



Clarke, Adam,
"The preacher's manual"

CLAVIS BIBLICA:

OR, A

Compendium of Scriptural Knowledge:

CONTAINING

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CONTENTS

OF

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS;

The Principles of Christianity derived from them, and the
Reasons on which they are founded: with Directions
how to read most profitably

THE HOLY BIBLE.

ORIGINALLY DRAWN UP FOR THE INSTRUCTION

OF

TWO HIGH PRIESTS OF BUDHOO,

From the Island of Ceylon.

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL. D. F. A. S.

Thus saith the Lord; Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the
old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find
rest for your souls.—Jer. v. 16.

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THE following Tract was originally drawn up, as the title expresses, for the instruction of two *high-priests* of *Budhoo*; of whom a few words may be necessary. In the year 1818, when The Hon. Sir Alexander Johnston, chief judge of Ceylon, was obliged to return to England, on account of his lady's ill health, the two priests in question, *Sree Goona Munhi Rat'hana*, and his cousin *Dherma Rama*, high-priests of the temple of Doodandhuvé, near Galle, in the island of Ceylon, applied to him, with earnest entreaties, to permit them to accompany him to England, that they might study Christianity in the place where it was properly understood, and where the people lived according to its precepts. This strange proposition, coming from two high-priests of considerable learning, who by such a step must cut themselves off from all the emoluments of their temple for ever, and from all their

acquaintance and kindred, did not a little surprise him. He saw plainly that they must be sincere; and their readiness to abandon all secular good, without the smallest prospect of gaining any thing in return but spiritual advantages, was the proof.— They had for a considerable time suspected the sufficiency and even truth, of their own religious system; and having met with the *New Testament*, printed in Cingalese, by the *Wesleyan Missionaries*, at Colombo, they carefully read it; and were greatly struck with the benevolent character and wisdom of Christ, and the dignified simplicity and purity of His religion. But as they only saw Divine things through a glass darkly, they did not like to avow their doubts and suspicions on the system of Budhooism, till they had examined the subject more minutely, and consulted the teachers of Christianity on the various doctrines it proposes.

After much hesitation, Sir Alexander consented to take them under his care.— And on their arrival in England, they were kindly received by the Wesleyan Mission-

ary Society, who, in conjunction with Sir Alexander, desired me to undertake their instruction. I did so; and in doing it encountered many difficulties, which, because the good hand of my God was upon me, I surmounted; and after twenty months' instruction under my own roof, I was fully convinced that they were sincere converts to the Christian Religion, and that their minds were under a very gracious influence; at their own earnest desire, I admitted them into the Church of Christ by baptism.

Expecting that they might soon return to India, and being well aware that there were several points of Christian knowledge on which their information must necessarily be imperfect, I thought it best to embody and systematize those instructions which I had frequently given them, that they might be able at all times to have recourse to them, and be the better qualified to speak with their enemies in the gate, of whom they expected no inconsiderable numbers both in rank and learning. I have done what I intended, and made a copy for

each to take with him on his journey ; not having even the slightest thoughts of committing it to the press : but *their own* entreaties, as well as those of several judicious friends, who thought it might be useful as a tract for the *Foreign Missions*, and a profitable manual to many *at home*, have induced me, my own judgment on the whole concurring, to give it, by means of the press, a wider circulation.

That I see nothing in the Holy Scriptures but what is consistent with what is commonly called the orthodox faith, will not surprise those who know me :—I quarrel with no man on account of the peculiarities of *his* religious creed ; I believe my own to be the truth of God ; and am, as I have long been, a hearty well-wisher to all mankind, a servant of the Church, and a friend to the public.

ADAM CLARKE.

London,
May 9th, 1820.

A
LETTER

TO

ADAM SREE GOONA MUNHI RAT'HANA,
VADHEYGAY,

AND

ALEXANDER DHERMA RAMA, APOTANTREYGAY,

*Formerly Teerunanxies, or High-priests of Budhoo,
in the Island of Ceylon.*

Millbrook, Feb. 14th, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

HAVING heard in your own country, though *indistinctly*, of that SUPREME GOD, who is the sole Object of the Christians' worship; and of that Christ, *through* and *by* whom, He dispenses salvation to the human race; you took a long and painful journey from your native island to visit that favoured nation, where this God is more especially known and adored, that you might learn among His genuine followers to know his nature, and the nature of that worship which Himself has prescribed.

In the course of His unsearchable, but gracious providence, you were placed under my care; and it has been my earnest and anxious study to lead you to this God, through the Son of His love, who died for the offences of a sinful world, and rose again for the justification of men; and has commanded repentance and remission of sins to be preached in His name among all nations. And it is with great satisfaction and gratitude to God, that I hope I can say, neither your *application* nor my *endeavours* have been in vain.

You have learned to know that God who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh; and who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. You have sought His favour through the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has often afforded you the *drawings* of His *Spirit*. These He has granted you, only as a *specimen* of what he will communicate if *you follow on to know the Lord*; that is, if you *search the Scriptures* diligently, and pray much to God, placing your *whole confidence* for salvation in the *sacrificial* death of Jesus Christ. In short, He will give you to *know* and to *feel*, that you are not only turned from *idols* to the living God; from vain hope and *superstitious* fears, to that *hope* which maketh not ashamed; and that *fear* which is the beginning of wisdom: but he will also give you to know and *feel* that you are adopted into the family of heaven, and

become the sons of *God*, by faith in Christ Jesus.

After long and carefully studying our holy religion, and finding that our blessed Lord commands His disciples to baptize all converts to Christianity with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, you have applied to me for that baptism; and after having been well instructed in its nature, importance, and design, you received it in a most solemn manner, in the public congregation, where prayers from more than a thousand hearts were offered up to God for your present and eternal happiness; and you there felt, that in answer to those prayers, and your fervent supplications, God did pour out His gracious Spirit upon you, so that you found such peace of conscience, such joy in God, as your tongues were incapable of expressing. Thus, then, by this public profession you have *put on Christ*: you have assumed the *Christian* name; you have promised to be His faithful, loving, obedient servants to the end of your days: in a word, “to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful desires of the flesh; and to keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life.” Thus you have taken the *true God* to be *your God*; and He has taken *you* to be *His children*. You have promised to be obedient to Him; and He has *engaged* to furnish you with that *grace* and *strength*, without which

no good act ever was, or ever can be done. For this heavenly help you must continue to pray, humbly offering all your *desires, prayers, and obedience*, unto God through Jesus Christ your Saviour; who alone can make them acceptable in His sight who is the Fountain of infinite purity and justice. You have also promised to take up the cross of Christ; “*not to be ashamed of Christ crucified*, but boldly confess Him, and fight manfully under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil.” Be steady; God’s grace will ever be sufficient for you; and, after having guided you by his counsel through life, He will, if you continue steadfast in the faith, at last receive you into His eternal glory, by Christ Jesus. Amen.

As your stay with me has been too short to acquire both the English language, and a general knowledge of the Sacred Writings, and the doctrines they contain, and you may possibly soon return to your native land, I have drawn up the following short, but *comprehensive, view* of the *Holy Scriptures* of the Old and New Testaments, and the *principles of religion* derived from them; to which I have added a few *directions*, by attending to which you will never read this *Divine word* without gaining an increase of heavenly knowledge, and an increase of religious experience. I wish you to have always at hand those *principles* which have often been the subject of my teaching, and of your learning; that understanding *them*, and the *reasons* on which they are founded,

you need not be afraid of your most cunning adversaries ; but be always able to give them that ask you, a reason of the hope that is in you ; and which I trust you will ever feel it your duty and interest to recommend to the notice and consciences of your *Heathen countrymen*, who are still lying in that *darkness*, out of which, by the mercy of the true God, you have now risen. I know that it is your present purpose to announce to the Heathen in your own country, and in continental India, the Gospel of the grace of God. In reference to this, should God call you to such a work, I wish to give you a few particular directions.

1. If you go forward in the spirit of the original apostles and followers of Jesus Christ, trusting not in *man*, but in the living *God*, He will enable you to pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and that work by which He is pleased, will prosper in your hands.

2. Remember, that as the souls of sinners are saved by the *mere mercy and power of God*; by the same principles is the world to be converted. *Human* might, authority, or influence, can do little here : “ it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts,” that this great work is to be performed. *Zech. iv. 6.*

3. The primitive disciples of Jesus Christ, when they went to the Heathen, as you are now going, had nothing to recommend them but the *simplicity and holiness of their lives*, and the excellency of the *Doctrine* which they

preached: and they had no *support* but that which they received from their Lord. But this was sufficient to pull down the strong holds of sin and the devil. The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, such as worldly men use; but they were *spiritual*, such as God furnishes: and they were, therefore, mighty through God. They had Christ in their hearts, they had a powerful love for the perishing souls of men; and they went forth in *His strength*, proclaiming to the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ.

4. The *same work* is still to be done; and the *same grace* and simplicity of heart are equally requisite *now*, as *formerly*. Do not suppose that *human strength*, and *human learning* howsoever useful, will accomplish *now*, what it required the *arm* of the *Almighty* to perform in those *primitive times*. The hearts of sinners are as *dark* and as *hard* now, as *formerly*; and nothing but the *light* of God can illuminate them, and nothing but the power of God can make them *soft*. Trust, therefore, in *Him*, both in behalf of your own souls, and in behalf of those to whom you may minister: and point *them*, and ever go *yourselves*, to that “Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” *John* i. 29.

5. There is one thing more, of which it may be requisite to apprize you. As preachers of the gospel of Jesus, do not expect worldly *honours*: these Jesus Christ neither took to Himself, nor gave to His disciples. If you be

faithful, you will have that *honour* that comes from God: His Spirit will say in your hearts, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Instead of receiving the honour that comes from men, you may possibly be despised, defamed, and persecuted. For the "laws of Christ condemn a vicious world, and gall it to revenge; and as the religion of Christ gives no quarter to vice, so the vicious will give no quarter to that religion. Do not wonder, therefore, if you should be *mocked, insulted, and abused*: "if they have persecuted me," said JESUS, "they will also persecute you." This the primitive disciples found: but they tell us that, far from being discouraged on this account, "they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His namesake." *Acts* v. 41. His true ministers have ever found the same spirit in the unconverted. You have read of the persecutions of the primitive Christians; and you have also read of the many holy men, *bishops, ministers, and others*, who have lost their lives in *this country*, when *lawless power, false religion, blind zeal, and brutish bigotry* prevailed: but these blessed martyrs all died in triumph—they *glorified God in the fires*; and, when consuming at the stake in the raging flames, they possessed the highest consolation of God, and rejoiced that ever they were born! Should *you* be ever called to bear the same testimony, you will doubtless find the same grace and support.

I mention these things, because their occurrence is *possible*—yet it is not very likely that you will be called to suffer *personal abuse*. Wherever you go, whether in *India* or *Ceylon*, you will be under the protection of the mild, excellent, and powerful laws of the British King! These laws you know are vastly superior to all those of which you have heard or read. Of this king, (under whose government you have received the light of life; and in whose paternal kingdom you have found, though strangers and foreigners, a place of refuge; and among whose subjects you have found so many *friends* and *brothers*;) you cannot but speak well. I know you love him, and his administration; and I know that you will declare to your countrymen what blessings *they* enjoy, who live among the Christian subjects of a Christian king. And I am sure I need not add that you will ever feel love, attachment, and gratitude to that Religious Society (the Wesleyan Methodists,) who cheerfully took you by the hand, on your first landing in this country, and placed you under my care; with the wish that you should have every thing necessary for your bodies and your souls. How this wish has been accomplished, while under my roof, yourselves know best. If I have been faithful, my work is with the Lord: and for my cares and anxieties, I ask only an interest in your prayers.

To what I have said in the foregoing pages, I need scarcely add any thing further.—The

Holy Scriptures tell you, that your *adversary* the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ; 1 *Peter* v. 8. therefore *watch, pray, believe, love, and obey.*

WATCH against his temptations; *watch* against your own spirits.

PRAY much in *private.* *Pray* for God's grace to make you humble and teachable. *Pray* for His *Spirit* to help your *weakness.* *Pray* for Divine light, and *pray* for *holiness of heart.*

BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus, as having *died* for you. *Believe* on Him as your *Intercessor* at the throne of God.

LOVE Him who first loved you, and called you from darkness into His marvellous light. *Love* Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

OBEY Him affectionately in all things : *obey* Him as your Master, your King, and your God ; and continue in His truth until death.

PERSEVERE in doing His *will* ; i. e. whatsoever He *commands.* *Persevere* in suffering His will, cheerfully bearing whatsoever affliction or trial He may permit to come upon you. " I now commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified."

I am, my dear friends,

Your affectionate Teacher and

Servant in Christ Jesus,

ADAM CLARKE.

GENERAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
SACRED WRITINGS.

Search the SCRIPTURES, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of ME.—
JOHN v. 39.

*All SCRIPTURE is given by INSPIRATION of GOD; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—*2 TIM. iii. 16, 17.

THAT Collection of Writings delivered by Divine Authority to the Jews by Moses and the Prophets, and which the Jewish church has always received as *divinely* inspired, includes *thirty-nine Books*, the names of which are the following: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I. Samuel, II. Samuel, I. Kings, II. Kings, I. Chronicles, II. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.*

These books *collectively* have had a variety of appellations each of which serves to point out some excellence, of those writings, as contradistinguished from all others.

The Jews have divided them into *three classes*, which they have termed, 1. תורה TO-RAH. 2. נביאים NEBYIM. 3. הכתובים HA-KE-THUBIM: or, as we sometimes express it, The LAW, The PROPHETS, and The HAGIOGRAPHA.

The LAW, included in the *Pentateuch*, or five first books, they considered as coming immediately from God Himself to Moses.

