of their several duties, point out to them many faults of conduct, which would not perhaps have been attended to by themselves,

selves, which yet are both transgressions of their duty, and will diminish their happiness in each other, and their authority in the family. He may examine the masters and the servants, how they treat each other, direct the former to kindness, and the latter to obedience and fidelity. He may inculcate on parents the obligation of taking care of the virtuous education of their children, give them familiar directions about the right manner of it, warn them against the faults that are generally fallen into, show them the necessity of training them to industry, and fitting them for some lawful calling. He should recommend family religion, particularly the reading of the scriptures, and inspecting the behaviour of all within the house. A visit to a family is one of the properest opportunities of giving instructions, exhortations, or reproofs, on such subjects as these.

It happens often, especially in country parishes, that several families are convened together. In this case, besides what has been already mentioned, a minister has a fit opportunity of enquiring, on what terms they live with one another, of examining into the grounds of any differences which prevail among them, and into the occasions, which, from their situation, produce disputes more frequently among them; and he may contribute greatly to establish good neighbourhood and harmony, by directing them how to avoid these contentions, by reconciling their differences, and urging



ing the obligation of Christian concord. This may likewise be a fit opportunity of exciting them to brotherly admonition. As it is the duty, not only of ministers, but of all Christians, to exhort one another on proper occasions, a minister may direct neighbours to keep an eye on the conduct of each other, to admonish each other privately whenever they find one another guilty of a fault, or wanting in any duty. By this means, they may be rendered useful monitors to each other; the more knowing may contribute to the instruction of the ignorant, and the regular and virtuous to the amendment of those who are not so well disposed. A minister may render visitation of families still farther useful, by accompanying it with catechising. This might make it tedious and laborious in very large and populous parishes; but in small parishes, and even in all except the very largest, it may be easily accomplished in so moderate a time as no man will grudge, who enters into the spirit of his employment. By this means, a parish may be catechised twice, with very little additional trouble to the minister.

Visiting families begins to be neglected by some ministers, as a less useful part of their employment; but they who neglect it, seem not to attend to the good purposes to which it may be rendered subservient. It seems to be naturally implied in teaching "from house to house;" it is expressly enjoined by the laws of our church; and a minister

who first performs it, or thinks of performing it in so careless and formal a manner as to render it useless, and then neglects it because he finds it useless, is plainly wanting in his duty, and omits one thing, by which he might, in a great degree, and in some peculiar ways, promote the good of his people. This part of a minister's work should generally be performed once every year; and that season should be chosen for it when the people are most at home, when they are least engaged in work, and can attend with least inconvenience; a season of this sort in the summer will be most commodious for the minister, who is obliged to go through the whole parish. As the intermissions of labour are not very long, a minister should contrive, as much as possible, to visit his whole parish during the continuance of them; but he should, at the same time, not hurry it so much, as to oblige him to go through it in a superficial or merely formal way. If a parish be so very large, as to render it necessary, either to visit it hastily, or to encroach upon the busy seasons of the year, it may be proper, either to visit the whole parish, in the way we have described, one year, and catechise, without visiting it, the next; or, every year to visit one half, and catechise the other.

## SECT. II.

*Of Catechising.*

THIS brings us to the next duty, Catechising. This has been considered in all ages as the properest method of communicating the knowlege of every subject. A particular species of it was the only method which Socrates used for either confuting errors, or leading men to the knowlege of the truth. It is plain from scripture, that this method was used for bringing converts to the knowlege of the gospel. Luke tells Theophilus, that he wrote his gospel on purpose that he “ might know the certainty of those things wherein he had been *instructed* ;” it is in the greek, *περι ων κατηχηθης*, wherein he had been *catechised*, or instructed by catechising<sup>r</sup>. It is said, that Apollos was “ *instructed* in the way of the Lord<sup>s</sup> ;” the greek word *κατηχημενος* signified initiated, or informed by catechising. As this is indeed one of the properest methods of instructing, especially the young and the ignorant, it is to be considered as recommended by all the exhortations which are given ministers to “ teach.” We know that it has been always used in the Christian church, and that converts

<sup>r</sup> Luke, i. 4.<sup>s</sup> Acts, xviii. 25.

verts to Christianity were, by this method, very carefully instructed in the nature of that religion, before they were baptized, and on this account were, during the time that passed before their baptism, called Catechumens. This method of instruction has many advantages. It keeps up the attention much better than a continued discourse. It gives opportunity of observing how far a subject is understood, and of illustrating it till it be understood. It tends to make things better retained. It serves to explain those terms which often occur in preaching, and which, however familiar they may be to the preacher, might be dark to many of the hearers, or be misunderstood by them; and will thus prove an excellent preparation for their attending to sermons with understanding and advantage. But its obligation and utility will be easily acknowledged; it is more necessary to consider the best manner of performing it.

We have already mentioned, that catechising may be very properly joined with visitation of families; not that, when it is thus joined, it should be thought sufficient. It ought to be likewise performed by itself. Sometimes a minister may find it convenient to do this likewise, by assembling several families together in their own neighbourhood; but generally it is most convenient to call them to the church, or to his own house; the fatigue of coming once is inconsiderable to each of them, whereas it would be a great toil for him to go through

through them all. The winter months, when they are little taken up with their business, will be generally found most convenient for this, and are for the most part chosen. It is sometimes, too, eligible to spend a part of Sunday afternoon in catechising, especially in the spring, immediately before afternoon sermon be begun, and in autumn, immediately after it is given over. A great many can then attend without any interruption to their work, and receive at least, from hearing others examined, some instruction in the principles of religion.

It is by no means sufficient, that the people be able to say a catechism by rote; they are perfectly ignorant till they know the meaning of all the words and propositions in it; and the absurd answers which the common people often give to the questions of the most common catechism, show that they may have the whole by heart, without really understanding any part of the subject of it. A minister's chief care therefore ought to be, to bring them, not to repeat, but to understand the catechism; and this may be done almost with the stupidest, by means of plain explications and easy illustrations. Answering to the questions of a catechism should not be made a mere exercise of memory; it may be no more, even when they understand what they repeat. It should be made, as much as possible, an exercise of judgment. In order to this, such questions should be put, as may lead  
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lead them gradually to discover of themselves, and to give in their own words the answer which they should have given, and about which they were at a loss. This method of leading men, by well-contrived questions, from some easy and known principle to the discovery which we want them to make, is properly the Socratic method of instruction. It requires some genius and dexterity in the questioner to pursue this method on any subject; but if he be capable of it, it will render catechising an agreeable and entertaining exercise to himself; whereas, in the way it is commonly managed, it is a dry and tedious labour. It will likewise be highly profitable for the learner. It will make those whose memory is naturally weak, to attain almost as much real knowledge, as they who have stronger memories: it will render their conceptions distinct and determinate: and when they are thus led to deduce all their knowledge from easy principles, conviction will necessarily attend all their conceptions. They will comprehend religion, and, at the same time, perceive the truth of its several parts. This manner of examination which we propose, will probably be easily comprehended by all of you, however difficult it may sometimes be to reduce it to practice.

It is a fault in most catechisms, that they abound too much in technical and systematic terms. This is one great occasion both of people's getting them merely by rote, and of their not understanding

them. It were much better that these terms were confined altogether to controversial writings, and used neither in sermons nor in catechisms. But as they are often used in both, they should, in catechising, be explained in as easy and familiar a manner as possible, that, when they occur in preaching, they may not be unintelligible. It is likewise a fault in most catechisms, that the principles of religion, and the precepts of it, are kept too much distinct, and laid down in different parts. By this means the practical tendency of the christian doctrines does not appear; their connection with holiness is not pointed out; the duties of religion are explained, but they are not enforced by the proper motives. These inconveniences should be remedied in catechising. No question relating to any doctrine of religion should be dismissed, without showing its influence on practice, and the force with which it recommends holiness. In examining, again, on every question relating to duty, the peculiar obligations of that duty should be brought into view. All this may be accomplished by proper questions put in the way that we have already described. But with these, it will be very proper, that a minister frequently intermix short exhortations to the due improvement of the principles of religion, by the careful practice of every duty.

It is but a small part of a catechism that a minister can ask at every particular person; yet the  
design

design of catechising is to instruct persons in the whole scheme of religion. In order to effect this, a minister must call as many together to be catechised, as he can go through, without either rendering the examination of each superficial, or immoderately fatiguing himself. The increase of labour at every particular meeting will be compensated, in some degree, by the smaller number of meetings. He must endeavour at each meeting to go through the whole catechism; by which means, all who are present may be instructed in all the parts of religion. In order to make room for this, it will be proper to pass slightly over such things as are of lesser moment, and to dwell chiefly on those things of which the people seem most ignorant, or which are of greatest importance, and most immediately connected with practice.

The duty of catechising should be diligently practised, especially with regard to the young. It is by this means that they can best learn the great articles of the christian religion: if they do not learn them then, they will scarce ever learn them thoroughly; but if they then learn them, they will keep a fast hold of them to the end of their lives. It is with the young that most benefit may be expected from it; their minds are open to truth, and pliable to goodness; on those who are already confirmed either in ignorance or in vice, it cannot be expected that so great an impression will be made.



## SECT. III.

*Of Fellowship Meetings.*

WE shall next make a few observations on a custom which prevails in some places, but is not universal, that of holding fellowship meetings. It cannot be doubted, that meetings of private Christians, either among themselves, or with their minister, if they were managed aright, and judiciously employed in devotion and in exciting one another to love and good works, might be attended with very considerable advantages. But at the same time it is plain from experience, that they have seldom been managed aright, and that they have in fact generally been attended with real inconvenience. They are too much confined, as all who choose are not admitted to them, though their morals may be unexceptionable. They are chiefly composed of persons who are disposed to idleness, and think they cannot mind religion, without neglecting their worldly business and many of the social duties of life; of such persons as are conceited of their knowledge, on account of their dipping into abstruse and disputable subjects, or of their peculiar sanctity, on account of the orthodoxy of their opinions; of such persons as place almost the whole of religion in a punctual observance of the ceremonial duties of it, and thus substitute  
 superstition

superstition in the place of holiness ; of such persons as are under the influence of a weak and ignorant enthusiasm ; and, in a word, of such as think they derive great merit from their attending such meetings, and on that account regard themselves as the only godly persons, and despise others, who are perhaps much better and more virtuous than they. The consequence of persons of such characters meeting together is generally to promote their spirit of superstition, to foster their enthusiasm, to flatter their hypocrisy, to cherish their conceit and spiritual pride, and their pharisaical contempt of others. When they are met, the spirit that reigns in them will make their conversation tend rather to pervert, than to improve, their religious sentiments : their spirit, joined with their ignorance, will render their devotions often full of absurdities and extravagance. This has been so generally the effect of these meetings, the abuse of them has been so frequent, that it appears to me, they should rather be shunned upon the whole, than courted by a minister. If they have not been customary in his parish, it will be better not to introduce them. All the good effects that could be expected from them will be much more certainly and more effectually promoted by the occasional private instructions and exhortations which we have formerly recommended, and by exciting those who live in the same neighbourhood to converse about religion, and admonish each other, in the way that we have already hinted.

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and they will be promoted by this means, without the danger of those abuses which have often arisen from formal meetings. If a minister find that meetings of this sort have been already introduced into his parish, it can seldom be prudent to attempt to discourage, or to abolish them, all at once. This would only irritate the people, and in a great measure destroy the minister's usefulness. If he should refuse to attend them, the people would hold them by themselves, and be apt to proceed to a greater height of extravagance, than if he were present. He ought therefore to set himself to establish such regulations, as may tend to prevent the abuses of them, and render them subservient to a good purpose. He should take care to be always present at them himself. He should appoint them to be held at such times as may not interfere, either with their worldly business, or with other duties. He should take care that they be not confined to a particular set of people of a pharisaical spirit, but that all who are unexceptionable in their morals have free access to them. He should take care that all subjects to be discoursed on be proposed at a previous meeting. He should hinder every subject from being introduced, that tends to lead men into useless speculations, intricate disputes, or superstitious and enthusiastical notions. He should allow only such subjects to be introduced, as have a real tendency to make men wiser and better, by either explaining or enforcing the duties of religion; and he ought to lead them

to consider them in those views in which they tend most strongly to produce this effect, and to keep them to this way of considering them. He should recommend it to the people to consider the subject carefully by themselves, before they venture to speak on it in the presence of others. When any of them vent any thing absurd or enthusiastic, they should be immediately checked and corrected. None should pray, but those who are desired by the minister ; and when they utter any thing extravagant in prayer, it should not only be pointed out to them, but they should be hindered from attempting it again for some time, till they learn to think more soberly and justly. The minister should always be careful to inculcate on them, that they are no better than their neighbours merely for attending these meetings ; that they are only useful so far as they are means of rendering them more virtuous in their ordinary conduct. By such means as these, a minister of prudence may, in a great measure, prevent the abuse of fellowship meetings, and turn them to real advantage : and when he finds that they are already introduced into a parish, and that the people are fond of them, it will generally be better to model them, in this way, into an useful form, than to attempt abolishing them altogether.

## SECT. IV.

*Of Marrying.*

To these duties we may add Marrying; but it will not require many words. It is by law committed to ministers, and from its solemn and important nature, there are good reasons why it should be so.

It is their duty to do all they can to prevent marriages in any way improper, by advice and persuasion. If these prove ineffectual, and if the impropriety lie only in some imprudence, or some inequality between the parties, the minister must allow them to judge for themselves; to refuse to marry them, would be assuming an authority to which he has no right. But there may be improprieties of such a kind and degree, as to justify or even require this; for instance, if one of the parties be under age, and plainly drawn in by the art of the other, it would be a just reflection on a minister to solemnize their marriage. Some marriages are so confessedly unlawful, that not to refuse absolutely to celebrate them would be highly criminal.

A minister may be sometimes desired to celebrate marriages which are in themselves unexceptionable,

tionable, in an irregular manner, or without the ordinary forms of proclamation. There no doubt are cases in which the omission of these cannot be attended with any bad consequences. Yet it is safest for a minister steadily to adhere to them. There can never almost be a good reason for seeking to dispense with them; it is a caprice which deserves no encouragement; it is really penal, though there may be no danger of the penalty being actually demanded. Such cases may be pleaded as a precedent for his conduct in others, where it is not so clear that bad consequences may not follow; and by refusing in these, he incurs the charge of inconsistency and partiality, or by complying, does what he thinks improper, or even hazardous.

The form of marriage includes some instructions concerning its nature and duties, and the marriage vow, with prayer before and after. All this is so simple, that it must be unnecessary to enlarge upon it.

## SECT. V.

### *Of subordinate Duties.*

If the several private duties, respecting both individuals and societies, which we have hitherto illustrated, be really incumbent on a minister, it

will follow, that whatever is absolutely necessary to the performance of them is in the same degree incumbent on him, and that he is under some obligation to whatever can contribute to his performing them in the best manner. Hence are derived several secondary or subordinate duties of the pastoral office, the consideration of which will serve for a proper conclusion of this part of the subject.

The first of them is constant residence. If there be no express command in scripture, imposing this as a necessary duty, the reason is admitted even by the Popish casuists to be, that the nature of the office implies it, because it cannot be executed without it; and every pastor being obliged to execute his office, is of course obliged to residence as indispensable for that purpose. In the primitive ages, the pastors of every church resided in it, except when they were driven away by persecution; and even by this they were not easily prevailed upon to desert it. In the original establishment of parochial churches in every nation, the incumbents were looked upon as strictly obliged to reside; and it was on the supposition of their being so, that glebes and houses were provided for them, in order to render their residence commodious. After corruptions in religion began to prevail, pastors sometimes indulged themselves in absence from their charges, for taking care of some worldly occupations in which they were engaged, or for attend-

ance at the courts of emperors and kings: and in the farther progress of these corruptions, the same person possessed himself of two or more churches or parishes, in one only of which he could reside. These practices were, however, very generally condemned as gross abuses; and, from their first appearance, even prohibited by the canons of successive councils. These canons began, in course of time, to admit some exceptions; first, by allowing one man to hold two churches when a sufficient number of fit persons could not be found for providing each with a separate pastor; next, when one church was so poor as not to afford a competent and sufficient maintenance; afterwards for reasons far less reasonable, as in favour of persons of high birth, or eminently learned, or dignified in Universities, who, on dispensations being granted by the Pope, might hold a plurality of benefices. By means of these exceptions, along with the facility of procuring dispensations, the abuse rose to so great a height, that many remote benefices were often accumulated in one person; for remedying which, the Council of Trent made several decrees; and though these did not take away all dispensations, they have rendered applications for them, and consequently both non-residence and pluralities, less frequent in the church of Rome than they formerly were. In England, a law had passed some time before that council, and before the establishment of the Reformation, which, by admitting the exceptions introduced in  
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the most corrupt ages, gave them a sanction in that church: and it has never been formally repealed. Under the authority of it, non-residence, on account of pluralities as well as on other pretences, continues to prevail; though it has always been condemned by many, and pronounced to be contrary to the declared sense of the church, particularly in its public offices, and unjustifiable in point of conscience\*. Residence being indispensably required in our church, it is unnecessary for me to inculcate the obligation of a minister to reside ordinarily in his parish. Care of health, necessary business, and other duties of different kinds, may, doubtless, prevent residence in the strictest sense continual, and justify absence for a short, and sometimes a longer time: but even such inducements should be complied with sparingly, not eagerly caught at. Without living much at home, a minister cannot perform the several duties of his office, which recur almost every day, in such a manner as can either give full satisfaction to his own mind, or yield the greatest benefit to his people. To wander often abroad on needless visits or amusement, exposes a minister to the contempt of his people, alienates their affections, and impairs his

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\* Stillingfleet, *Eccles. Cas.* 1. p. 23. Cas. 2. p. 158. Cas. 3. p. 213. Burnet's *Past. Care*, ch. v. vi. Secker, *Charge* 1. Cant.

his usefulness. But to be always at hand, to advise, direct, and inform them, to comfort the afflicted and diseased, to awe the disorderly, to give countenance to the well-behaved, to reconcile their differences, to promote friendly offices, to procure relief for the indigent, to answer quickly and regularly the several calls which they may have occasion to make upon him, will endear a minister to his people, and add an incredible force to all his instructions<sup>u</sup>.

On the same principles it is the duty of a minister, to keep himself as much as possible disengaged from all occupations except those belonging to his office: for the proper and careful performance of its duties, together with the studies requisite for that purpose, and the attention which his own worldly affairs render indispensable, will be sufficient to fill up all his time. No doubt there are cases which ought to be excepted. Teaching in any useful line is congenial to the proper business of a clergyman; some clergymen are well qualified for it, and in situations which put it in their power; and by engaging in it no farther than is really consistent with all their pastoral duties, they may not only innocently render their condition more comfortable, but employ their time  
laudably,

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<sup>u</sup> Stillingsfleet, *Eccles. Cas.* 1. p. 23. *Cas.* 2. p. 158. *Cas.* 3. p. 213. Secker, *Charge* 1. *Cant.*

laudably, improve themselves, be highly useful to society, and even be kept more constantly at hand for attendance upon their parochial functions. If a clergyman understand medicine, he may practise it in his neighbourhood to a certain degree, without drawing him off from these functions: and by this may not only better his circumstances, and do much good to the bodies of men, but also give assistance to such as could not otherwise have procured it, multiply his opportunities of addressing his people as a minister, and render them well disposed to listen to his addresses on subjects of religion. Some degree of attention to business, particularly in the way of agriculture, the situation of most clergymen renders necessary: but it can never be proper to extend it beyond what is necessary. If they engage so far in any secular employment as to be immersed in it, they cannot have leisure for all the duties which are incumbent on them, they will contract a turn of mind unfavourable to their always entering heartily into them, and there is a risk, that it may put them on doing some things which will not be deemed perfectly consistent with the purity and dignity of their character, and which will, on that account, render them less acceptable and useful in their proper station v.

That a minister may perform the several duties which we have enumerated, it is plainly necessary  
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v Stillingfleet, Eccles. Cas. 2. p. 157.

for him to be often in the company of his people, and to live in familiarity with them: and his performing these duties, on all fit occasions, when he is in their company, will prevent all bad consequences from his familiarity. To be often in their company, joining in their amusements, falling in with the trifling, or 'conniving at the blameable conversation in which they frequently engage, will very easily produce an excessive familiarity of the worst tendency. It cannot fail to destroy that respect and esteem which it is absolutely necessary for him to maintain, in order to give weight to his ministrations. But when, instead of that, he takes every opportunity of introducing useful conversation, of enlarging and correcting their knowledge, of exciting them to their duty and directing them in it, of giving them consolation, of doing them good offices; he may be very often in their company, not only without breeding any inconvenient familiarity, but so as to raise their esteem, and increase their love to him. If some of them should have even entertained prejudices against him, he will, by this means, most effectually wear them off: when they find him thus solicitous for their improvement and salvation, they will drop them of their own accord, and labour to make amends for them, by the warmth of their affection.

## C H A P. III.

*Public Duties, respecting a whole Parish.*

## SECT. I.

*Of Preaching.*

AS we are now come to the public duties of the pastoral office, we shall begin with Preaching, both because it will require a fuller consideration than the rest, and because, being one very considerable mean of instruction, it is nearest akin to the private duties, which we have hitherto chiefly illustrated. Preaching is so natural a method of teaching, is so often enjoined in the New Testament, and is so fully recommended by the example of our Saviour and his apostles, that it has always been acknowledged an important part of the office of a minister; and therefore it will be unnecessary to spend time in proving that it is incumbent on him. Nor do we propose to lay before you a complete system of the rules of preaching, deduced from the general principles of composition, or traced up to their source in the constitution of human nature. We shall content ourselves with proposing some of the principal rules of it, in such a way as may both convince you of their  
justness,

justness, and render them easily applicable to practice.

We shall not attempt any precise general definition of Preaching; it might be difficult to contrive one which would fully take in all its varieties; and the consideration of these varieties will supersede the necessity of it. It is plain that Preaching is the delivering a discourse, which tends to promote the salvation of mankind, by instructing them in the knowledge of their duty, and exciting them to the practice of it, and to the love of goodness. This being its design, "it is certainly," to use the words of Bishop Burnet, "a noble and profitable exercise, if rightly gone about; of great use both to the priest and people, by obliging the one to much study and labour, and by setting before the other full and copious discoveries of divine matters, opening them clearly, and pressing them weightily upon them. It has also now gained such esteem in the world, that a clergyman cannot maintain his credit, nor bring his people to a constant attendance on the worship of God, unless he is happy in these performances<sup>w</sup>."

The general end of Preaching, the promoting the religious and moral improvement of mankind, all preachers have professed to aim at, though they have taken very different methods, and

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<sup>w</sup> Burnet's Pastoral Care, ch. ix.

and the fashion of Preaching has, like all other fashions, undergone many changes. In the beginning of Christianity, Preaching was extremely simple; it consisted almost wholly of plain practical exhortations; it has since been sometimes joined with all the ornaments of rhetoric, and sometimes with all the subtlety of scholastic philosophy. In the dark ages, it was little else than panegyric on the Romish saints: after the Reformation, it was employed about the doctrines and duties of religion, but with too great a mixture of controversy: the several changes which it has since undergone, may be traced in the sermons to which there is easy access. It would be curious and entertaining to trace it through the various forms it has assumed, and to point out its most considerable revolutions. But a complete history of this would be long; and so far as it is either necessary or proper to hint at it, we shall have occasion to take notice of some of the most remarkable forms of Preaching, in illustrating its particular rules.

Preaching is one sort of public speaking; the eloquence of the pulpit is one branch of eloquence. A preacher differs from one who speaks in the senate or at the bar, only in the subject which he treats, and in the end which he pursues. These differences will occasion some varieties in the manner of speaking which he is to use; but still the peculiar rules of Preaching arise from the general principles

principles of eloquence, the same principles which are the source of all other sorts of composition. A particular comparison of the eloquence of the pulpit with that of the bar or the senate, in order to discover their agreements and their differences, would be curious, and might illustrate all of them ; but it is not so absolutely necessary to our present design, as to require our entering on a full discussion of it. We shall only remark in general, that on account of their agreements and analogy, many of the rules laid down by the ancients for the bar or the senate, are applicable to the pulpit ; but in applying them to it, judgement must be employed, on account of the circumstances in which they differ. It would be easy, from the comparison we have hinted at, to deduce the superior importance of christian oratory to all other kinds, both in respect of its subject and its end ; to point out the advantages which the christian orator has above all others, from the sublimity and moment of the topics on which he insists, and of the motives which he urges ; and to show the disadvantages under which he lies, in comparison with others, particularly from the spiritual nature of the subjects on which he insists, and from its being his business to excite men, not to some one action, which may be performed immediately, but to a general course of behaviour. But these things you will be able to prosecute, if you find it necessary, by yourselves.

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The ancient rhetoricians distinguished orations into three kinds, the nature and rules of which they delivered very particularly: 1. Deliberative, which were employed about something future, about what was to be done; and for these, there were frequent opportunities in the senate and popular assemblies in Greece and Rome, where public measures were concerted and resolved upon. Such orations aimed either at *persuading* to, or *dissuading* from, certain actions or conduct; and the topics on which they turned were, the honour or dishonour, the justice or injustice, the advantage or disadvantage, of the measures proposed. Many sermons might be reduced to this class; all such as aim at persuading to virtue in general, or to any particular virtue, from its obligations, its excellence, its advantages here and hereafter, or at dissuading from vice, by the opposite topics. 2. Judicial, which regarded the past, and belonged to the criminal courts; they were employed in accusing or in defending, and made use both of facts and arguments for these purposes. Sermons which are employed in defending any character approved in scripture from objections that have been raised against it, are of the same kind with judicial orations. So are all sermons, in some measure, whose business it is to vindicate religion in general, or any particular doctrine or duty which has been attacked as unreasonable, absurd, unworthy of God, hurtful to men; or to expose any error or vice which has been recommended under the opposite

site views; only these latter have things for their objects, not, like the former, persons. 3. Demonstrative, which relate to something present, and are employed either in praise or blame. They were employed in panegyrics on the excellence of persons, characters, conduct, laws, forms of government, or whatever could admit of an eucium; and likewise, in invectives against persons or things of an opposite nature. Of this kind were all their funeral orations on eminent persons, orations in meetings for the choice of fit persons for offices, or for continuing or repealing laws. To this class may be reduced sermons on the excellence of any great character recorded in scripture, on the excellence of Christianity, or of any particular doctrine or virtue, or on the deformity of vice. As the best rules for eloquence are to be found in the writings of the ancient rhetoricians, and as they apply their rules particularly to orations, according to this division of them, it may be useful for you to consider, how far, and in what respects, sermons are analogous to these species of orations; for so far as they are, all the rules of the ancients regarding each kind, will be applicable for your direction in the composition of sermons. But this division is plainly adapted to the several ends of speaking and sorts of discourses, for which the constitutions of Greece and Rome gave opportunity; it gives not the most natural view of the variety of pulpit discourses, though it may be in some measure accommodated

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to this; and therefore we shall arrange them under a different division.

As eloquence, considered in its largest extent, is the art of speaking so as to attain the end which a man pursues; so from the variety of the ends which may be attained by speaking, the most natural division of eloquence may be deduced. Now a man can scarcely be supposed to aim at any end, but one or other of these; to instruct, to convince, to please, to move, or to persuade. A man who aims at instructing or at convincing, addresses himself, though in different ways, to the understanding; he who aims at pleasing, addresses himself to the imagination; he who wants to move, to the passions; and he who wants to persuade, to the will. All these ends are allowed in some sort of composition or another; and from that end, the rules of that composition, which are no more than the proper means of promoting its main design, flow as from their source. But, from the nature of Preaching, all these ends are scarcely allowable in it. Some of them can never be in it pursued for their own sakes, or ultimately, though they may be used as means to something farther; and therefore will not come in, in determining the kinds of pulpit discourses.