The PROPHETS, *greater and smaller*, (with which they connected *Joshua*, and *Judges*, the two *Books of Samuel*, and the two *Books of Kings*;) they received as *extraordinary messengers*, deriving their authority from God, without the intervention of man; and delivering *predictions* and *expostulations*, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The HAGIOGRAPHA, containing the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Job*, *Canticles*, *Ruth*, *Lamentations*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Esther*, *Daniel*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Chronicles*, they acknowledged as divinely inspired also; but not to have been given on such extraordinary occasions as those on which the Law, and the different oracles delivered to the prophets, had been communicated.

1. The whole of these books *collectively*, they sometimes termed המקרא Ha-MIKRA, The READING; emphatically signifying, that these records were alone worthy to be *read* and studied, because of their *importance*, *antiquity*,

and *Divine inspiration*. It was from this epithet of the Sacred Writings of the Jews, that *Mohammed* borrowed the word القرآن *Al-KORAN*, which he prefixed to his pretended revelations; and which has the same meaning with the Hebrew מִקְרָא *Ha-MIKRA*, both signifying 'The READING.

2. In order to distinguish these Sacred Books from all others, they were termed by the Jews in those places where the *Greek* language prevailed, Αἱ Γραφαί, *Ai-GRAPHAI*, THE SCRIPTURES, OR WRITINGS, as being alone worthy of being written and preserved; 1. Because of their high importance. 2. Because they contained the most ancient writings in the world; the *Decalogue*, or *Ten Commandments*, a part of the book of *Exodus*, being probably the first regular production in *Alphabetical* characters, ever seen by man; and the *Pentateuch*, or *five books* of *Moses*, being unquestionably the oldest record in existence.

3. TESTAMENT, בְּרִית *Berith*, OR COVENANT, Διαθηκη, was another term used at a very early period, to designate these Divine Oracles; as they contained the *covenant*, or *agreement*, made between *God* and the people of *Israel*.

St. Paul calls the sacred books before the time of Christ Η Παλαια Διαθηκη, *hé Palaia Diathèké*, THE OLD COVENANT, 2 Cor. iii. 14. which is a very proper and descriptive title of the grand subject of those books. This apostle evidently considers the OLD and NEW Testaments as two COVENANTS, Gal. iv. 24. and, in com-

paring these two together, he calls one Παλαιαν Διαθηκην, the OLD Covenant; the other καινην, the NEW: one πρωτην, the first; the other νεαν, that which is recent. In opposition to the OLD Covenant, which was to terminate in the New, he calls this κρειττονα, better, more excellent, Heb. vii. 22. viii. 6. and αιωνιον, everlasting, Heb. xiii. 20. because it is never to be changed, or terminate in any other; and is to endure endlessly itself.

The word Covenant, we borrow from the Latin *convenio*, from *con*, together, and *venio*, I come; signifying a contract or agreement made between two parties; to fulfil the conditions of which they are mutually bound. The OLD Covenant, in its essential parts, was very simple; I WILL BE YOUR GOD, YE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE;—the spirit of which was never changed. The people were to take *Jehovah* as the sole Object of their religious worship; put their whole trust and confidence in Him; and serve Him in His own way, according to the prescribed forms which He should lay before them. This was *their part*. On *His side*, God was to accept them as *His people*; give them His Spirit to guide them; His mercy to pardon them; His providence to support them; and His grace to preserve them unto eternal life. But all this was connected with the strict observance of a great variety of *rites* and *ceremonies*, at once expressive of the holiness of God, the purity of Divine justice, and the exceeding sinfulness and utter helpless

state of man. A great part of the *four* latter books of Moses is employed in prescribing and illustrating these rites and ceremonies; and what is called the **NEW COVENANT** is the complement, or fulfilment and perfection of the whole.

4. When the writings of the *Evangelists* and *Apostles* were added, to distinguish them from the others, they were termed Η Καινή Διαθήκη, *Hé Kainé Diatheké*, **THE NEW COVENANT**, or **TESTAMENT**, signifying the *NEW agreement* made between God and **ALL** mankind, the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews*, the *first* or **OLD COVENANT** being made principally in favour of the *latter*; which **New Covenant** was ratified by the *incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection* of **Jesus Christ**, as the succeeding collection of **PRINCIPLES** point out.

The books containing this **NEW COVENANT** or **Testament** are *twenty-seven* in number; and have been divided into *four classes*:—I. **THE GOSPELS**. II. **THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**. III. **THE EPISTLES**. IV. **THE APOCALYPSE, or Revelations**.

The names of these books are the following: *The Gospels of St. Matthew, of Mark, of Luke, and of John*; *The Acts of the Apostles*, probably written by *St. Luke*. The *Epistles of St. Paul*:—To the *Romans*—First and Second to the *Corinthians*—To the *Galatians*—To the *Ephesians*—To the *Philippians*—To the *Colossians*—First and Second to the *Thessalonians*—First and Second to *Timothy*—To *Titus*—To

Philemon—And to the *Hebrews*.—The Epistle of St. JAMES.—The first and Second Epistles of St. PETER.—The First, Second, and Third of St. JOHN.—The Epistle of St. JUDE.—And the Book of the *Apocalypse*, or *Revelation*; probably written by St. JOHN, the author of the *Gospel* and the *three Epistles* mentioned above.

HAVING given a *general view* of the *Bible*, as a *collection of Sacred Writings*, it may be necessary for the benefit of the young and unexperienced to give a more particular account of the *contents or subject* of each book, included in this collection.

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD COVENANT.

I. THE PENTATEUCH, OR FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES.

GENESIS.

This book has its name from the Greek word *Γενεσις*, used by that ancient Greek version of the Scriptures commonly called the *Septuagint*, which signifies *generation*, or *origination*; because this book gives an account of the *origin*, or *beginning*, of all things. It begins at the creation of the heavens and the earth; gives an account of the creation and fall of man; the history of the first inhabitants of the world;

the origin of nations ; the call of Abraham ; and the history of the Hebrew Patriarchs ; and ends at the death of Joseph ; comprehending the space of about 2400, or at the lowest computation of 2369 years.

EXODUS.

The name of this book is also borrowed from the Greek Εξοδος, *Exodus*, which signifies the *going out* or *departure*; because the *departure* of the people of Israel from Egypt, to go to Canaan, or the land of Judea, promised by God to their fathers, is the most remarkable fact contained in the book. It gives an account of the birth of *Moses*, the Jewish lawgiver ; and contains a history of the transactions of 145 years, beginning at the death of Joseph, B. C. 1635, where the book of *Genesis* ends, and coming down to the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness of Arabia, at the foot of Mount Sinai, B. C. 1490.

LEVITICUS.

This book has the name of *Leviticus*, because it treats principally of the *Levites*, the descendants of *Levi*, the son of the patriarch *Jacob*, who were all devoted to the service of God in the tabernacle and temple. It also gives an account of the priests, the sons and descendants of *Aaron*, the brother of *Moses* ;

and of all the ceremonies to be observed in the different sacrifices and religious feasts prescribed by God. It seems to contain little more than the history of what passed during the *eight days* employed in consecrating Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. The above occurrences are supposed to have taken place in the year of the world 2514, *i. e.* 1490 years before Christ.

NUMBERS.

This book has been called *Numbers* from its containing an account of the *numbering* and *marshalling* the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, or desert of Arabia, to the Promised Land. It comprehends the history of between *thirty-eight* and *thirty-nine* years; *i. e.* from 1490 B. C. to 1451 B. C. and gives a distinct account of the several *stages* of the Israelites' *journey*; the various occurrences in the way; their trials, rebellions, punishments, deliverances, conquests, &c. with the several laws and ordinances, not mentioned in the preceding books; together with a repetition and explanation of several others which had been previously mentioned. The whole forming a most interesting history of the justice, mercy, and providence of God.

DEUTERONOMY.

This book has its name from the Greek ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝΟΜΙΟΝ, *Deuteronomion*, which signifies the *second law*, because it contains a *repetition* of

the preceding laws. It includes an account of what passed in the wilderness from the *first day* of the *eleventh month* of the *fortieth* year after the *departure* of the Israelites from Egypt, to the *seventh day* of the *twelfth month* of the same; making in the whole the history of the transactions of exactly *five weeks*. Besides a *repetition* of the previous *laws*, this book gives us the finest illustrations of each, so that it may well be called a spiritual comment on the laws of Moses; and also an account of the death of this most eminent man, and all his last discourses with the people. It is continued about *seven days* after his death. For he began to deliver his first discourse to the people in the plains of Moab the *first day* of the *eleventh month* of the *fortieth* year, chap. i. 3. and died on the *first day* of the *twelfth month* of the same year, aged *one hundred and twenty years*.

II. THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

JOSHUA.

This Book was probably written by the person whose name it bears; and is properly a continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy. It begins where that ends, immediately after the death of Moses; for by this great man Joshua was appointed general and leader of the Israelitish people; and under his direction it was, that they entered the land of Canaan. It contains an account of all Joshua's battles; his

conquest of the land ; division of it by lot to the twelve tribes according to their different families ; exhortations to the people ; remarkable providences of God : and concludes with Joshua's death, at the age of 110 years, 1443 years before the Christian era. It seems to include the period of about *eight* years.

JUDGES.

This Book contains a history of a high class of Israelitish *magistrates*, called by the name of *judges*, raised up at particular times by the especial providence of God, to deliver the people from their enemies, and to govern them according to the law of God. The duration of this species of government, from the death of Joshua to the reign of Saul, was about 348 years. But as this Book does not include the government of *Eli* and *Samuel*, the two last judges, but ends at the death of *Samson*, which happened in the year of the world 2884 ; consequently, it includes the period of only 323 years.

RUTH.

This Book, which contains the interesting history of the *woman* whose name it bears, is a sort of *appendix* to the *Book of Judges* ; and *introduction* to the Books of *Samuel*, next following. Ruth was a Moabitess, who was married to a Hebrew of the name of *Mahlon*, born in the land of Moab, where his parents *Elimelech* and *Naomi* had gone to sojourn in a time

when a famine had obliged them to leave their own country. Elimelech dying, Naomi, his widow, returned to Judea, her daughter-in-law Ruth accompanying her, whose husband had lately died. Arriving at Bethlehem, Ruth was soon known by a kinsman of her own, named *Boaz*, who took her to wife, from whom sprang *Obed*, the father of *Jessé*, who was the father of *David*, the progenitor of the *Messiah*. The Book seems to have been written to ascertain the genealogy of our Lord.

1st BOOK OF SAMUEL.

Samuel was an eminent prophet, and the last of the Israelitish *judges*; and most likely the author of the *materials* which constitute the two Books that go under his name, though probably *compiled* by another hand. The first Book contains an account of the Israelitish affairs under the government of *Eli* the high-priest, who was the *fourteenth* judge; under *Samuel* the *fifteenth*; as also an account of *Saul*, the first king of Israel, his reign and death, with which the Book concludes. It seems to include a period of about 115 years.

2d BOOK OF SAMUEL.

This Book is a *continuation* of the preceding; and includes the history of the reign of *David*, the successor of *Saul*, and comprises the period of about *forty years*.

1st BOOK OF KINGS.

This Book gives an account of the death of *David*, the reign of *Solomon* his son, the *building of the Temple*, the death of *Solomon*, the division of the empire under his son *Rehoboam* into the kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*; the idolatry of the *ten tribes* under *Jeroboam*, who seized on that part of the empire called the *kingdom of Israel*, and the transactions of the various kings of *Israel* and *Judah* down to the death of *Ahaziah*, king of *Israel*, and *Jehoshaphat*, king of *Judah*. The whole including a period of *one hundred and nineteen years*.

2d BOOK OF KINGS.

This Book contains the history of the Jewish and Israelitish kings down to the destruction of *Judah* by the *Chaldeans*, succeeded by the *Babylonish captivity*, including a period of *three hundred and eight years*.

1st BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

This and the following Book have their name from the Greek word *χροινια*, *Chronica*, from *χρονος*, *chronos*, *time*, signifying a narrative of events, registered according to the *times*, reigns, and years, in which they happened. The first Book, in the nine first chapters, contains several *genealogies*, from the *Creation*

down to the Babylonish captivity. The rest of the Book gives the history of the reign of *David*, beginning at the death of *Saul*, B. C. 1056.

2d BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

This Book contains the history of the kings of Judah, from Solomon to the Babylonish captivity. It is very similar to the Books of Kings; giving in many places the same events; but scarcely ever mentions the idolatrous kings of *Israel*; confining itself in general to the kings of *Judah* who reigned in Jerusalem.

EZRA.

In this Book we are informed that Cyrus, king of Persia, into whose hands the Babylonian empire had fallen, permitted the captive Jews whom he found scattered through his provinces, to return to their own land, under *Zerubbabel*, one of the Jewish princes, and *Jeshua* the high-priest: the oppositions they met with till the accession of *Darius* to the Persian throne, who gave leave to the Jews to rebuild their *temple* which had been destroyed by *Nebuchadnezzar*, king of Babylon; and sent *Ezra*, a man of great eminence, to assist them in the work. This man was full of faith and the Holy Spirit: he collected all the Sacred Books of the Jews, placed them in that order in which they now stand, and rendered the returned

Jews the most important services. Ezra flourished about 450 years before Christ.

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

This is a *continuation* of the history of the Jews after their return from captivity. *Nehemiah* was cupbearer to *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, or, as the Persians call him, *Ardsheer Dirazdest*, the *long-handed Ardsheer*, who, at his request, permitted him to go to Jerusalem several years after *Ezra* had gone thither, to settle the Jewish state, which was then in great disorder. He took two several journeys to Jerusalem, rebuilt the walls, restored the Divine worship, rectified a number of abuses, and again returned to the Persian court. He was a man of amazing resolution and fortitude, tempered with much wisdom, piety, and prudence; and is a model for all civil governors. *Nehemiah* flourished about 440 years before Christ.

ESTHER.

This woman was a Jewish captive; and became queen to *Ahasuerus*, king of Persia, about 458 B. C. She was, in this capacity, the means of preventing the massacre of the whole Jewish nation, which had been plotted by *Haman*, prime minister and favourite of the king. It details the whole history of these transactions, and of the wonderful providence of God

in raising her to the throne, preserving the Jews, and defeating their enemies.

III. POETICAL BOOKS, AND THOSE WHICH CONTAIN MAXIMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF LIFE.

JOB.

This Book gives the history of an *Arabian chief* illustrious for his *riches, patience, and piety*. It contains principally *conversations* in a highly poetical strain between him and his friends, concerning the *providence and perfections* of God. He was at first very rich and affluent; but God permitted him to be deprived of his property and children, and also to be sorely afflicted in his body: all which he bore with exemplary patience, which was at last rewarded with a double increase of temporal blessings, and the high approbation of his Maker. *When he flourished, is very uncertain.*

PSALMS.

This is a Book of 150 most elegant and spiritual *hymns*, chiefly written by king David. As *poetic effusions*, they excel every thing written by man; and from their depth and sublimity, their just descriptions of the majesty and perfections of God, the nature and consequences of sin, and the heights and depths of holiness,

properly challenge a distinguished place among the inspired writings of the Old Testament.

PROVERBS.

This Book contains a very large collection of *wise sayings*, spoken at different times by Solomon, king of Israel, and other eminent sages ; affording counsels and maxims for the direction and regulation of every department, office, and circumstance of life. They are delivered in a high oriental strain ; and many be said to contain all the wisdom of the ancient world.

ECCLESIASTES.

A Book supposed to have been written by Solomon in order to shew the *vanity of the world*, and of human life, whether in high or low estate : and that no happiness can be expected by the human soul, but in the fear, love, and obedience of God.

CANTICLES, OR THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

This is a very highly finished Hebrew ode, which, if literally taken, seems to describe the great love and affection which subsisted between Solomon and his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. But most commentators suppose it to be an *allegorical poem*, in which *Solomon* represents *Christ*, and his

Queen the Christian Church. Taken in this sense, it shews the great love which Christ bears to His genuine followers; and the duty and affection which they owe to Him. It is in the form of a *pastoral*.

IV. MAJOR PROPHETS.

ISAIAH.

This most eminent and holy man began to prophesy about 760 years before Christ, under *Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh*, kings of Judah. This last king was extremely wicked; and under his reign, and by his command, it is said that Isaiah suffered martyrdom, being sawn asunder with a wooden saw! He is supposed to have been of the blood-royal of Judah; and is the most sublime of all the prophets. His prophecies are so clear and minute, that they appear rather to be *narrations* of things *past*, than *predictions* of things to come. Of these prophecies the *five* first chapters are supposed to have been delivered in the reign of *Uzziah*; the *sixth* in the reign of *Jotham*; the *seventh* to the *fifteenth* in the reign of *Ahaz*; and the *rest* in that of *Hezekiah*. His predictions of the *advent, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glorious conquests* of Jesus Christ, are so clear and pointed, as to have gained him the appellation of *The Evangelical Prophet*. He spoke clearly also of the calling of the Gentiles; and foretold the ruin that Ne-

buchadnezzar brought on the *Tyrians*, *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, and *Philistines*; and also the ruin of Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the Babylonish empire. He is supposed to have prophesied about fifty or sixty years.

JEREMIAH.

This man was a priest of the tribe of Benjamin; and entered on the prophetic office about the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, seventy years after the death of Isaiah. He foretold the ruin, captivity, and restoration of the Jews, and the destruction of the Babylonish empire. He also predicted the *calling of the Gentiles*. He lived to see the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and suffered much himself, all which he feelingly describes. When Jerusalem was taken, and the king of Babylon had committed the government of the land to *Gedaliah*, Jeremiah continued in Judea: but *Ishmael*, who was of the seed royal, having slain *Gedaliah*, the remaining Jews, fearing the Chaldeans, fled to Egypt, whither this prophet was carried, and there died or was put to death. He prophesied about forty-five years during the reigns of *Josiah*, *Jehoiakim*, and *Zedekiah*, and under the government of *Gedaliah*; about 588 years before Christ.

LAMENTATIONS.

The *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah* composed after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the

captivity of Judah, are divided into *five* distinct chapters, which are so many beautiful *elegies* bewailing those sad events. Chap. i—iv. are written in *acrostichs*, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in consecutive order. The *third* chapter is written in *double acrostichs*; and the *fifth* in *single* lines, without this artificial order.

EZEKIEL.

This prophet was one of the Jews who was carried captive to Babylon, with *Jehoiakim*, king of Judah. He began to prophesy in Chaldea, about the *fifth* year of the *captivity*, before Christ 595 years; and continued about twenty-five years. He preached against the iniquities of the Jews; and foretold the destruction of several neighbouring nations, enemies to the Jews. He was chiefly sent for the edification of the *poor captives* in *Babylon*. He foretold the *calling of the Gentiles*, and the glorious state of the *church of God*, under the similitude of a *temple*, the parts of which he very minutely describes. He is on the whole very obscure.

DANIEL.

This prophet was also one of the *captives* in Babylon, whither it is supposed he was carried when *very young*. He was contemporary with *Ezekiel*; and was famous for wisdom, penetra-

tion, and piety. His prophecies concerning the Messiah; the destruction of Jerusalem; the formation of the Chaldean, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, and their revolutions; are so very clear, that their very *dates* are fixed. That concerning the *advent* and *death* of our Lord is the clearest prophecy ever delivered: though he lived nearly 600 years before our Lord, he foretold the very *year* in which He should be *manifested*, and the *year* in which He should be *cut off*. He, and his companions, after running great risks, and suffering great hardships, were raised to great honours in the kingdom of Babylon. His prophecy is a lasting monument against the Jews of the truth of the *Christian religion*. He died about 536 years before Christ.

V. THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

HOSEA.

This prophet is thought by some to have been the earliest of all the prophets. He was certainly contemporary with *Isaiah*; and exercised his office in the kingdom of *Israel*, about the same time that *Isaiah* exercised his in the kingdom of *Judah*. His prophecies are chiefly directed against the *ten tribes*, previously to their being carried into captivity. He also predicts the coming of the *Messiah*, and the glorious state of the Christian church. He flourished from 785 to 725 years before Christ.

JOEL.

This prophet was contemporary with *Hosea*, and flourished about 785 years before the Incarnation. His prophecy may be considered in the light of a very solemn *sermon*, warning the Jews to repent of their sins; foretelling a grievous *famine* which was to be occasioned by an innumerable *host of locusts*; promises the penitent God's mercy; and fortells in a very pointed manner that great out-pouring of the Divine Spirit which should take place under the gospel dispensation.

AMOS.

This man was neither of the *sacerdotal* nor *prophetic order*: but was a *herdsman*, a *keeper of cattle*, in the territory of *Tekoa*; and was sent by God to call the people of Israel to repentance, and denounce the Divine judgments against the workers of iniquity. He foretells the judgments of God which were to fall on the Syrians, Philistines, Tyrians, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites. He flourished about 787 years before Christ.

OBADIAH

This is the *shortest* of all the prophets. His *prophecy* refers to the *Edomites*, the descendants of *Esau*, whom he threatens with utter

destruction, because of their cruelty and oppression to the Jews. It is supposed that he lived about 587 years before the Christian era; and was contemporary with *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*.

JONAH.

Jonah was a native of *Gath-Hepher*, in Galilee; and was sent by God to denounce His judgments against the *Ninevites*: but, fearing for his personal safety, he determined on leaving his own country; and so took ship, and endeavoured to escape to *Tarshish*. Meeting with an extraordinary storm, the sailors, concluding that there must be some person aboard against whom there was Divine wrath, questioned him on the subject. He confessed his sin, was thrown overboard, and was swallowed by a fish, in whose belly he remained three days and three nights; and was a type of our Lord's death and resurrection. The fish having cast him up on dry land, he went to *Nineveh*, delivered the Divine message, the people trembled, fasted, and repented, and were saved. He is supposed to have flourished about 862 years before our Lord.

MICAHA.

This prophet was sent to reprove both Israel and Judah for their manifold sins, which he did, with great warmth and fidelity. He

foretold their captivities; comforted the godly; and predicted the incarnation of our Lord, mentioned the very place of his birth, Bethlehem, described his offices, as *King* and *Priest* of his people; and foretold the glory of the Christian church in the latter days. He flourished at the same time with *Isaiah* and *Hosea*, about 750 years before the Christian era.

NAHUM.

Though the *Ninevites* had repented at the preaching of *Jonah*, they did not continue to bring forth the fruits of repentance. This prophet was, therefore, sent to foretell their destruction, and the ruin of the *Assyrian* empire, of which *Nineveh* was the capital. This destruction was effected by the *Medes* and *Babylonians*, about *sixty* years after. *Nahum* lived under the reign of *Hezekiah*, about *ninety* years later than *Jonah*, or about 772 years before the Christian era. He is the most *sublime* and *energetic* of all the minor prophets.

HABAKKUK.

The preceding prophet foretold the destruction of the *Assyrians* who carried the *ten tribes* into captivity; and *Habakkuk* foretold the ruin of the *Chaldeans*, who completed the captivity of this unhappy people, by carrying away the *two tribes* that remained. He is supposed to

have been contemporary with *Jeremiah*, and to have flourished about 616 years before our Lord. The *Prayer* in the third chapter of this prophecy is inimitably fine.

ZEPHANIAH.

This prophet was sent to the Jews under *Josiah* to foretell them of their approaching captivity by the Chaldeans, on account of their idolatry, and other heinous offences ; of which he strenuously exhorts them to repent. He foretells also the destruction about to be brought on the Philistines, Moabites, Ethiopians, and Assyrians. He flourished about 630 years before Christ.

HAGGAI.

This prophet, with the *two following*, were sent to the Jews *after their return from the Babylonish captivity*. He reprehends their negligence in not building the temple, being more intent on their secular interests than on the glory of God ; on account of which God sent a *dearth*, by which they had been grievously distressed. At his instigation, the people resumed the work, which had been sadly neglected ; and the temple was soon finished : and though that temple was much *inferior* to that built by Solomon, yet he foretold that *its glory* should be greater than that of the former ; which was accomplished in the Mes-

siah's honouring it with His presence and preaching. He lived about 520 years before Christ.

ZECHARIAH.

This was the *second* prophet sent to the Jews after their return from captivity; and he encouraged the people to proceed with the building of the temple. There are many prophetic visions in this book which relate to the Jews; and several *prophecies* relative to our Lord; his riding into Jerusalem as a King; the *thirty pieces of silver*, for which Judas sold his Master; the destruction of the Jews; and the calling of the Gentiles. He flourished about 520 years before our Lord.

MALACHI.

This was the *third* and last prophet sent to the Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity. From his prophecy, it appears that the Jews were in his time greatly corrupted. They had not only neglected, but profaned, the Divine service: these he sharply reproveth; and encourages them much, who in those times of degeneracy continued faithful. He foretells the coming of Christ; and very clearly speaks of his *forerunner*, *John the Baptist*. He intimates, that no other prophet would be sent to them; and that they must be careful to observe the law of Moses,

till the Advent of the Messiah. He flourished about 397 years before the Incarnation; and was the *last prophet* ever sent to the Jewish people. His book, therefore, properly closes up the canon of the Old Testament.

About his time *Ezra*, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, had made a complete collection of all the Sacred Books of the Jews, in which all the *major* as well as the *minor prophets* were included; though some think that *Simon the Just* added *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*, and *Malachi*, to *Ezra's* work. This is the *same collection* which exists to the present day; to which nothing has been added, and from which nothing has been taken away. See *Ezra*.

The next *extraordinary Messenger* with whom the Jews were favoured, was JOHN THE BAPTIST, of whom this prophet (*Malachi*) so clearly speaks. After him came GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH; who, before His ascension to heaven, commissioned His *disciples*, who were afterwards called *Apostles*, to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning first at Jerusalem."—*Luke xxiv. 47*. This was accordingly done; and the word of the Lord had free course, ran, and was glorified.

GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE BOOKS CONTAINED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the SCRIPTURES, might have hope.—ROM. xv. 4.

I come now to consider the writings of the NEW COVENANT, which were the effect of this revelation of Jesus Christ, and the mission of His Apostles; and shall divide them into four classes:—

I. The Historical Books; including the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.

II. The thirteen Epistles of St. Paul.

III. The Catholic or general epistles: *viz.* of James, Peter, John, and Jude.

IV. The Apocalypse, or Book of the Revelation.

Of these different books I shall endeavour to point out the *author*, the *time* when written, and the chief *subject* of each.

I. THE HISTORICAL BOOKS; *VIZ.* THE FOUR GOSPELS, AND ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. MATTHEW.

This Evangelist is supposed to be the same who is also called *Levi*, son of *Alpheus*. He was

by birth a Jew ; and, like the rest of our Lord's disciples, a native of *Galilee* ; and appears to have been at first a *collector of the public taxes* under the Roman government. He was called by our Lord to be a disciple, when sitting in his public office by the sea-side, near the city Capernaum.

He was placed by our Lord in the number of His *Apostles*, and continued with Him during His life. After the ascension of Christ, he was at Jerusalem ; and received the Holy Spirit with the rest of the disciples, on the day of *Pentecost*. His Gospel, (*i. e.* his history of the incarnation, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord) is generally allowed to be the most *ancient* part of the writings of the New Covenant. It is very probable that he wrote this book in *Hebrew*, about the *eighth* year after the ascension of our Lord, or A. D. 37. and that it was by himself, or some other, translated into Greek about A. D. 61.

Matthew being a constant attendant on our Lord, his history is an account of what he *saw* and *heard* ; and, being influenced by the *Holy Spirit*, his history is entitled to the utmost degree of credibility. Whether he was *martyred* for the truth, or died a natural death, is uncertain.