To please, is an end which can scarcely ever be ultimate to a preacher. A poet may be allowed to rest in pleasing his readers, by presenting to their

imaginations all that is sublime and beautiful, by the novelty of his thoughts, and the harmony of his numbers. This is indeed the sole end of pure poetry or description, as distinguished from other kinds of composition; and it aims at nothing but in subservience to this end. If it convey just and striking sentiments, if it move the passions, and agitate the soul with various emotions, it is only as a mean to prevent disgust, and to heighten the delight. But it is only a small part even of poetry, that rests wholly satisfied with giving pleasure. The epic, the tragic, and all the greater kinds of poetry, aim at something beyond it, and aim at giving pleasure only as subordinate to instructing, moving, or persuading. And if poets themselves generally aim at a farther end than pleasure or amusement, much more ought an orator constantly to look beyond it: or, if it were allowable for the orator at the bar or in the senate sometimes to aim only at pleasing, at exciting the admiration of men, at setting off his own ingenuity and parts, and raising his reputation; yet even on that supposition it could not be allowable in the preacher. His function is so important, the character he sustains is so grave and sacred, the subjects of which he treats are so momentous, that it is inexcusable to spend any part of the time which men allow for their being instructed in religion, and excited to the duties of it, in merely amusing them with ingenious thoughts and gaudy figures. If a preacher only dazzle his hearers with the  
brightness

brightness of his sentiments, the vivacity of his turns, or the beauty and propriety of his language, he is a mere declaimer. A preacher ought never to be actuated by a fond desire to please, in any of his performances. All true eloquence is fit to please ; but pleasing is not its true or ultimate end. It may however be allowed, that there is one way in which the christian orator may properly enough aim at pleasing ; he may endeavour to raise admiration of a virtuous character or action. Admiration is one species of pleasure ; it is not, properly speaking, a passion, but a sentiment belonging to the imagination ; and the raising of admiration is the only way in which a preacher can be allowed, professedly and mainly, to address the imagination of his hearers.

It is very seldom too, that moving can be the ultimate end of a pulpit discourse. It is indeed often necessary to move the passions in Preaching, but not merely for the sake of moving them. The passions are the great springs of action : in order to persuade men to any course, it is always necessary that the passions be moved, engaged, and directed to their proper objects ; but they may sometimes be moved, without tending in any degree to persuasion ; and when this is the case, to move them is not properly Preaching. There is but one case in which a sermon can properly rest in this ; when it is designed to excite certain affections, which are to be immediately exerted in the performance of

some religious duty. When a sermon is intended to be a preparation for the right performance of that religious duty, it may be allowable to point the whole of it at raising, to a great degree of fervour, the devout affections suitable to that duty. Of this kind is what is called an Action sermon. But even in this case, as the devout affections which should be raised tend directly to practice; as the raising them to a considerable height tends to render them habitually prevalent; and as the religious duty in which they are exerted is a noble instrument of virtuous practice, and directly subservient to it; the discourse may be considered as not wholly resting in moving the passions, but tends in some measure to persuasion, and therefore may be included in that class, of which this is the main and ultimate end. Thus, in dividing pulpit discourses, it is not necessary to make a distinct branch of those which aim at moving the passions.

On these principles, we may divide all pulpit discourses into four kinds: 1. Such as aim at instruction or explication. 2. Such as aim at convincing men of truth. 3. Such as aim at raising admiration of a virtuous character or action. 4. Such as aim at persuading men to goodness.

ART. I. *Of Instructive or Explicatory Discourses.*

THE first sort of pulpit discourses are instructive or explicatory discourses. They are addressed to the understanding, to our powers of perception or apprehension. Their design is simply to make the hearers comprehend or know the nature and extent of the subject. They may be reduced to different kinds, according to the different subjects which it properly belongs to a preacher to explain. These subjects are three: 1. A passage of scripture. 2. A doctrine or duty of religion, 3. A character.

1. As the Christian religion is contained in the scriptures, and as it is proper that every Christian should be able to read the scriptures with understanding, the explication of a particular passage of scripture is often a fit subject of a discourse from the pulpit. This kind of discourse is already marked out by the name of a Lecture, though we must extend this name a little beyond ordinary use, in order to take in all the discourses that properly belong to this head. It is commonly reckoned a discourse on a large passage of scripture; for the most part, it should be so; but the extent of the passage is not essential to the idea of a lecture. A lecture is any discourse designed to explain the import of a particular passage of scripture. Now, some passages of scripture are difficult;

cult; others are easy and practical. Hence will arise two kinds of lectures, which we may call, for distinction, critical, and practical.

The main design of a critical lecture is to give a distinct view of the meaning of a passage of scripture. In order to explain it, it is first of all necessary, to find out the general design and scope of the passage; for a clear view of this will throw great light upon all the parts; and by exhibiting a distinct comprehension of this to the audience, they will be enabled to enter into all the particular illustrations, and to perceive their whole force. If, for example, a Psalm be the subject of lecture; when we can find out the author of it, the occasion on which he composed it, his situation when he composed it, what he had in view by it; this will of itself often illustrate many of the expressions, show the propriety of the sentiments, give them a peculiar force and beauty, and render the whole a lively picture of the author's soul, of the different emotions to which he was subject, of their conflicts with each other, and of the sentiments and affections which prevailed and chiefly influenced him. Whatever place of scripture be pitched on, there is the same need for considering the scope and occasion. It were easy to point out many passages in the Gospels, where a different view of the general design will lead to very different explications of the particulars; and where, without fixing on the design, it is impossible to give  
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any tolerable, or consistent explication of them at all. In the Epistles, it is still more necessary; for sometimes a whole Epistle, and always a large portion of an Epistle, is a chain of reasoning all tending to one point, either confirming or illustrating it; and not to consider it in this light, is to miss the whole meaning of the writer. You need only look into any good commentator on any paragraph of an Epistle, to be convinced how much the understanding, and, by consequence, the explaining of it depends on perceiving the general scope. There are indeed some parts of scripture in which no connection is preserved, but almost all the sentences are unconnected, as particularly the book of Proverbs; and there it is sufficient to attend to the scope of each distinct aphorism.

It will follow from the observation that has been already made, that it is proper to lecture on the scriptures in the order in which they lie, or on a book regularly from beginning to end; except the Psalms, which being separate pieces, and not ranged in the order in which they were written, may be explained with equal propriety in almost any order; for each may be considered as a distinct book. But in other parts of scripture, it is by thus going regularly through a whole book that we can follow the scope of the author, and unfold it gradually to the hearers, with all that is said in order to promote it. In going through any book of scripture, one will sometimes come to verses which are plain

enough to be understood by all. It is enough to read these, without attempting any explication of them; for this would both waste time needlessly, and make the people imagine, either that they were obscure, or that the preacher trifled. If a verse contain any expressions that are obscure, it is necessary, in explaining it, to ascertain the meaning of these expressions, either from other places of scripture where they are used, or by other easy and convincing means. If any of the expressions be metaphorical, it is proper to point out from what the metaphor is taken, what is the force of it, and how it is applied to the present subject. The meaning of every difficult expression should be represented in as plain terms as possible. This is often the first step towards an explication of a verse. But a preacher must not rest here; for it is not enough to find out the meaning of a single expression; it is necessary to show the force which it has in that particular place, and how, in conjunction with the other expressions, it tends to make up the meaning of the whole. It is a great fault in lecturing, to enlarge on every single expression, as if it were a complete sense, and to raise doctrines and observations from it in this way. This is not to analyze the scripture, but to mangle it; it is not to explain it, but to play with it, to speak about it and about it, to wrest and distort it. When any obscure expressions which occur in a verse are explained, it is next proper, putting the explication of them, or plainer words in the place of  
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of them, to express the sense of the whole verse or whole clause, as clearly, as shortly, and as strikingly as possible. If the verse be a simple, complete, and unconnected sense, no more is necessary for the explication of it. If it be a proposition laid down to be proved or illustrated, this must be expressly taken notice of, that it may be kept in view, and that the view of it may throw light on all the arguments or illustrations produced in support of it. If it be a part of a chain of reasoning, or an argument or illustration of any particular point, then, after the general sense of it is unfolded, its force for proving the point in hand, or its influence in illustrating it, must be shown; for this is absolutely necessary for explaining it as it there stands. It often happens in scripture, that a particular passage expresses some affection or temper of the person who writes it. In this case, it cannot be truly explained by unfolding, in the clearest manner, the import of every expression. This would be only to represent the dead carcase of the sentiment, but to miss the soul or spirit of it. A preacher should endeavour to paint the affection expressed, to the life, and to transfuse it into his hearers. This is the case particularly in the Psalms, and in all the places of scripture which are devotional. This is no more than entering into the spirit of the author, which is confessedly, in every case, necessary for explaining him. In lectures to a congregation, a display of  
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critical knowlege is always improper ; it is enough that the preacher proceed upon the principles of genuine criticism ; he should seldom lay open these principles to the congregation, for they cannot enter into them, and will rather be perplexed by them. For the same reason, it is improper to mention a number of different explications of a passage. It is generally best to give them the explication that appears to be most probable, without troubling them with any other, which would both confound them, and perhaps lead them to think the sense of scripture uncertain. In lecturing, every thing should be expressed as shortly as possible, for thus it will be best remembered ; and as clearly as possible, for this is necessary to explication, the chief means of promoting which is perspicuity.

A lecture is a discourse which admits very little ornament, very little of address either to the imagination or the passions. But it sometimes even requires a little of both. As much as is necessary to preserve attention is absolutely requisite, and attention can scarcely be preserved, where neither the imagination is in any degree gratified, nor the passions roused. But sometimes the nature of the passage to be explained, demands more. When it abounds with images, for instance, it is best explained by unfolding them, and making them more striking to the fancy. When it expresses  
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any passion or temper, it is best explained by displaying that, and infusing it by sympathy into the hearers.

The lectures which we have termed critical, may be subdivided into two sorts: 1. Such as are explications of a large portion of scripture. These are now commonly called lectures. They are the more necessary in our church, because they are now the only thing we have in place of public reading of the scriptures, which, in opposition to our own directory, they have unhappily justled out. In discourses of this sort, it was formerly remarked to be proper, to explain a book regularly throughout. For every distinct lecture, a distinct and complete paragraph or sense should be chosen. It is always proper to add to the explication of the verses, such practical reflections and exhortations as naturally arise from them. These ought not, in general, to be mixed with the explication, because it would break the connection, and keep the force of the whole from being perceived. It is better to subjoin them to the explication; for thus it will best appear that they are founded in the passage, and they can be prosecuted together, and without interruption. It sometimes happens, that one paragraph is too short for a lecture, and that two or three can be comprehended in it. Then, the reflections arising from one of the paragraphs may be subjoined immediately to the explication of that paragraph, before  
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proceeding to the explication of another. For, such a discourse is, in reality, two or more distinct lectures put together. 2. Such as are explications of one verse or two, which contain some considerable difficulties. These are lectures, according to the definition we have given; for their design is the explication of a part of scripture; and all the rules which we have laid down, are as applicable to them as to the former sort. An Exercise and addition is a discourse of this sort, when it is properly pursued; not spent in an useless grammatical analysis of the words, but employed in a true critical explication of them. Only it is plain, that when such a discourse is brought to the pulpit, it must not be filled with the words of the original language. Making allowance for this circumstance, many of Clarke's discourses are of this sort, and very proper models for them. In a discourse of this kind, the meaning of the words should be first cleared up; then, the doctrine which they truly contain, should be proposed and briefly illustrated; and then, the use and improvement of that doctrine should be shortly pointed out. The proper subject for such a discourse is a text, which at once is difficult, and contains some important and useful doctrine. Discourses of this sort will naturally be interspersed with those of the former kind; for in every book, one will now and then meet with a difficult verse, which requires a particular explication. And as, on the one hand, it is contrary to the design of lecturing to spend more  
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time than is necessary in explaining a clear passage ; so, on the other hand, it would be wrong, when a difficult passage occurs, not to allow it the time that is really necessary for explaining it.

Every part of scripture is intended either to illustrate and enforce our duty, or to explain and confirm some doctrine of religion ; and as all the doctrines of religion are subservient to practice, and are proposed as motives to our duty, we may justly say that every part of scripture is fit to influence our practice. On this account practical reflections are, as we have observed, an essential part even of a critical lecture. But there are many passages of scripture which are extremely plain in themselves, and need very little explication : these are the proper subjects for that species of lecturing which we have termed practical. Some of the rules of critical lectures, already laid down, are likewise applicable to these : for instance, it is necessary to observe the general design and scope of the passage. Even in a plain passage, there are generally some expressions that need to be explained. These should be first of all explained, according to the rules already mentioned. After this, the practical observations which arise from the passage, should be prosecuted. In prosecuting them, two things are necessary ; first, to show that each observation is founded on the passage ; and next, to illustrate the observation itself, and apply it to practice. There are many parts of scripture  
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fit for such lectures. Thus many historical passages are so easy, that very little is necessary for clearing up the narration; and that little may often be best done by giving the substance of the history in modern language, and even with greater brevity than it lies in the passage. After that is done, a preacher should point out, with what view such a passage of history is recorded, to what end we may apply it, what lessons we may learn from it; and in pointing out this, may very properly spend the greatest part of the discourse. The parables of our Saviour also are extremely proper subjects of practical lectures. It is at least, in general, proper first to explain the whole story or similitude in its literal sense, so far as it needs to be explained, that thus the whole import of it may be seen at once. This literal explication of the verses will generally be extremely short. But it is best to give it altogether; it will afford an opportunity of showing the propriety, the beauty, and the real occasion of many of the circumstances which are supposed or related; it will likewise tend to prevent a fault which is very common in explaining parables, but a fault which ought to be carefully avoided; I mean, the drawing a moral from every circumstance or incident of the parable. This fault has in a great measure arisen from giving the meaning and intention of the parable as one proceeded, verse by verse, which obliged him to contrive something designed by every circumstance; though it is plain that many circumstances are added, merely to render  
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the literal story probable, or for ornament, but have nothing answering to them in the moral. And it were easy to give many instances of strange mystical explications which have been devised from some circumstances of our Saviour's parables. In general, it is proper first of all to explain the parable itself, as if it were a literal story, and had no farther meaning, so far as it needs explication in this way; and it is proper that this be a continued explication, not interrupted by pointing out the meaning of any part of it, at least in most cases. After this is done, we must next explain the real design and intention of the similitude, and propose the instructions which it was designed to convey. When these are proposed after the whole explication, the same fault must be avoided which we have already taken notice of. We are often, especially young men, apt to be greatly pleased with finding some mystical sense in every circumstance. To allegorise them all has an appearance of ingenuity, and therefore gratifies; but it is always merely fanciful and uncertain, and therefore should be avoided. It is always faulty to refine in this manner, to found doctrines or to squeeze maxims from every incident in a figurative discourse. It is necessary to distinguish the circumstances which are brought in merely to fill up or adorn the narration, from those which are essential to the parable. Attention to the occasion of the parable, or to the run of the incidents, or to the reflections made on it, will enable us to distinguish

guish between these. We must draw the moral only from the latter, and inculcate the instruction which the parable was plainly designed to convey. As all our Saviour's parables were originally addressed to the Jews, most of them were designed to convey some instruction, which their particular circumstances rendered necessary. It is proper always to take notice what this instruction was, because the view of it adds greatly to the force and beauty of the parable. Sometimes it will be best to exhibit the whole import of the parable with respect to the Jews together, and afterwards to show what instruction it conveys to all Christians. Sometimes again, when the instructions conveyed by a parable are pretty much distinct, it will be better to consider each instruction separately, as directed first to the Jews, and then as applicable to Christians. But still, whichever of these ways be chosen, the principal part of a lecture on a parable should be inculcating on the auditory the instructions which it conveys. In prosecuting the instructions that arise from a parable, it has always a peculiar beauty, to introduce only such allusions, similitudes, and illustrations, as have an analogy to the circumstances of the parable. This prevents a confusion of metaphors and figures: it makes the whole appear to rise naturally from the parable: it serves to inculcate the whole with the greater force. You will find models of the manner of explaining parables which we have recommended, in Tillotson's discourses on the parable of the ten virgins,

virgins, and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. I shall mention only one other subject proper for this sort of lecture, which we have termed practical, the book of Proverbs. Some of the apothegms there need a critical explication; but in explaining all of them, the principal thing to be done is to represent the sentiment or maxim which each contains, in a strong and striking light, so that it may affect and touch the hearers. And as they are all separate practical sayings, there is scarcely any need of general reflections at the end of a lecture on several of them.

A practical, as well as a critical lecture, may be sometimes made on a single verse, or a small portion of scripture. A discourse on a single verse is always properly a practical lecture, when it is not a prosecution of some one subject, but is intended to explain or enforce all the instructions which are implied in the several members of the verse. Thus every discourse, prosecuted in what is called the textual method, is properly a lecture, either of the critical or the practical sort, or often a mixture of both. A sermon, as distinguished from these, is the prosecution of some one subject, in some or other of the ways that will be afterwards explained.

2. Lectures are confined to an explication of the scriptures; but there are other subjects which it is necessary to explain. A second kind of expli-

catory discourses is such as are intended to open up or illustrate a particular doctrine or duty of religion. It is absolutely necessary that a doctrine be understood, before it can be believed. It is absolutely necessary that a duty be understood, before it can be practised. It is therefore proper that discourses be often employed in explaining both. A subject of this kind is either simple or complex; a regard must be had to this distinction in explaining it.

Some simple subjects are at the same time so easy and well known, that any explication of them is unnecessary; it cannot make them plainer; and in that case, it would be mere trifling. All our natural passions, as joy, grief, love, hatred, are known to every one by immediate feeling, and cannot be made clearer by any verbal explication; all that can be done is to refer the hearers to what they feel. In discoursing on these passions, it may indeed be necessary and proper to point out the several views which the scripture gives of them, the objects which it presents to them, the good purposes which they answer, or the abuses to which they are liable; but all this is different from explaining the passion itself. When a simple subject needs explication, or can be made clearer by it, the explication may be performed by a definition marking precisely what it is. The rules of definition are given in logic, and have their foundation in nature. 1. It should be short. 2. It should be

be perspicuous; and therefore both obscure and metaphorical terms should be avoided in it. 3. It should be exact, so that the definition may be substituted for the name of the thing defined; it must on the one hand exhaust the subject, and, on the other hand, include nothing but what belongs to it. A simple subject may be farther explained, by distinguishing it from some other with which it is naturally connected or nearly allied, and with which it may therefore readily be confounded. Thus kindness, meekness, and placability, are virtues near a-kin, and yet really distinct. A person may have a very warm and affectionate disposition, and yet not possess meekness, which is a calmness in opposition to anger, and not easily ruffled even by great provocations; and a man may possess this temper, and yet not be placable, but unrelenting, when once provoked. Things which have no natural connection often acquire an artificial connection, or become so related in the opinions of men, that they are as readily confounded as if they had been naturally connected; and consequently it is as necessary to distinguish them. The power of education, custom, example, the ignorance, the weakness, and the passions of men, lead them to form many unjust associations; and on no subject more frequently than on religion and morality, where it is also most dangerous. To break these associations, to separate things which are totally distinct and yet often confounded, is a point of great importance in discourses calculated

lated for the religious improvement of mankind. Thus religion is often confounded with superstition; yet they are very different. Superstition represents God as a capricious being, pleased with insignificant ceremonies and abstinence from indifferent things, and severe on the neglect of them. True religion must be carefully distinguished from this; it is the very reverse; it consists in having just conceptions of the divine nature and perfections, in exercising such devout affections as correspond to these, and in exerting them both in external devotion and obedience to his will. Thus zeal for truth and goodness, and virtuous indignation against vice, are often confounded with, and therefore must be explained as perfectly distinct from, a settled sourness or violence of temper, and hatred of men's persons for difference in opinions or ceremonies. In the imaginations of some, pride, which consists in a high opinion of one's own talents and endowments, and leads to resent the sentiments of others concerning him, when they fall below this standard, is connected and confounded with greatness of mind, which is totally different, which consists in a freedom from all mean passions, little designs, and interested views. On the other hand, humility is by some confounded with littleness of soul and meanness of spirit; but no two things are more different. Humility arises from a just sense of our own imperfection, of the narrowness of our understanding, of the defects of our knowledge, of the weakness of our

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our virtues ; and it is never found except in those who have conceived a high standard of perfection and virtue, and who, from frequent self-reflection, are conscious that they fall below it. But the forming of such a high standard is so far from having any tendency to produce meanness or littleness of mind, that on the contrary, it has the strongest tendency to wear it off, to exalt our aims, to cherish whatever is great or worthy, and to raise us gradually nearer to the standard which we have conceived. Thus again, envy and emulation are often confounded, and must be distinguished ; the former is an uneasiness at the superiority of others, producing a desire that they may be brought down to our level, or below it ; the latter is a noble ardour for attaining excellence, leading us only to improve ourselves. A simple subject may be explained, not only by a definition, and by distinguishing it from others with which it is apt to be confounded, but also by description. A thing that cannot be defined, may notwithstanding be described ; and after a subject has been defined, it may be illustrated. A subject may be described or illustrated in many different ways. Many things are very properly described by their effects. The divine perfections cannot be conceived by us abstractly, as they exist in God ; they are conceived only by means of their effects, and as showing themselves in these ; and it is by properly pointing out their effects in the works and ways of God, that they can be explained.

plaining a thing by its effects, the most striking and interesting of them should be selected; this will render the explication animated and spirited. Such principal and leading effects likewise should be chosen, as include or suggest many particulars; this will prevent tediousness of illustration, and render it full in a consistence with brevity. In particular, any virtue or vice cannot be more properly explained, than by pointing out how it shows itself in human life. This may be done by examples taken from history, especially from the sacred history; or it may be done by pointing out how it shows itself in the different situations of life; for instance, humility may be explained, by pointing out how it will lead us to behave to those who are our inferiors, our equals, or our superiors, in knowlege, in religious improvement, in rank, in age, or in character; this will give a full and the most practical view of the subject. A simple subject may be farther explained by comparison with others nearly related to it, or in any respect analogous to it, but better known, or better defined. A subject may likewise be illustrated by contrasting it with its opposite; for opposites set by one another, mutually illustrate and throw light on each other. Humility and pride, temperance and intemperance, piety and impiety, when opposed in their natures and their effects, on the persons themselves or on others, will by this means be better understood. It must be observed, that all these methods of explication are not necessarily to be



be united on every subject; but a person's own judgement must direct him, which of them is proper on each particular subject, as he has occasion to treat it.

The second kind of subjects for explication is complex, or such a subject as is made up of different parts into which it may be distinguished. In this case, whether a doctrine or a duty be the subject to be explained, it is first of all necessary for the explication, that the several parts or branches of it be pointed out distinctly, and in a natural order. Distinctness and order are necessary in every kind of discourse; but they are above all necessary here, where information is the ultimate end. If the parts be confusedly jumbled together, or if the subject be not distributed into its natural and complete members, or if the several members be not exhibited in their natural order and succession, the discourse can convey only an imperfect, or a confused idea of the doctrine or the duty. The principal rules of a just division are three.

1. It should be complete; the several parts taken together should exhaust the subject. For example, if we should divide all practical religion into the duties which we owe to God, and those which we owe to our neighbour, the division would be faulty; for there is a third class distinct from both these, the duties which we owe to ourselves.
2. In a just division, all the parts should be distinct and separate, so that no one of them be included in another.

other. 3. The parts should succeed each other in a natural order; the simplest and most fundamental going before the others, and rising step by step through these others. For example, in explaining the love of God in the most extensive sense, to find out the natural order of the parts, we may reflect on what passes in our minds towards a person whom we esteem and love, a person of high abilities with whom we are connected by some degree of dependence, and from whose favour we expect some advantages. To such an one we will feel, 1. High esteem of his talents and virtues; 2. A propensity to think often and to speak honourably of them; 3. Desire of his happiness and joy in it; 4. Desire of his approbation and pleasure in possessing it; 5. Gratitude for his favours; 6. Confidence in him. This may be easily transferred to God. If the first of these were placed any where else, the division would be confused; for esteem is the foundation of all the rest. When the subject is thus properly divided into its parts, each part should be prosecuted according to the rules already mentioned for the explication of a simple subject.

It were easy to produce many examples both of a proper and improper order in explaining doctrines or duties. But you will easily be convinced of the necessity of the former, and of the inconveniences of the latter, without our spending time in producing examples. The best means of leading you  
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into a proper order in composing on any particular subject, is a thorough understanding of that subject, and of the dependence of its several parts. This will enable you to throw them into that order, in which they will reflect greatest light on one another. On some subjects, however, different orders in arranging the parts may be equally natural, and each may have some advantages. For example, in explaining religion in general, as consisting of three kinds of duties, we may begin with the duties to ourselves, which are simple and easily comprehended; as self-government, or a due command of our sensual appetites, so that they may not lead us into gratifications prejudicial to our health, vigour, reputation, or fortune; and of anger, resentment, and other passions destructive of the peace of our minds; attention to the improvement of our rational powers, and the prosecution of our most important, our spiritual and eternal interest. Next, the duties which arise from our connection with other men, with individuals, with a family, or with larger societies. Next, the duties incumbent on us as members of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ. And lastly, those which belong to us as creatures, as subjects of God's rational kingdom. Or, we may observe the contrary order, beginning with our duties to God, and descending to the inferior duties. The former gives the most easy view of the subject, as the first steps are simple, and prepare the way for the comprehension of the succeeding ones; the latter may give

give the completest view of each part, as founded in the authority of God. The former would be the proper order in instructing a person totally unacquainted with the subject; for it would be impossible to give him an idea of love, reverence, and gratitude to God, without having first taught him to observe the motions of his heart towards men; the latter will, perhaps, give the most solid and comprehensive view of the subject, to one who has already a general acquaintance with it.

When I speak of distributing the subject to be explained, into its natural members, I do not mean to recommend a multiplicity of dry divisions and subdivisions. This custom, unknown to the ancient orators, and to all the Christian preachers of the first ages, was introduced by the scholastics. It often gives only a seeming order to the discourse, but really mangles and breaks it; by following it too much, a preacher does not, like a skilful anatomist, separate his discourse into its proper parts; but, like a butcher, cuts it out into a number of pieces. A division is more necessary in an explicatory sermon, than in any other. But even here, a simple and natural division of the doctrine or duty into its general parts is sufficient; and subdivisions generally break the subject and clog the memory. It is much better that without them every part be placed in its natural situation. Both in dividing and in prosecuting the explication of a subject, all scholastic terms and method should be avoided.

avoided. A preacher should not explain a doctrine or duty, by the technical terms of metaphysicians, but as much as possible, in the language of common sense, and in the words of scripture. He should not divide it in the forced method of the logical topics, but in the natural way that will convey such a conception of it, as may tend to influence practice.

The design of an explicatory discourse being to inform the understanding, there can be in it no direct or professed proofs of the truth of the doctrine, or arguments for the duty, which is the subject of it; the whole is designed for explication. By considering, therefore, what is implied in explication, or what is necessary for accomplishing it, we may perceive the nature of an explicatory discourse. Now, it is plain that every particular included in a doctrine or duty, must be clearly expressed, and spread out as it were. It must likewise be shown, that every particular introduced, is really included in that doctrine or duty; and that it arises from the preceding and is subservient to the succeeding parts of it; and thus, reasoning is introduced on the several particulars of a doctrine or duty, even in an explicatory discourse, though not on the truth of the general doctrine, or obligation of the whole duty.

Explication, from its very nature, admits very little of address to the imagination or the passions.

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But it does not exclude it altogether. Even in explaining a doctrine, comparisons, metaphors, and all other figures which serve for illustration, are very naturally introduced. The explication of a duty admits something more. It is the design of an explicatory sermon, not so much to give a dry analysis of a duty, which would enable a moralist to comprehend distinctly all that it includes, as to give a striking view of it in its whole extent, fit to influence the practice. It is its design, not so much to inform persons of what they did not know before, as to give them a lively sense of the nature of a duty generally understood. In order to answer this end, every thing that is said must be addressed, though not to the passions, yet to the feelings of mankind. This is what is properly termed, sentiment; a notion or opinion set in such a light as to touch the feelings, particularly any of the internal or reflex senses of human nature. Every thing that is said in explaining a duty should be set in such a light as to touch the consciences of the hearers, with a sense of its beauty, propriety or obligation. This can scarcely fail to happen, if the sentiments themselves be just and true, and be expressed by the preacher so as to show that he feels them himself. For then the hearers will, by sympathy with him, conceive them strongly; and a strong conception of any duty will always produce a perception of its obligation or propriety.

3. There is likewise a third sort of explicatory discourses, in which the subject to be explained is a particular character. The two former kinds are very common; this kind is more rare, but may be sometimes used with great advantage. Butler's sermon on the character of Balaam is an example of it. Human characters are very complicated, and frequently composed of very inconsistent principles, of which one actuates a person in some parts of his conduct, and another in other parts; and sometimes all of them influence him in some degree, in the same action. Hence it becomes often difficult to form a just idea of a man's true character. Now the design of such a discourse as we have mentioned is, to unravel a particular character, and point out the operation of the different principles which are compounded in it. A character which is to be explained, ought always to be that of some person who is described, or whose history is recorded, in scripture: for otherwise, it will not be so familiar, nor can be rendered so familiar to the audience, as to make them enter into it, or easily apprehend it. It is proper to give a view of the history of the person whose character we design to explain, so far as it can throw any light upon his real character; for as it is from actions that a character appears, so the history of a person's actions is the only means by which we can investigate his character, and the principles by which he is actuated. With the history of a person's particular actions must be joined an

account of the principle and temper which each of them discovers or proceeds from, and the state of mind which they show a person to have been in at the time of doing them. By this means the hearers will be assisted in forming a just, and at the same time a lively conception of the several principles which form the character. This will prepare the way for representing, in an intelligible and striking manner, the whole character at once, with all the complication and opposition of principles which it appears to contain. The picture of the most remarkable features in a character should be attended with such observations as may account for it, and explain the combination of principles, and the degree of influence which they have in the conduct. When the character of a particular person, described in scripture, is thus plainly represented as showing itself in his particular circumstances, the hearers will, of themselves, in some measure, be able to discern how far it resembles their own. But, in order to enable them the better to discern it, and to render the description more useful, it will be proper to represent the character in a more general way, or rather to show it in a variety of lights; to point out the different forms which it assumes, the different ways in which it influences the conduct, the different degrees in which it betrays itself in common life. This will bring it home to the hearers, and apply it directly to their instruction.