ST. MARK.

This is the same who is called *John Mark* ; and who travelled from Jerusalem to Antioch

with Paul and Barnabas, and afterwards into other countries.—*Acts* xii. 25 xiii. 5.

It is supposed that he wrote this Gospel at *Rome*, about A. D. 64. and that he died at *Alexandria*, in *Egypt*, in the *eighth* year of the reign of *Nero*, the Roman emperor. It is very probable that he had seen the Gospel written by St. Matthew, as he omits several things which are amply detailed by that evangelist: at the same time he inserts several curious particulars, not mentioned by any of the others.

ST. LUKE.

St. *Luke* is the most elegant of all the evangelical writers; his language being purer, and much more free from *Hebraisms*, than any of the rest. He was an early convert to Christianity, and was St. Paul's *fellow-labourer*, (*Philemon*, ver. 24.) and accompanied him when he first went to Macedonia; and from Greece through Macedonia and Asia, to Jerusalem; and from Jerusalem again to *Rome*, where he staid with him the *two years* of his imprisonment in that city. It is generally believed that he finished and published his *Gospel*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, in Greece, about A. D. 47. both of which he dedicates to *Theophilus*, an honourable Christian friend of his in that country. His Gospel, like those of the preceding evangelists, gives an account of the birth, preaching, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord. It is supposed

that he died in peace about the *eightieth* or *eighty-fourth* year of his age.

ST. JOHN.

This evangelist was the son of a fisherman named *Zebedee*, and his mother's name was *Salome*. They were probably of *Bethsaida*; and the father and his sons *James* and *John* followed their occupation on the sea of *Galilee*. Both these brothers were called to the *Apostleship*; and *John* is supposed to have been about *twenty-five* years of age when he began to follow our Lord. It is likely that he was one of our Lord's relatives; and was that disciple whom it is said our Lord loved: that is, he had a *peculiar affection* for him. He was also an *eye and ear witness* of our Lord's labours, journeyings, discourses, miracles, sufferings, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension.

The Gospel of *John* pre-supposes the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*: the grand facts he has in common with *them*; but he supplies many particulars which are not found in the others. *St. Matthew* seems to labour to prove the fact of the *reality* of our Lord's *incarnation* or *humanity*: on the other hand, *John* takes up the *eternal Divinity*, which he powerfully establishes; and gives us many invaluable discourses and conversations of our Lord with his disciples, as well as several miracles that are not found in the other evangelists. No one of the Gospels gives us the

whole history of our Lord ; we must read all *four*, to have this complete. John was banished by the Roman emperor *Domitian* to the isle of *Patmos* in the *Ægean* sea : but his successor *Nerva*, having recalled all the exiles banished by *Domitian*, John returned to *Ephesus*, where he died, aged upwards of *one hundred* years. The *Holy Virgin* is said to have lived with him till her death, which took place about *fifteen* years after the crucifixion.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The Book of the *Acts* of the *Apostles* is the *fifth* and last of the *historical books*. It was doubtless written by *St. Luke*, probably about *A D. 63.* ; and is dedicated to the same noble personage, *Theophilus*, to whom he dedicated his Gospel. The design of the apostle in writing this book appears to have been two-fold : 1. To relate in what manner the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost were communicated on the day of *Pentecost* ; and the subsequent miracles performed by the apostles, by which the truth and Divine origin of Christianity were confirmed. 2. To deliver such accounts as proved the claim of the *Gentiles* to admission into the *Church of Christ*. In this book we see how the Christian church was *formed* and *settled*.— The Apostles simply proclaimed the truth of God, relative to the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ ; and God accompanied their testimony with the demonstration

of His Spirit. The consequence was, thousands embraced Christianity, and openly professed it at the risk of their lives. They were converted, not merely from *one religious sentiment to another*; but from *sin to holiness*. Their *tempers, passions, and moral prospects*, were all changed; and they only lived to bring glory to God, and do good to men. This mighty change is every where in this book attributed to the power of the *Holy Spirit*, which took of the things which were Christ's, and applied them to the souls of the people. Such was the *Christian Church* at its formation: and such it *must be* to the end of the world, if it deserve the name of *Christian*.

II. THE THIRTEEN EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Paul, at first called *Saul*, was born of Jewish parents at *Tarsus*, a city of *Cilicia*. When young, he was sent to Jerusalem for the purpose of receiving a Jewish education; and was placed there under a most eminent doctor or Rabbi, called *Gamaliel*. He joined the Jewish sect called *Pharisees*, who were at once the best learned, the most proud, hypocritical, and intolerant of all the Jews. Paul imbibed much of their spirit, as he acquired the whole of their learning. He became proud, overbearing, and haughty; and grievously persecuted

the Christians : but as he was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, with authority from the chief priests, to bind and variously persecute all that bore the *Christian name*, he had a most remarkable vision, which see related in Acts, chap. ix. in consequence of which he carefully examined and embraced the Christian faith ; and afterwards became one of the most zealous promoters and successful defenders of that cause, which he had before so inveterately persecuted.

Of his labours, sufferings, and travels, we have an ample account in the book of the *Acts*. He was long imprisoned at Rome ; and at length suffered martyrdom, having his head cut off, by an order of the Roman emperor *Nero*, on June 29, A. D. 66.

Rome, to whose inhabitants, or rather to the Christian Church there, this Epistle was directed, was the *metropolis* of the Roman empire, and the *mistress* of the world.

The occasion of writing this Epistle was the following :—Many Gentiles as well as Jews having been converted by the preaching of the Gospel, the *latter* refused to admit the *former* to all the privileges of the church of Christ, unless they submitted to be *circumcised* ; as they supposed that this was the only *gate* through which they should be admitted into the *fold*. In this Epistle St. Paul shows, that the Jewish rites and ceremonies were *done away* ; that all men, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, had sinned against God ; and that no sacrifices or observances of

the Jewish law could make atonement for sin ; (for by its works no soul could be justified ;) God had therefore appointed a *new way* of salvation, the *sacrifice of Christ*, and *faith* in that sacrifice. That this privilege was not granted to the *Jews* alone, but equally to the *Gentiles* ; that none could be saved, but in this way ; and that those who were thus saved stood upon the broad ground of God's infinite mercy, and were equal in their religious rank, rights, and privileges. This view of the subject gave the apostle ample scope, 1st, to show the absolute inefficacy of *human works*, whether consisting in *moral obedience*, or in *observation of religious rites and ceremonies*, to purchase the favour of God, or make an atonement for sin : and, 2d, the sovereign efficacy of the *death of Christ*, and *faith* in the merit of that death, to bring the soul into the favour of God, and give it a right to eternal life. That *sacrificial offering of Christ* being the sole grand *procuring cause*, and *faith* the *means* of applying its benefit to the guilty conscience.

1ST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Corinth, to which this and the following Epistle were sent, was one of the most celebrated cities of *Greece*. It is situated on a *gulf* of the same name ; and was anciently the *capital* of the *Peloponnesus*, or *Achaia*. It was joined to the main land by a narrow *isthmus*, or neck of land, that had the port of *Lecheum* on the

West, and the port of *Cenchrea* on the *East*, by which it commanded the commerce both of the *Ionian* and *Ægean* seas. By the port of *Lechem* it received the merchandise of *Italy*, and of the *western nations*; and by the port of *Cenchrea* it received that of the *Ægean* sea, the coasts of *Asia Minor*, and of the *Phœnicians*. As this city abounded in riches, so did it in luxury and corruption of manners: and no place in the habitable globe needed the gospel of Christ more than this did. Here a church was founded, the principal members of which were eminently endowed with the gifts and graces of God's *Spirit*: but as some dissensions had arisen among them concerning things *lawful* and *unlawful*, what might be done with a clear conscience, and what ought not to be done, they wrote to St. Paul to give his judgment, and settle these disputes. This *first Epistle* is in answer to that letter; in which, among other things, he discusses the question of the *unlawfulness of eating things offered to idols*: and enters at large into a consideration of that most important doctrine, the *resurrection from the dead*, and its proofs drawn from the natural and moral world, and from the *resurrection of the body of our blessed Lord*.

2d EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

The preceding Epistle having been well received, and its exhortations and reprehensions having produced the desired effect; the apos-

He writes this to comfort and confirm them in the truth. He reproveth a *false apostle* who had insinuated himself among them, and endeavoured to render their minds evil affected towards himself. In this Epistle he vindicates his own *doctrine* and *conduct* against the aspersions of that false apostle, gives an affecting account of his own *trials* and *sufferings*, and strongly exhorts them to holiness of heart and life.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

Galatia or *Gallogræcia*, was anciently a part of *Phrygia* in Asia Minor, bounded on the east by *Cappadocia*, on the west by *Bithynia*, on the south by *Pamphylia*, and on the north by the *Euxine* sea.

The church of God founded in this place seems to have been greatly perplexed and disturbed by some Jewish teachers, who endeavoured to persuade the converted Gentiles, that unless they were *circumcised*, and kept the law of *Moses*, they could not be saved.— Many having been stumbled and turned aside by these teachers, the apostle wrote to them, 1. To vindicate his own apostleship which those false teachers had undervalued. 2. To assert and maintain the doctrine of *justification by faith*, from which they had been departing. And, 3. To call them back to the liberty of the gospel from which, under those bad teachers, some of them had apostatized. He proves at

large, 1. That no rites or ceremonies of the Jewish law could avail in their justification. 2. That their *own works* could avail nothing in reference to their acceptance with God; the only way of salvation being by *faith*, and that this was the *original way*, for Abraham was justified by *faith* long before the *Law* was given. 3. That the *curse of the law* was upon every sinner, and is not removed but by the sacrifice of Christ.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

Ephesus was a very famous city of *Ionia*, and once the *metropolis* of that part of the world. The grand subject of this Epistle is to prove, that the great *mystery of God*, which had been hidden from all former ages, was opened and explained by *calling the Gentiles into the church*, making them one with the converted Jews, and placing them under the one great and only Shepherd, Christ Jesus. The apostle also shows the necessity of the doctrine of *justification by faith*; enters into a description of the heights, lengths, and breadths, of Christian holiness; points out the *enemies* of true believers; shows them the *spiritual armour* with which they are to defend themselves; and concludes by giving them the most pointed directions relative to the cultivation of their hearts, their moral conduct, and particularly their exact fulfilment of all the *relative duties*.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippi was a town of *Macedonia*, in the confines of *Thrace*, and near the northern extremity of the *Ægean* sea. St. Paul first preached the gospel here about A. D. 53, and established one of the most pure and excellent churches. False teachers had crept into this church also, against whom he warns the people, exhorts them to unity and concord, points out to them the glory which shall be revealed to the truly faithful, speaks of the blessedness of his own experience, and thanks and commends them for the contributions they sent to supply his wants.

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

Colosse, or *Colassa*, was a city of *Phrygia Pacatiana*, now a part of *Natolia* in *Asia Minor*, situated on an eminence on the south side of the river *Meander*. There is a very great similarity between *this Epistle*, and that to the *Ephesians*. It contains the very depth and essence of Christian doctrine, and Christian experience; strongly excites to holiness of heart and life; and exhorts to a regular fulfilment of the relative duties, viz. parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants, &c.

1st EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

Thessalonica, now called by the Turks *Salonichi*, is a seaport town of *Turkey* in *Europe*,

and anciently the capital of *Macedonia*. *Paul* and *Silas* preached the gospel in this city about A. D. 51 or 52. This Epistle is probably the *first* that St. Paul wrote: and it appears that the church of *Thessalonica* was the purest of all the apostolic churches. The apostle finds scarcely any thing among them to *reprove*. They had received the *whole truth* as it was in *Jesus*, and their *conduct* was conformed to it. They had a *faith* that *worked*, a *love* that *laboured*, and a *hope* which enabled them to *bear* all afflictions patiently, and wait for the coming of the Lord *Jesus*. The directions which he gives in the last chapter, relative to the *perfection* of their Christian faith and character, are of the utmost importance; and intimately concern all Christian *churches*, and all who bear the Christian *name*.

2d EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

It appears that the *second* Epistle was written shortly after the first, the main design of which is to warn the people against crediting a *false report* which they had heard relative to the *sudden appearing of Christ to judge the world*; which they had so far received and credited, as actually (at least some of them) to give up their secular affairs, as being inconsistent with the expectation of so solemn an event, so speedily to take place. On this subject the apostle sets them right by giving just notions of the future judgment, predicts a cer-

tain *apostacy* from the faith, and exhorts them to obedience and fidelity in all the circumstances of life in which God may place them.

1st EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

Timothy, the person to whom this Epistle was addressed, was the son of a *Gentile*, by a *Jewish woman* named *Eunice*, the daughter of a *Jewess* named *Lois*. it is likely that, at the time that *Lois* was converted to the Christian faith, her husband was dead, as was also the husband of *Eunice*; and that the grandmother, mother, and son, lived all together. Their son *Timothy* became strongly attached to *St. Paul*, received the Christian faith in its power, became an *Evangelist*, and travelled with the apostle through different parts, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. The apostle having left him in the city of *Ephesus* to superintend the church in that place, he wrote this first Epistle to him, probably about A. D. 64 or 65, in which he gives him direction, 1. To oppose those *fables* invented by Jewish teachers, to recommend the observance of the Mosaic law as necessary to salvation. 2. To oppose those *uncertain genealogies* by which certain persons wished to show their descent from *Abraham*, on the persuasion that they should be saved merely because they were *his* descendants. 3. That he might oppose a *foolish* propensity which they had to the discussion of intricate questions, which, instead of leading to godliness, engendered strife.—

4. The apostle gives him suitable directions how to act the part of an Evangelist ; how to rule the church of God ; and how to repress irregularities, and maintain truth.

2d EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

This was in all probability written a short time after the *first* ; for the same sort of *persons*, *doctrines*, and *practices*, are reprobated in the *second*, which were condemned in the *first*. The same *commands* and *instructions* are given to Timothy in the *second* as in the *first*. The same *remedies* for the corruptions which had taken place at Ephesus are prescribed in the *second* as in the *first*. And in this second Epistle every thing is addressed to Timothy as the *superintendent* both of the *preachers* and *laity* in the church of Ephesus. All which prove, that as the same persons and the same state of things continued when this *second* Epistle was written, as when the *first* was written ; consequently, both must have been sent within a short time of each other.

In this Epistle St. Paul strongly exhorts his son Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words which had been delivered to him ; shows him *what* and *how* to preach ; predicts the evils of the *latter times*, and his own approaching *martyrdom* ; and sends salutations to different friends.

Both Epistles are a treasury to the church of Christ, and of the utmost consequence to all preachers of the gospel.

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

From frequent mention made of this person in St. Paul's Epistles, we learn that he was a *Greek*, and most probably a *Heathen* till converted to Christianity by St. Paul. He accompanied this apostle in several of his journeys; and was at last left by him in the *island of Crete*, as superintendent or bishop of the churches there planted. *Crete* is a very large *island* in the *Mediterranean sea*; being about 180 miles long, by about 40 broad.

This Epistle is very similar to the *first Epistle to Timothy*. They are both principally occupied in describing the qualifications of those who should be appointed to *ecclesiastical offices*; and the ingredients in this description are nearly the same in both Epistles. *Timothy* and *Titus* are both cautioned against the same prevailing corruptions; the phrases and expressions in both letters are nearly the same; and the writer accosts his two disciples with the same salutations; which shows, not only that the two Epistles were written by the *same person*, but nearly about the *same time*, viz. A. D. 65.

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

Philemon seems to have been a person of consideration, affluence, and charity, in the city of *Colosse*; and a distinguished Christian, who

had a *church at his house*; and frequently entertained the Christians and Christian ministers who passed that way.

The *occasion* of writing this letter was the following:—*Onesimus*, a slave, had on some pretence or other run away from his master *Philemon*, and come to Rome, where St. Paul then was as a prisoner, though dwelling in his own hired house, and guarded by a Roman soldier. *Onesimus* having found him out, was converted by the apostle, who wrote this letter to his friend *Philemon* in behalf of one who, though formerly *unfaithful*, was now restored to a better mind. The recommendation is managed with great skill and address, and was no doubt successful. The Epistle contains no pointed reference to any particular *doctrine* of Christianity; but is a model for *recommendatory* and *intercessory* letters. It was probably written about A. D. 62.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

This is allowed to have been the *last* written by St. Paul, of which we have any knowledge; and was most probably composed in A. D. 63. The *design* was to prevent the Jews, who had received the *gospel*, from turning back again to *Mosaic rites* and *ceremonies*. And, to accomplish this design, he shows them that the *Law* was but the *shadow of good things to come*, and the *Gospel* the *substance*; that the *former* without the *latter* was without meaning,

and without use ; and that every thing *in* and *under* the law, pointed out some corresponding spiritual good under the Gospel. The major part of the Epistle is a *comment upon the Law*, and the most beautiful illustration of it that ever was or can be given. On the *prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal offices* of Christ, it is both *ample and luminous* ; and no man can read it without having his *head enlightened*, and his *heart mended*. It is by far the most *elegant*, the most *argumentative*, and the most *useful* Epistle of the great apostle of the Gentiles. In it he concentrates all his *learning*, all his *legal knowledge*, and all his *evangelical experience* and *unction*. The Epistle every where shows the hand of a *master* ; and that hand was guided by the unerring wisdom of the *eternal Spirit*.

III. THE CATHOLIC OR GENERAL EPISTLES.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

James the Less, one of the disciples and kinsmen of our Lord, has been most generally supposed to have been the author of this Epistle ; and that it is the *oldest* of all the Apostolical Epistles, and perhaps prior to any of the *Gospels*. It seems to have been written to comfort and edify the believing Jews, who were scattered through the different nations of the earth. It is written much in the style of

a *Jewish prophet*; and seems to be a *connecting link* between the *Law* and the *Gospel*, as *John the Baptist* was between *Judaism* and *Christianity*. The style of it is elevated, and the diction compressed and clear; and the lessons of morality and submission to the Divine will which it conveys, are not surpassed by any thing found in the writings of the other apostles.

1st EPISTLE OF PETER.

Peter was a native of *Bethsaida*, in *Upper Galilee*; and by trade a *fisherman*. He and his brother *Andrew* were called early to be disciples of *Christ*. Being *married*, he had removed his family to *Capernaum*; and his house there seems to have been the usual residence of our Lord when in those districts. He is generally supposed to have obtained the crown of martyrdom at *Rome*, at the beginning of *Nero's* persecution, about A. D. 64 or 65.

His Epistles seem to be written to believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*; especially those who were *suffering persecution*, or were obliged to leave their country on account of the gospel, and take refuge in *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*, and *Bithynia*. He exhorts them to patience, submission, perseverance, and holiness, after the example of our Lord; and concludes with suitable exhortations to the elders to guard and feed the flock of *Christ*.

2d EPISTLE OF PETER.

This is addressed to the same persons as the *first*, and on nearly the *same occasion*. He shows that the *believing Gentiles*, though *uncircumcised*, were entitled to the same privileges as the believing Jews; exhorts them to patience, and steadiness in their Christian profession; warns them against false prophets, and professing Christians, whose lives were *unholy*; refers to the *day of judgment*, and wonderfully describes the *action of the fire*, by which all things shall be destroyed; but predicts a *renovation* of all things, so that a *new heaven* and a *new earth* should be, by the power of God, generated as out of the old.

1st EPISTLE OF JOHN.

The writer of these three Epistles is the same as John the Evangelist, of whose history we have already had a sketch in speaking of his Gospel. This Epistle appears to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and probably in the year of our Lord 68 or 69.

The design of this Epistle is to inculcate the doctrine of *holiness of heart and life* springing from *love to God and man*. Indeed this *love* seems to be his *text*, and he has written the whole Epistle on this text. His own soul was

filled with this heavenly fire ; and it *shone* on, and *warmed* all around.

2d EPISTLE OF JOHN.

This Epistle is of a *private* nature, being written to an eminent Christian matron in or near *Ephesus*, probably a *deaconess* of the church ; or one who was in the habit of accommodating apostles, and itinerant evangelists. He commends her for her piety, for the Christian state and discipline of her family ; warns her against false doctrines, and false teachers ; and concludes by hoping shortly to pay her a visit.

3d EPISTLE OF JOHN.

This is also an Epistle of a *private* nature, being written to an eminent Christian friend of the name of *Gaius*, to whom he earnestly wishes,—1. Health of body. 2. Health of soul. And, 3. Prosperity in secular affairs. He commends him for his charity and hospitality, warns him against a troublesome person of the name of *Diotrephes*, and promises to pay him a visit shortly. Both these persons must have been near the apostle's habitation, as he was now about ninety years of age, and consequently incapable of taking any *long journey*. Both these Epistles are supposed to have been written between A. D. 80 and 90. The exact time is not known.

EPISTLE OF JUDE.

We know no more of this person than what he tells us himself, in the beginning of this Epistle, that he was "a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." But as there were several *Judes*, and several *James's*, we know not *which* are intended. It is not directed to any particular church or people, but to Christians in general; and hence it has been called a "General Epistle."

He warns the churches of Christ against false teachers, and against apostacy; and describes the false teachers of the time in the most vivid colours. The *exhortation* in verses 20, 21, is forcible and affectionate; and the *doxology* in verse 24 and 25 is well adapted to the subject, and is peculiarly dignified and sublime. It is supposed that this Epistle was written about the year of our Lord 64 or 65.

IV. THE APOCALYPSE, OR BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

This is generally allowed to be written by John the Evangelist, author of the Gospel, and of the three Epistles lately reviewed; and that it was written while he was an exile in the isle of Patmos; and published after his return, about A. D. 96. It is undoubtedly the latest piece of the New Covenant: after which the Divine Spirit has not thought proper to *add*

any thing farther to the Christian code. This, therefore, finishes and seals up vision and prophecy under the NEW TESTAMENT, as Malachi does under the OLD.

The Book opens with a splendid appearance of the Lord Jesus, as the *Ancient of Days*, in his sacerdotal vestments; who dictates to John seven Epistles, or Letters, which he orders him to send to seven churches in Asia Minor; viz. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

After these, there are a profusion of *hieroglyphic representations*; accompanied by a tissue of most *solemn prophecies*, supposed to regard not only the *church*, but the *different governments of the world*, from that time to the day of judgment. Several of these prophecies appear to have been already fulfilled, some in the act of being accomplished, and others remain which respect future ages. The Book is written in great dignity and majesty of figure, metaphor, and colouring: and several of the prophecies in it bear a striking similitude to some in the prophets *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*.—Obscure as it is, God pronounces a blessing on all them who shall read it; and, because it closes the canon of the New Testament and Revelation in general, God thus speaks:

If any man shall ADD unto these things, God shall add unto HIM the plagues that are written in this book. If any shall TAKE AWAY from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take

away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book.—Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

With this apostle the Reader may well add, unto him that LOVED us, and WASHED us from our sins in His own BLOOD, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.—Rev. chap. i. 5, 6.

All these books collectively, whether given to the Jewish or Christian Churches, are sometimes termed THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT; and generally through all Christian countries, and in almost all languages, The BIBLE; from a Greek word βιβλος, A BOOK, as being the only book that teaches the knowledge of the true God; the origin of the universe; the creation and fall of man; the commencement of the different nations of the earth; the confusion of languages; the foundation of the church of God; the abominable and destructive nature of idolatry, and false worship; the Divine scheme of redemption; the immortality of the soul; the doctrine of the invisible and spiritual world; a future judgment; and the final retribution of the wicked in the pains of eternal perdition, and of the good in the blessedness of an endless glory.

From this Bible, or collection of Sacred Writings, the following principles have been ex-

tracted ; which, though they do not contain every particular, yet they exhibit the grand *principles of revealed religion* ; and, in several cases, the *reasons* on which they are founded. I have endeavoured to deduce them in their dependent and progressive order, that the mind may be easily and gradually led from primitive to secondary and ultimate truths, through the whole economy of Divine justice, mercy, and grace, as far as these things are revealed to us in the Sacred Writings, or seem fairly deducible from the different parts of Divine Revelation.

This is a *desideratum*, or thing to be desired, but not yet furnished, which few *catechisms, creeds, or confessions of faith* attempt to supply, though in *them* we might reasonably expect to find such principles.

I have seen most compositions of this kind : but have not found in any of them such a condensed *synopsis*, or general view of those principles, on which every Christian must found his faith, if he wish it not to stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. *Bodies of divinity*, so called, are out of the question ; as being by far too voluminous for the purpose ; nor do they in general contain *principles*, but rather *systems of doctrines*, most of which are founded on *party creeds*.

These *Scriptures* we know to be revelations from heaven :

1. By the sublimity of the doctrines they contain ; all descriptions of God, of heaven,

of the spiritual and eternal worlds, being in every respect worthy of their subjects ; and on this account, widely differing from the childish conceits, absurd representations, and ridiculous accounts, given of such subjects in the writings of idolaters, and superstitious religionists, in all nations of the earth.

2. The *Bible* is proved to be a revelation from God, by the *reasonableness* and *holiness* of its *precepts* ; all its *commands*, *exhortations*, and *promises*, having the most direct tendency to make men *wise*, *holy*, and *happy* in themselves, and *useful* to one another.

3. By the *miracles* which they record : miracles of the most astonishing nature, which could be performed only by the almighty power of God ; miracles which were wrought in the sight of thousands, were denied by none, and attested through successive ages by writers of the first respectability, as well *enemies* as *friends* of the Christian religion.

4. By the *truth* of its *prophecies*, or *predictions* of future occurrences, which have been fulfilled exactly in the way, and in those times, which the predictions delivered many hundreds of years before, had pointed out.

5. By the *promises* which they contain.— Promises of pardon and peace to the penitent, of Divine assistance and support to true believers, and of holiness and happiness to the godly, which are ever exactly fulfilled to all those who by faith plead them before God.

6. By the *effects* which these Scriptures produce in the *hearts* and in the *lives* of those who piously read them ; it being always found that such persons become *wiser, better, and happier* in themselves, and more useful to others : better husbands and wives ; better parents and children ; better governors and subjects ; and better friends and neighbours. While those who neglect them are generally a curse to themselves, a curse to society, and a reproach to the name of man.

7. To these proofs may be added, the *poverty, illiterate and defenceless* state of our Lord's disciples, and the primitive preachers of His gospel. The *Jewish rulers and priesthood* were as one man opposed to them ; they sought by every means in their power to prevent the preaching of Christianity in Judea ; the disciples were persecuted every where, and had not one man in *power or authority* to support them, or espouse their cause ; yet a glorious Christian *church* was founded even at *Jerusalem* ; thousands received and professed the faith of Christ crucified, and many of them gladly sealed the truth with their *blood*. When they had preached the gospel throughout *Judea*, they went to the *Heathens*, preached the gospel in different parts of the *Lesser Asia, Greece, and Italy*. In all these places they had to contend with the *whole power and influence* of the *Roman empire*, then entirely Heathen, and the *mistress* of all the known world ! Christian churches, notwithstanding, were founded every where ; and even in *Rome* itself, the throne

of the Roman emperor! Here they were as defenceless as in *Judea itself*; they had to contend with all the *idolatrous priests*, with all the Greek *philosophers*, with the *secular government*, and with the many millions of the *deluded and superstitious populace*, who, instigated by *furious zeal*, endeavoured by the most *barbarous acts* of persecution to support their false gods, idols, temples, and false worship: yet, before the preaching of these poor, comparatively unlearned, and *totally defenceless men*, *idolatry* fell prostrate; the *Heathen oracles* were struck dumb; the *philosophers* were confounded; and the *people* were converted by thousands; till at last all *Asia Minor* and *Greece*, with *Italy*, and the various parts of the *Roman empire*, received the gospel, and abolished idolatry! Had not this doctrine been *from God*, and had not *He* by His almighty power aided these holy men, *such effects* could never have been produced. The *success*, therefore, of the unarmed and defenceless apostles and primitive preachers of Christianity is an incontrovertible proof that the gospel is a *revelation from God*; that it is the means of conveying *light and life* to the souls of men; and that no power, whether *earthly* or *diabolic*, shall ever be able to overthrow it, it has prevailed, and must prevail, till the whole earth shall be subdued, and the universe filled with the glory of God. *Amen.*

All these are proofs which cannot be contradicted, that these Scriptures are a revelation

from God ; and consequently, the only complete directory of the faith and practice of men.