Sermons of this sort will require a great knowledge of human nature ; but if they be properly executed, they may often be extremely useful. By being employed about the character of an individual, they will give both a plain and a striking view of what is the subject of them. By analysing that character, either as it is maintained through life, or as it is displayed in a particular action, they will lay open some of the most secret windings of the human heart, some of those turns of mind and temper, which have the most extensive influence upon the sentiments and practice of men.

There are many proper subjects for such discourses to be found in holy writ ; as, for example, the situation of David's mind in the matter of Uriah, the character of the proud pharisee in our Saviour's parable, and in a word, all such passages as give an opportunity of pointing out any combination of principles, any contrast of passions, or any secret and subtle workings of human nature, in the person to whom they refer.

So much for those discourses which rest in explication or instruction, and are addressed purely and ultimately to the understanding. We shall conclude with observing concerning all explicatory discourses, that, as their ultimate end is information or instruction, so their prevailing character ought to be perspicuity. It is only by this, that their end can be promoted ; and in order to  
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obtain this, the sentiments must be just and natural, disposed in a simple and regular order, set off with apt and obvious illustrations, and expressed in words plain and common in themselves, and, as much as possible, familiar to the hearers. The best way of attaining this perspicuity is to keep it constantly in view, while we are composing, as our principal aim, to be understood by the hearers. This will prevent our aiming at an ostentation of ingenuity and learning, and will make all our efforts to centre in giving a clear view of the subject. In order to this, the first requisite is, that we have a clear idea of it ourselves. This requires both a considerable exactness and extent of general knowledge, and a careful preparation for every particular subject.

ART. II. *Of Convictive or Probatory Discourses.*

The second kind of pulpit discourse is that which has for its end the proof of the truth of some doctrine of religion. This may be called a convictive or probatory discourse. It is addressed to reason, or to those powers of the mind, by which we perceive evidence, and distinguish truth from falsehood. There are many of the truths of religion, which all Christians believe; but it is often proper to exhibit the proofs even of these: for though men do not disbelieve them, a clear view of their evidence will render their belief firmer: though their belief be firm, yet a strong perception  
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of their evidence will render its influence upon the conduct greater. Thus the proofs of a God, of a Providence, of a future judgment, are very proper subjects of sermons to a christian audience, who do not doubt of any of these doctrines. As the design of preaching on them is, not so much to convince men of what they do not believe, as to strengthen the influence of a belief which they have already, a preacher is not confined altogether to the abstract and cool method of argumentation, but may very allowably throw in whatever tends to make the force of the argument better felt, or to render it fitter to touch the heart. In such sermons, therefore, a degree of ornament may be admitted, which would be very unfuitable to a philosophical examination of the evidence of principles. Were a metaphysician, for example, to produce a proof of the being of God, he would satisfy himself with giving a plain and conclusive argument for it; but a preacher should set that argument in a more popular light, exhibiting it in such a way that it may produce a sense of the divine existence, fit to remain with men, and to influence them in life. In order to this, he must turn every part of it into sentiment; he must show that he has himself a strong conviction of it, which may infect them with the same by sympathy; he must not urge the argument in general, but must in every part of it give a view of some particular existence, and a lively picture of the impressions of the creator which it bears; the same proof

which he represents so as fully to convince the understanding, he must make to strike the imagination, and to touch the heart. Whatever be the truth proposed to be proved, the christian orator will find means of setting the proofs of it in this striking light. It would be absurd to attempt a formal proof that all men are mortal; yet it is very necessary to insist on the certainty of death, to give men a striking sense of it, and to detect those causes which make it have so little influence on the generality.

Even in the most abstract reasoning, it is wrong to stay to obviate every trifling objection that may be formed against the reasoning. It retards the progress, breaks the argument, and distracts the attention. But it is still more improper, when the design of a sermon is to strengthen men's conviction of a truth which they believed before, and to render that conviction fitter for influencing practice. In this case, to introduce every objection, and stop to answer it, must perfectly chill the argument, must wholly interrupt the course of the thought, and render it unfit to operate either on the imagination or the passions. Besides, as a great part of mankind are incapable of balancing evidence, or of weighing objections and answers against each other, and perceiving the preponderance of evidence, the multiplying of objections in preaching will tend much more to perplex or raise doubts, than to remove them and strengthen conviction.

conviction. They should therefore be very sparingly introduced in such probatory discourses as are intended to give men a strong conviction or a lively sense of truths which they already believe. And by far the greatest part of probatory discourses from the pulpit ought to be of this kind. The doctrines which a preacher ought certainly to treat most frequently, are the great and important truths of natural and revealed religion. These are universally believed by those to whom he has occasion to preach. The greatest part even of the controversies that have been raised about these, among the different sects of Christians, has regarded the manner of explaining them, rather than the truth of the doctrines themselves. Yet it is necessary to remind men of the evidences of these doctrines, otherwise their assent to them will be very weak. But it is proper to handle them in the popular, sentimental, and striking manner, which we have pointed out, not in the accurate, dry method of ratiocination, which would be proper for the conviction of a person who disbelieved them.

But though this be the kind of probatory discourses for which a preacher will have most frequent occasion; yet it may sometimes be necessary to prove doctrines which are really denied by some of his hearers. When doctrines of real importance are denied, or doctrines truly pernicious and of a bad tendency in life are propagated, it becomes a very proper

end of preaching, to prove the former, and to confute the latter. There will be need for discourses of this sort much more frequently in some congregations than in others; and different situations will point out different subjects as fit to be handled in this way. But whatever be the situation in which a minister be placed, he should be careful to preach in this way no more than is absolutely necessary; for to dwell on the dry eviſtion of mere speculative and controverted points, tends to draw men too much off from practice, to lead them to place religion in speculation, and to render them fond of questions and fruitless disputes.

In such discourses two different methods may be used; the analytical, and synthetical. In the former, the point to be proved is not explicitly proposed, but the principles from which it is deducible are laid down and pursued through their several consequences, till at last the point in view appears to be evidently deducible from them. This method is not very common in sermons, and is indeed difficult; but it is very proper when the hearers are prejudiced, and leads them on, without suspicion, from one acknowledged truth to another, till at last the conclusion breaks in unexpectedly upon them. In the synthetical method, which is the most common, a proposition is explicitly laid down, and the arguments for it professedly urged. This kind likewise admits two different methods, answering to the two kinds of demonstration in  
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mathematical subjects, the direct, and the indirect. In the former, the preacher confirms the truth, by proposing the arguments for it in their natural order, by which they add greatest weight to one another. He should propose them in that point of view, in which they are least liable to the exceptions which are made against them. When they cannot be set in such a light as to be evidently not exposed to these exceptions, he must take notice of such exceptions as are most material, and show that they are invalid, and that the argument against which they seem to lie, is conclusive notwithstanding them.

Sometimes again; a probatory discourse may proceed in the indirect method of reasoning. This will be the case, when the preacher's aim is chiefly to confute error. Sometimes a false opinion is advanced, and by merely showing that the arguments produced for it are really inconclusive, the opposite truth will be sufficiently supported. Sometimes a truth is not directly denied; but it is thought to be attended with such difficulties, or liable to such objections, as weaken men's conviction of it, and make them doubtful or sceptical about it. In either of these cases, the most natural way of producing a conviction of the truth, is to proceed in the indirect way; to propose the several arguments by which the false opinion is supported, to show that they are not sufficient to prove it, that notwithstanding them, men may re-

main convinced of the opposite truth. It will thus depend on the nature of the truth that is denied, on the manner in which it is denied, and on the particular disposition of the hearers, whether it will be most effectually supported by reasoning in the direct and ostensive, or in the indirect and apologetical method. To these circumstances the preacher should attend, and by them he should be directed to the one method or the other; always taking care to choose what will be most effectual in the particular case.

In mathematical subjects, either of the kinds of demonstration is sufficient of itself; if either be used, it would be superfluous to add another of the same kind, or to subjoin a demonstration of the other kind. But religious and moral subjects are widely different. Their evidence generally not only arises from several arguments joined together, but also, there are at least appearances of argument against them. On this account, in most subjects of preaching, both the methods of eviction that have been mentioned, may be very properly united in probatory discourses from the pulpit. When the discourse proceeds chiefly in direct confirmation of the truth, by proposing the several arguments that support it, it is highly proper, not only to remove the exceptions brought to weaken the several arguments, which will be best done in prosecuting the particular argument against which they are pointed; but also, after all the arguments  
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have been profecuted in this manner, it will be very fit for the farther confirmation of the truth, to answer the arguments which are produced on the other fide, and to show either that they have no real force, or that they have not force enough to counterbalance the arguments which have been proposed before. In like manner, when the discourse has proceeded chiefly in the indirect way; after having insisted on all the arguments for the false opinion, and shown them to be inconclusive, it will add great weight to the reasoning to show next, that not only is there no solid argument for it, but that there are also strong arguments against it; that not only is there no valid objection against the truth, but also the strongest evidences for it. Hence, every probatory discourse, intended to evince a truth disbelieved or doubted by the hearers, will properly proceed both by confirmation and confutation; and the kinds of such discourses will be distinguished chiefly by the order in which these succeed each other.

Thus probatory discourses are of two kinds; such as are designed to produce a sense of truths already believed, and such as are designed to beget belief of truths formerly denied or doubted; and the latter hold chiefly either of confirmation or of confutation. We may reduce to this head a third sort of discourses; such as are employed in investigation, or in tracing out the causes of things; as, Why Christianity has not, in fact, a

greater influence on the reformation of mankind; Why men are so apt to place religion in externals; and the like. For though such discourses are not employed in proving a particular proposition by arguments, they consist principally of reasoning, in order to convince men that the causes assigned do really produce the effects taken notice of. But as the end of all these sorts is the same, conviction, so there are many rules common to them all, resulting from this their common end. These are, in general, the rules of right reasoning, which ought to be delivered fully in that part of philosophy which professes to teach the art of reasoning. We cannot here enlarge upon them all; but shall only hint at a few of the most considerable of them.

It is necessary to attend, whether the point to be proved is simple or complex; if it be complex, its several parts must be kept in view, and the arguments supporting them, according to their natural order, be regularly proposed. The arguments which prove only one part of the proposition, must be carefully separated from those which prove the whole, and reduced to different classes. If those which directly prove the several parts of the proposition, be first urged according to the natural order of these parts; such arguments as confirm the whole, will, by coming after them, be well understood, and will, as it were, collect into a point, and concentrate the conviction produced  
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by them. In other cases, it may have a good effect to begin with the general arguments, and then, such as particularly prove the several parts, will spread out and illuminate the conviction produced by the former. If the general truth to be proved is pretty well understood in the gross, and the general arguments for it are very plain, this latter is perhaps preferable; if that truth be but indistinctly or imperfectly conceived by the hearers, or if the general arguments for it be complex, the former manner will be most eligible.

In order to reason well on any subject, it is first of all necessary, that a man know what kind of proof or evidence that subject admits of; otherwise, he will be in danger of falling into a wrong track, and of searching out improper arguments. On this account, that part of logic which distinguishes evidence with accuracy into its different kinds, and ascertains the proper province of each kind, is of the greatest importance, and is indeed a proper preparation for reasoning of every sort. Now, all the subjects, of which a preacher has occasion to attempt the proof, are reducible to two kinds; such as are to be proved by reason, and such as are to be proved by revelation. He should content himself with whichever of these kinds the present subject admits of; for to apply them indiscriminately to all subjects, would be perfectly absurd. In proving a truth discoverable by reason,

son, he must consider what is the peculiar kind of proof suited to that truth, and exhibit it. In proving a truth by revelation, care must be taken to argue, not from the sound, but the real meaning. It is proper to show that the expressions in a text, which seem to imply a proof of it, have that sense which renders them a proof of it in other texts; and that they are determined to this sense by the context and strain of writing in that particular text. When a truth admits a proper proof only from reason, yet that proof, or some steps of it, may very well be expressed in the words of scripture. When a truth is to be proved only by revelation, it may yet be very properly illustrated from suppositions of reason. Some truths may be proved both by reason and revelation; then, each part of the proof should be prosecuted according to its peculiar rules. In proving from reason, all abstruse, far-fetched, and complex arguments should be avoided, for they will be neither intelligible nor convincing. In proving from scripture, only plain texts and fully to the purpose should be used; obscure texts would need long explication before they could be applied, and ambiguous ones will promote doubt, instead of dispelling it. In proving from either, only such arguments should be used as are truly conclusive; a few of these will be sufficient to produce conviction; but a weak argument always debilitates the stronger ones. Every argument, from what-  
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ever source it be derived, should be exhibited as shortly as can be, without detracting from its force; for thus its whole force will be best represented at once. Care should likewise be taken not to urge too great a multiplicity of arguments, for this would only confound the judgement and burden the memory. It is much better to make a selection of those which will be most easily comprehended, and are most undoubtedly conclusive; these will be sufficient to produce conviction, and more would rather tire, than strengthen the conviction. In other cases, it may be proper to distribute the arguments into different classes, which, like a projection in architecture, will take off from the ill effect of the number, and enable the mind to comprehend them without difficulty or disgust. All the doctrines of true religion are of a practical nature, and ought to be always represented as subservient to practice. Even in a discourse therefore, intended mainly for proving a doctrine, its influence on practice ought to be pointed out. When the discourse is of the first kind, designed to produce a strong sense of a doctrine already believed, it has been formerly observed, that the whole argument should be carried on in such a way as to touch the heart. But besides this, every probatory discourse should conclude with pointing out its influence on practice. Sometimes this may be done, by enforcing from it some one virtue to which it is principally subservient. Sometimes, when the doctrine proved, enforces equally several

veral duties, the obligation which it lays us under to all these, may be pointed out in distinct inferences or deductions.

ART. III. *Of Panegyric or Demonstrative Discourses.*

THE third sort of discourses are such as are addressed to the imagination, and are intended to raise admiration. A preacher may, without deviating from the end of his vocation, endeavour to enrapture his audience with this pleasure. The reason is, that admiration tends naturally and immediately to produce imitation, and to excite noble ambition and emulation. The preacher seems to aim only at making a character admired; he employs all the means which can promote this end; but he seeks the admiration of his hearers only for the sake of its necessary consequences; yet as nothing farther is requisite for securing these, but exciting admiration, this may justly be considered as the distinguishing aim of such discourses.

The ancient Rhetoricians take notice of this species of discourses, and call them Panegyric or Demonstrative. They allow two sorts of them; one employed in praising, another in blaming. Christian charity scarcely allows one of the latter sort to be brought to the pulpit; it seems to forbid making it the whole purpose of a discourse, to describe and exaggerate, as it were, all the vices of one particular person. It is more suitable, to re-  
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present, in the fairest point of view, eminent virtue and goodness. There are many subjects on which such discourses may be properly composed by a Protestant preacher; as the life of our Saviour, and the lives of those holy men whose history is recorded in scripture. We are expressly commanded to follow these examples; and therefore it must be highly proper to propose their examples to a christian audience.

A demonstrative discourse bears some analogy to the last kind of explicatory discourse which was explained, as a character is the subject of both. But they are considerably different. The design of the one is from the actions to deduce a distinct analysis of the character; the design of the other is to represent the character and the actions in such a light as may most effectually promote imitation. The true way of doing this is to paint the whole man, and to set him before the hearer's eyes, speaking and acting. In describing the course of his life, the preacher should chiefly point out those passages in which his virtues best appeared. He should recount his laudable actions: this gives force to a panegyric; this is what instructs people, and makes an impression on their minds. This is to paint a person to the life, and shows what he was in every period, in every condition, and in the most remarkable junctures of his life. At the same time, a demonstrative discourse should not be a simple narration. It is enough to select the  
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chief facts, and represent them in a concise, lively, and striking manner. There should be the same difference between a mere history and a discourse of this kind, as between a natural history of an animal and a poetical description of it. The former describes minutely every particular regarding it; the latter chooses a few of the most remarkable particulars, and, by combining them, exhibits a pleasing and striking picture of the object to the imagination. It is never allowable to exceed the bounds of truth; but the end of this discourse requires that the virtues of a person should be set in the most amiable and engaging light that truth will permit; and that the faults which were blended with these virtues should be either wholly omitted, or touched as slightly as possible. This is evidently the way to excite admiration, and to promote imitation; and it is plainly allowable, because the preacher's professed design is, not to give a history of the person, but to exhibit his example so far as it is worthy of imitation. This sort of discourse should never be allowed to run into the florid; but it may approach nearer to it, and be more adorned with bold figures, than any other sort of sermon. A good deal of this is really necessary for attaining its end.

Demonstrative discourses may be distinguished into three kinds. The subject of the first is a person's whole life. Such a discourse as this will exhibit a lively picture of all the virtues which a  
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person has exercised, in all the different periods, and in all the various situations and emergencies of life. The subject of the second kind is one period of a holy man's life; it may exhibit all the virtues which he exercised, in all the different situations in which he was placed during that period. Thus a discourse may be employed in exhibiting Joseph's example before his advancement to the government of Egypt; or in displaying his example after his advancement. The life of Paul after his conversion is another instance of this kind of discourse. The third species is that which has for its subject a particular virtue, as displayed in various circumstances through the whole of a man's life; as the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham. These three kinds of demonstrative sermons differ only in the extent of their subject; their end and general rules are almost wholly the same; they can scarce differ in any other respect than the division of which they are susceptible. The first kind, which takes in a whole life, may be prosecuted in two different methods. 1. The life may be divided into its different periods, and the virtues displayed in each period exhibited to the view of the hearers. By this means, each member will become a discourse of the second species. 2. It may be divided according to the different virtues which appear in it; and the discourse may show how each virtue separately has been exercised and displayed through all the different periods and situations in which the person has been placed.

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In this way, the example of Christ is represented in *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, as reducible to piety, charity, purity, and humility; and the prosecution of this subject, in the first part of that book, is not a bad example of a discourse of this kind. This sort of division has some advantages, especially when a person's situation has not undergone very great changes. The only inconvenience that attends it is, that sometimes different virtues are complicated in the same action; but this is not of great consequence, for that action may be introduced under that virtue which is predominant in it; and all the other virtues which likewise appeared in it, may be at the same time pointed out without any breach of method. And to compensate this, one has an opportunity, by pursuing this method, to exhibit every virtue of the person's life entire, and in all the different points of light in which the person had, through his whole life, occasion to exert it. When this method is pursued, every part of the discourse becomes a demonstrative discourse of the last sort. In this species sometimes, but often in the two last, no division is absolutely necessary; it is enough that the several actions of a person be represented in a natural order. In the second species, where the subject is some period of a life, if the preacher choose a division, it may most naturally be made according to the different virtues which a person has had occasion to show in that period. In the third species again, where one particular virtue is  
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the subject, the division may be according to the different periods or situations in which that virtue has been exercised. There are many sermons extant, which are in some measure of the demonstrative kind; as all those on the example of Christ. But few or none of them are prosecuted according to the accurate rules of such compositions.

In a word, it is the design of a demonstrative or panegyric sermon, at once to give a distinct knowledge, and to excite high admiration of the virtues of a particular person, with a view to promote the imitation of them, by giving a lively view of these virtues as displayed in a series of actions.

#### ART. IV. *Of Suasory Discourses.*

The last kind of pulpit discourse is addressed to the passions and the will; its end is persuasion; we may therefore call it the suasory. This is of all the most complex kind; it includes all the rest, or at least it presupposes instruction, conviction, and pleasing, and superadds something to them which is peculiar to itself, and constitutes its distinguishing criterion. A suasory discourse is intended to persuade men to a certain course; and in order to answer its end, it must discover what that course is; it must prove that it is subservient to some end acknowledged to be of importance by the hearers; and that end must be so represented

to the imagination, that it may excite a strong affection to it, by means of which the will may be determined to the course which leads to it.

In order to persuade a man to any course, the understanding must be addressed so far, as to let him both know what the course is that you want him to pursue, and to convince him that his pursuing that course will answer some good end. It is possible indeed to move men, without enlightening them; but this emotion is a mere temporary passion, which neither has any fixed direction, nor can answer any purpose. If you would move a man with any thing beyond such a transient emotion, if you would truly persuade him, you must enlighten as well as move. You must not only let him know what is the course which you would have him to take, but also show the reason why he should take it. In every suasive discourse, therefore, there must be reasoning or argument used, in order to convince the hearers that they ought to do what you recommend to them; and till they be thus convinced, it is impossible that they can do it. A reasonable being always proposes some end, and it is for some end that he does every action, and either indulges or curbs any disposition. The reasoning, therefore, which can contribute to persuade men to any action or any course, is of that particular kind which shows that action or course to be conducive to a certain end or purpose. To persuade men to holiness and virtue, one may,  
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for instance, prove that it is conducive to peace of mind, to present interest, or to future happiness. This can be proved only by reasoning or argument. If the arguments produced do not convince men that holiness is necessary for these ends, they can have no tendency to persuade them; however much they may desire the ends, and however willing they may be to pursue them, yet they will not be prevailed on to pursue them in this way, except they be convinced that this way leads to the attainment of them, and is necessary for it. Thus the judgement must be convinced by proper arguments, before men can be excited to any action. Solid reasoning is therefore one essential ingredient in that eloquence which tends to persuasion. But this is not alone sufficient for persuasion.

It is likewise necessary to render the hearers fond of the end, to which the course recommended is represented as subservient. Though a man be ever so much convinced that a certain action will redound to his honour, for instance, yet he will never think of doing that action, if he has no desire of honour. To understand, therefore, what more than mere reasoning is necessary to persuasion, we need only consider, what principles of the mind they are that attach men to the ends which they pursue. They are, in general, the affections and practical principles of human nature. Conscience renders the doing our duty, and obtaining the

approbation of our own minds, a desirable end to us. Self-love makes us fond of happiness, and ready to do what is necessary for obtaining it. Ambition attaches us to honour. Gratitude disposes us to what will be agreeable to a benefactor; benevolence, to what will tend to the happiness of others; and so in other cases. Now, to persuade to a certain course, we must excite those affections or principles, which attach men to those ends from which our topics of argument are deduced. Would we, for example, persuade men to holiness, from its necessity in order to obtain the heavenly happiness, we must not only prove that it is necessary for this, but also render them desirous of the heavenly happiness. Would we excite them to virtue, from gratitude to God our benefactor, who requires it, we must not only prove that it is the properest expression of gratitude, but also we must excite in them a disposition to be grateful. But as it is thus necessary to excite the passions, as well as to convince the judgment, so the former will not be sufficient alone without the latter. Let any passion be ever so strong in a man's mind, it will not lead him to any particular course, except he be convinced that that course tends to gratify it. You may raise in a man the strongest desire of heaven; but this desire will not incline him to practise holiness, till you have likewise convinced him that holiness is the way to heaven. Thus neither argument alone, nor moving the passions alone, is sufficient. The cool reasoner, who con-

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fines himself to the former, may convince men that certain actions are necessary to certain ends; but he does not excite their desire of these ends. The warm preacher, who has no solid argument; may raise a violent emotion, a present desire of a certain end; but he does not point out the means by which it may be attained; or, if he mention them, he does not sufficiently evince their necessity; and therefore, the emotion which he raised has no fixed direction, but evaporates without determining men to any settled course. The latter warms without enlightening; the former enlightens without warming. Both perform but half the business of persuasion. To complete it, the judgment must be convinced and the passions raised at one and the same time. When this is done, the will is immediately determined to resolve on the course, and to perform the action recommended. Affection makes us desirous of the end; reason shows us that we must do certain actions for obtaining it; and as soon as this is perceived, affection urges us to will the doing of that action; and when we are brought to will it, persuasion is accomplished, and we immediately do the action. A suafory discourse is, therefore, directly addressed to the will; its design is to seize and captivate the will, and lead it to exert itself in an effectual volition of the course recommended. And this is attained by convincing the hearers that that course is necessary for a certain end, and raising, at the same time, a strong affection to that end. The

preacher who can frame his discourse so as to produce these two effects at once, will be a master of persuasion, and attain that vehemence which is the noblest species of eloquence, its very summit and perfection.

We have already observed, how one of the parts of persuasion is to be performed; the judgement is to be convinced by solid reasoning. It will now be necessary to show how the passions may be raised; for in raising them, the other part of persuasion consists. Now, there are only two ways by which any passion or affection can be produced; either by giving an actual perception of the object of that passion, or by presenting a lively idea of that object. The actual presence of the object of a passion never fails to excite the passion; the feeling of pain produces sorrow; the sight of distress raises our sympathy. But it is seldom that a preacher can present the objects themselves to his hearers; if their affections could be raised only by the actual presence of their objects, it would be out of his power to raise them in most cases. But God has wisely constituted us in such a way, that the several passions and affections of our nature may be likewise raised by strong and lively ideas of their objects. Thus, the certainty of a very great calamity will raise sorrow, before we actually endure it; a description of deep distress will excite our compassion to the person who suffers it; merely thinking of a favour will raise gratitude to the author



thor of it. It is by this way that the preacher has access to the hearts of his hearers; he can raise their passions only by presenting to them strong and lively ideas of the objects of them. As it is the imagination of the hearers that conceives these lively ideas, so it is by addressing himself to their imagination, that the preacher presents these ideas to them. All the passions take their rise from the imagination, and it is by first touching the imagination, that we must, by means of it, move the passions. In order therefore to explain how the passions are raised, it will be necessary to consider how the imagination is addressed, and what kind of address to it has an influence on the passions.

Now, every description which tends to please any of our internal or reflex senses, is addressed to the imagination; whatever is new, beautiful, elegant, harmonious, or sublime, gratifies the imagination; and every description of such objects is addressed to it. Every such description is admitted into poetry, which rests in gratifying the imagination, and whose end is to please. But there are some objects which, however much a lively description of them may gratify the imagination, have no tendency to influence the passions, because they are not the cause or the object of any passion: Such descriptions therefore cannot enter into suatory discourses; they have no tendency to promote the end of them; they would rather obstruct it, by fixing the mind upon something else.

Again, some descriptions even of those things which are the natural objects and causes of our passions, are unfit to excite them. If they be so florid and gaudy as to amuse or dazzle the mind, it will rest in the amusement which they give, without feeling any disposition to be actuated by the passion which these objects might have raised. The description may be very beautiful in itself, but it does not suit its place, nor contribute to the end to which it ought to have been subordinate. The descriptions then which, in a suasive discourse, are addressed to the imagination, must be so contrived as to set those objects and causes of our passions, of which they are descriptions, in that point of view in which they have the strongest tendency to excite the passions. In order to this, the passions themselves, with their objects and effects, must be well painted. The most striking circumstances of the objects and effects must be represented in so lively a manner, that the hearer may almost fancy that he sees them. The workings of the passion must be represented so naturally, as to make them think that they see one actuated by it, and as may turn the lively idea of it which they form, into the passion itself. Metaphors, similitudes, images, abrupt and strong expressions, rightly chosen and applied, and, in a word, many of the figures of eloquence, are subservient to this. Till a strong idea of the object, effects and workings of the passion, be in this way imprinted on the imagination, the preacher's discourse cannot excite the

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the passions of the hearers. But, if he can convey such a strong idea, the passion will immediately rise spontaneously and without more ado.

Thus we have endeavoured to analyse persuasion, to show all that it includes, and all that is necessary for accomplishing it. Persuasion always tends to some action or course of action; it operates ultimately on the will, which is the immediate cause of action; but in order to determine the will, it must previously convince the judgement, strike the imagination, and move the passions. A preacher would persuade men to a certain conduct; in order to do this, he must convince them by argument and reasoning, that that conduct tends to some valuable end; he must likewise bring them to perceive and feel that that end is really valuable, by painting it in lively colours: this picture will of course raise the passion or affection which attaches to this end; and an affection for the end immediately determines the will to pursue that course which was shown by reasoning to be necessary for the attainment of the end. All this is requisite; if any step of it be wanting, persuasion cannot be accomplished: the discourse may answer other ends, but it cannot answer this particular end, persuasion. If it contain only argument, it will convince; if it contain only gaudy painting of objects unconnected with the passions, it will please; if it contain only proper pictures of the objects, effects and workings of the passions, but without a mixture of reasoning, it will

will be pathetic, it will move the passions. But in all these cases it falls short of persuasion. To accomplish this, argument, painting, and the pathetic, must be combined.