“ The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,” said an eminent scholar, “ have God for their *Author*, the SALVATION of mankind for their end, and TRUTH without any mixture of *error* for their *matter*.”

As a revelation from God, they have stood the test of many ages ; and as such maintained their ground against every species of enemy, and every mode of attack. Truth is mighty, and must prevail.

This revelation is now *complete*. God will *add* nothing more to it, because it contains every thing necessary for men, both in reference to this world, and that which is to come : and He has denounced the heaviest judgments against those who shall *add* to it, or *diminish* any thing from it.

Principles

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

I. There is **ONE** God, who is self-existing, uncreated, infinitely wise, powerful, and good : who is present in every place ; and fills the heavens, and earth, and all things. Now, as **THIS ONE** God is *eternal*, that is, without beginning or end, and is present every where, and fills all space, Isa. xliv. 6—8. there can be only **ONE** such Being ; for there cannot be *two* or more *eternals*, or two or more who are *present every where*, and *fill all things*. To suppose more than *one* Supreme source of infinite wisdom, power, and all perfections, is to assert that there is no Supreme Being in existence. A plurality of eternal beings would resemble a plurality of universes, eternities, and infinite spaces ; all which would be contradictory and absurd. Isa. xliv. 6, 7, 8.

II. This one infinite and eternal Being is a Spirit : i. e. he is not compounded, nor made up of parts ; for then He would be nothing different from matter, which is totally void of in-

telligence and power. And hence He must be invisible; for a spirit cannot be seen by the eye of man: nor is there any thing in this principle contradictory to reason or experience. We all know that there is such a thing as the air we breathe, as the wind that whistles through the trees, fans and cools our bodies, and sometimes tears up mighty trees from their roots, overturns the strongest buildings, and agitates the vast ocean: but no man has ever *seen* this air or wind; though every one is sensible of its effects, and knows that it exists. Now, it would be as absurd to deny the existence of God, because we cannot *see* Him, as it would be to deny the existence of the air or wind, because we cannot see it.

As, to reason and sense, the wind is known to exist by the *effects* which it produces, though it cannot be seen; so God is known by His works: and a genuine Christian is as conscious that this Divine Spirit works in, enlightens, and changes his heart, as he is that he breathes the air, and *feels* the action of the wind upon his body; and is either chilled, cooled, or refreshed, by its breezes. John iv. 24. iii. 8.

III. In this God there are found Three Persons, not distinctly or separately existing; but in one infinite unity; who are termed Father, Son, and Spirit; or GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST; all existing in the *one* infinite and eternal GODHEAD; neither being

before or after the other, neither being greater or less than the other. These three Divine Persons are frequently termed among Christians THE TRINITY. 1 John v. 7. Luke iii. 22.

IV. This God is the Creator, Governor, and Preserver of all things : all creatures, animate and inanimate, owe their being to Him ; and by Him they are all supported. John i. 3. Neh. ix. 6.

V. The works of creation show God to be infinitely powerful, wise, and good. His POWER is seen in the vastness or magnitude of His works ; His WISDOM is seen in the skill and contrivance, so evident in each, and in the whole ; and His GOODNESS is seen in the *end* for which each has been formed : for He has made all intelligent and animate beings capable of happiness ; and He has so contrived their bodies, minds, and different parts, as well as the things by which they are surrounded, that this happiness is, in general, within their reach. Psa. civ. 24.

VI. MAN is one of the chief works of God. His *soul* was created in the *image of God*, i. e. in *righteousness* and *true holiness* ; and his body was formed out of the dust of the ground. There was no imperfection in his body, a machine of the most complicate, curious, and difficult contrivance : and no *sinfulness* in his *mind* ; for God, who is all *perfection*, could make nothing that is *imperfect* ; and He, who

is infinitely *holy*, could make nothing that is *impure*. Gen. i. 27.

VII. But from this state of perfection and purity man fell, by his disobeying the commandment of God; and so became liable to sickness, death, corruption, and dissolution in his body; and became *ignorant*, *sinful*, and *vicious* in his *soul*; which imperfections and sinful propensities he communicated to all his posterity: for as the *stream* must ever be the same with the *fountain* from whence it flows; so all generations of men must necessarily have the same kind of nature with those from whom they are descended. Adam, the first man, was made in the *image and likeness* of God: but, when he sinned, he lost that Divine image; and then, when he begat children, it is said in the Sacred Writings, that he begat them in his *own image*, Gen. v. 3. *i. e.* sinful and corrupt like himself. And in this state all human beings that are born into the world are still found; and their sinful *dispositions* lead them unto sinful *practices*; so that the whole human race are fallen, and all are sinners against God and their own souls. Psa. xiv. iii.

VIII. God, who is infinitely good, showed His mercy to fallen sinful man by promising him a SAVIOUR who was to come in that time, which God should see to be the most suitable. Gen. iii. 15.

IX. This Saviour was no less a Person than the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who in that suitable

time was to take upon Him the nature of man, by assuming a *human body*; which He subjected to death, that he might make a sacrifice and atonement for all those who were partakers of the same nature, *i. e.* for the WHOLE HUMAN RACE. *Matt.* i. 21, 28. *Heb.* ii. 9.

X. Jesus Christ, as *man*, could suffer and die; as *God*, He was incapable of either: but it was necessary that His *human nature* should suffer in order to make an atonement; and it was necessary that His *Deity* should be *united* with that humanity, in order to make its suffering of infinite value, that thereby a suitable atonement might be made for the sins of the world. *1 Pet.* iii. 18.

XI. The *law* which God gave to men was given to *human nature*. That nature transgressed this law; on that nature, therefore, Divine justice had a claim; and from it that justice had a right to demand satisfaction.—To have destroyed that human nature existing at the time of the transgression in the first human pair only, would have been inconsistent with the innumerable purposes of Divine justice, mercy, and providence; therefore, God permitted them to live and propagate a posterity upon the earth: but in His infinite love He found out a Redeemer for this fallen nature. But this Christ or Redeemer took not upon Him the nature of *angels*, but the seed of Abraham, that is, *human nature*, that in the nature which sinned He might make the expiation required. *Heb.* ii. 16.

XII. It was also necessary that this Redeemer should be infinitely Divine and perfect ; as the end of His great undertaking was not only to purchase pardon for a world of offenders, but to merit eternal happiness for mankind.— Now an infinite happiness cannot be purchased by any *price* less than that which is *infinite in value* ; and infinity of merit can only result from a nature that is infinitely Divine or perfect. Col. i. 17.

XIII. Accordingly we find that, about 4000 years after the creation, this Jesus Christ was born in Judea, of a *Virgin*, whose name was *Mary*, in whose womb His human nature was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost ; and about *thirty-three* years afterwards, having wrought multitudes of miracles, the most astonishing and beneficent, and preached that heavenly doctrine called the *Gospel*, or *Good News*, He gave up His life at Jerusalem as a sacrificial offering for the lives of all mankind. He was *buried* ; rose again, by that Divine power which could not suffer death, on the third day, according to His own predictions ; and gave commission to His *disciples*, (holy men to whom He had taught the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,) to go into all the world, and preach His Gospel to every creature ; which they and their *successors* have done, and are doing : and by these means CHRISTIANITY has been spread and established in the earth ; and will finally prevail in every nation of the world according to His own most

positive declarations. *Luke* ii. 11. *Isa.* liii. 9.
1 *Tim.* ii. 6. *Mark* xvi. 15.

XIV. God has assured mankind that there is and can be no salvation but *through Jesus Christ*: that *for the sake*, and on the account, of His sacrificial sufferings and death He can forgive sins; and on no other account *will He* show mercy to any soul of man. *Eph.* i. 7.

XV. As *all* have *sinned*, and come short of the glory of God, and are consequently exposed to endless punishment, and no man can make an atonement for his own soul, God has commanded all who hear the Gospel to *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, to believe on Him as *having died for them*, and to believe that his sufferings and death are a *sufficient sacrifice* for their sins; and consequently, to offer this sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ as a ransom price for their souls. *Mark* xvi. 16.

XVI. But it is not likely that any person will *feel his need* of Jesus Christ as his Saviour, unless he feel that he is *sinful, guilty*, and cannot help himself: hence the Holy Scriptures require men to repent; that is, to turn from and be deeply sorry for their transgressions, to *mourn and be distressed* for having sinned against God; and to implore His mercy through Christ Jesus, by fervent and continued prayer. *Acts* iii. 19. xviii. 30.

XVII. The Scripture gives no hope to any man, that his sins can be blotted out, or his soul saved, by any thing *he can do, or has done*,

or by any *sufferings* through which he can possibly pass : every man, therefore, must come to God through Christ, to be saved by *free grace*, and *mere mercy* alone. *Rom.* iii. 24. *Eph.* ii. 8.

XVIII. When a sinner comes thus to God, with a *broken and contrite heart*, *believing* and *trusting* in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, God freely pardons him ; and he *knows* and *feels* that he is pardoned, because his darkness and distress are all taken away ; and the Spirit of God bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God : this God has promised ; and, therefore, it is the privilege of *every Christian* to know that his sins are forgiven him for Christ's sake : and of this fact there are thousands of living witnesses in the Christian church. Let it ever be remembered, that genuine faith in Christ will ever be productive of *good works* ; for this faith worketh by love, as the apostle says : and love to God always produces obedience to His holy laws. *Rom.* v. 5. viii. 16.

XIX. *Pardon*, or *forgiveness* of *sin*, implies, that the man's *guilt* is taken away ; and that he is no longer in danger of falling into *endless punishment* : but it does not imply that the *evil* of his *nature* is wholly removed ; for this is a separate work of God's mercy. *Romans* v. 1. viii. 1.

XX. Hence, God promises His Holy Spirit to *sanctify* and *cleanse the heart*, so as *utterly to destroy* all *pride*, *anger*, *self-will*, *peevishness*, *hatred*, *malice*, and *every thing contrary to His*

own holiness. 1 Thess. v. 23. Rom. viii. 13. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

XXI. The work of *pardon* on the *conscience* is called JUSTIFICATION ; the work of *holiness* in the *heart* is termed SANCTIFICATION :—these two comprise the whole salvation of the soul in this world. He who is *completely sanctified*, or cleansed from all sin, and dies in this state, is fit for glory. Rev. iii. 5.

XXII. Let it be therefore remembered, that REPENTANCE must go before *justification* ; that JUSTIFICATION must go before *sanctification* ; and that SANCTIFICATION must go before *glorification*. Consequently, he who does not repent and forsake sin cannot be *justified*, he who is not justified cannot be *sanctified*, and he who is not sanctified cannot be *glorified*.

XXIII. As the grace that produces any of these states may be lost through sin, or carelessness ; hence the necessity, that the *true penitent* should continue to *watch* and pray till he is justified ; that, when justified, he should continue to watch and pray, and deny himself, and *take up his cross*, till he is *sanctified* ; and, when sanctified, he should continue the same course, *believing, loving, and obeying*, till he is *glorified*. As he will be in danger as long as he lives of falling from grace, so he should continue to watch and pray, believe, and maintain good works, as long as he breathes : for while thus employed, humbly trusting in the Lord Jesus, he cannot fall. 1 Cor. ix. 27

2 *Pet.* ii. 17. *Mark* xiv. 38. xiii. 37. 2 *Pet.* ii. 10.

XXIV. Jesus Christ has ordained only two *sacraments*, or religious *ceremonies*;—The *first* BAPTISM, by which we *enter* into His church; and the *second* the LORD'S SUPPER, often called the SACRAMENT, by which we continue members of His church. The former implies being *dipped in*, or *sprinkled* with water, in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. The *water* is an emblem of the *cleansing and purifying* influence of the Holy Spirit; and the whole of the act itself signifies a consecration of the person to the endless service and glory of the ever blessed Trinity, that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whose name he has been baptized. The *second or holy sacrament* is an emblem of the *sacrificial death* of Christ; the BREAD which is used signifying His BODY that was crucified, and the *wine* His *blood* that was shed for the sins of the world. But the bread and wine are only *emblems* of this body and blood; not *changed* into that of our blessed Lord, as some have erroneously imagined. He, therefore, who receives the Holy Sacrament professes thereby that he expects salvation only through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.—*Matt.* xxviii. 29. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

XXV. The *body* is *mortal*, and must die and mingle with the earth, out of which it was made: but it shall be *raised again* by the power of Christ, in what is called the RESURREC-

TION from the dead. But the soul is immortal, and can neither die nor perish: but in the resurrection the body and soul shall be again united, both of the just and of the unjust.—*Heb. ix. 27. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. John v. 28, 29. Eccl. xiii. 7.*

XXVI. After the *resurrection* comes the general JUDGMENT, in which God shall render unto every man according as his works have been: those who have lived and died in *sin* shall be sent into hell, and be thus for ever banished from God and the glory of His power: those who have here received the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been faithful unto death, shall be brought into the kingdom of glory, and be eternally with the Lord. *John v. 29. Rev. ii. 10.*

XXVII. In the interim, from death to the resurrection, all souls shall be in a state of *conscious existence*; the wicked having a foretaste of the misery that awaits *them*, and the *good* having a foretaste of the blessedness which is prepared for them. But neither can be supremely happy or wretched till the souls are joined to their respective *bodies*; otherwise a day of judgment would be rendered unnecessary: for as the works for which they shall be punished or rewarded were done *in the body*; so they must be joined to their bodies before they can be capable of bearing the due degree of *punishment*, or enjoying the fulness of *eternal glory*. *Luke xxiii. 43.*

XXVIII. Those who, at the day of judgment, are sentenced to punishment, shall never escape from perdition ; and those who are taken to glory, shall never fall from it. Both states shall be eternal. *Matt. xxv. 46.*

XXIX. The BIBLE, from whence the above principles are drawn, is a revelation from God Himself; and declares His will relative to the salvation of men. The words contained in it were *inspired* by the *Holy Spirit* into the minds of faithful men, called PROPHETS and SEERS, in the *Old Testament*; and EVANGELISTS and APOSTLES in the *New*. These all spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. *Rev. xxii. 19. 2 Pet. i. 21.*

XXX. This BIBLE, or the *Scriptures* of the *Old and New Testaments*, are the only complete guide to *everlasting* blessedness: men may *err*, but the *Scripture* cannot; for it is the WORD OF GOD *Himself*, who can neither *mistake, deceive, nor be deceived*. *2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.*

XXXI. From this WORD all *doctrines* must be derived and proved; and from it every man must learn his duty to *God*, to his *neighbour*, and to *himself*. *Isa. viii. 20.*

XXXII. We have, therefore, *three grand gifts*, for which we should incessantly magnify God:—First, *His Son*, CHRIST JESUS. Second, The influence of His Holy Spirit. And, third, His *blessed word*. *1 John iv. 10. Luke xi. 13. John v. 39.*

XXXIII. This *Word* shows us that God is Love: that he hateth nothing that He hath made; that He is loving to every man, and is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. 1 John iv. 16. Psa. cxlv. 9.

XXXIV. It shows us that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and that the whole human race may believe in Him to the saving of their souls. Heb. ii. 9. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Ezek. xviii 33. xxxiii. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

XXXV. It shows us that God sends His Holy Spirit into the hearts and consciences of all men, to convince them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and that His *light* is to be found, even where His *Word* has not yet been revealed. John i. 19. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. Rom. ii. 14.

XXXVI. On this ground the Bible informs us, God will judge the *Heathen*, who have never been favoured with this Divine revelation. Those who have acted conscientiously, according to the dictates of this heavenly light in their minds, shall not perish eternally; but have that measure of glory and happiness which is suited to their state; while those who have acted contrary to it, shall be separated from God and happiness for ever. Rom. ii. 12. Luke xii. 47, 48. Acts x. 34.

XXXVII. By this light even the *heathens* are taught the general principles of right and wrong; of justice and injustice: not to injure each other: to be honest and just in their

dealings; to abhor murder, cruelty, and oppression; and to be charitable and merciful according to their power. John i. 9. Rom. ii. 14.

XXXVIII. Those who have been favoured with Divine revelation shall be judged according to that revelation. They have received *much*, and from *them* much shall be required; for the Bible assures us that those who *have* the Gospel, and do not obey it, shall be punished with an everlasting separation from the presence of God, and the glory of His power, in that place of misery where their worm, the accusation and self-reproaches of a guilty conscience, shall never die; and their fire, the instrument of their torment, shall never be quenched.—2 Thess. i. 9. Mark ix. 44.

XXXIX. Thus we find that God will judge the heathen by the law which He has written in their minds; and He will judge the Jews by the Law which He has given them by Moses and the prophets; and He will judge the Christians by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which He has given them by the evangelists and apostles; and He will judge the Mohammedans according to the opportunities they have had of knowing the Gospel, and the obstinacy with which they have rejected it. And this will be an aggravation of the punishment of the Jews, Mohammedans, and other unbelievers, that the Gospel which would have made them wise unto salvation, has been re-

jected by them ; and they continue blasphemously to deny the Lord that bought them.

XL. As the Sacred Scriptures were mercifully given to man to promote his present as well as his eternal happiness; hence they contain directions for every state and condition of life : on husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, they enjoin mutual love, affection, obedience, and fidelity. To governors and the governed they prescribe their respective duties; kings and magistrates, as the representatives of God, they enjoin to use their authority for the protection and comfort of the people: the people they command to love, honour, obey, and pray for their secular rulers; to submit to those laws which are formed for the peace, good order, and prosperity of the state; and to hold in abhorrence every thing that might tend to disturb the peace of the community. In a word, they require all men to love their neighbour, every human being, as themselves; and in all circumstances to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them. Matt. vii. 12. Luke x. 31. Rom. xiii. 1—7. Ephes. v. 21—33. vi. 1—9. Col. iii. 18. 25. 1 Tim. ii. 1—3. Tit. ii. 1—6. iii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. iii. 1—7. v. 1—5.

XLI. From the foregoing principles we see that whatsoever is worthy of the infinite perfections of the ONE ETERNAL Being, and whatsoever is calculated to produce the present and everlasting happiness of mankind is taught

in the Bible; and that these truths have never been fully nor clearly taught, and most of them not at all, in any system of religion which has been adopted by even the wisest of the Heathen nations.—That, where this Book of Divine Revelation has been received, there is found the greatest portion of wisdom and true greatness; and the largest share of political, domestic, and personal happiness; and that none in such nations are wretched, ignorant, or miserable, but those who do not obey its dictates.

XLII. As this religion positively commands its professors to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and their neighbour, any and every human being, as themselves, hence it is the duty of all Christian nations and people to exert themselves in every possible and reasonable way to send this glorious light of revelation to all the nations of mankind who have not yet received it: and while they continue to use that *prayer* which Jesus Christ has mercifully taught them, in which is contained this petition, *Thy kingdom come*, they should keep a constant eye on the condition of the Heathen, and labour to send them that Gospel so essential to their peace, their comfort, and their happiness.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.—*Mark xvi. 16.*

And I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the EVERLASTING GOSPEL to preach to them that dwell on the earth; and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; saying with a loud voice, FEAR GOD, and GIVE GLORY to HIM.—Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

J. B. & Co. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Book

DIRECTIONS

FOR PROFITABLY READING THE

WORD OF GOD.

HAVING thus laid down at large the *principles* of the Christian religion, and the *reasons* on which they are founded, and given a general view of that Divine revelation from which they are extracted, it may be necessary to give a few *directions* to those who seriously ask the question, “How may we profit most, and grow wise unto salvation, by reading the Sacred Writings?” I answer:—

1. Deeply consider that it is your *duty* and interest to read the Holy Scriptures.

2. When you read, consider that it is God's word which you read; and that His *faithfulness* is pledged to fulfil both its *promises* and *threatenings*.

3. Read the whole Bible, and read it in order; *two chapters* in the *Old Testament*, and *one* in the *New*, daily, if you can possibly spare the time; and you will have more time than you are aware of, if you retrench all

needless visits, and save the hours spent in useless or *unimportant conversation*.

4. Think that the eye of God is upon you while you are reading His word: and read and hear it with that reverence with which you would hear God speak, were He to address *you* as He did the prophets and people of old; for be assured, that He considers it as much His Word now, as He did when He first spoke it.

5. Remember that the word of God is not sent to *particular persons*, as if by *name*; and do not think *you* have no part in it, because *you* are not *named there*. It is not thus sent: it is addressed to particular *characters*; to saints, sinners, the worldly minded, the proud, the unclean, the dishonest, the unfaithful, liars, sabbath-breakers, the penitent, the tempted, the persecuted, the afflicted, &c. &c.

6. Therefore examine your own state, and see to which of these characters *you* belong, and then apply the word spoken to the character in question, to yourself; for it is as surely spoken to *you* as if your name were found printed in the Bible, and placed there by Divine inspiration itself.

7. When, in the course of such reading, you meet with a *threatening*, and know from your own state that this awful word is spoken against *you*, stop, and implore God, for the sake of the sufferings and death of His Son, to *pardon* the sin that exposes you to the punishment threatened.

8. In like manner, when you meet with a *promise* made to the penitent, tempted, afflicted, &c. having found out your own case, stop, and implore God to fulfil that promise.

9. Should you find, on self-examination, that the threatening has been averted by your having turned to God; that the promise has been fulfilled, through your faith in Christ; stop here also, and return God thanks for having saved you from such sore evils, and brought you into such a glorious state of salvation. Thus you will constantly find matter in reading the Book of God to excite to repentance, to exercise faith, to produce confidence and consolation, and to beget gratitude; and gratitude will never fail to beget obedience. He who reads the Bible in this way must infallibly profit by it.

10. It is always useful to read a portion of the Scriptures before prayer, whether performed in the family, or in the closet. In doing this, mark some particular passages, that they may become a subject for your petitions: by attending to this, all formality and sameness in this sacred duty will be prevented; and you will have an abundance of materials for petitions, supplications, thanksgiving, &c. And thus your prayers will never be tedious, unsatisfactory, or unedifying, either to yourself or to others.

11. Remember that in reading, you keep the eye of your mind steadily fixed upon Him, who is the *end* of the Law, and the *sum*

of the Gospel ; for even the Holy Scriptures can make you wise unto Salvation only through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

12. Let the Scriptures, therefore, lead you to that Holy Spirit by which they were inspired ; let that Spirit lead you to Jesus Christ, who has ransomed you by His death. And let this Christ lead you to the Father, that He may adopt you into the family of heaven ; and thus being taught of Him, justified by His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit, you shall be saved with all the power of an endless life.

13. As often as you have an opportunity of hearing the word of God preached, be sure to attend ; for remember, the Holy Scripture asserts that “ faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” *Rom.* x. 17. It is, therefore, your duty and your interest to hear that word preached ; diligently to attend public worship, and attentively hear what God, by the mouth of his ministers, shall say unto you. The minister is God’s messenger, and the expositor of His word. They who do not attend public worship, show that they have little reverence for His name, and little regard for their own souls. He who has the opportunity, and does not wait upon God in public, has little reason to expect that God will depart from His own institutions, to bless him in private. “ The path of duty is the path of safety ;” and “ they who wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.” *Isa.* xl. 31.

14. All these directions may be summed up in that most excellent form of sound words, which is used in our church :

COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY
IN ADVENT.

“ Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy
“ Scriptures to be written for our learning,
“ grant that we may in such wise hear them ;
“ read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them ;
“ that, by patience and comfort of Thy holy
“ word, we may embrace and ever hold fast
“ the blessed hope of everlasting life, which
“ thou hast given us in our Lord Jesus Christ.
“ Amen.”

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the *Creator's* praise arise !
Let the *Redeemer's* name be sung
In every land, by every tongue !

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord :
Eternal truth attends thy word.
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till sun shall rise to set no more.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below :
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host ;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.

A
LETTER
TO
A PREACHER,
ON HIS ENTRANCE
INTO
THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY;

WITH
SOME DIRECTIONS TO THE PEOPLE HOW THEY
MAY PROFIT UNDER THE PREACHING OF
THE WORD OF GOD,

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL. D.

FROM THE FOURTH LONDON EDITION, MUCH EN-
LARGED AND IMPROVED.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.—2 *Tim.* ii. 15.

Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.—1 *Tim.* iv. 12.

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METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE
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1820.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Letter, in miniature, was originally drawn up for the use of a young man in London, (Mr. Samuel Woolmer,) who, in the year 1797, gave up some flattering worldly prospects for the privilege of proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God, as an itinerant Wesleyan Methodist Preacher; and who has since that time laboured in his Master's vineyard with credit and success.

Some judicious friends who saw the plan, urged the Author to fill it up, and *publish* it; as something of that kind was much wanted, and was likely to be very useful both to the junior Preachers, and to the people. Submitting more to their judgment than his own, the work was accordingly sent to press, for the *first* time, in 1800. It shortly after went through a *second* edition; and that having been for a considerable time out of print, a *third* edi-

Advertisement.

tion has been repeatedly required; and now a *fourth*.

In revising his work for another impression, many *improvements* suggested themselves, which were accordingly adopted; and several considerable *additions* have been made of subjects not less important than those previously introduced, which it is hoped will make the work more generally useful.