It was necessary, for the sake of distinctness, to consider these parts of persuasion separately. But we must not imagine that they are to be kept perfectly separate in a suafory discourse. We are not first to prove by cool reasoning, that a course tends to a certain end, and then with warmth to raise an affection to that end; nor are we first to raise a strong passion for the end, and then when we have possessed the hearers with it, to convince them by cool reasoning that, if they would gratify that passion and obtain the end, they must take the course which we recommend. If we were to keep the two parts of persuasion, argument, and the pathetic, in which last painting is evidently implied, thus entirely distinct and separate, the effect of the one must be lost and wear wholly off, before we came to the other; each would be weakened by their divorce; and the two parts of the discourse would appear unlike and unsuitable to each other. The argument and the pathetic must be in some degree interwoven and incorporated together through the whole discourse. It is not indeed necessary that they should prevail equally in every part of it; sometimes the one, sometimes the other will preponderate; generally, argument should prevail in the former part, and the pathetic in the latter,

latter, though this does not hold without exception. But whichever prevails, there must, through the whole, be a mixture of the other. The argument must not be pursued in the same unaffecting way, as if it were intended only for conviction, but must be intermixed all along with such lively and pathetic descriptions as may gently touch the passions, and prepare them for rising, when they come to be more professedly addressed. The reasoning which evinces that the course recommended tends to a valuable end, must be so contrived as, at the same time, to raise some degree of affection to that end. In like manner, that part of the discourse which is intended chiefly to raise the passions, must be so contrived as to preserve all along the conviction arising from the argument. The colours by which the end is rendered affecting, must be intermixed with such hints of the argument, as may keep in view that course by which the passion raised by the end may be gratified. A preacher who would persuade, must thus address at one and the same time all the powers of human nature, the understanding, the imagination, and the passions.

It is evident from what has been said, that an address to the passions is necessary in a discourse whose end is persuasion. But if a discourse contained only an address to the passions, its end would be properly, not persuasion, but moving. And it was observed before, that merely to move, is not a proper aim in a discourse from the pulpit, except

in some very particular cases. But as it is allowable in some cases, it will be proper just to remark what it is that forms the moving, as distinguished from the vehement or persuasive. This latter results from the union of reasoning with painting. Now, if the former of these ingredients be removed, if the discourse contain only moving pictures of the object of any passion, without any reasoning concerning the way of exerting that passion, it will produce the pure pathetic; a certain passion or affection will be raised by it, but the mind will not be determined by that discourse to exert the passion in any particular way. Again, all our passions do not lead equally to action; some of them lead to it very directly, as desire, aversion, benevolence, anger; some seem to lead rather to inaction, or at least lead very faintly to action, as joy, sorrow, &c. If a discourse tend chiefly to raise those of the latter kind, it will be properly pathetic; accordingly, this term is very commonly restricted to such compositions as tend to produce sorrow.

It is, I know, an opinion entertained by some, that a preacher ought not to address himself at all to the passions of his hearers, but only to their reason. It is alleged, that to move their passions, is to put a bias upon their judgement, to mislead them, and to raise an emotion which will be transient, and wear off without leaving any good effect. But this opinion can proceed only from want of  
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attention, or from very superficial reflection. In matters of mere speculation, it is indeed wrong to work upon men's passions; but wherever action is concerned, the coolest speaker addresses the passions of men; and indeed, unless he speak to their passions, he cannot speak to any purpose at all. No argument can be proposed for any course of action, but what implies an address to some passion or affection. If a man tell me, it is for my interest, he addresses my self-love; if for my honour, he addresses my ambition; if for the public good, he addresses my benevolence; in a word, whatever motive can be proposed, it addresses itself to some one of those passions or affections which are the only principles of our actions. Suppose a person destitute of these, and the strongest reasoning will have no effect upon him. If I should prove clearly and convincingly, that a certain action tends to happiness, this will have no influence on a person destitute of self-love. If I prove that an action tends to honour, a person void of ambition would tell me, I am convinced it does, but I have no desire of honour. These principles cannot be disputed; and when they are admitted, to say that a preacher should confine himself to cool reasoning, and not address the passions of his hearers, is to say, that he should excite them to action, without applying to the only principles of their nature which can excite them to action; or rather it is to say, that he should address these principles, but that he must be careful to address them only in  
such

such a way as has no tendency to engage them. This is a plain absurdity, though it be sometimes expressed in such terms as to give it some show of plausibility. Reasoning which tends to show that a course is conducive to interest or honour, will have some influence in determining those to that course, who have previously self-love or ambition in a considerable degree of strength; but if these principles be weak, or be counteracted by other principles, it will have no influence upon them. But even when these principles are weak, or so overborne by opposite principles as to be hindered from exerting themselves, they may be excited and strengthened by a proper address to the passions. The want of this must therefore be an essential defect in a discourse intended for persuasion.

Having thus laid open the general principles of suafory discourses, we shall now point out briefly their different kinds. They are plainly distinguishable into two kinds. 1. Such as are designed to dissuade from vice. In order to do this, two things are necessary; to weaken the passions which lead to vice, and to stir up and strengthen such passions or affections as may oppose and check these. To dissuade from intemperance, for instance, one may give such a view of sensual pleasure as tends to check the desire of it; and he may give such a view of the pleasure and reward of abstinence, or of the misery and punishment of intem-



intemperance, as may raise desire of the former, and dread of the latter, for antagonists to sensual appetite. A passion is weakened by methods contrary to those by which it is raised. All that belongs to this sort of discourse is therefore easily deducible from the principles which have been already laid down.—2. Such as are designed to persuade to virtue. In these too, it is necessary both to strengthen virtuous affections, and those principles which co-operate with them, and to weaken such vicious passions and principles as would draw off from the course recommended.

In suafory as well as in probatory discourses, one may proceed either in the direct or indirect method of reasoning; either by urging direct arguments for any course of virtue, or against any course of vice, or by removing the pretences by which men commonly prevail upon themselves to neglect the virtue or indulge the vice, or excuse themselves in doing so. Thus a suafory discourse intended to prevail on men not to delay repentance, might proceed either by proving directly the danger of delaying it, from the difficulty of religion, from the continual increase of the strength of vicious habits, from the uncertainty of life, &c. or by removing the excuses which men plead for delaying it, from mistaken notions of grace, from want of leisure at present, &c.—Suafory discourses may be again divided in another view; into such as persuade to virtue in general, or dissuade from vice

vice in general, and such as have for their object some one particular virtue or vice. These kinds differ only in the extent of their subject, not at all in the rules of prosecuting them. It will be sufficient therefore to observe on this head, that, because men are little affected with generals, it will be often necessary to descend to particular virtues and vices, and labour to inculcate a due conduct with regard to them. If a minister employ himself only in recommending religion and holiness in general, men will have no distinct conception of what is included in them, and every person will find it very easy to satisfy himself that he is not defective. But when particular branches of conduct are made the frequent subjects of preaching, men will more readily discover their own faults, and by this means be laid open to the full force of all the arguments that are used. Whether a general course of conduct, or a particular branch of it, be the subject of a sermon, that sermon may be employed in enforcing it, either from all the topics that recommend it, or from some one class of topics. These two differ likewise only in the extent of the subject, and therefore admit the very same rules. It is only necessary to observe, that wherever different arguments, deduced either from the same or different topics, are used in a discourse, they should be placed in such an order, that each may appear to spring naturally from the foregoing, and that all may lend the greatest strength to one another.—I shall mention but one division

division more of suafory difcourfes. Some of them recommend one courfe from a variety of topics; others of them recommend a variety of courfes from one and the fame topic. The examples that we have already hinted at, are all instances of the former kind. For an instance of the latter, we may fuppofe the preacher, from this fingle topic, the confideration of death as our departure from this world, urging his hearers not to fet an immoderate value on prefent earthly things, not to entertain an immoderate fondnefs for them, not to employ endless labour about them, not to defpife thofe who are in lower worldly circumftances than themfelves, not to abufe their prefent poffeffions, not to commit fin in order to avoid the lofs of them, not to murmur for the want of them, not to be impatient under real and pofitive afflictions, not to envy others. There are many fubjects which naturally direct a preacher to follow this method in a fuaforey difcourfe upon them.

We have not confidered the feveral branches of that divifion of pulpit difcourfes which we deduced from the ends of fpeaking; and this divifion has given us an opportunity of propofing the general rules of each kind of difcourfe, fo far as they arife from its peculiar end. There is nothing that can come within the province of a preacher, that is not reducible to one or other of the kinds which we have defcribed. And there is none of thefe kinds

which does not properly belong to his province. Indeed, all these aims are constantly considered as belonging to a preacher. There is but one respect in which the manner of their belonging to him is generally considered as different from that manner in which we have represented them. We have considered them as different kinds of sermons; and they are commonly considered as different parts of one sermon. Which of these two ways of considering them is most proper will appear afterwards, when we come to consider Preaching in another light. At present we shall only observe, that though they were to be regarded as different parts of one sermon, yet as the ends aimed at are different, and as the principles of composition suited to these ends are likewise different, it will still be necessary to consider them separately; and therefore all that has been said is equally applicable to Preaching on that supposition, as on the supposition which we have followed.

#### ART. V. *Of Invention.*

We have considered Preaching with respect to the various ends at which it aims, and the kinds of discourses which arise from that variety. This has led us to remark the most general rules belonging to each species of Preaching. The eloquence of the pulpit may be considered in another light; with respect to the different exertions of mind which it requires in the speaker. This is a light in which  
writers

writers on the principles of rhetoric have always chosen to consider every kind of composition. There have been disputes among them concerning the number of mental exertions belonging properly to eloquence, which are too trivial to deserve our entering into them. They are generally reckoned five; invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and pronounciation; and according to this distinction, the parts of eloquence are commonly reckoned. By prosecuting this division, we shall have an opportunity of laying down the particular rules of pulpit discourses, regarding the subject, the method, the style, and composition, the mandating, and the delivering. As this is the division that is commonly followed, in explaining the principles of eloquence, by the writers of institutions, a number of their rules are applicable to Preaching; and as you can have recourse to them, we may treat more shortly of them.

The first exertion of mind necessary in every discourse is invention, which is therefore reckoned the first part of eloquence. Under this head we shall consider the helps of invention, the choice of subjects, the qualities of texts, the exordium, the explication of text and context, the laying down the design, the division, the prosecution, and the conclusion. These parts are common to all kinds of discourses.

The helps of invention are of two kinds, mediate or remote, and immediate. The former are of very great consequence; they in some measure remove the need of the latter; but without them, the latter cannot be sufficient. By the mediate or remote helps of invention, I mean previous application, and a fund of knowlege. This is so necessary for a public speaker, that all the ancient writers on rhetoric require almost universal knowlege in an orator. Without a considerable stock of solid knowlege, a preacher's head will seem unfurnished; he will appear to labour for matter to fill up his discourse; he will not seem to speak from the abundance of his heart, but will talk as if he were at a loss for the very next thing he is to say. He lives, as it were, from hand to mouth, without laying up any stock of provision; and therefore, whatever pains he takes about his discourses, they appear always thin and half-starved. Though he could afford three months for studying a sermon, such particular preparations, however troublesome, must needs be very imperfect. Preachers ought to employ several years in laying up a plentiful stock of solid knowlege; and then, after such a general preparation, their particular discourses will cost them the less pains. But if, without any preparatory study, a man only apply to a particular subject, as he has occasion to preach on it, he is forced to put off his hearers with common-place notions and superficial remarks.

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If a man be only acquainted with controversy, and have read sermons, he may thus pick up a few thoughts; but either they will be merely speculative, or by being borrowed at second-hand, they will be indigested, dead, and pointless.

A sermon is a discourse founded on scripture, and addressed to men; a preacher must therefore have these three qualifications, the knowledge of scripture, of human nature, and of human life. These ought to be the three great branches of his study.

The knowledge of scripture must be acquired by reading it much, and that in the original languages; and by reading it critically, that we may remember not only the words, the doctrines, the precepts, the histories recorded in holy writ, but also thoroughly understand their meaning, and their application. The most beautiful and striking parts of the best sermons are the scriptures which are interwoven with them; and, if they were always entirely apposite, and urged with their full force, they would be almost irresistible.

Sermons should also be deeply founded in human nature. I do not mean that sermons should be abstract discourses on the principles of human nature. But when men's feelings are truly delineated, when all maxims and directions that are given, are perfectly suitable to the principles of

the mind, then the sermon may be truly said to be founded in human nature; and no species of argument will make a deeper impression, or produce a more solid and thorough conviction. In order to be able to give his discourses, in this manner, a foundation in human nature, a preacher must study carefully the philosophy of man, especially of his moral and active powers. A person who is unacquainted with this branch of knowledge must be often at a loss and in danger of misrepresenting things, when he is to address himself to mankind on subjects of practice. This part of philosophy must not be neglected when the ordinary time of education in it is expired; it is rather to be then begun, for it is generally only after this that men's faculties are ripe for the study of it.

The third requisite mentioned was the knowledge of human life. Without this, our descriptions must be false and unnatural, and can never strike. It is to be acquired by observation, and by the study of history. Biography is the most proper kind of history for this purpose. It relates many minute circumstances, actions, and sayings of a person's life, which serve very much to let us into his real character. It is often proper in sermons, to adduce professed examples, either of the nature, influence, and deceit of vice, of the nature and exertions of virtue in real life, or of their consequences, rewards, and punishments. For most part, these should be taken from scripture, and  
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more sparingly at least from prophane history. But even when a preacher does not choose professedly to make use of examples, it will be extremely useful to have them in his eye, that he may frame his explication, description, or argument, according to what has really been. The perusal of history with a view to acquire a knowledge of real life, will, in a great measure, prepare men for using the other method of acquiring this knowledge; will train them to that acuteness, attention, and thoughtfulness, which are necessary for their making observations themselves on mankind, and tracing out characters which they meet with in real life.

The immediate helps of invention are the works of other men, from which assistance may be derived. These may be reduced to two sorts. First, models which are proper to be imitated. These are finished and regular discourses, either on the subjects which the preacher is to treat, or on other subjects. Those which are on different subjects are the most useful helps, as they give an impulse to genius, and a direction to judgement, without laying him under a temptation merely to transcribe. The ancient orations, particularly those of Demosthenes and Cicero; the most finished and elegant sermons, and even some of the poets, may be highly useful for directing genius, and forming the taste in Preaching. The second sort of helps are such sermons and compositions as are rude and

indigested as to the manner, but contain plenty of materials. A preacher cannot copy after these as models, but he may dig in them as in a mine. They are like a piece of rich ore, in which he may find matter for the furniture of pulpit discourses, and find, at the same time, such a defect of refinement and polishing, as to leave room for the exercise of his own genius and talents to finish and rub them up. He may find a rich collection of noble sentiments, and strong and nervous expressions, but delivered with such negligence of dress, as to style or method, as leaves abundance of room for the exercise of his own powers in altering and methodising whatever materials he borrows from them. We may apply to such productions what Pope says of the works of Shakspeare; “ One may look upon them, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestic piece of Gothic architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn.”

In using the immediate helps of invention, a preacher may take two different ways. He may first read and digest all that he chooses to consult on the subject, and then, laying aside the books, and meditating on his subject, he may form his own plan, and dispose the materials which he finds in his mind, in his own manner and style. Or,  
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he may first form his own plan, and prosecute it in the way which he thinks most proper, and then read over writers on the subject; and after having read them, review his own composition, and alter or add to it according to the new materials which he finds suggested to him by his reading. The latter method will give a sermon most the appearance of an original, and is, perhaps, for the most part eligible; but the former may be very properly used, either when one is not previously so well acquainted with a particular subject on which he is to compose, or when he is obliged to compose in haste. These are the only two ways in which a preacher ought to use the works of others. Merely to compile a sermon by tacking together passages which please him, from others who have written on the subject, is always absolutely wrong; it gives the whole the appearance of patchwork; there is no consistence in the parts, either as to the train of thought, or as to the style. If one cannot compose sermons in another way, it were much better to borrow complete sermons from the works of others. But certainly, a man who is under a necessity of doing either this, or what is more improper, ought never to have attempted Preaching, or addicted himself to a profession for which he is so ill qualified.

We proceed next to make some observations on the choice of subjects. As to the nature of the different subjects which may be properly chosen for

for a discourse from the pulpit, it will be unnecessary to say any thing, after what has been already said concerning the kinds of discourses. There have been unhappy differences about the kind of subjects on which a preacher ought to insist. An opposition has been established between what is called Gospel-preaching, and what is called Legal-preaching. I hope this ill-judged and ill-defined distinction is now pretty much out of doors, at least with most people; and therefore, it will not be needful to enter so deep into the subject as might, perhaps, have been proper when it was more in vogue. On this, as well as on most subjects, it appears to me that men have gone into extremes. The patrons of what was called Gospel-preaching insisted chiefly on the doctrines of religion, or rather, on some few of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; on the righteousness and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, on faith in him, on the great grace of the evangelical dispensation, and on the assistances of the Divine Spirit. They were certainly in the right to insist much on these; but they were, notwithstanding, blameable in several respects. They considered these doctrines, not in the genuine strain of the New Testament, which explains them with the greatest simplicity, and always urges them as arguments for the practice of holiness; but in the strain of disputatious systems, encumbered with technical terms and subtle distinctions, and so as wholly to draw off men's attention from practice, instead of contributing to

excite them to good practice. They omitted many other parts of the gospel, equally necessary and important with these doctrines; while they enlarged on the blessings of the gospel and the means by which they were procured, they were very sparing in recommending the character which we must maintain, and the conduct we must pursue, if we would be partakers of them, though to animate us to this is evidently the only end, for which either the nature of the blessings themselves, or the method of their conveyance, was revealed by God. They indeed often described faith in Christ; but they did not enough either describe or recommend that love and those works which will always spring from true faith; they rather seemed to depreciate them, as if they would have made mankind afraid of being holy, lest they should trust in it, and rob the Redeemer of his glory in saving sinners; thus directly opposing the strain in which both our Saviour and his apostles spoke, who always urge men to holiness, and set the righteous in opposition to the wicked. Instead of representing the assistances of the Spirit as they are always represented in holy writ, as encouragements and incitements to diligence, they held them forth in such a light as tended rather to make men wait indolently till the Spirit should operate upon them, than to exert their utmost endeavours to do their duty in a dependence on its aids. When they either explained or recommended holiness, they were so careful to represent it as arising from  
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grace, that they scarcely either exhorted to it, or showed the obligations men were under to cultivate it. In short, their sermons were too little calculated to influence practice. On the other hand, the patrons of what was called Legal-preaching, represented religion as practical, explained and inculcated the several duties of it, urged the arguments which reason or revelation supplied for the practice of virtue, insisted on the great doctrines of natural religion which the gospel pre-supposes, as well as the doctrines of pure revelation which it superadds to them. So far they considered Preaching in its proper light. But they were not wholly blameless. They often represented the virtues of the Christian life too much in the abstract manner of philosophy, and in the terms of art of modern scholasticism. They insisted, perhaps, too seldom on the peculiar doctrines of revelation, and on the duties which result from the new relations of which it informs us. In opposition to both extremes, a Christian preacher ought to insist both on the doctrines and on the duties of religion; always representing the former as arguments for the latter, and the practice of the latter as absolutely necessary to render our knowledge of the former really useful to us; and always expressing the whole, as much as possible, in the strain of scripture language. This is undoubtedly Gospel-preaching; for it is to preach in the same way that Christ preached, and that his apostles wrote.

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What farther remains with regard to the choice of subjects is, the qualities of any particular subject which is chosen. The only quality that it will be necessary to take notice of is, that in every sermon there should be unity of design. This is a fundamental rule in every sort of composition; but in none is it more frequently neglected than in sermons. It is indeed so universally disregarded, that it may perhaps appear to many a singularity and affectation either to recommend it or to adhere to it in Preaching. But, however little it has been followed in practice, it has been recommended by some who have written on Preaching, particularly by Bishop Burnet and the Archbishop of Cambray. It is indeed a rule founded in the most essential principles of human nature. Man, being a reasonable being, thinks and speaks with some intention and design. He has always some end in view, however wrong and trifling the end itself, or however improper the means by which he endeavours the attainment of the end, may often be. It is therefore requisite that in all compositions the writer have some plan or object. A production without a design would resemble more the ravings of a madman, than the regular effects of thought and genius. Now, if there must be a design or plan, there ought likewise to be unity of design. When this is wanting, there is no bond of connection between the different subjects treated of, which may bring them under one plan or view, and which may easily convey the mind from one of them

them to the other. The understanding finds it difficult, when it has been filled with the conception of one object, to make a transition to another wholly different, and cannot easily conceive that other in a strong and lively manner. Even the understanding is perplexed and confounded and distracted; but if the nature of the subject be such as tends to excite the passions, the inconvenience is still greater. When the passions are excited by one object, they will pass easily to another connected with it; but they will pass with difficulty or not at all along different objects quite unconnected with one another. By this means a preacher, by introducing different subjects and different designs into one sermon, would lose all that communication of emotions by which alone he can interest the heart, and raise the passions to a proper pitch.

If unity of design be necessary in a sermon, it will be proper to consider how it may be preserved, what is to be deemed a deviation from it, and what degree of variety is consistent with it. We have already reckoned up several kinds of discourses. It was with a view to the propriety of unity of design, that we called them distinct kinds; for most commonly they are all united in the same discourse, and all seem to be equally principal, and their ends equally ultimate in the intention of the preacher. Now, by explaining how far these kinds may allowably be combined,  
and



and how far not, all will be done that is necessary on this subject of unity of design. There is one case, in which all or most of the kinds of discourses that have been mentioned, may be joined together even professedly in discoursing from one text. It is when that text is made the subject of several discourses, and every separate discourse is the prosecution of one of the designs proposed. For instance, if 2 Corinth. v. 14. be chosen for a text, “ The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” To prosecute all the designs which are implied in this verse, one might propose such a method as this: 1. To show that, previous to the interposition of Christ, all men were in a state of death. 2. To show that Christ died, that he might redeem us from this state of death. 3. To show that this interposition of Christ was a display of the greatest love. 4. To urge the death of Christ for us, and the love which it manifested, as an argument for Christian obedience. If we consider this as a method proposed for one discourse, it will have too little unity of design. But if these four heads be made the subject of four discourses, each discourse will be properly one; the three former of the probatory, the last of the suatory kind. Each will be as really distinct from the other, as if it had been preached from a distinct text; and each will have its own unity of design: the preacher only saves himself the trouble of finding out a new text for every sermon. Sometimes

times it may be eligible to use this method; thus, if one choose a text which is a general exhortation to any duty, as Ephes. v. 2. "walk in love," he may with equal propriety propose, in any single discourse, either to explain the nature of Christian love or charity, or to enforce the practice of it. If therefore he think it proper to insist on both these subjects, he may certainly prosecute the former in one discourse, and the latter in another discourse from the same text, without transgressing any of the rules of composition. Sometimes again it will be more eligible to choose different texts for the different points which one designs to prosecute; as when some of them are but obscurely implied in a text which treats of the others; when the subjects which might be found implied in one text are very different and unconnected; when prosecuting them all in so many different discourses would occasion one's insisting too long on one text, so that it might become tedious and disagreeable to the hearers, and wear off that expectation of novelty which a new text is apt to raise. But which of these methods he will choose must be left to the judgement of the preacher on particular occasions. Only it must be remembered that the subject of each separate discourse should be strictly one.

In order to this, it is necessary that in every discourse some one of the ends of Preaching above taken notice of should be the leading and principal design

design of the preacher, and that every thing introduced into the sermon should be rendered subordinate to that end. To propose explication, proof, persuasion, as different ends all equally principal in the same discourse, is plainly to deviate from unity. One of them diverts the attention from the other, and tends to distract the mind. But though, to preserve unity, it be absolutely necessary that some one of the ends of Preaching be the leading design in a sermon, yet others of the ends may be aimed at as subordinate to that end which is predominate. For instance, if the design of a discourse be to explain any duty, what, if it were alone, would form a demonstrative or panegyric discourse, may very properly be introduced as a means of explication. An illustrious example of that virtue exercised by a person in real life, will show the proper exertions of that virtue more plainly than any abstract precepts that could be given; and, while it thus does not interfere with the end, explication, but promotes it, it will very effectually, though without an appearance of designing it, strike the conscience with a sense of its obligation, and dispose men to practise what they are made to see belongs to their duty. Thus, in an explicatory discourse, the demonstrative may be incorporated, so as to contribute to the main end of the discourse.

Again, in a probatory discourse, it is necessarily supposed that the doctrine to be proved is previously understood.

understood. It would be a deviation from unity to propose first the explication, and then the proof of the doctrine, as two independent heads. But though explication be not directly proposed, yet the whole proof may be, and ought to be, conducted in such a way, as may of course carry explication along with it, and really make the doctrine understood, while it proposes only to confirm it. Indeed, the eviſion of a doctrine includes explication ſo naturally, that an argument cannot be juſtly profecuted, without its ſhowing, in every ſtep of it, what is the nature of the truth which it is brought to prove. In a probatory diſcourſe, indeed in any diſcourſe, it would be wrong to make a digreſſion to explain a difficult text of ſcripture which is brought in incidentally ; but yet ſome explication of ſcripture, viz. ſo far as it is ſubſervient to illuſtration or proof, may be very properly introduced in any diſcourſe. In a ſuaſory diſcourſe, perſuaſion ought to be the only profeſſed deſign of the whole ; every thing that is introduced ſhould be regarded but as a mean of promoting this end. But explication, proof, and painting, are, from the very nature of this diſcourſe, neceſſarily introduced, not for their own ſakes, or as a part of the profeſſed deſign of the preacher, but as means of perſuaſion. Examples are very proper motives to practice, and therefore may be here diſplayed in all their beauty, and directly urged as motives to good practice. In a word, all that is neceſſary for preſerving unity of deſign in a ſermon

sermon is, that one simple design be proposed; that every thing introduced be such as tends to promote that design, and be set in the particular light in which it will tend most to promote it.

It will appear, from what has been said, that the ordinary way of dividing sermons into so many distinct and independent heads, is scarcely consistent with unity of design. But it must be remarked, that every division is by no means inconsistent with it. A discourse is naturally divided into parts, according to the branches of the subject to be explained, or the arguments which are urged. But even a division, very little different from such as are commonly proposed, and prosecuted in a manner very little different, may be easily contrived so as to be rendered consistent with unity of design. We may illustrate this by some examples. We already mentioned a method which might be proposed, and would very probably be proposed in the ordinary way of preaching, on 2 Corinth. v. 14. and which is inconsistent with unity of design. Yet if, in preaching on that text, it were proposed as the design of the sermon, to urge men to live to Christ by the practice of holiness, from the consideration of his death, all the very same heads which we mentioned before might be introduced very consistently with unity of design, with no other variation but that of proposing and prosecuting

cuting them as motives or arguments to this conduct. One might propose to pursue the design, by showing that the death of Christ urges us to holiness and the obedience of his gospel, by evincing, 1. That without being thus interested in his death, we must be in a state of death and misery: 2. That we are bound to it, because it was the very design of Christ's death to deliver us from the bondage of sin: 3. That we are bound by his death to obey him, in gratitude for the love which his submitting to death for us manifested. Thus again, in preaching from Matth. v. 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," the common method is, 1. to explain purity of heart; 2. to explain the blessedness of seeing God; 3. to show the connection between them. Here, three different heads, though not unconnected, yet separate and independent, are proposed as equally principal. But if one would preserve unity of design on this subject, it would be proper to propose, as the design of the discourse, to enforce the practice of holiness from the happiness in the enjoyment of God which is connected with it; and in prosecuting this simple design, all that is necessary for explaining either the nature of holiness or of its reward might be introduced so as to be rendered subservient to it. It is needless to multiply examples. If men be once sensible that an adherence to unity is proper, it will be easy to discourse on every subject so as to preserve it.

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I would not be understood to mean that an adherence to unity of design is so indispensably necessary in every sermon, that it should never be departed from in a single instance. But certainly it is a rule of composition so plainly founded in human nature, that it ought not to be departed from often, or without any reason at all. A strict adherence to it will indeed render Preaching more difficult. It is not so easy to keep one design continually in view, and promote it through a whole discourse, as, without forming any design, to speak a little upon different views of a subject. But a Christian minister ought to follow, not the method of Preaching which is easiest, but what is most proper and useful.

In considering Preaching with respect to the different exertions of mind employed in it, which are commonly called the parts of eloquence, we naturally began with invention, and have already considered the helps of invention, and the qualities of the subject in general. We shall now consider invention, as it regards the several parts of a pulpit discourse.

The first of these is the text. It is a part of scripture which contains the subject of the discourse, and by its being divinely inspired, gives weight and authority to it. We already made all the observations that are necessary, with respect to those passages of scripture which are the texts of such

discourses as we termed Lectures. The observations which we are now to make, regard the discourses which are properly termed Sermons. From the nature and design of a text, it will follow that the principal qualities which should be sought for in it, are such as these. 1. It should be a proposition containing the intention and substance of the sermon, so that the text may be the sermon in epitome, and the sermon the text spread out and expanded. It is a fault to prefix a text as if it were only a motto to a discourse which has some relation to it, but does not prosecute its real intention and design. It deprives the discourse of the weight and authority which might arise from its being evidently founded on the text. If the subject of the sermon be such that a text directly expressing it cannot be found in scripture, it gives a strong presumption, that that is not a proper subject of Preaching; and if a text directly implying it can be found, it shows want of judgement in a preacher to choose one that does not. It will not be difficult to find texts which have this quality for any subject of true religion. A general assertion of a doctrine will serve either for a sermon intended to explain that doctrine, or for one intended to prove it. For a sermon designed to explain a duty, one may choose either a general exhortation to that duty, or a place of scripture which enumerates the parts of the duty. In order to persuade to a duty, one may choose a text which either contains a general exhortation to it,  
or



or expreffes its obligation, its neceffity, or advantages. 2. A text fhould be fimple; it fhould not only contain the whole fubject, but likewise it fhould contain nothing befides it. Without this, either there will be fome part of it which has nothing to anfwer to it in the fermon; or the fermon muft contain two or more fubjects inftead of one. At leaft, if the text be complex, one part of it fhould be made the fubject of each fingle difcourfe. 3. A text fhould be plain, that it may not require long time and great pains for clearing up the meaning of it, or making it underftood, and thus detain too long from the profecution of the fubject which it contains. 4. A text is the better if it be fhort, for it will be the more eafily remembered. All the qualities oppofite to thefe are faults in a text, though not all equally unpardonable. It may not be always eafy to find a text at once fimple, plain, and fhort, for every fubject which a preacher may think it ufeful to infift upon. And certainly he ought not to lay afide an ufeful fubject merely becaufe he cannot find a text in all refpects fuch as he would choofe. It is one of the moft unpardonable faults in a text, not to imply truly the fubject of the difcourfe. If it only refemble it in found, it is a mere playing upon words; it is in no proper fenfe a foundation for the difcourfe. All texts that, in relation to the fubject, have any appearance of wit, or humour, or conceit, are very improper, for they are unfuitable to the dignity and gravity of the pulpit. It has been difputed, whether

ther a text should be chosen for the subject, or the subject chosen and the discourse made for the text. In all discourses formed in the textual method, in all which we have comprehended under the name of Lectures, the latter must be the case. And the opinion of those who have determined that this latter should always be the case, seems to have arisen from their admitting only the textual method of Preaching. But in the several other kinds of sermons of which we have taken notice, there seems to be no impropriety in choosing a text for the subject. And any text expressing the subject will obviously appear to suit a discourse properly made on that subject. But a subject may often be distorted or prevented from being represented in the most natural and striking manner, by being studiously adapted to the phrases and manner of expression of a particular text. It is, perhaps, the best way in general to choose the subject and form the design of the discourse first of all, then to fix on a text which expresses it, and with that text in view to compose the discourse.

The exordium naturally succeeds the text. Its end is to prepare the minds of the hearers for the discourse. It is sometimes not necessary to use an exordium, because their minds need no preparation; as when we are to discourse on a subject that is easy and generally acceptable, and against which they entertain no prejudices. If one choose an exordium here, it may be employed in representing

senting the subject as generally acknowledged to be useful, and as, therefore, confessedly important and worthy of regard, though too little regarded in practice. Sometimes again, a preacher combats the prejudices of men, as when he defends a doctrine which they are disposed to reject, or inculcates a duty which is perhaps unfashionable. In this case an exordium seems to be necessary, or, at least, highly useful, and it should, with as much address as possible, expose the weakness of the prejudices against the subject, or insinuate the necessity of combating them, or give such an account of their origin as may dispose men to suspect them, or hint that it is the preacher's sense of their dangerous tendency that leads him to endeavour to remove them. The importance of the subject, and the near concern which the hearers have in it, is often a very proper topic for an exordium; but it should not spend itself in mere general assertions to this purpose, but suggest such sentiments as may convince the hearers. This will have a great tendency to engage them to attention, and to dispose them to give the discourse a favourable hearing. The exordium may sometimes be employed in laying open such principles as tend to make the subject better understood, and thus both dispose the hearers for attending to it, and prepare them for profiting by it. Sometimes, a piece of history, especially of sacred history, may be very properly turned into an exordium; particularly when the text is introduced by a history; in this case, the  
exordium

exordium will coincide with the giving a view of the context. But it would be tedious to mention all the topics from which introductions may be deduced, or to illustrate them by examples. From whatever topics the exordium be deduced, it should be fit for answering its end, for preparing the minds of the hearers. In order to prepare their minds for profiting by the discourse, it is necessary to render them *attentive*, for without this they cannot either understand or apply it; to render them *docile*, or fit to apprehend and receive it; and *benevolent*, ready to give a fair hearing to the preacher. These dispositions should be kept up through the whole discourse, but it is the business of the exordium or introduction to raise them. All the topics already mentioned, and all the topics proper for introductions, must be subservient to some of these purposes of the introduction. An introduction is faulty if it be common, or such as may be applied with equal propriety to almost any subject. It ought to rise naturally from the subject, and to lead directly to the next part of the discourse; it should appear to be taken, as it were, from the very bowels of the subject, and be fit to give an opening to it; on this account, it has been the opinion of some rhetorical writers, that, though it comes first in order, it ought generally to be thought of last, after the whole design is thoroughly digested; but I imagine that, in this way, there would be great danger of its being forced, and not cohering sufficiently

ciently with the sermon. The introduction should generally be cool, for it is natural to begin calmly, and to rise to warmth by degrees, in proportion as one is more engaged by his subject. But when the subject is obviously interesting, and when the text gives an affecting view of it, a warm and vehement exordium is allowable, and will have a great influence on the audience. That an introduction may be fit to produce the effects for which it is designed, it is necessary that the introduction itself both be understood, and please. In order to these, it must be plain, the sentences short, every thing accurate, the expressions proper, but without an appearance of labour and study, yet smooth and flowing; it should be fit to catch and entice the hearers all at once. Finally, an introduction should be short; immoderate length is a great fault; it makes it disproportioned to the discourse; it keeps the main design too long out of view.

The introduction is succeeded by the explication of the text and context. The design of explaining the text is to make it understood, and to show that it really contains that which is the subject of the discourse. By showing this before-hand, the preacher is freed from the necessity of distorting his subject during the prosecution of it, to accommodate it to the precise words and form of expression in that particular text. Whenever, therefore, the text is perfectly plain of itself, and obviously contains the subject of the discourse, it is  
superfluous

superfluous to spend time in explaining it. The only design of explaining the context is to show, from the intention of the writer and the connection of the text with what goes before, that the meaning which the preacher puts upon it is its real and genuine sense, and that he, therefore, pursues in his discourse what is its true import. On this account it is evident that when a context is plain, no explication of it is necessary for investigating the true meaning of the text; and when there is no dependence of the text on what precedes, any notice of the context is superfluous. When an explication of the text, or the context, or of both, is necessary, the rules of it may be deduced from what has been already said of lectures. We shall only observe that the explication should be as short as possible; for it is rather a preparation to the design, than a direct part of it,

The next part is the design. It should coincide with the import of the text, and should be proposed in a single proposition. By this means it will appear clearly what is the point at which the preacher is to drive; and the hearers will be prepared for perceiving the subservience of every thing that he says, to this point. It should be proposed in as plain terms, and set in as striking a light as possible. It will thus make the deeper impression on the hearers, and throw greater light on the whole discourse. An affectation of quaintness and ingenuity in proposing the design is always

ways blameable, as it detracts from its solidity and weight, and renders it less apt to be understood or remembered.

From what has been said of the kinds of discourses, it will be easy to conceive how the design should be proposed; it will be to explain, to prove, or to persuade. It is sometimes very proper to join with the proposition of the design, an insinuation of the useful purpose which it answers; for example, when one proposes to explain any duty, he might add, that all may see what it is that is incumbent on them, and may be enabled, on examining themselves, to discern how far they comply with their duty, and in what respects they are negligent or defective in it. Or it may be proper to join with it a direction to such a disposition in hearing, as may enable them to apply the discourse to its proper use, as to reflect on their own conduct, and examine their own consciences, while a duty is explained; to ponder the force of every argument produced, when a truth is confirmed; and so in other cases. It is very common with the French preachers to subjoin an Ave Maria to the proposing of their design. A Protestant preacher may substitute, in place of this, a short prayer. If this were always used, it would degenerate into a mere unaffecting form. But sometimes, when the subject is uncommonly striking or solemn, or when one has been raised to a considerable degree of warmth in the exordium, or when it has ended  
with

with any mention of the assistances of the divine spirit, a short prayer for God's rendering the design effectual may be very properly subjoined to the proposal of it, and will have great influence. Sometimes the proposition of the design may be very properly implied in a prayer or invocation of this kind. But the varieties which may be admitted, and the occasions that are proper for them, will be naturally suggested to a preacher by his subject, and the circumstances in which he is to speak.

The division or method comes next in order. It is the proposing of the several parts or members of the subject, before entering on the prosecution of them. Divisions were never used by the ancient orators, and very seldom by the christian fathers. They were first introduced by the scholastics, and have been since almost universally retained by christian preachers. The ancient orators, instead of proposing before-hand the division which they were to follow, often even studied to conceal the distinction of the parts during the prosecution. Indeed, as their view in speaking was to persuade their hearers to something which was to be done immediately, a formal division might have had so much the appearance of study, as to have prevented this effect. And as the effect must take place immediately, it was not necessary to do any thing which might assist them in retaining afterwards a distinct view of the tenor of the discourse. **But a Christian Preacher is to deliver discourses on**  
important



important subjects, which, it is taken for granted, he has carefully considered before-hand, and therefore an appearance of study will not so directly obstruct any design which he may propose. His discourse is intended to influence them in a long course of conduct; and in order to influence them, it must be remembered and recollected long after it is heard; in order to which it is necessary that it be distinctly apprehended when it is heard: the proposing a division contributes to this end, and is therefore no ways improper. In a word, a division is more necessary to preachers than it was to the ancient orators, on account of the different natures and designs of their discourses; what were inconveniences to them will be none to preachers. There are doubtless some cases, in which a division will be inconvenient in a sermon. For instance, it may sometimes happen that all the parts of a sermon rise naturally out of one another, and contribute directly to one design; yet if they were all proposed in the beginning, their connection and dependence would not appear: in this case, it is better to omit any professed division, and to content oneself with proposing the general design.

“ When a division is given, it should be such as  
 “ arises naturally from the subject; such as gives  
 “ a light and a just order to the several parts;  
 “ such a division as may be easily remembered,  
 “ and, at the same time, help to connect and  
 “ retain the whole; such a division as shows at  
 “ once the extent of the subject and of all its  
 “ parts.”

“ parts.” Thus the division of an explicatory sermon will be according to the different branches of the doctrine or duty to be explained; that of a probatory or suafory difcourse, according to the different arguments which are to be urged, for conviction or perfuafion. A division fhould not confift of too many members; if it does, moft fubjects will be, by this means, cut into pieces rather than properly diftributed into parts; befides, it will confound both the apprehenfions and the memories of the hearers, and will thus produce the very inconvenience which it is the only defign of it to prevent. This fault in divifion generally proceeds from an affectation of subtlety in diftinguifhing wherever there is the minuteft difference, fometimes where there is no difference at all. The French preachers generally confine themfelves to three parts; but fome fubjects have more than three diftinct members; and, confidering the variety of fubjects, no certain number can be fixed on for every cafe. A divifion fhould be laid down as fhortly, and in as plain terms, as poffible, without either obfcure or fuperfluous expreffions. There fhould be no affectation of quaintnefs or conceit in a divifion. This is a fault very frequent in the French preachers. Where there is any degree of this, it renders the divifion worfe than it would be in the textual way of deducing the divifion, not from the members of the fubject, but from the expreffions and claufes of the text.

We come now to consider invention, as employed about the prosecution or body of the discourse. This is in every discourse the principal part. The way in which the ancient rhetoricians treated of this part, was by pointing out the several sorts of topics, or common places, from which arguments or illustrations might be deduced. These they handled with great subtlety. It is however found by experience, that these are of little use in practice. They supply only superficial arguments at the best; they only give a hint to genius, and sometimes they rather mislead than direct into the right way. They may be an ingenious analysis of the heads of argument; but they are of no use as a foundation for speaking. We shall not therefore spend time in accommodating them to sermons. A thorough understanding of the subject will be a much better means of inventing what is proper to be said on it, than any artificial topics. We have already prevented ourselves in what might have been observed concerning the peculiarities of prosecution, according to the different kinds of discourses. All therefore that remains is to consider what is common to all the kinds.

The object of invention is the sentiment: it will not therefore be improper to point out the several qualities of sentiments or thoughts which a christian preacher ought to seek after, and of the faults which he ought to avoid. The first and fundamental quality of thoughts or sentiments on

every subject is, that they be true and just. Frequently those thoughts or sentiments which appear at first sight the brightest, are not just and solid; yet they are apt to dazzle and please by their glare, and on that account to be chosen. Such false thoughts would not, however, pass without censure by a judicious critic, in a piece of wit, or a poem. But they are, above all, unsuitable to the gravity and solemnity of pulpit discourses, and to the importance of the subjects treated in them. Truth is the first quality, the very substance of sentiment: if it want truth, the more bold and shining it is, the more faulty it must be. Thoughts are the images of things, and are true no farther than they represent things faithfully. Again, thoughts or sentiments ought to be natural. Natural thoughts are not far-fetched, but arise obviously from the subject; so that they seem to have been found easily and without any labour; and one would think that they must have occurred to any person on the subject. The opposite of this quality is affectation; when sentiments are studiously stretched and carried too far; when, instead of being sublime, they are extravagant; when, instead of being elegant, they are finical; when, instead of being delicate, they are subtle and refined. On the contrary, when thoughts are natural, they bear no mark of study or design; if an object be described, it is by such appearances of it as strike every person as soon as they are mentioned; the passions are made to express themselves

elves properly in their own language. But in avoiding affected sentiments, we must take care not to fall into such as are flat and languid.

Another quality of sentiment a-kin to the former is, that it be suitable to the subject. Those sentiments which suit a familiar subject, will not suit a sublime or pathetic one; those which suit explication would be cold in persuasion; those which would be proper to persuasion would be extravagant in explication. It is likewise necessary that sentiments be perspicuous or clear. Obscurity sometimes belongs to the sentiment as well as to the expression. When it rises to a great height, it becomes unintelligible and absolute nonsense. Even when it is in a less degree, when a thought is so abstruse as to become dark and hard to be understood, it is a fault. A thought ought to be so clear, that persons of tolerable understanding may comprehend it, without being obliged to employ too great application of mind. These qualities of sentiment are universally and indispensably necessary. There are others which are not necessary in every case, but ought to be attended to in cases where they are proper; such as sublimity, beauty, delicacy, which are so fully explained by critical writers that it will not be necessary to enlarge on them.

The last part of a discourse is the conclusion or peroration, which pretty much coincides with what

is commonly called the application. The conclusion should always be suitable to the kind and end of the discourse. We have formerly said all that is necessary with respect to the conclusion of all sorts of lectures and textual discourses, and likewise of those which are explicatory of a particular character. Those which are designed to explain a duty, may be concluded in different ways suitable to their design. It is very proper, after having explained fully the several parts of it, to recapitulate the whole; this will both assist the hearers in remembering what has been advanced for the direction of their conduct, and what can be of no use for directing it except it be remembered; and will also tend to give them a stronger impression of the connection and dependence of the parts. Sometimes a recapitulation is all that is necessary in concluding an explicatory discourse, but it ought always to be at least a part of the conclusion. Again, as the design of explaining a duty is to direct the practice of the hearers, and as they will not think of altering their conduct except they see how far they are deficient, exhortations or directions for examining themselves how far they really practise their duty, may very properly succeed the recapitulation. Whatever can contribute to their forming a right judgement of their real character and conduct in respect of the virtue or vice that has been illustrated, may very properly be introduced here. Farther, any directions which may conduce to their practising the virtue or avoiding the

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the vice, will justly find a place in the conclusion of such an explicatory discourse. Sometimes arguments for the practice of a duty arise from the very view of the nature of that duty. It is impossible, for instance, to explain resignation, without mentioning the freedom from inward anxiety and sollicitude which this temper implies. In cases of this kind it will not be improper to mention in the conclusion, that, in order to recommend the duty, it is sufficient to understand its nature, and to hint at those arguments for it which are so properly internal, as to be implied in the very conception of it. Sometimes too, in the conclusion, a preacher may address exhortations or directions distinctly to different classes of his hearers, according to the different ways in which the duty explained respects them; as to those who wholly neglect it, and to those who already practise it in some degree; which will give an opportunity of pointing out and rebuking such sins or practices as are remarkably inconsistent with it. Sometimes, all these parts may be proper in the conclusion of one discourse; sometimes one or a few of them will be sufficient. It was already remarked, that a discourse intended to prove a doctrine, should be concluded by pointing out its influence on practice, either in several inferences when it is equally connected with several duties, or in one deduction when it is peculiarly subservient to some one branch of virtue. The same holds of those discourses; which are employed in explaining a doctrine. It

remains only therefore to point out briefly, what ought to be the conclusion of a suafory difcourfe. As the defign of the whole difcourfe is to perfuade men to the practice of fome duty, fo the conclufion fhould evidently be calculated for fixing and confirming this effect. What, therefore, ought to be its nature, will eafily appear by recollecting what has been already obferved on the means of perfuafion. Argument is abfolutely neceffary to it; the conclufion, therefore, ought to contain a fummary or recapitulation of the feveral arguments which have been urged in the difcourfe. It fhould not merely mention the heads of them, but represent in brief their whole force, and their greateft ftrength. It fhould, as it were, collect their whole vigour into one point, that it may be more intefe and affect the more. But, as argument alone does not perfuade without an addrefs to the paffions, fo the conclufion muft contain not only the fubftance of the whole arguments, but alfo fomething fit to influence and intereft the paffions. Indeed, though the pathetic fhould, in a greater or a lefs degree, run through the whole of a suafory difcourfe, the conclufion is the principal feat of it, in which it will naturally rife to the greateft degree of warmth. It is not neceffary here, any more than in the other parts of the difcourfe, that the argument and the painting, from which the pathetic results, fhould be kept diftinct. It is much better that they be incorporated together fo perfectly as to be blended and undiftinguifhable; that  
fo



to the conclusion may at once collect, as it were, into one point all the light and all the warmth of the discourse, and leave its full effect upon the hearts of the hearers.

So much for invention, the first exertion of mind employed in the eloquence of the pulpit.

#### ART. VI. *Of Disposition.*

The second exertion of the mind is disposition, which is therefore reckoned the second part of eloquence. It is employed in reducing the whole train of the discourse, and all its parts, into their proper order. Order consists in placing things together which are naturally connected. Without a proper disposition, the materials of a discourse would be a mere confused chaos. In every art, the disposition of the materials is as essentially necessary as the finding them out.

We are prevented in many observations regarding the particular disposition proper for the different kinds of discourses, by the account of each kind that was formerly given. Some of the most general rules of disposition are likewise sufficiently implied in the recital, that was made under the last head, of the order in which the several parts of a discourse naturally succeed each other. A few observations upon it will be all that is farther necessary.

Disposition regards both the whole plan and each part of it. In the whole plan that order should be observed, by which every thing may prepare the way for what succeeds, and preserve the force of what went before. “ Every thing  
“ should be introduced to the best advantage, and  
“ where it is fittest to make a due impression.  
“ Often, that which would seem nothing to the  
“ purpose, by being unseasonably urged, has a  
“ very great weight when it is reserved for its  
“ proper place, till the audience be prepared by  
“ other things to feel all its force and conse-  
“ quence.” The heads of every doctrine, the parts of every duty, have a natural connection and dependence, so that one is first, and the others succeed in a certain order; and this order ought to be observed in explaining them. In proving or persuading by arguments, there is greater latitude as to the order. Sometimes, indeed, the arguments have a natural succession, so that one rises and grows out of another, and one prepares the way for another. In this case, this natural order ought to be carefully observed; the simplest should be placed first, and all of them disposed so that one may prepare the way for our fully understanding and feeling the force of those which follow, and every succeeding argument may add to the weight of those which went before. But often, the arguments are more unconnected, so that any of them may, with little impropriety, be placed first or last. Here, one is left at liberty to choose  
any

any order that he pleases; but even in this case, one order may be better than another. Thus, some have advised to begin with the weakest arguments, and to proceed gradually to the strongest, that so the reasoning, by continually gathering force, may complete its effect upon the hearers. Some again have approved of beginning and ending with the strongest arguments, and throwing the weaker reasons into the middle; because we are naturally attentive at the beginning, and if we be pleased with what is then said, we hear the rest with the more favourable disposition, and what comes last sticks best with us. But in the disposition of the general parts of a discourse, a great deal must be left to the judgement of the preacher; few universal or invariable rules can be established.

Order is necessary not only in this, but in the arrangement of each particular part. In general, it is proper on each head or argument, first to propose it briefly, and then to spread it out in the prosecution, illustrating or urging the whole of it. But though it be easy to discern when a proper order is observed, or to discover a particular fault that is committed, it is not easy to lay down rules which would not be either too general to be understood, or too particular to be useful in every case. In passing from one part of a discourse to another, some form of transition is necessary. English preachers are generally very careless and unartificial in this, contenting themselves with  
mentioning

mentioning one head when they have finished another, without being at any pains to run them, as it were, into one another. Greater care, however, in this respect would often be attended with good effects. A transition, for instance, may be made from the explication of one part of a duty to that of another, by hinting how the practice of the former leads to the latter, or how insufficient the former will be without the latter. In passing from one argument to another, whether in a probatory or a suafory discourse, especially in the latter, it will be proper not to seem to give up the former arguments, or to allow their force to vanish when we leave them and proceed to others. This will be best done by recapitulating the former ones, at least the one immediately preceding, and professedly superadding the next one to them. Various ways of doing this will easily occur on trial.

#### ART. VII. *Of Elocution.*

The third exertion of the preacher is elocution, which regards the language, style, and composition of sermons. The language of sermons ought, first of all, to be plain and perspicuous. In order to attain this, we must use words that are in common use, words which are suitable to the subject, avoiding all technical terms of art, all terms borrowed from the schools, and all such expressions as are ambiguous or equivocal, or as are above the understanding of the people. “ The figures must be  
“ easy

“ easy though not mean, such as tend to make the matter better understood.” Too frequent and too distant metaphors obstruct perspicuity, and turn the discourse in some measure into a dark allegory. All confusion in the arrangement of words likewise produces obscurity. Long periods, such as contain in them two or three different thoughts, are hard to be followed or apprehended. Plainness ought to be preserved in every kind of composition, but most of all in explication; for the very design of this being to make things understood, every degree of obscurity is perfectly unfuitable. The language of a preacher ought likewise to be pure; we should avoid all solecisms or faults in construction, all barbarisms, or words and terms that do not truly belong to the language. Mean and low expressions are unbecoming the dignity of the pulpit, and the sublimity of the subjects which are there treated, and must disgust every person of any degree of understanding. At the same time very great nicety and correctness of style is lost in a discourse that is to be but once heard by a common audience. But a remarkable want of composition, an obvious roughness and asperity of style, is disagreeable. There must be some degree of harmony in order to prevent disgust. The language ought likewise to be nervous, animated, and affecting. A great part of the force of a sentiment often depends on the manner in which it is expressed. What will have great force if it be expressed in one way, will become perfectly languid and uninteresting by being expressed

expressed in another. In general, the language is forcible and moving, when it is such as shows that the speaker is touched with what he says; this never fails to affect the hearers. And most of the figures of rhetoric are nothing else but different ways of showing this. These figures are fully treated by the ancient rhetoricians, to whom we shall refer you. The studying them, and having all their variety in view, will give you an aptitude and bent to light upon them, when it is proper to introduce them. In studying them, it will be proper, first, to acquire a distinct idea of the nature of each; and next, to consider what is its real effect; whether it conduces to perspicuity, to ornament, or to vehemence. Such a previous knowledge of them will prevent your introducing them improperly, and enable you to use with a good effect those figures which suit the subject and the occasion. It must be remarked that any appearance of design in introducing figures, or crowding them together, must be carefully avoided. If they do not appear to rise naturally from the subject and occasion, without being sought for, they will defeat their own design, and render the discourse fligid, affected, and disagreeable.

#### ART. VIII. *Of Memory.*

The next exertion of mind necessary in a preacher is memory; the next exercise incumbent on him is to commit to memory the discourse  
which

which he has invented, composed, and expressed. In most places it would be unnecessary to attempt proving that this exercise is incumbent on a public speaker. To show you, however, that reading is not approved even by those among whom it is most used, I shall give you the sentiments of Bishop Burnet upon it, in his own words. “ Reading is  
“ peculiar to this nation, and is endured in no  
“ other. It has indeed made that our sermons  
“ are more exact, and so it has produced us  
“ many volumes of the best that are extant; but  
“ after all, though some few read so happily, pro-  
“ nounce so truly, and enter so entirely into those  
“ affections which they recommend, that in them  
“ we see both the correctness of reading, and the  
“ seriousness of speaking, sermons, yet every one  
“ is not so happy. Some, by hanging their heads  
“ perpetually over their notes, by blundering as  
“ they read, and by a cursory running over them,  
“ do so lessen the matter of their sermons, that is  
“ they are generally read with very little life or  
“ affection, so they are heard with as little regard  
“ or esteem. Those who read ought certainly  
“ to be at a little more pains than for the most  
“ part they are, to read true, to pronounce with  
“ an emphasis, and to raise their heads, and  
“ direct their eyes to their hearers; and if they  
“ practised more alone the just way of reading,  
“ they might deliver their sermons with much  
“ more advantage. Man is a low sort of creature;  
“ he does not, nay, for the greater part he can-  
“ not,

“ not, consider things in themselves, without those  
 “ little seasoningings that must recommend them to  
 “ his affections. That a discourse be heard with  
 “ any life, it must be spoken with some; and the  
 “ looks and motions of the eye do carry in them  
 “ such additions to what is said, that where these  
 “ do not at all concur, it has not all the force  
 “ upon them that otherwise it might have; be-  
 “ sides that the people, who are too apt to censure  
 “ the clergy, are easily carried into an obvious  
 “ reflection on reading, that it is an effect of  
 “ laziness<sup>a</sup>.”

It is easy to see that this writer disapproved reading sermons much more highly than he thought proper, on account of its universal prevalence in England, to declare explicitly. Indeed, the impropriety of reading sermons arises from the very principles of human nature, not from any groundless prejudices. It is not the only design of language to communicate the ideas of the speaker, by exciting them in the minds of the hearers; it is its design likewise to express the sentiments and affections of the speaker, and by this means to raise them in the hearers. Reading may answer the first of these ends, but it is improper for answering the latter. It is not a natural expression of the speaker's being interested in what he says; it does not render  
the

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<sup>a</sup> Pastoral Care, ch. ix.



the hearers attentive, or contribute to touch or strike them. It is necessarily weaker, more languid, and more unaffecting than speaking.

Were we to inquire at length concerning memory, we might examine on what the remembrance of single thoughts, and on what the remembrance of their series or connections, depends; and we might deduce, from the general principles on which both depend, the means of rendering both easier. But it will not be necessary for our present purpose to enter so deep into the matter; it will be sufficient to make a few general remarks upon mandating.

In order to perform this exercise easily, it is proper that the memory be susceptible, so as quickly to receive what we would commit to it; distinct, so as to retain not only the things themselves, but likewise their due order or position; and ready, so as to suggest them without difficulty, when we have occasion for them. These qualities of memory are attained by pretty much the same means. A thorough understanding of the subject is a great preparation for mandating easily; for it will enable every part to strike us with greater force. In order to our remembering, it will likewise be proper that we fix close attention upon what we would remember, without allowing our thoughts to be distracted or to run off to other subjects, when we are engaged in mandating. It is also

proper that we dwell on every part till we have thoroughly acquired it, before we proceed to any other. If at first we should be able to commit to memory but a few sentences or periods in a day, we must take care to acquire them perfectly before we proceed to others. Order and distinctness in composition, and even writing a discourse in separate paragraphs, is of great help to memory; it makes it more easily susceptible, by saving a great deal of labour that would be necessary for impressing every single thought, if it were either disposed or written confusedly; it will make it lie distinctly in the mind, and give many handles for recollecting it. When we have looked over what we would commit to memory, we should endeavour to repeat it to ourselves; for this endeavour, and looking to it when we are at a loss, will fix it more speedily, than if we were to read it over much oftener, without any attempt to recite; and when we find ourselves at a loss at any particular place, and, by looking to it, endeavour to fix it, we shall scarcely be in any hazard of finding ourselves again at a loss at that particular place. It is found by some to be of great service to look over what they want to remember, immediately before going to sleep at night, because then the mind is not afterwards busied about any ideas which may drive it away; or to look it over in the morning on first getting up, because the mind is not then pre-occupied with any ideas which may hinder its taking fast hold of it. A person ought at first to commit every word  
and

and syllable to heart, whatever trouble it may cost him ; for this will most speedily perfect the habit of remembering, and make it more easy for him to remember afterwards, though he only charge his memory with the principal things and the general order of the whole. It will be of great use frequently to recollect and endeavour to repeat what one has committed to memory, at certain intervals, before delivering it in public ; for a man cannot at first promise on what he has but lately committed to memory ; but the reviewing of it after a certain interval fixes it in the memory more deeply than it was before. These are some of the principal means of committing discourses to memory. The frequent use of these means will beget a habit of doing it easily. No power of the mind is more improveable by use than memory : memory is in no way improveable to so great a degree as in this exercise of mandating. Use makes it incredibly easy to acquire what we want to remember ; and it produces at the same time so strong a habit of recollecting readily, that though one had committed what he is to say very imperfectly to memory, he will run no risk of missing any part of it. The use you should make of this is to begin as early as possible to mandate either sermons or any thing else, and to repeat them either by yourselves or in the company of others. By this means the habit will be formed, and all the difficulties over, before you come to appear in public.

To many, however, mandating a sermon is a very difficult matter. Where the memory is naturally weak, it will take up so much time as to leave little for any thing else; and even with the best memory, diffidence and timidity may have such an effect upon one, as to make him forget, before a congregation, what he was perfect master of when alone in his closet. Where it can be done with tolerable ease, it is certainly most natural; the preacher will feel it most agreeable; and, in general, it will have greater influence on the audience. At the same time one ought to have his notes before him, to which he may have recourse in case of his being at a loss; otherwise, if he happen any how to get discomposed, he may find it difficult to recover himself.

But though mandating be not absolutely necessary to good preaching, good reading is indispensably so. To read servilely, with one's eyes constantly fixed on his papers, is disgusting to an audience. It shows something so cold and lifeless in a preacher, that what he says, be it ever so good in itself, can never affect his hearers. A preacher ought always to peruse his sermon till he enter thoroughly into the spirit of it, and be able, with a glance at his notes now and then, to deliver it with facility and propriety. To read well, is an accomplishment of much greater importance than many are apt to imagine. It admits of all that warmth and animation, of all that action which is  
necessary

necessary or becoming in the pulpit, and will, in a great measure, supersede the necessity of mandating.

ART. IX. *Of Pronunciation or Action.*

The last exertion employed by the preacher, and the last part of eloquence, is Pronunciation or Action. You will find this topic treated largely by rhetorical writers, and even very minute rules for the modulation of the voice and the motion of the several parts of the body given by them, especially by Quintilian. We shall therefore study the greater brevity. It is acknowledged by all, that the several languages which have prevailed in the world are merely artificial, and derive their signification wholly from compact or tacit consent. But this necessarily supposes that men had previously a natural language; for without that, they could never have expressed that consent, or entered into that compact, from which artificial language derives its origin. Now, this natural language could be nothing else but such inarticulate sounds and motions as naturally expressed the sentiments and passions of men. The difficulty and scantiness of these made them inconvenient, and rendered artificial language necessary. But they had in some respects greatly the advantage of this latter. This of itself expresses only ideas; they expressed all the movements of the soul: this of itself is dead and unanimated; they were animated and alive, as

it were. Each of them being thus imperfect by itself, the perfection of speaking consists in uniting natural and artificial language as much as possible. In the union of them, all the rules of pronunciation and action have their foundation. The natural inarticulate sounds which were in use before language was invented, cannot be mixed with the articulate sounds of which language consists; but their force is united to them when these articulate sounds are pronounced with the tone and modulation of voice which correspond to the sentiment or emotion which they signify. The other part of natural language, the motions by which men expressed their sentiments, may be joined with language, and constitute what is properly termed Action. Whatever is inconsistent with the union of natural and artificial language, whatever implies the mere use of the latter without any mixture of the former, is a fault in pronunciation. The following observations may throw some light on this subject.

Pronunciation includes two parts; the management of the voice, and the gesture of the body. In general, a great composure of both is absolutely necessary; a gravity and composure of look and voice, equally distant from a light careless behaviour on the one hand, and an affected tone and wry faces on the other. Every thing must be delivered in such a manner and with such an emphasis, as may show that the preacher thoroughly under-

stands all that he says, is fully persuaded of it, and has those affections which he desires to infuse into others. The pronunciation must be always distinct, and the action lively, natural, and becoming, such as may point out strongly what his words alone would express in a flat and languid manner. An orator must not always have his hands or his body in motion, for it is not natural to use many gestures when we say common things, without any vehemence or emotion. Both the voice and the gesture may have a greater degree of vehemence in Preaching, than conversation could properly admit in saying the same things; for the sight of a great audience, the importance of the subject, and the solemnity of the occasion, will naturally give a greater degree of warmth than one could have in discoursing familiarly with his friends. It is sometimes proper to express some things with a less degree of force than their nature would seem to require, especially when they are to be followed by things which require the utmost force of pronunciation and action; for men may waste their spirits so much in saying plain things, as to be forced to utter those things faintly which ought to be delivered with a vehement action; but when the preacher says things less warm with an easy and familiar manner, he will the more easily grow vehement, and attain energy of voice and action when the subject most requires it; and the audience will then be most affected. One of the most common faults both in voice and action is a monotony

or sameness running through the whole, however different the sentiments expressed may be. Many things concur to lead men into this, as their not having previously studied the varieties of pronunciation, the difficulty which they find at first in recollecting readily what they are to say, the being obliged to speak above the ordinary tone of their voice in conversation. But it should be carefully avoided; it appears tolerable when the cant or tone is harmonious, but it is always improper and unnatural. When one's words are dictated by his feelings, he always uses many different gestures and inflections of the voice, according to the different feelings by which he is actuated. If one would preach naturally, his voice must assume a variety of proper tones and inflections, and rise and fall with a just and easy cadence according to the nature of the things which he expresses. In the same way, the action should be varied so as to suit both the subject and the variations of the voice. The best way of discovering what is the tone and gesture suitable to any particular subject, is to observe those which men have when they are, undesignedly and without premeditation, engaged on such a subject. By observing how men speak and move when they would explain any thing, you may see what is the tone of voice and gesture which fits explication. "Observe what is the posture, and what the voice of one, whose heart is pierced with sorrow, or surprised at the sight of an astonishing object; remark the natural



“ tural action of the eyes, what the hands do, and  
“ what the whole body ;” and where these passions  
are concerned, let your manner be the same. It  
is necessary that there be no appearance of affect-  
ation, either in the voice or action ; and yet,  
without endeavour and study at first, it will be  
impossible ever to attain a proper manner. The  
only course, therefore, that can be taken, is to  
employ oneself much in whatever tends to form a  
proper manner, before one has occasion to speak  
in public, that he may not expose himself to ridi-  
cule, or prevent the effect of the discourse, either  
by improprieties, or by an appearance of art and  
study. You may begin with observing the va-  
rieties of voice and action described by rhetorical  
writers ; accustom yourselves to perform each of  
them easily and readily ; remark which of them  
suits every particular subject or passion ; frequently  
repeat something which gives you an opportunity  
of trying them, either by yourselves, or rather,  
when you can, in the company of others, who  
may observe any improprieties into which you fall.  
By frequent exercise in this way, you may acquire,  
before you appear in public, such a variety of  
graceful pronunciation and action, that when you  
are engaged in your subject, you will naturally fall  
into what suits it, without any design or thought.

Thus we have considered sermons both with  
respect to their kinds and their parts. There are  
many observations of great importance which might

be made concerning Preaching, considered in a moral or practical, rather than a critical view; as, that sermons ought to convey the truths of religion pure and unmixed; in the language of scripture as much as possible; in a way suited to the capacities of the hearers; in a way that is most likely to promote their reformation; in a way which shows that the preacher feels himself the whole force of the truths which he believes. But we shall not enlarge on these; they are fully treated in many writings, particularly in some sermons on this subject, which are well known, and to which you can have easy access.

When a person is settled in a congregation, it is proper that in Preaching he should observe some regular series or order, that all the parts of religion may be illustrated in their real connection and dependence. For, in every science, order in teaching is absolutely necessary. The plan which a minister lays down should not be either too short, else subjects must be treated superficially; or too long, else the very end of it will be frustrated, because many of the hearers will not live to see it completed. There are many different plans into which a course of sermons may very properly be digested, some of which may be most agreeable to one, and others to another, and which the same man may, for the sake of variety, follow at different times. Thus, one may follow an historical order, in which subjects will succeed one another  
in

in some such way as this. The being of God, his attributes, the creation, the fall and its consequences, the nature and use of the Jewish dispensation, the Christian dispensation; the life, death, and exaltation of our Saviour; the effects of his mediation, the gospel terms of acceptance, the various duties of Christianity, death, judgement, heaven, and hell. I mention this one only as a specimen, and I mention only the most general heads. Whatever plan is chosen, the doctrines and the duties of religion ought to be intermixed with one another, that their real connection may appear.

Besides a minister's ordinary course of sermons, there are occasional discourses which he must sometimes use, as on fasts and thanksgivings, about the time of sacraments, at synods, and the like. These are subject to the very same rules of composition with other sermons. The matter of these should always be such as suits the particular occasion of them, and excites to the practice of the particular duties which the occasion requires. And it must be left to the preacher to judge what appears to him to have these characters. No doubt some general directions may be given. Thus, on a public fast, it is proper to give such a view of the calamity which occasions it, as may excite the hearers to repentance: on a public thanksgiving, such a display of the blessings acknowledged as may inflame their gratitude: on a fast day

day before a sacrament, what might either urge them to repentance, or direct them in the exercise of it: on a Saturday, or in an action sermon, what is fit to excite those affections which should be exerted in commemorating the death of Christ: in the afternoon or on Monday, what may confirm their good impressions, and persuade them to the practice of holiness.

There is one thing more that will deserve to be taken notice of on the subject of Preaching; whether writing discourses regularly, or Preaching on mere premeditation, be the preferable way. This latter way has been warmly recommended by two writers on the subject of Preaching, Bishop Burnet in his Pastoral Care, and the Archbishop of Cambray in his Dialogues concerning eloquence. They propose that a man should be at great pains to prepare himself for Preaching without writing, for several years before he attempt it, by acquiring great knowledge of the scriptures, by comparing together those passages which belong to the same subject; by often laying them together, and digesting in his thoughts what arises from them upon any subject; by acquiring a distinct and connected idea of the whole body of divinity, and by furnishing his mind with a large collection of sentiments from practical writers upon all kinds of subjects. Being provided with these materials, in order to qualify himself for this way of Preaching, he must accustom himself to talk freely to himself, and let his

his thoughts flow easily from him; he must frequently write on all sorts of subjects, that he may bring himself to correctness both in thinking and speaking; he must for some years accustom himself to preach as it were to himself on all sorts of subjects once or twice every day, that he may acquire an easiness both of thought and of expression; above all, he must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion, and must, by meditation and prayer, draw down divine influences, which are always to be expected when a man puts himself in the way of them, and prepares himself for them. This preparation will enable him to pour out true thoughts in just and easy expressions. But even after all this preparation, he must at first try smaller excursions from his fixed thoughts; and as he succeeds in these, he may give himself farther scope; and so, by long practice, he will at last arrive at so great an easiness both in thinking and speaking, that a very little meditation will serve him for preparing a sermon. If one be to try Preaching in this way, it is necessary that he meditate so carefully on his subject beforehand, as to have a distinct and comprehensive view of it, as to reduce his thoughts into proper method, as to have thought of the strongest expressions and figures. It is supposed that in this way he must have a great advantage in the freedom and force of his pronounciation and action; he will speak in an easy, unaffected way,  
and

and not like a formal declaimer ; he can vary his discourse according to the occasions which cast up while he is delivering it.

In my opinion, these writers have carried the matter too far. It is very proper that a man should be able to preach in the way they recommend, when it is necessary ; but no man ought always to preach in this way. If he do, he will run into trite common-place topics ; his compositions will be loose and unconnected ; his language often coarse or confused ; and diffidence, or care to recollect his subject, will destroy the management of his voice. At any rate, a person should accustom himself to compose regular discourses for many years after he begins to preach, before he attempt this method, except in short excursions, or when absolute necessity requires it.

It is the design of all the discourses that are prescribed here, to prepare you for the business of Preaching. In order to their doing so, it is best that you compose just such lectures and sermons as should be delivered in public ; that you imagine yourselves preaching to a congregation, and make your sentiments, your method, your language, your pronunciation, and your action, precisely such as you would think proper for a popular audience.

## SECT. II.

*Of presiding in the ordinary Public Worship of God, administering the Sacraments, and conducting Public Worship on extraordinary occasions.*

WE have already considered the several private duties of the pastoral office, and we have largely explained Preaching, which is the first public duty of this office that we took notice of. The other public duties incumbent on a minister, which peculiarly regard the parish in which he is settled, may be reduced to these: Presiding in the ordinary public worship of God, administering the sacraments, and conducting public worship on extraordinary occasions. In explaining these as duties of the pastoral office, it would be superfluous to attempt a large explication of the nature of prayer or of the sacraments. In the view which we here take of them, it will be sufficient to make such observations as tend to show how a minister may perform with propriety his particular part in these sacred offices.

In the primitive church, the manner in which public worship was conducted seems to have been this. “ When the congregation was assembled, “ the first act of divine service which they performed was reading the scriptures. When the “ reading of the scriptures was ended, then followed the singing of psalms, either such as “ were

“ were taken out of the scriptures, or such hymns  
 “ as were composed by any of themselves; and  
 “ these they were always careful to sing *ἑμμελως και*  
 “ *συμφωνως*, in good tune and concert. When the  
 “ singing of psalms was ended, then succeeded  
 “ the preaching of the word. As soon as the  
 “ sermon was ended, then all the congregation rose  
 “ up to present their common and public prayers  
 “ to God, stretching out their hands, and lifting  
 “ up their eyes to Heaven, and the minister with  
 “ a modest and supplicating voice presented, in  
 “ the name of the congregation, prayers suited to  
 “ their present circumstances.” The manner of  
 public worship prescribed by the directory of our  
 church coincides, in almost every material circum-  
 stance, with this, which was observed in the  
 church at least for three centuries. It appoints  
 that, the congregation being assembled, the mi-  
 nister should begin with a short prayer, impressing  
 them with a sense of the divine presence, and  
 begging God’s assistance and acceptance. Next,  
 the scriptures are to be read in their order. Then  
 psalms are to be sung. After this, the minister is  
 again to pray. Preaching succeeds this prayer.  
 The sermon being ended, the minister is again to  
 pray. After prayer, a psalm is to be sung, and  
 then the minister is to dismiss the congregation with  
 a solemn blessing.

Of these parts, preaching has been already  
 considered; reading the scriptures has somehow  
 gone into disuse; perhaps it has been insensibly  
 jostled



jostled out by lecturing; sometimes a chapter which was read, would require some observations for explaining it; and from making these after it had been read, men, at first perhaps conceited of their own abilities, and fond of speaking, came by degrees to comment on every piece of scripture which they read, till at last the very notion of a lecture's being intended chiefly for reading a piece of scripture is wholly lost. Reading the scriptures seems to be so necessary and essential a part of Christian worship, that the omission of it is the most faulty defect in the present practice of our church. Yet so great is the perverseness and weak bigotry of many, that in some places it would almost create a schism to attempt to introduce it; and even the authority of our directory, framed in the revered ages of the church, would not be sufficient to secure from blame the person who introduced it. I know nothing, however, which better deserves a man's running the risk of giving offence, than restoring the public reading of the scriptures. In some places it might perhaps be attempted without offence, and there it should be attempted. It might perhaps, in most places, be introduced gradually, by lecturing on large portions of scripture, first making the explication shorter than ordinary, then passing over some of the easier verses without any explication; then explaining only a few of the most difficult verses; and afterwards, reading a whole chapter, and only subjoining some practical observations upon it.

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The only part that remains of ordinary public worship, on which it will be necessary to make any observations for directing the minister in the part he is to act in it, is prayer. In churches where composed liturgies are used, a minister has nothing to do but to read their prayers; he need only study to pronounce them with gravity and affection, and with a due slowness and emphasis, which will be most effectually attained by bringing his mind to an inward and feeling sense of those things that are prayed for. But in our church, where no liturgy is imposed, a great deal depends on the minister, and therefore he ought to be at the greatest pains to fit himself for performing this important part of worship in a proper manner. It would be foreign to our present design to consider the point of imposed liturgies as a theological question. But it may prepare the way for some of the observations which we are to make concerning public prayer, to begin with observing, that both established forms of prayer and the total want of them have some advantages and some inconveniences. When public forms are appointed, the people may be supposed to know more perfectly what are the devotions in which they are to join, to have a better opportunity of bringing themselves beforehand to the temper which suits them, and may enable them to join with sincerity in them. They may likewise be carefully drawn up by persons of abilities, and may thus prevent many absurdities into which weak and ignorant ministers, trusting

trusting wholly to their own gifts, may sometimes run. But it must be acknowledged, on the other hand, that when set forms are imposed, they cannot be so exactly suited to particular circumstances and emergencies as might be wished: they must be gone over so often that they become tiresome and disgusting, or at least unaffecting both to the minister and to the people, and, by thus degenerating into mere form, prevent all the good effect which might result from a previous acquaintance with them. Praying without set forms may, doubtless too, be productive of some inconveniences. Thus, when the audience know that the prayers are the performance of the preacher himself, they are too apt to consider them as a specimen of his abilities, to attend to them with a view to form a judgement of his talents, and thus to be diverted from expressing their devotion in the words that he uses, which ought to be their only employment. This appears to me to be the inconvenience which is most inseparable from public prayer without established forms. The best means of curing it will be, frequently to inculcate the necessity of joining heartily in prayer, and to contrive his prayers so that they may be fit to affect them with devotion, and to raise their minds in the exercise of it. It might however, without the imposition of forms, be effectually remedied by a proper directory (such as our own is in some measure), containing either a variety of forms, any of which might be used, or a large collection of materials

for prayer, out of which a choice may be made, put into the hands of the people, recommended to their study, and rendered by this means sufficiently known to them. The other inconveniencies which are sometimes imputed to prayer without set forms, really arise from faults in the manner of performing it, and will be avoided by ministers taking care to perform it in a proper manner.

Thus it is said that the people cannot join in prayer, of which they know nothing beforehand, and into which the preacher may perhaps throw peculiar sentiments of his own, in which the congregation do not agree with him. But this objection can lie only against prayers which are very ill contrived. The proper matter of prayer all are acquainted with, and can join in, and none are wholly ignorant of the language in which it may be most fitly expressed. The minister, while he confines himself to the proper subject of prayer, can have no occasion to throw in peculiar sentiments of his own. In public prayers, he should confine himself to those expressions of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and petition, which are applicable to all, and might with propriety come from the mouth of any of the congregation. Peculiarities are proper for private devotions, not for public. Every part of public prayer ought, as much as possible, to be expressed in the language of scripture, which is both the most weighty in itself, and the most familiar to the congregation. When  
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other expressions are mixed with it, they ought to be as plain and simple as possible. Pompous, affected, and obscure expressions are wholly improper for devotion. When the proper matter of prayer is thus kept to and expressed, all may bring themselves to a fit temper for joining sincerely in it as easily as if they knew the whole composition beforehand, and at the same time they are freed from the deadness and coldness which the constant use of established forms is apt to produce.

If persons not restrained to imposed forms ever run into absurdities for want of them, it is owing not to the use of extemporary prayer itself, but to a wrong manner in using it. Because established forms of prayer are not publicly imposed, it does not therefore follow that arbitrary forms may not be used; that a minister may not himself compose or collect forms proper for the different occasions on which he is to use them. Because a minister is not obliged to read a liturgy prescribed by authority, it does not therefore follow that he is to pour out such petitions or devotions as occur to him, without any method, choice, or premeditation. On the contrary, we ought to be as careful about what we say in prayer, as about what we say in preaching, as solicitous to speak with propriety when we address ourselves to God, as when we address the congregation. When a person first begins to appear in public, it will be very proper that he prepare his prayers with as great care and

regularity as his sermons. It will likewise be generally proper, when any particular or public occasion demands a considerable peculiarity in the subject or manner of prayer, to compose devotions suited to it. By this means, a preacher of moderate understanding will be able to avoid every thing unbecoming in prayer, and to perform it with greater propriety, and so as to raise more fervent devotion both in himself and in others, than by going over public forms. If a person compose a variety of prayers in this way, and become thoroughly master of them, he will soon be furnished with such abundance of materials for prayer, that he can easily perform this part of public worship afterwards, without the necessity of either composing a distinct form of prayer for every occasion, or recurring constantly upon the same form or the same expressions; but mixing together and disposing in different manners, according to the present impulse of his mind or the nature of the occasion, those petitions and devotions which he had formerly digested into several distinct prayers. There is another way which a preacher may take, and which he should superadd to the former, for forming himself to a readiness, a copiousness and variety in public prayer. He should collect together, and write down, such proper adorations, expressions of praise, petitions, and acknowledgements, as he meets with, particularly in reading the scriptures; he should write them down in any order in which they occur. By this means he will

in a short time obtain a large stock, and by frequently looking it over and fixing it in his mind, the several things which he has written down will occur to him readily when he has occasion for them, without his needing to digest them into form before-hand; one thing will suggest another connected with it; and the disposition of his prayers, dictated in this manner by the present temper of his mind, will be more easy and natural, and will render them more striking and affecting, than if it had been contrived coolly in his closet.

Most other observations which might be made concerning public prayer, regard it rather as a Christian duty, than the peculiar part which a minister has in it by presiding in the public worship. There is one, however, that we may briefly touch upon, the order in which the parts of prayer may be most properly disposed. This may, no doubt, be different, and the proportion of time allowed to each will vary according to different occasions. In general, adoration is proper in the beginning, to strike us with a sense of the Divine Presence, and to excite, by the contemplation of God's perfections, those pious and devout affections which should prevail in the mind when it is engaged in prayer. From adoration, the transition to praise and thanksgiving is extremely easy and natural. Thanksgiving will be very properly succeeded by petitions for mercy, and, as connected with these, by confession of sin and expressions of repentance.

Petitions, not only for the direction and assistance of God's spirit, but likewise for all good things to ourselves and others, will be very properly introduced by these. But, in fact, there is no necessity for keeping these several parts distinct. It is better to intermix them through the whole of prayer. This is the most ordinary method in the devotional parts of scripture, which are the best models we can follow. It is the most natural expression of a mind possessed by devotion, and actuated by piety. It gives fuller scope for expressing all the variety of affections which are combined in a pious temper. Indeed, though those which we have mentioned are commonly reckoned all the parts of devotion, yet there are some affections which it is extremely proper to exert in devotion, that are not properly reducible to any of them. Such are expressions of our trust in God, of our resignation to his will, of our good resolutions, of our regard to God's judgement of us, of our delight in him, of our sense of the beauty and excellence of holiness; these are rather implied or supposed in some of the parts of prayer, than explicitly contained in them. But, by considering prayer, not as composed of so many parts which should succeed each other in order, but as an exertion and expression of a pious and holy temper, we may very properly introduce the expressions of all its branches, not confusedly, yet so as not to be scrupulous in keeping them separate and distinct.

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The next public duty of the pastoral office is the administration of the Christian sacraments. These are two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which we shall consider briefly, not in every view that might be taken of them, but simply in this one view of its being a part of a minister's function to dispense them in such a way as to render them most useful to Christians.

To begin with Baptism. It is very necessary that a minister instruct his people frequently concerning the nature of baptism, that they may not go about it as a ceremony, as it is too visible the greater part do, but that they may attend to its real design and importance. As it is very proper to instruct parents in this privately when they desire to have their children baptised, so no time is more suitable for instructing the congregation publicly concerning it, than when it is to be dispensed. As it is not convenient to make long discourses on these occasions, it will be proper to confine oneself to some one view of it at each time. And it may be considered in many different views, each of which will convey a striking conception of its nature and use. It will be unnecessary to go over all these views; every place of scripture almost in which it is mentioned, sets it in a light somewhat peculiar. To give a few instances of the different lights in which it may be set. At one time it may be very proper to point out the foundation of ritual duties in our mixed

and compounded natures, their necessity for exciting us to holiness by such ceremonies as strike the senses, the proneness of men in all ages to abuse them, and to substitute them in the place of true goodness, the care of our Saviour to prevent this by the simplicity and significance of his positive institutions, and particularly of baptism. At another time, one may enlarge on its being an institution of our Saviour, and therefore, its deserving our closest attention to the real design and intention of it. Sometimes one may represent it as the sign of our believing the truths of the gospel and receiving its precepts, from our Saviour commanding his disciples to baptise men in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to teach men at the same time to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them. At other times it may be represented as, both by the declarations of scripture and the original manner of dispensing it, an emblem of a spiritual death and resurrection. Sometimes it may be represented as the seal of those religious privileges which God has freely bestowed on the Christian church as means of holiness and improvement, as admitting those who are baptised, to them, and as a sign of the obligation which the enjoyment of these privileges lays us under to the practice of holiness. At other times it may be represented as a stipulation to walk worthy of the Christian vocation; which it is of great importance to fulfil so as to preserve a good conscience. Many different views of  
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of it will occur by careful attention to its nature, and to the several places of scripture relating to it. It will generally be sufficient to give one of these views of it at once. But whatever view of it be given, it should be made to issue in urging all present to walk suitably to their Christian profession, and inculcating on them the necessity of holiness.

As in the first ages of the gospel, when the persons baptised were adult, they were obliged at their baptism to profess that they believed the gospel of Christ, were willing to engage in the profession of it, and resolved to walk worthy of this profession; so now, when infants are baptised, it is proper that some professions and stipulations should be exacted from their parents or sponsors. It is proper that they should be obliged to make public profession of their own belief of the gospel. This profession ought to be confined to the fundamental and uncontroverted truths of religion, and not extended to any of the distinguishing tenets of a party; for baptism is an institution of Jesus, not of any leader of a sect; it is the sign of our admission into the Christian church, not of our admission into any particular division of Christians. It is likewise proper to exact an engagement from the parents or sponsors, to instruct the child in the whole doctrine of the gospel, in the import of its having been baptised, and to fulfil their obligations to take care of its education.

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Both the propriety of the thing itself, and the constant and universal practice of the Christian church requires that the exacting of these professions and engagements should be followed by prayer and invocation of God, which, on this occasion, may very properly consist in acknowledgements of God's goodness, particularly in the gospel, in the continuance of it from one generation to another, in making us and our children partakers in his covenant, in his freely bestowing upon us our Christian privileges, in his appointing this sensible action as a sign of our being invested with them, and in petitions that he may bless his own ordinance of baptism at the time, that he may join the inward baptism of his spirit with the outward baptism of water, that the washing with water may not be an empty ceremony to the child, but may be followed by that purity of heart and life, of which it is designed to be only a type and representation.

When the blessing of God is, in some such way as this, implored on his institution, baptism itself is performed by sprinkling, along with a repetition of the words of institution.

The dispensing of baptism is very properly followed by prayer, that it may be rendered effectual to the salvation of the child, that it may be followed by sanctification and remission of sins, that the child, now a member of the Christian church  
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and admitted to the outward privileges of the gospel, may become a member of God's true invisible church, and be received into the enjoyment of the eternal blessings of the gospel, that the parents may be enabled to perform their duty to their child and family, and all the duties incumbent on them, and that all present may walk worthy of their holy vocation; and to these prayers suited to the institution, any of the proper materials of devotion may be added as occasion requires.

The rules and practice regarding the circumstances in which any alteration is to be made in any of the ordinary methods of dispensing baptism, are so well established, that it will not be necessary to enlarge upon them. Some cases of difficulty may, no doubt, occur; but as these cannot be foreseen or enumerated, it must be left to a man's own prudence and the best advice he can obtain, to direct him in these cases.

The other Christian sacrament is the Lord's Supper. It is very necessary to explain properly the nature of this institution, both in preaching and in private, that the people may be guarded against the two extremes of irreverence and superstition. This is a part of teaching; but we are at present to consider this sacrament only in the view of dispensing it in such a way, that it may tend most to the end for which it was designed,  
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the promoting of true holiness and goodness. All who profess Christianity are not to be promiscuously admitted to it. They who are either grossly ignorant, or openly and customarily vicious in any particular way, act unsuitably to the common profession of Christianity; and nothing could tend more to bring this solemn act of worship into contempt, than to admit these to it, who, it is plain, could not perform it acceptably. At the same time, one should avoid the other extreme of too great rigour and severity in excluding persons on account of those faults, which may be resolved into the weakness of the present state, and may be consistent with sincere goodness. The proper light in which it should be considered is, that it is a means of improvement, but at the same time a means of improvement which cannot be used to advantage, except by those who have already some degree of good dispositions. In this view of it, it is plainly absurd to require so great a degree of perfection in those who are admitted to it, that, if they were possessed of that degree, they could scarce need means of improvement. And, on the other hand, it is wrong to receive those who can evidently exert no good affections in it, and therefore cannot be improved by the use of it. A minister, by considering it in this light, and regulating his conduct by this view of it, may take several advantages from this sacrament for making good impressions on the people. Thus, about the time of a communion, every minister that knows  
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any one of his parish guilty of eminent sins, may go to him, and admonish him to change his course of life, or not to profane the table of the Lord. When a person designs first to partake in the Lord's Supper, a minister may make good impressions on the person himself and on others, by making him not only in private, but in as public a manner as he finds it convenient to use, to make solemn profession of his embracing the Christian faith for himself, and to vow that he will live suitably to it, renouncing the sins which he has formerly indulged, and promising to live henceforth as becomes a Christian. This is practised by some ministers with good success, and with a very great effect.

When the actual dispensing of this sacrament comes on, the first part of the service is, what is called fencing the tables; that is, describing those who are unfit for this part of worship, and those who are fit. In doing this, care should be taken to require no qualifications which are not absolutely required by the scriptures. All unbelievers and all wicked persons should be declared unworthy; but no minister, except he can show a revelation from Heaven, declaring his explications of scripture to be infallibly true, has a right to declare any person unworthy on account of such errors in judgement as are consistent with a sincere belief of Christianity. This institution is the test of Christians, not of any  
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one sect ; it is the bond of Christian love, not of division and schism.

Again, a minister should warn them who are unworthy, in such a manner as may show, in the most obvious way, that his warnings are not arbitrary, that he does not merely speak from his own opinion or humour ; in such a manner as may carry conviction with it, that the several characters which he describes do necessarily, in their very nature, render persons unfit for this act of worship. The easiest and most effectual way of answering this end seems to be, along with every character that is described, to point the reason why, or to express in what manner, it renders those to whom it belongs unworthy. Thus, in general, the necessity of some preparation and previous good disposition of heart arises from this, that external acts of worship can improve the temper only by their being exertions of the good affections from which they proceed, and therefore cannot at all improve those who have not some degree of these affections, and of consequence cannot exert them, or put them in exercise ; and the matter may be represented in this light by the minister. When atheists are excluded, the obvious reason may be hinted, that they cannot join in an act of religious worship ; when deists, that they cannot join in a christian institution. When the vices forbidden in the third commandment are mentioned, it may be hinted  
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that they are inconsistent with that reverence of God which suits so solemn an approach to him. The vices forbidden in the fourth commandment show a want or a weakness of devout affections, and therefore unfit men for this institution, in which devout affections should be raised to the highest pitch of fervency ; and so in other instances. Proceeding in this way will give great weight to all that a minister says in this part of the service, will render it convincing, and keep it from being in any measure regarded as a mere form.

In declaring who are fit for this act of worship, a minister's view should be, not only to declare, in as plain terms as possible, what are the characters that render one a good man and a true Christian, or at least, in such a disposition of repentance as will render this act of worship acceptable, but also to remove the grounds of fear which weak or melancholy persons are apt to dwell upon, from reflection on the present state of their minds, their want of warmth of devotion, their being distracted with idle thoughts, or their not having found time for such particular preparation as they would have chosen.

As the whole office of a clergyman is properly ministerial, not lordly or dictatorial, so in this service in particular, it seems to be more suitable to this character of his office to express his warnings as declarations of the necessary qualifications of  
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communicants, by which they may examine and judge themselves, than to affect the authority and solemnity which are sometimes used, of repeating continually, "I debar and exclude," or "I invite" in the name of Christ."

After this part of the service is over, as this sacrament is a positive institution, not of natural obligation, but deriving its obligation solely from its being appointed in scripture, the institution should be read from some of the places of scripture where it is recorded. The reading of it should be followed by prayer, which will properly consist of two parts, thanksgiving for the blessings of the gospel, and petitions for God's blessing on the institution, for his grace to excite and enliven all the devout affections which should be exerted in it, and for his assistance to perform our vows, and practise all the duties of life to which they bind us. This prayer, which should be contrived, as much as possible, to express and excite sincere and fervent devotion, may be very properly followed by giving such a view of the nature of the institution, as may dispose both to a rational and to a devout observance of it.

After this is over, it would be extremely decent, that, except the minister's distributing the elements with the words used by our Saviour, all the rest were performed in solemn silence. And this is, in fact, the method prescribed by our directory.

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But custom has introduced discourses at every table. These are attended with this inconvenience, that they employ the communicants too much in hearing, and divert them from what is their proper business, internal devotion. Since they are used, they ought therefore at least to be contrived so as to produce this inconvenience as little as possible. Set discourses, calculated for information, are always improper. The part of the discourse which precedes the distribution of the elements should be employed in giving some striking view of the love of God in Christ, tending directly to inflame the affections which ought to be exercised. The discourse should not be continued after the elements are received; the minister should either preserve absolute silence, or throw in only such short hints as may direct and animate the devotion of the communicants; any thing further interrupts entirely the exercise of devotion, which should employ them. The remaining part of the discourse will be properly employed in such warm exhortations, striking sentiments, and practical maxims and directions, as may make an impression on them, and influence their conduct.

After all have communicated, there generally is, and very properly may be, an address or exhortation. For this, there are several very fit topics. The most common way is to give a description of the different characters of communicants, by which they may know how far their temper has

been right or faulty, and exhortations suited to the variety of their tempers. And if this be done with judgement, and with a fixed view to habitual practice, it may be very useful. Another proper topic may be, to rectify men's mistakes about the advantages to be expected from this sacrament, in immediate and sensible illuminations or consolations, to direct them to judge of their advantage by their after-conduct, and to improve their communication by a holy life. Or a minister may urge upon them the obligations which Christianity, and particularly which this public profession of it, lays them under, to virtue and holiness. In a word, whatever has a tendency either to persuade or to direct them to a becoming conduct, is a very proper topic.

In general, great care is necessary in every thing that is said about this sacrament, to avoid mystical and unmeaning expressions, to use no word which does not convey a distinct and rational conception, and to direct the whole to practice. Most men's minds are, at this time, peculiarly susceptible of good impressions; and a minister should seize this favourable opportunity of fixing in them something practical, something moral, something fit to enter into their temper, and regulate their life.

As to the worship of God on extraordinary occasions, we have already taken some notice of the peculiarities of sermons suited to them. And,  
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with regard to conducting public devotion on them, it will be sufficient to observe, that the subject of the devotion should be suited to the particular occasion; that for this end, the greatest proportion of time should be allowed to that part of devotion which most suits the occasion; as to confession on fasts, to praise on thanksgivings; and that, in general, it may be proper to spend more time in devotion than on ordinary occasions.

## C H A P. IV.

*Ecclesiastical Duties respecting the Church in general.*

**T**HE public duties of the pastoral office, which have been hitherto considered, are incumbent on a minister as pastor of a particular parish, and regard all the congregation under his care. But, besides these, there are other duties of a still more public nature, which are incumbent on him as a member of the church in general, and which do not immediately or necessarily respect the parish committed to his care. These we shall briefly consider.

We shall begin with a part of the pastoral office, which is indeed often exercised by a minister in his own parish, but which we have chosen to consider under this head, because it is often also exercised by him in a more public capacity, and without any immediate reference to his own parish, and because it bears some relation to the other duties which regard the government of the church; I mean the exercise of public discipline.

We have already considered the several private ways of checking or rebuking wickedness, which  
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a minister may, and ought to use. But private rebukes are not sufficient in all cases; the apostle Paul expressly commands Timothy, in some cases, to “rebuke them that sin before all, that others “also may fear<sup>b</sup>.” And our Saviour directs our conduct in this matter: “If thy brother shall “trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault “between thee and him alone: if he shall hear “thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he “will not hear thee, then take with thee one or “two more, that in the mouth of two or three “witnesses every word may be established. And “if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the “church: but if he neglect to hear the church, “let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a “publican<sup>c</sup>.”

In the first ages of the church, the discipline was extremely strict, much stricter than the temper of the present age will permit. And though the greatest care should be taken not to slacken discipline more than absolute necessity requires, yet prudence forbids to stretch it farther than the situation of things will bear; for attempts to do so, by proving ineffectual, will disappoint their own design, and make the spiritual arms of the church even more despised than they were before.

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<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. v. 20,

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xviii. 15, &c.

Every thing essential to the manner of exercising discipline is prescribed in the form of process established by authority, which is composed with a spirit of moderation and good sense perfectly inconsistent with that inquisitorial spirit which some are disposed to exert in discipline. An acquaintance with the rules which are there prescribed is absolutely necessary for every minister, in order to secure him from blunders in appointing censures. And the rules of procedure being there fully laid down, renders it only necessary here to make a few general observations, which may be of use for directing you to apply the rules with prudence and judgement.

All sins require repentance, and repentance will always show itself by obvious and open effects; but all sins are not the proper objects of church discipline. Christian charity will not allow us to pry into the secret faults of others; it is only their open and public sins that give scandal, and deserve public animadversions. All open and public sins are in themselves proper objects of discipline; yet all of them cannot be easily brought under discipline. Some of them do not show themselves by overt and determinate acts; they do not admit of definite measures. It is not easy to fix the limits where the lawful ends and the unlawful begins. On this account they cannot easily be censured publicly, for it is not easy to prove that persons are guilty of them; and to inflict censures in cases  
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which do not admit determinate and satisfactory proof, would open a door to tyranny and oppression. For the same reason, many vices which display themselves in determinate and overt acts, cannot, in all cases, be easily subjected to public censure, because they cannot be fully proved. These causes have reduced the vices which are now publicly censured to a very narrow compass, to such as discover themselves by effects perfectly unquestionable and free from all ambiguity. Yet even these are more than are generally subjected to the exercise of discipline, as swearing, some instances of drunkenness, many cases of lying, dishonesty, and calumny, and many overt acts of impiety. All such sins, which are both open and capable of legal proof, ought, doubtless, to be much more subjected to discipline than they are, for they are properly scandalous. But it will not be prudent to attempt the exercise of discipline against sins, to which these characters do not agree. In ages when a sense of religion prevails, they who have fallen into sin may, from a true disposition of penitence, be ready to acknowledge it when they are accused, and to make all the reparation in their power for the scandal they have given. But that is not the temper of the present age; men will acknowledge nothing which cannot be proved against them. In this situation, all that can be done is to extend the exercise of church discipline uniformly against those sins which can be clearly

proved, and to attempt only private admonitions or reproofs against other sins.

The abuses of the Popish church have introduced an inveterate and deep-rooted mistake, which it will not be easy to eradicate, that submission to church censures is a sort of penance which expiates the guilt of the sin. All methods should be taken to remove this error, and to inculcate that they are only spiritual chastisements designed to increase true repentance, and to express it, and that no farther than they do so, can they be of any avail for obtaining pardon. In inflicting censures, a minister should carefully remember that he is a judge, and should therefore preserve perfect impartiality and strict justice. It is particularly base to make the power entrusted to him in any degree an instrument of his own resentment. If he bear any grudge at a person whose conduct exposes him to public censure, it would be much better to decline, as much as possible, any share in judging of it, in order to avoid even the suspicion of partiality. All discipline ought to be managed in such a way as may tend most to promote true virtue; and in order to this, it should always be directed by prudence, joined with a spirit of meekness.

In almost all the public duties which are incumbent on a clergyman as a member of the church  
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in general, he acts the part of a judge, and therefore ought to be careful to maintain the character of a judge, the peculiar decorum of which is strict and inflexible integrity. Here indeed, all extremes are to be avoided. We must not, by studying to be impartial, become rigid or severe; nor, in avoiding rigour, ought we to swerve from integrity. We must be strict, yet not captious; unbiassed, yet not rigorous; meek, yet not remiss.

The subjects of judgement which principally come before ministers as members of judicatories, (besides cases of discipline,) are two; the decision of settlements, and the qualifications of candidates for the ministry. It will not be improper to make a few observations on these separately, because there are some circumstances peculiar to each.

In questions concerning settlements, the property and rights of men are as truly concerned, as in any questions that are brought before a civil judge. An honest man can have no more scope for favour in cases of this sort, than a civil judge can have in trials for life and property. It cannot fail to be a great reproach to a clergyman to be thought more open to solicitations than any other judge. Yet it has somehow happened, that they who would never think of soliciting a civil judge in a cause depending before him, make no scruple to solicit clergymen with regard to causes depending before church judicatories,

judicatories, and imagine they have a right to be offended with a person, and to resent it, if he refuse to give his voice as they require. Clergymen have given too great countenance to this shameful practice, by listening to solicitations, by yielding to them, by not expressing sufficient indignation against them, by not remembering that it is incumbent on them to sustain the integrity and inflexibility of the judge. One circumstance has greatly contributed to this; the laws of the church regarding settlements have scarcely ever been fixed and determinate; and this has led not only clergymen, but all others concerned in church judicatories, to assume a liberty, and to think that they might allow themselves a great latitude in determining according to circumstances in any particular case; and partiality or attachment easily made them conceive circumstances in the most favourable light for that side which they were disposed to espouse. This cannot excuse the conduct; for the assuming this liberty evidently tended to make every thing loose and uncertain; and it is reproachful to any court to be guided by no fixed principles. In this situation, it was plainly incumbent on every clergyman to lay down a settled rule of judgement for himself, and to adhere to it uniformly till he found a better, for which he might exchange it in all cases. He ought not to hearken to solicitations; if they are made by persons to whom he lies under obligations, he may profess his readiness to oblige them in every way in his power.

power, but at the same time tell them resolutely, that in questions before a judicatory he considers himself as a judge, and must be determined solely by the merits of the cause. By whomsoever he be solicited, he may declare his readiness to receive information of any facts on which the cause depends, but express a firm resolution to listen to nothing else, and an honest indignation at the suspicion of his being capable of partiality or corruption. This is the conduct which integrity dictates, and which is necessary for keeping a good conscience. This is the conduct which will redound to the honour of the whole order; it is indeed necessary for preserving it from reproach or contempt. And this conduct will most effectually secure a man's own ease and independence; for if it be once known that this is a man's fixed determination, he will meet with no importunities; and if he adhere to it uniformly and sacredly, no person will think that he has a title to be offended, on whichever side he gives his judgement; he will not only preserve more general esteem, but will run less risk of incurring the displeasure of individuals, than they who are more open to influence, who therefore offend in every instance where they do not hearken to it, and who are often reduced to situations in which they must incur the displeasure of some one of the contending parties.

The other great subject of judging, about which a clergyman has occasion to be conversant, is the qualifications

qualifications of candidates for the ministry. This is evidently a duty of great importance. Nothing can have a nearer connection with the prevalence or the decline of religion and virtue, than the abilities and manners of the clergy. The greatest care is therefore incumbent on those on whom the choice of them depends. A minister ought to take all the pains he can, to learn the true character of those who are proposed for this office; and if he be not fully satisfied, either by his personal knowledge, or by the information of those who have personal knowledge, that they are, in respect both of understanding and morals, really qualified for this office, he should not be prevailed on, by friendship, or attachment, or compassion, or any sort of influence, to concur in bringing them into this important office. It is an exhortation of the apostle Paul, “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins<sup>d</sup>.” To do it suddenly, is to do it without a strict and accurate inquiry into a man’s real character; and by doing it thus suddenly, men in some measure incur a share in the guilt of the unworthy person to whose promotion they contribute. This is, in general, very little attended to; but every clergyman ought to charge his conscience, in a deep and particular manner, not to contribute to bring any person into the ministry, if he have any reason to think that his abilities

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<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. v. 22.

abilities are not such as may raise him above contempt, and render him really useful, or that his life is not so regular, and his temper so virtuous, as to make him fit to be put in holy orders. This will be particularly incumbent on a clergyman in presbyteries, where motions for licencing take their first rise; for there one has the best opportunities for information; and superior judicatories are often obliged to take things for granted on the information of those lesser courts, to whom it is supposed a person proposed is fully known. Both intellectual and moral qualifications ought to be regarded; but the latter are of much greater consequence than the former. In some situations, a moderate degree of the former will be sufficient; but in any possible situation a sensible defect of the latter cannot fail to produce the worst consequences, with respect both to the usefulness of the minister, and the general interests of religion. Were clergymen as careful in this part of their duty as they ought to be, it would in a great measure prevent all the inconveniencies which could be apprehended from any particular method of settling parishes.

Ministers, as members of church courts, have not only a power of judging, but likewise a sort of legislative authority. All the fundamental laws of religion are contained in the scriptures; those of particular establishments or forms of religion are fixed by the original constitution of particular churches:

churches : but there is a necessity for additional laws on account of particular emergencies and changes of circumstances. These ought always to be consistent with scripture ; they ought to prescribe the best means of answering the ends of religion, in the present situation, and according to the particular circumstances which take place. In ecclesiastical, as well as in all other matters, the true spirit of a legislator is the spirit of moderation, disposing to avoid all extremes. Care should be taken that laws which are made really tend to answer the end for which they are made ; for it is no uncommon thing for legislators to understand so little the nature of some laws, that by some of their consequences they obstruct the very ends for which they were designed, and which, considered in one light, they appeared fit to promote. All ambiguity, obscurity, and confusion, ought to be avoided in making laws ; for it will prove a source of endless questions and cavil, and an occasion of arbitrary sentences, when the laws come to be executed. No useless laws should be made, for they always weaken such as are necessary. A law should always be framed so that it may not be easily eluded, for when it can, it never fails to detract from the authority by which it was enacted. Penal laws in matters of religion and speculative opinions are always pernicious ; as the clergy cannot enact them by their own authority, they should never wish to see them enacted by the civil power. If they be executed, they only destroy mankind ; if they



they be not executed, they show the impotence of those by whom they were enacted.

There seems to me to be more of a moral obligation on clergymen to attend judicatories of which they are members, than is commonly apprehended. Many things may be done by a few, reflecting dishonour on the whole body, which the presence and influence of others might have prevented. In this case, it is not easy to see how one whose business it was to have been present, can excuse himself to his own conscience, if he neglected attendance without good reason.

I shall conclude the consideration of the duties of the pastoral office, with a few observations concerning the behaviour of a clergyman to his brethren of the same profession. God has wisely constituted human nature in such a way, that relation of any kind excites a peculiar degree of love and benevolence. This constitution of nature leads men to love those of their own profession, and to be concerned for the interest of the society to which they belong. It is acknowledged that the profession of clergymen unites them by as close ties, as any other profession does those who exercise it. By this means, it demands a great degree of benevolence from clergymen to one another. This benevolence should exert itself in urging clergymen to be peculiarly ready to do those good offices to one another which they owe to men in general.

general. They should be warmly interested in the concerns, and solicitous for the prosperity of each other. Notwithstanding the great degree of equality which is established among ministers by the constitution of our church, there must necessarily arise some difference in the circumstances of clergymen, from their situation, their demands, and their advantages or disadvantages; and from the very nature of man, and the greater or less opportunities of men, there will be differences with regard to prudence, learning, and abilities. That benevolence which men of the same profession owe to one another, obliges those clergymen who have, in any respects, the advantage of their brethren, to be so far from despising them because they are not so happily situated, as, on the contrary, to do all they can to assist and encourage them. Benevolence to the clergy as belonging to our own profession will very naturally exert itself in a love of their company, which will produce not only the several exercises of hospitality towards them, when they fall in the way, but likewise a desire to contrive being in their company, and maintaining a friendly correspondence with them. Nothing can be more improving than clergymen's being frequently together, especially if, either when they are accidentally in company, or in meetings concerted on purpose, they would promote the knowledge, and give advice in the affairs of one another, and contrive the properest means of promoting the interests of religion and virtue. " Hereby they  
" would

“ would be cemented into one body ; they might  
“ understand what were amiss in each other’s con-  
“ duct, and try to correct it by prudent advices. It  
“ is a false pity in any of the clergy, to see their  
“ brethren running into ill courses without giving  
“ them warning ; it is a real cruelty to the church,  
“ and may prove a cruelty to the person himself ;  
“ for things may be more easily corrected at first,  
“ before they have grown to be public, or are  
“ hardened by habit and custom.” A due degree  
of that benevolence which clergymen owe to one  
another as members of the same body, especially  
if it be joined with a sincere regard to the interests  
of religion, the good cause in which all are en-  
gaged will effectually extinguish those little rival-  
ships about popularity or the like, which create  
grudges, animosities, and divisions, and turn off  
men’s attention from what is essential in religion,  
to things which are at most but appendages of it.  
Benevolence will likewise produce moderation to-  
wards one another on account of difference of sen-  
timents and opinions, which cannot fail to arise  
among fallible men. The clergy will naturally  
have peculiar occasion to exercise this virtue to-  
wards one another, because their studies are, more  
than those of other men, confined to matters of  
religion, and so will most readily give rise to a va-  
riety of opinions ; and likewise, because they have  
peculiar opportunities of knowing each other’s  
sentiments. “ Now, it is by considering our  
“ brethren in the several endearing views in which

“benevolence will represent them, that we shall  
“feel ourselves,” to use the words of an excellent  
writer, “inspired with the principles of true  
“Christian moderation. When we observe others  
“differing from us in opinion about lesser points,  
“or even, as it appears to us, erring from the  
“truth in more important matters, it will imme-  
“diately occur to us, that we are all in a state of  
“much darkness, and equally liable to mistakes  
“and errors. Real love, and affectionate sym-  
“pathy, and just views of human nature, will lead  
“us to reflect on all that vast variety of circum-  
“stances which may prevail on honest and worthy  
“minds to embrace opinions widely different from  
“those which we reckon true.” These are some  
of the principal duties which clergymen owe to  
one another, which are all natural exertions and  
effects of the peculiar degree of benevolence which  
their being of the same profession tends to pro-  
duce.

All the duties which we have enumerated are  
incumbent on every clergyman; and all these  
together are certainly sufficient to occupy the  
whole man, to engage all his attention, and to  
employ all his time. Yet he cannot, with a good  
conscience, neglect any of them: he must devote  
himself to them: he must not satisfy himself with  
performing them in any way, but must be always  
solicitous to perform them in the best way, and  
must persist in performing them with greater and  
greater

greater care and prudence, till they really answer their design in a thorough reformation of the people. This display of the duties of the pastoral office fully justifies the view of its importance and difficulty with which we set out, and even shews that the highest picture of its importance and difficulty which can be drawn in general terms, falls far short of the truth. Every single duty almost belonging to this office requires the exertion of all the powers of human nature; but all its duties together seem to require more than human abilities. A minister is engaged to promote the most important of all ends, the improvement and salvation of mankind; the failure of which is necessarily attended with everlasting consequences of dread and horror; and nothing but unwearied assiduity in the discharge of numerous duties, which will occupy every part of his time, and which it is not easy to discharge aright, can prevent a clergyman's being accountable for these consequences. A just conception of the duties of the pastoral office must produce a vigorous sense of its moment and difficulty; and this sense must excite all who aim at the office to the greatest care in fitting themselves for it, and possess them with the deepest solicitude that they may not be unworthy. The first step to their being fit is to know what are the qualifications requisite, and by what preparation they may be obtained. Some observations on this subject will complete our view of the pastoral care.

## PART III.

*The Requisites for performing the Duties of the Pastoral Office.*

**F**OR every profession some qualifications are requisite, suitable to its nature, and deducible from its functions, which every one that makes choice of it should labour to acquire. For acquiring these, some means adapted to them are necessary, and should be carefully employed; and with some plain thoughts on the qualifications necessary for your profession, and the means of acquiring them, I shall conclude this subject.

## CHAP. I.

*The Qualifications for the Pastoral Office.*

**T**HE qualifications which are necessary for the pastoral office may be easily deduced from the consideration of the duties which belong to that office; for they will include every thing that is necessary for the proper performance of these several duties. In deducing them we shall study brevity, because they have been very fully illustrated

trated and fet in different striking lights by many who have treated of the ministerial character.

The qualifications which are of importance to a clergyman are partly natural, and partly acquired. It is not unnecessary to take notice of the former, because, though they are not in our power, yet the want of them shows that a man was never designed for this difficult profession, and should determine him, or those at whose disposal he is, to make choice of some other occupation, for which so great talents are not requisite, and in which he may succeed better.

A clear and sound understanding and good sense are gifts of nature absolutely necessary for a person who intends to be a clergyman. They are necessary for acquiring the knowledge which his profession demands. They are necessary for applying this knowledge in the several ways of instruction, as occasion requires. They are necessary for enabling him to avoid those errors and imprudences both in teaching and in living, which would obstruct the end of his function and the success of his labours.

A strong and firm memory is likewise a talent of great advantage to a clergyman. Memory is necessary for acquiring the knowledge which suits his profession. If it be remarkably defective, the greatest application to thought or reading will be

insufficient to furnish him with the necessary stock of knowlege.

A warm, lively, and strong imagination is highly useful to a clergyman. It gives him a readiness in applying what he knows, with propriety, to particular occasions which occur. It gives a great advantage for the composition of public discourses, and enables him to set every sentiment in a striking light. It adds an ornament to all the knowlege which he possesses, and enables him to apply it to use with the greatest lustre.

These are intellectual talents derived from Nature, which the occupation of a clergyman demands. When Nature has denied these, it points out that a man was not designed for this profession, as much as its denying a man the bodily strength which is requisite for any severe employment shows that he was not designed for that employment and that he ought not to make choice of it.

There are other intellectual qualifications necessary for the ministerial office, which may be acquired by those who are not defective in the natural talents already mentioned, and which all who make choice of this profession ought to be careful to acquire. Knowlege is absolutely necessary for a teacher. If it be asked, what kind of knowlege? we may answer, that no part of real knowlege is useless or superfluous. It is proper, however, not  
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to represent the necessary knowledge as too extensive, lest the view of its extent should discourage the diffident from attempting this profession; or lest solicitude to acquire all parts of it should confound our studies, and render us superficial in every part. But all the knowledge which is strictly connected with the subject of a minister's teaching is certainly indispensably necessary; so that no person who has not a competent measure of it can be qualified for the ministerial office.

A competent knowledge of the original languages in which the inspired writers deliver themselves, and of the history, antiquities, and customs of the ages and nations in which they lived, or to which they allude, is necessary for enabling us to find out the true sense of the scriptures, and to illustrate them in a just and clear manner; and this is the business of every clergyman,

An acquaintance with the rules of right reasoning is necessary for enabling us to argue conclusively and with strength, both in private and in public; for qualifying us for detecting the sophisms, and answering the cavils of the enemies of our holy religion; and for defending either the whole or particular parts of it against their attacks.

A clergyman must possess that knowledge of human nature which may show him the best and

most successful methods of addressing men, of informing their minds, or influencing their hearts.

Without such a knowledge of human life and of the world as may make him in some measure a judge of the characters of men, he cannot advise or reprove them in a proper way, nor execute any of the duties of his office prudently, with a due regard to place, time, persons, and other circumstances.

The knowledge of natural religion and morality is still more nearly connected with the pastoral office. Natural religion is the foundation of revealed; its principles and the duties of morality are all adapted, illustrated, and improved in the Christian system. Acquaintance with these will furnish him with materials for all the functions of his office.

The knowledge of the evidences of revealed religion is necessary, both for establishing his own faith on a rational foundation, and for enabling him to guard others against the attacks of unbelievers.

The scriptures are the proper study of a clergyman; they are the fountains from which his instructions are chiefly to be drawn; the knowledge of them is requisite for the discharge of every part of his

his duty. He should understand not only the meaning of them critically, so as to be able to perceive it on consulting them ; but he should have such an acquaintance with them, as to be able to recollect and apply many passages of them as occasion requires.

A knowlege of the several doctrines and duties contained in the scriptures, in their proper order and dependence ; a knowlege of the different opinions which have been entertained by different sects of Christians ; and a knowlege of the history of the several revolutions of religion and the Christian church, will be highly serviceable to a clergyman on many different occasions.

A collection of just and striking sentiments on religious and moral subjects, and of examples from sacred and profane history, treasured in the memory, and rendered familiar by frequent thought and meditation, will enable a minister to perform all the kinds of teaching incumbent on him with readiness and ease.

A knowlege of the principles and rules of composition, and good taste, formed by the study of these, and by an intimate acquaintance with the best writers of every kind, is necessary for enabling a clergyman to acquit himself properly in his public performances.

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We may add, though it will perhaps appear trivial, that a propriety, justness, and force of pronunciation, will give great advantage to all that a clergyman says, and ought by no means to be neglected. The want of it often prevents the best things from having their full effect upon the bulk of mankind.

But the most important qualifications of a clergyman are those of the heart, sincere and uniform virtue and goodness. A good heart, with a moderate degree of understanding and knowledge, will enable a man to do much greater service in the church, than the highest abilities joined with a vicious character. All virtues are necessary to a clergyman; all vices are unallowable in him; but not all precisely in the same way. Some virtues are so indispensably necessary, that the least appearance of the want of them is scandalous, and renders him absolutely useless and contemptible. Other virtues may not perhaps be so readily or so generally missed, but to possess them will greatly adorn his character. Some may properly be considered in both these lights,

Some things, which are scarcely regarded as virtues, at least are not rigorously insisted on in other men, are absolutely indispensable in a clergyman. Of this kind is what is commonly termed Decency. Levity in conversation or in behaviour,  
which

which would scarcely be at all censured in others, will be sufficient to render a clergyman ridiculous and despicable. Decency obliges him to seriousness in these respects, to moderation in the use of diversions and amusements, to strict abstinence from every appearance of evil. In every thing he should keep himself, to the conviction of all, at a great distance from what is unlawful. He must rather abstain from things indifferent, than run a risk of offending such weak persons as are truly honest, and do not pretend scruples as a cloke for pride, or a pretence for censuring.

Particular care is necessary in abstaining from all those vices which are regarded not merely as defects of good dispositions, but as indications of dispositions positively bad. Acts of these vices are determinate; every single act throws an infallible and lasting stain upon the character of a clergyman. Thus every plain act of covetousness, every undue attempt to gain or to save money, as it is always mean and gives a contemptible idea of a man, so it brings a great stain upon a clergyman. Every attempt in him to carry on a lucrative employment, or to involve himself in business, even such as is lawful in itself, will be regarded as a mark of avarice.

Any act of injustice, whether dictated by avarice or by any other principle, will appear to all to be detestable in a clergyman.

All lying, falsehood, or perfidy, are likewise regarded as positive vices, rendering the character of a clergyman either odious or despicable.

Every degree or kind of intemperance is eminently of the same nature. A single overt-act of it is sufficient, in the opinion of the world, to eclipse and overbalance many virtues. It must therefore be guarded against with the greatest care. A freedom from every habit, and even from the suspicion of this vice, is a qualification absolutely necessary in a clergyman.

Positive acts of impiety, or expressions of irreligion, of whatever kind they be, whether swearing, neglect of the several duties of outward devotion, expressions of indifference about the principles of natural or revealed religion, scoffing or talking lightly of religious and important subjects, will always be perfectly shocking in a clergyman, and will render his character perfectly detestable.

A freedom from all these vices is indispensably necessary in a clergyman; and in order to keep free from them, he must possess a considerable degree of the virtues opposite to them: an affectation of them, or an hypocritical pretence to them, will not look natural, but will betray itself by its appearance of force to the more discerning; it will not always hold out; the mask will fall off  
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in some unlucky moment; all will see that it was only pretence from the beginning; the detestation which is due to hypocrisy will be added to that which the vices attempted to be concealed excite; and both together will be thrown on the detested criminal. There are some of the virtues opposite to the vices which we have mentioned, that though they be possessed in the highest degree by a clergyman, will only be sufficient to preserve him from blame, but will not be considered as giving any considerable positive worth or beauty to his character. Such particularly are temperance and justice. Temperance implies an absolute command over all the sensual appetites, so as to be able to restrain them at all times from leading us into what is unlawful. A minister must cultivate this virtue in the highest degree, else he will more or less expose himself to contempt; but to cultivate it to the highest pitch will not be considered as doing any more than preserving him from contempt. He must adhere to strict justice. All his dealings with others must be strongly marked even with justice improved into equity: but the highest improvement of it will only keep him blameless. There are some other of the virtues already hinted at, which, though some degree of them be absolutely necessary for rendering the character inoffensive, yet when they are cultivated in an eminent degree, bestow great dignity upon it, and are highly ornamental to the profession. These, considered in this view, we shall have occasion to men-

tion again, along with some others, which likewise adorn the character of a minister, and qualify him greatly for the several functions of his office.

We shall begin with Piety. Piety in all its branches, as founded in just sentiments of the divine nature, including love, reverence, gratitude, resignation, trust, imitation, and fear of God, and leading to the fervent and constant exercise of devotion, is a temper of the greatest importance to a minister. It was remarked already, that expressions or acts of impiety are perfectly scandalous. Such a degree of piety as may preserve from these is absolutely necessary to hinder his becoming odious: but such a low degree of it is not sufficient to qualify him for his office. The highest pitch of it is necessary to render him an example of godliness, to give him that constant regard to God which will be the only settled principle of diligence in the discharge of the several functions of his office, to enable him in teaching to give a striking view of the obligations of piety, or to give amiable displays of the several acts of devotion, or an inviting view of the pleasures of religion. The highest pitch of piety is necessary to animate us in leading the devotions of Christians, and to prevent our whole application to them from degenerating into a train of hypocrisy or formality.

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A great degree of benevolence to mankind is another necessary ingredient in the character of a clergyman. We might have mentioned properly enough expressions of repentment, malice, envy, and the like malevolent passions, among those vices which disgrace the character of a clergyman. Such a high degree of benevolence as may not only preserve a minister from these, but also produce a warm concern for the good of others, a concern especially for the salvation of their souls and their eternal interests, as may lead him to forgive injuries, and exert itself notwithstanding the impulses of repentment, is necessary for adorning the character of a clergyman, for enabling him to exert himself without grudge or weariness in the several duties by which he may benefit his people, to give him spirit and earnestness in his several ministrations, to give him a constant motive to do all the good he can.

Benevolence will contribute greatly to form another virtue of great importance in the character of a clergyman, true Christian moderation. This is a virtue which will have many occasions of showing itself, and is necessary for many purposes in the pastoral office. It is necessary for his living peaceably with others, in a world where all men cannot be of the same opinion. It is necessary for convincing those who are in error. It is necessary for his treating controverted points, either in public or in private, with decency; and for pre-  
serving

erving him from that rancour, fury, and intemperate zeal, which, being indulged, has exposed the clergy to the highest censure among their more discerning adversaries. It is nearly connected with that meekness and gentleness which is so often recommended in scripture, and sets off the character of a minister to so great advantage.

Humility will be of great use for enabling a minister to submit easily to all the little offices of beneficence which may contribute to the advantage of men, or to his own usefulness. A vain, self-conceited person can have no true relish of divine truths.

It was already observed that plain expressions of avarice and worldly-mindedness expose a minister to absolute contempt: but it is necessary that he have a much greater degree of elevation above the world, than to preserve him merely from contempt. A settled view of the vanity of the enjoyments of this earth, and a superiority to them, would banish all the workings of avarice and ambition, party-spirit and faction, and would add the greatest force and life to all a man's sentiments and discourses on spiritual things.

I shall mention one other qualification of great moment. It is to be possessed with the true spirit of his office. A sense of the importance of this office, an ardent desire to combat and overcome  
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the difficulties of it, a zeal for promoting its end, a pleasure in being employed in its duties, are ingredients in this spirit. And this spirit raised to a high pitch is necessary for keeping a clergyman's business from being a drudgery, and for enabling him to perform it with true force and relish.

These several qualifications it is the business of a minister to cultivate as long as he lives. It cannot therefore be expected that he should be perfect in them when he enters into this office. But every man who has not in him the principles and beginnings of all these qualifications, and a settled resolution and eager desire to improve and become perfect in them, is unfit for this office, and incapable of discharging its duties properly.

These are only hints on the principal qualifications for this office, and the way in which each is conducive to it.

## C H A P. II.

*Of Preparation for the Pastoral Office.*

AS the qualifications necessary for the pastoral office are easily deducible from the several duties of that office, so the necessary preparation may be deduced from the consideration of these qualifications. Whatever study or exercise is proper for forming or improving any of these qualifications, is very proper for preparing those who design to enter into the pastoral office.

Good sense and understanding are improved by employing reason and judgement often upon all kinds of subjects both of science and life, and by imbibing just and solid principles from reflection, reading, and conversation.

Memory will be cultivated by frequently accustoming ourselves to recollect what we know, and by frequently committing things to memory and repeating them.

There is no faculty of the mind, on improving which so little care is commonly bestowed in education, as the imagination: yet it is certainly improveable to a very considerable degree. It is improved

improved by reading works in which real genius and invention are displayed. These not only supply hints to a person's thoughts, but at the same time give an impulse to his fancy, and prompt him to pursue these hints. Works of poetry are particularly proper for improving fancy, in what regards figures, images, and ornament; but too much study may hurt fancy, instead of improving it. The exertion of memory is always easier than that of invention. On this account, if a person's memory be stored with many things said by others on a subject, his thoughts will fall most naturally into that track which they have followed; whereas, if he had been ignorant of their sentiments, he might have perhaps pursued a new and original track. If one be acquainted with the images which others have used, fancy will be apt, from the repositories of memory, to suggest such as have been used already; but if it had not been so much cramped by memory, and more accustomed to invention, it might have discovered new and original ones. Composition on different sorts of subjects is the proper method of improving invention. It would not perhaps be improper likewise, sometimes to set the mind a searching for all the images or illustrations which can be applied to a particular subject: this exercise might sharpen the inventive faculty, and give it a habit of ranging easily and freely.

With respect to the acquired intellectual qualifications before mentioned, or the different sorts of knowlege necessary for a clergyman, it is only needful to observe, that each branch of knowlege is to be acquired by studying it with care and application. All then that is proper on this head is either to give general directions concerning the best method of study, or to show the order and manner in which the several branches of knowlege already mentioned may be acquired. The former is so extensive a subject, that it would require too much time to enter into it particularly; and it is a subject to which it is presumed none of you are absolutely strangers. The latter we shall now touch upon.

It is supposed that every person who aims at the pastoral office has been educated in the Greek and Latin languages; and that, during the time of his application to the sciences, he has improved in the knowlege of both, and acquired an acquaintance with, and taste in, classical learning. It is likewise taken for granted, that he has studied the several parts of philosophy, particularly the abstract sciences, which lay open the principles of human nature, which teach the rules of reasoning, and the truths of natural religion and morality. But, in improving himself in these parts of knowlege, by applying professedly and statedly to the study of them, he may very properly spend the first year  
after

after he devotes himself to the study of divinity. By close application for that space of time, he may make considerable progress in all these, so as to be able not only to retain, but to carry himself forward in them afterwards, by making them a bye-study or an amusement, while he is carrying on others professedly and as his stated business. The second year he may make himself master of all that regards the truth and evidences of revealed religion, and make some progress in the study of the scriptures. It may justly be supposed, that from the very beginning of his application to the study of divinity, and even before, he has, by frequently reading the scriptures as a Christian, acquired considerable knowledge of the plain and practical parts of them, and has a great deal of these parts digested in his memory, and in readiness to be recollected, when occasion requires. But what we assign to this period of his studies is a more professed and critical application to them. In studying the truth of revealed religion, he ought first of all to attain a thorough knowledge, and to form a comprehensive idea of the positive evidences of religion, whether external or internal, and afterwards to examine the particular objections that are raised against them, and the answers to these objections. In studying the scriptures, he should read them in the original languages, beginning with the New Testament, taking the assistance of the best commentators, and, at the same time, carrying on the study of such things as tend to  
illustrate

illustrate the scriptures; as the rules of genuine criticism, and the histories of antiquities, customs, sects, &c. which are alluded to in them. If one be a diligent student, the second year will be sufficient to give him the knowlege of the evidences of revelation, and to carry him through the study of the New Testament. The preparatory studies already mentioned are usually attended with the study of ancient and modern history; and if this study be carried on as a relaxation through all the period we have hitherto considered, the student will have made considerable progress in it, and may easily, as he certainly ought, carry it on ever after in the same way. In the third and fourth years one may make considerable progress in studying the Old Testament, and in acquiring the knowlege of the history of the church, the system of religion, and the several controversies that have arisen in it. The system and the history of the church ought always to be studied together; they will throw mutual light on each other, and they are in fact little else than different ways of considering the same thing. A fifth year may be very properly employed in such studies (not dropping those entirely which have been already mentioned) as have a more immediate connection with Preaching, and the several methods of instruction necessary in the pastoral office. A person may be employed in storing his mind with a variety of religious and moral sentiments, by the study of the best writers both ancient and modern, on practical subjects.



subjects. He may likewise apply to study carefully the rules of composition, and the best models of eloquence, particularly the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, and accustom himself, more frequently than before, to composition and to just pronunciation. We do not suppose these things to be wholly delayed till now; on the contrary, the studies already mentioned cannot be carried on without a man's having dipped into them; we only assign this as the proper time for applying to them more professedly, and making them one's leading study.

The time we have thus parcelled out will be sufficient for a man's acquiring the elements of all the parts of knowledge necessary to a clergyman: and by studying them in this regular order, he will preserve distinct all the knowledge he acquires, and fix such a regular plan in his mind, that whatever acquisitions he makes afterwards in any of the parts, will fall naturally into their proper places. But it is only the elements that he will acquire. Every time that he reviews any of the parts, he will discover something new, and make farther progress. He may afterwards, through the whole of his life, be employed in prosecuting any of these branches to which his inclination or opportunities determine him at a particular time. And if he has acquired a true spirit of study in youth, he will find enough in these several  
branches

branches to make his whole life pass both agreeably and with continual improvement.

I would recommend it to those who are just beginning to study divinity, to set out on the plan we have delineated; and if any of greater standing have not hitherto observed it or some other regular order of study, they will perhaps find their account in beginning it immediately. They will be able to complete it in a shorter time; and in pursuing it, all the knowledge they have acquired by more desultory studies, will easily fall into its proper place, and be rendered more clear and strong.

But though a competent degree of knowledge in these several subjects be necessary, before one's entering into the ministry, and may be acquired in the manner now pointed out, yet every person ought to set himself to make farther progress and improvement after that time. "What is a very good beginning, is by no means a sufficient stock to go on with; and even that will lessen, if no pains be taken to increase it. Persons of lower abilities and attainments are in danger, without this, of becoming useless and despised; and they who set out with greater advantages are bound to endeavour at doing, in proportion, greater services to the church of God."

It

It is absolutely necessary, as a preparation for carrying on these studies, indeed for acquiring any real knowledge, and therefore a necessary preparation for the pastoral office, to lay aside all prejudices, and to cultivate a fair, unbiassed temper of mind, disposing to the impartial examination of every subject.

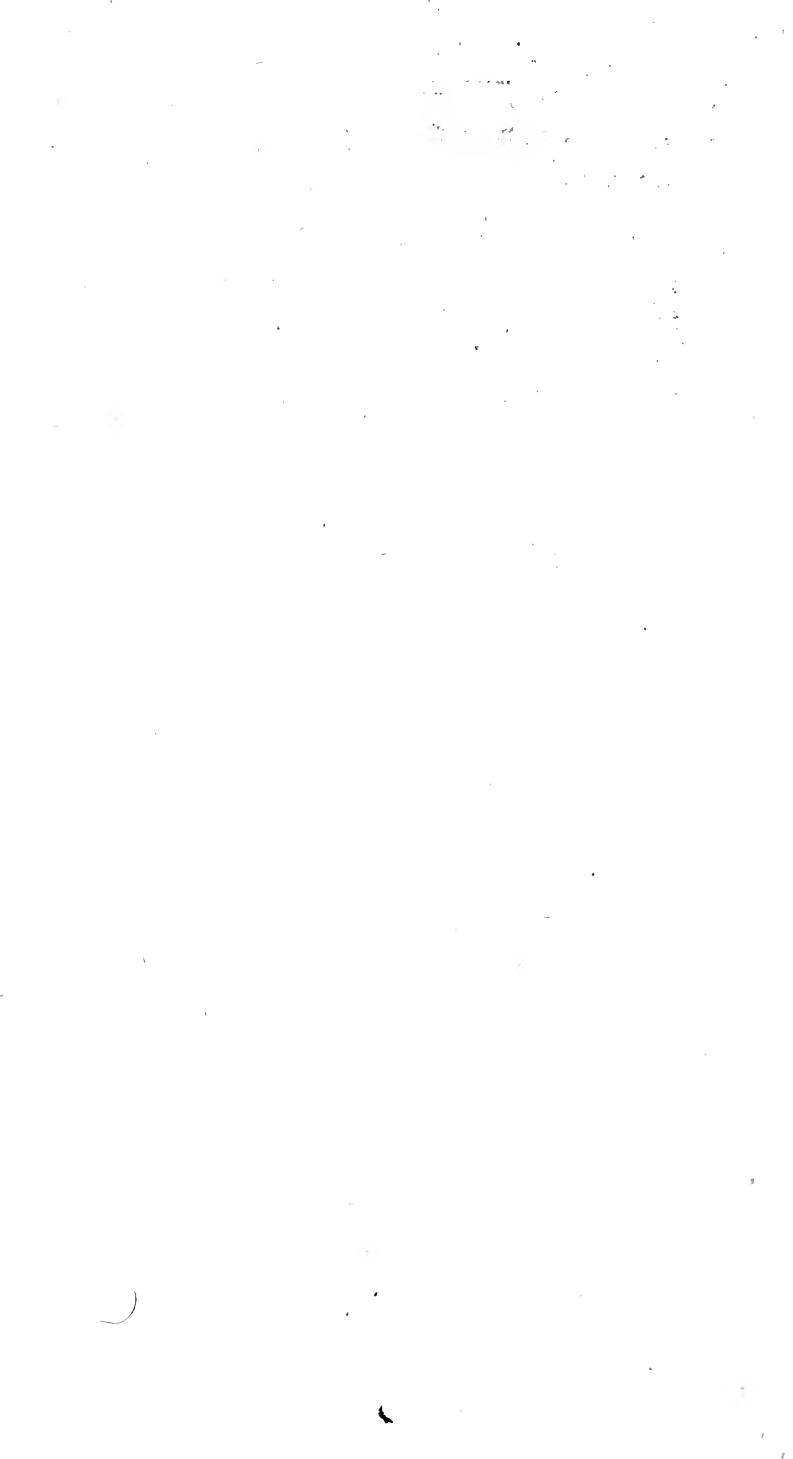
The several moral qualifications mentioned can be acquired only by practising the virtues which they imply. It is of importance for the divine to begin from the earliest youth to practise them. As soon as he resolves on his profession, he should immediately begin with firm resolution to practise that blamelessness of behaviour, and to cultivate that true worth of heart, which are necessary in his calling. The virtues which are essentially requisite to keep the character of a clergyman blameless and free from contempt, he should be master of from the very first, so as to be never chargeable with any acts of intemperance, injustice, falsehood, impiety, nor even of levity in conversation or behaviour: and his whole conduct should show, even in the earliest life, that he has the seeds of the sublimer virtues which adorn the ministerial character, and that he is cultivating them with diligence and speed. This early practice of universal virtue is necessary on many accounts. Any defect of virtue which a man has shown, any indecency in which he has allowed himself, though long before, will be remembered

to his disadvantage after he has entered into the pastoral office, and will throw a reflection on his character. It will expose his after-virtue to the suspicion, or perhaps the accusation of hypocrisy, which will greatly diminish his usefulness. Besides, a considerable change of manners on one's entering on this office, or a little before, is always ungraceful, and has the disagreeable appearance of force and constraint. Farther, one's indulging himself while young, in manners which he must break off when he becomes a clergyman, fosters habits which it will be difficult for him to overcome, and which may perhaps make him a slave to vice or levity through his whole life. Many things which are regarded as indecencies in a minister, may be esteemed mere trifles, and perhaps they are so in their own nature. But trifles have often very important consequences. A minister can execute his functions only by the authority which the opinions of men give him; and therefore must regard the opinions of men, while he endeavours to rectify them. As vice is wholly inconsistent with the ministerial character, so it is of importance that one who is preparing himself for this office have as many restraints from it as possible; and it will be a considerable restraint that he be known, wherever he appears, as a person who has the sacred function in his view. In a word, one who would prepare himself for the pastoral office, should always act, in every respect, in such a way that he may have no occasion, when he enters into this office, to  
make

make the least alteration in his manners or behaviour.

All that has been said on the pastoral office has no tendency to gratify idle curiosity, or to give scope to a disputatious humour. It tends wholly to practice; and the knowledge of it is of no use, except it be reduced to practice. It will deserve to be remembered by you, that it is very possible for a person to have a sublime idea of morals, either in general or as regarding a particular profession, and yet be very defective in practice.

THE END.



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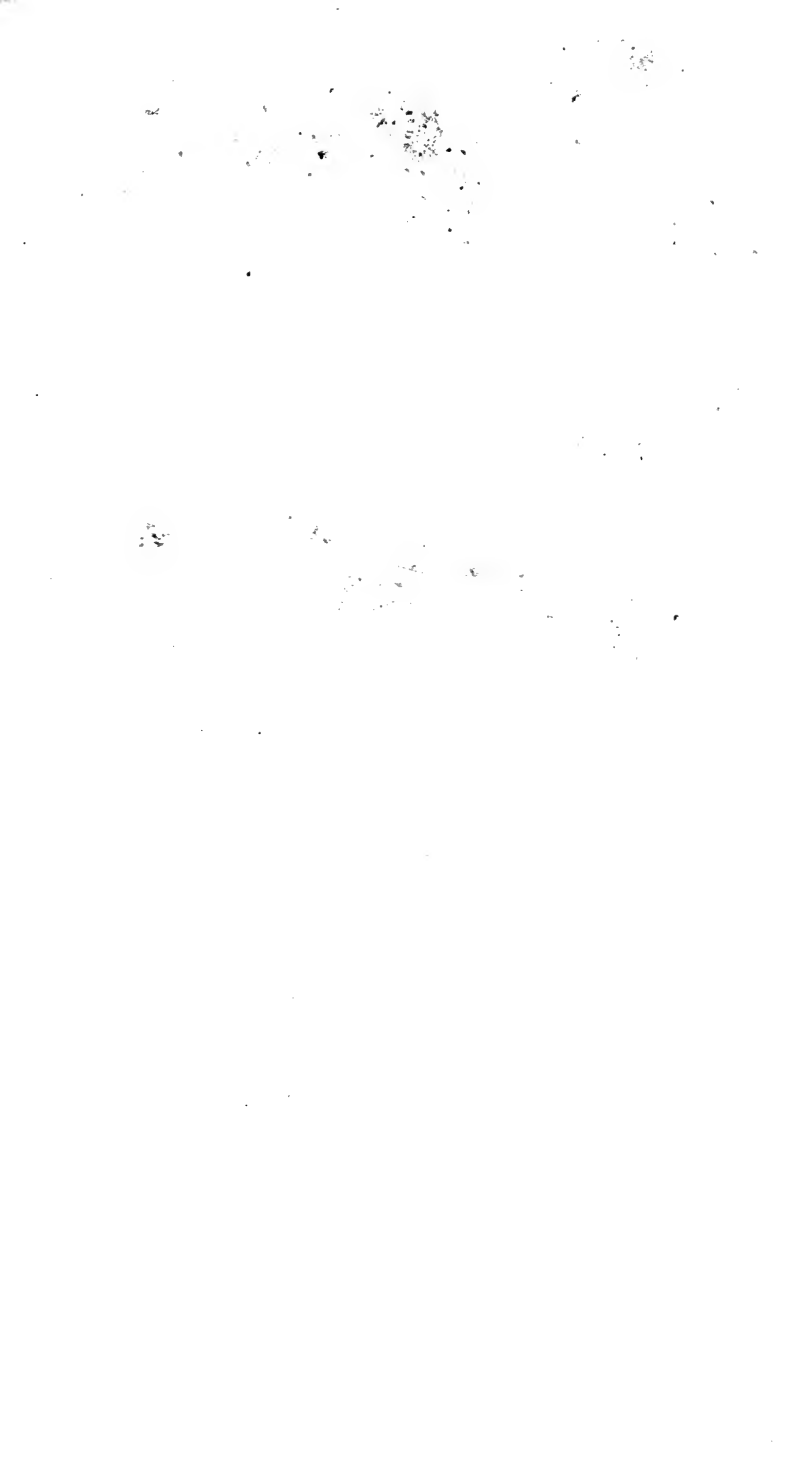
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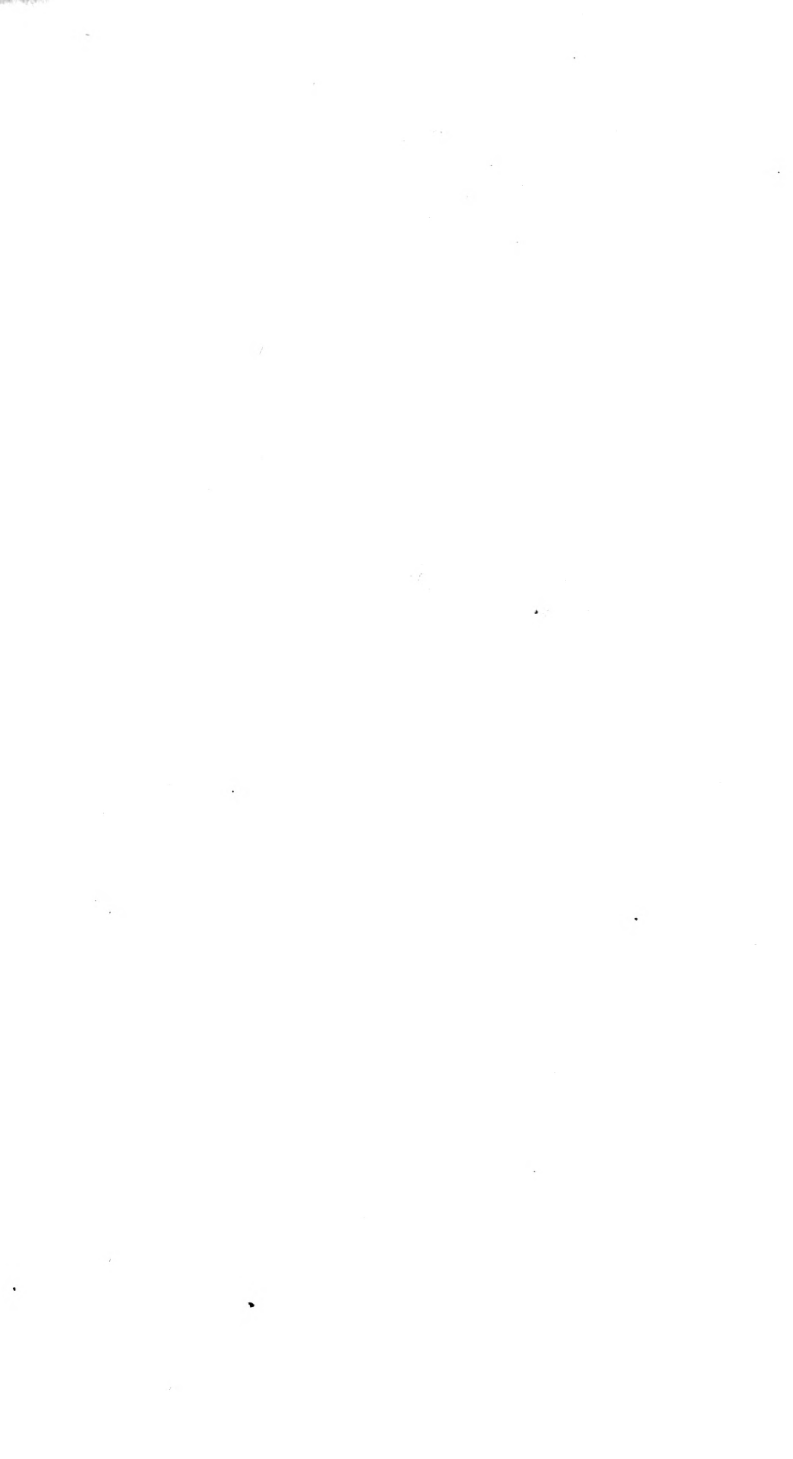


















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