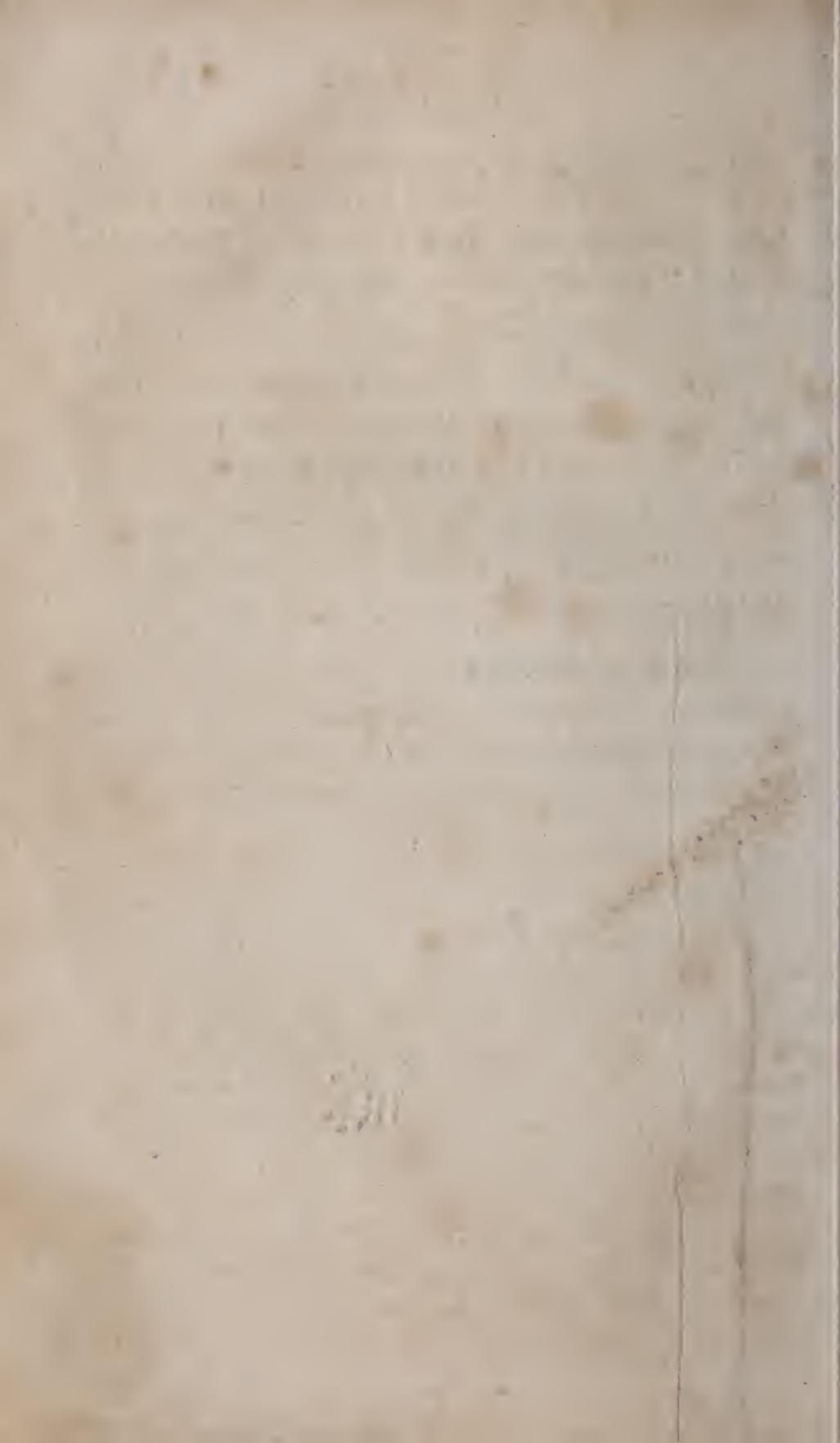
Many may be of opinion that the work might be still farther enlarged, with great advantage to the main subject. Of this the Author is sufficiently aware; but as he intended no more originally than a *Letter*, and not a laboured dissertation on the Christian ministry, or any subject connected with it; he wishes still to keep within the reasonable bounds of his original plan.

Without the Author's knowledge, two foreign editions of this Letter have been published, one in the sister kingdom, and another in America: with what correctness the Author knows not, as he has not read them. He is glad, however, to find, from the general report of his brethren at home,

Advertisement.

that this work has not only met with their approbation, but has been very generally useful: and he hopes that in its present improved state it will be still more extensively so. This is the sole end at which he has aimed; and for the good that has been done by it, he cheerfully gives the glory to that God from whom all good comes; and to whom alone all praise and thanksgiving are due.

Millbrook, Jan. 1, 1819.



A LETTER

TO

A PREACHER, &c.

My dear Friend,

YOU are engaged in the most important work in the universe. Commissioned by God Almighty, you are sent to explain and enforce that Mystery which had been hidden from former ages; that glorious scheme of salvation, the redemption of a lost world by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the work is extremely *awful* and *difficult*, you may nevertheless take encouragement from the *honour* God has conferred upon you in calling you to it, to go forward with pleasure and delight; and this is requisite, that you may not be too much depressed by the trials necessarily attendant on an employment which will ever be opposed by the wickedness of men, and the malice of demons. But, while you take encouragement from the above consideration, a proper sense of the *awfulness* of the work, which should ever rest

upon your mind, will keep you from being elated by your *honour*, as there is such a possibility of miscarriage, and such a danger of being *unfaithful*. However, these two considerations will serve mutually to counterbalance each other, and cause you to *rejoice* before God with *trembling*.

As you have, no doubt, deeply considered the nature of the work, and counted the cost; and have deliberately chosen your present employment, at the certain loss of every worldly prospect, and at the hazard of your life; permit one who has learned experience on a variety of points connected with a Preacher's usefulness, and at no ordinary expense either, (having had the pain to be often instructed through the medium of his own blunders) to give you the following Advices.

I. *Concerning your call to the work of the Ministry.*

Your call is not to instruct men in the doctrines and duties of Christianity merely; but to convert them from sin to holiness. A doctrine can be of little value that does not lead to practical effect: and the duties of Christianity will be preached in vain to all who have not the principle of obedience. That this principle is not inherent in any man's nature, and must be communicated by God alone, has all the proofs that any subject can possibly require, or receive. This is, indeed, the basis

on which the necessity and importance of the Christian System rests: Jesus Christ comes to save men, not only from ignorance, by teaching them *the truth*; but to save them from their sins; and this He does by enlightening the heart, purging the conscience from dead works, and transfusing the principle of righteousness and true holiness, which is the only principle of obedience. Now, all preaching is vain, where these effects are not produced; and such effects can only be produced by the immediate agency of God: but He makes the faithful preaching of His word the means of conveying this agency; and He will convey it by whom He pleases, for He is, and ever will be, Sovereign of His own ways.

It is the prerogative of God both to call and qualify a man to be a successful preacher of His word. All men are not thus called—Among the millions professing Christianity, very few are employed in the work of the *Ministry* in the *ordinary course of Providence*; and still fewer by *especial call*.

A regular established ministry of pure Christianity, in any country, is an ineffable blessing; for by it the *form* at least of *true religion* will be preserved. Such a ministry God furnishes in the regular order of His providence; and its fruits are his *ordinary work*. But there is a *power* as well as *form* of godliness; a *soul* as well as a *body* of religion; and to produce this, is God's *extraordinary work*; and to produce it, He not only communicates *extraordinary*

influence, but employs *extraordinary means*. In this work, God often “chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty ; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, hath He chosen to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh might glory in His presence.”

That there are such dispensations in *Providence* and *Grace*, the whole history of the church proves : and every *revival of religion* is the proof of the dispensation of an *extraordinary influence* ; for in such outpourings of God’s Spirit, we ever find *extraordinary means* and *instruments* used.

You are either among these *ordinary* or *extraordinary* messengers ; and you have either an *ordinary* or *extraordinary call*. But as you belong not, as a Christian Minister, to any established form of religion in the land ; you are an *extraordinary messenger*, or *no minister* at all ; and you have either an *extraordinary call*, or you have *no call whatever*.

It is a matter of the utmost consequence to be thoroughly satisfied on this point. No man should engage in the work in which you are engaged, unless he verily feel, that “he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office.” He must not presume that he is thus moved, because he has been educated for the ministry : in cases of this kind, *man may propose*, but *God must dispose*. He may, indeed,

be a minister in the ordinary course of God's Providence, as has been already stated : and God may choose one thus educated, to be an extraordinary messenger, to revive His work in the earth. Thus was your *founder* chosen, qualified, and sent forth. But what could his single arm effect?—God, therefore, gave him as helpers, men called and qualified by Himself, to do that extraordinary work so beneficial not only to Great Britain, but also to a great part of the civilized world, and even to heathen countries.

These men all testified that they had an *extraordinary call*, to do an extraordinary work, by extraordinary assistance. The immense multitudes of souls converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God ; the general diffusion of scriptural Christianity throughout the land, producing love to God and man ; due submission to all lawful authority, and the most cordial respect to every moral precept ; were the proofs that they had not mistaken their call, and that God had not withheld his extraordinary influence. Persuaded that they had an extraordinary call to convert transgressors, to lead them to Christ Jesus that they might be justified by faith in his blood, and afterwards to build them up on their most holy faith, they constantly depended on God, sought and expected from him extraordinary assistance, and thus lived in the constant exercise of the Spirit of faith, piety, and prayer. You will copy their example, and be

owned of God as they were owned, if you walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.

I hold this to be a matter of prime importance : for long experience has shown me, that he among us, who is not convinced that he has an extraordinary call to the ministry, will never seek for extraordinary help, will sink under discouragement and persecutions, and consequently, far from being a light of the world, will be as salt without savour ; and, in our connexion, a *slothful* if not a *wicked* servant, who should be cast out of the sacred fold, as an encumberer of the inheritance of the Lord.

II. Concerning the SPIRIT in which you should do your Work.

I. In what are called the *Larger Minutes*, which contain the doctrine and discipline of the Methodist Societies, and in which the wisdom and experience of your predecessors in the ministry are condensed, you will find many excellent rules and directions, not only relative to the spirit, but also to the manner, in which you should perform the work to which you are called. I shall make but a few extracts from this pamphlet, because I wish you to read it all carefully over, and to become master of every part of the subject. The *twelve rules of a helper*, i. e. a Preacher just taken upon trial, have so much good sense, as well as piety, to recommend them, that I shall

beg, in this place, to press them on your attention. They are the following :

1. "Be *diligent*;—never be *unemployed* a moment:—never be *triflingly* employed:—never *while away* time: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. "Be serious. Let your motto be *Holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all *lightness, jesting, and foolish talking*.

3. "Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly *young women*.

4. "Take no step towards *marriage*, without consulting with your brethren.

5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know, *the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side*.

6. "Speak *evil* of no one: else *your words* especially, would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your breast, till you come to the person concerned.

7. "Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart.

8. "Do not *affect* the *gentleman*. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a *dancing-master*. A Preacher of the gospel should be *the servant of all*.

9. "Be *ashamed* of nothing but *sin*: not of fetching wood or drawing water, if time per-

mit : nor of cleaning your own shoes, nor those of your neighbour.

10 “ Be *punctual* : do every thing *exactly at the time* : and keep our rules, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

11. “ You have nothing to do but to *save souls* : therefore, spend and be spent in this work : and go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you *most*.

12. “ It is not your business to *preach* so many times, merely, or to take care of *this or that society* ; but to *save as many souls* as you can : to bring as *many sinners* as you possibly can to *repentance*, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.”

I have only one remark to make on these rules ; and it shall be on the word *gentleman*, in the 8th article, which I am afraid may be misunderstood. Whether we have borrowed the term from the French *gentilhomme*, or the Latin *homo gentilis*, or compounded it from the Latin *gentilis*, and the Saxon *man*, is a matter of little consequence. The French define it, “ *celui qui est noble de race* :” he who comes from a noble stock or lineage. The Romans define gentlemen thus : “ *qui inter se eodem sunt nomine ab ingenuis oriundi, quorum majorum nemo servitatem servivit ; et qui capite diminuti non sunt* :” Those who have a certain family name ; are born of freemen, whose ancestors were never in servitude, and who have never been degraded from their kindred or ancient stock.

The common acceptation of the term is, “a man of large fortune, who lives independent of all others; and who not only serves no man, but is above serving himself.” Properly, it signifies “a man of an ancient respectable family, in possession of an entailed descending landed property; who is affable and obliging in his manners, and benevolent in his conduct :” and by courtesy it is given to every “well-bred, genteel, and well-behaved man,” whether he be sprung from an ancient respectable family, and have landed property, or not.

Now Mr. Wesley does not say, Do not *act like a gentleman*; this he did himself; and this he recommended, as well by precept as example: but he says, “Do not *affect the gentleman*; do not pretend to be what you are not—to be nobly descended, when you are not—nor be above serving yourself or others, even in the meanest offices of life. He who is well-bred, decent, gentle, and obliging in all his conduct, is a *gentleman*; he who *affects* this character is none, no more than a *monkey* is a *man*.

He who boasts of his ancestry, talks of his mighty sacrifices, and insinuates that he has descended from much dignity, respectability, ease, and affluence, in order to become a Methodist preacher, is the character of which Mr. W. speaks. Such a one *affects the gentleman*, wishes to be thought so by others, may be thought so by persons as empty as himself; but, in the sight of every man of good com-

mon sense, is a vain, conceited, empty ass; is unworthy of the ministry, should be cast out of the vineyard, and hooted from society.— You will not copy such a character as this.

These rules, next to the Scriptures, will prove a lamp to your feet, and a light to your path: and will at once recommend themselves to your judgment, your conscience, and your heart.

From what are termed the “smaller advices relative to preaching,” I shall make a short extract, though several of the subjects here shall be treated more at large, in the course of this letter.

1. “Be sure never to disappoint a congregation, unless in case of life or death.

2. “Begin and end precisely at the time appointed.

3. “Let your deportment before the congregation be serious, weighty, and solemn.

4. “Always suit your subject to your audience.

5. “Choose the plainest texts you can.

6. “Take care not to *ramble*, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.

7. “Be sparing in allegorizing, or spiritualizing.

8. “Take care of any thing awkward or affected either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.

9. “Sing no hymns of your own composing.”

On this advice I beg leave to make one remark. Very few persons, however accredited they may be as *authors*, are allowed to quote *themselves* in the pulpit:—and for a man who is not a first rate poet, to give out a hymn of his own composing, in such a place, must, to every intelligent person, savour of deep ignorance, and almost incurable vanity:—I say, unless he be a first rate poet, such as Dr. Watts or Mr. Wesley, which may be the case with *one* in every *ten* or *twelve millions* of men. The odds, therefore, are so much against you and me, and perhaps most of our brethren, that the attempt to stand candidate for so large a portion of fame would be absurd. I might add to this, Sing no music of your own composing; it may be as exceptionable as your poetry: and from the peculiar difficulty of musical composition, it is a thousand to one it may be worse. Every man should be cautious how he *exposes* himself in public. But to return to the *smaller advices*.

10. “Beware of *clownishness*. Be courteous to all.

11. “Be *merciful* to your beast; not only ride moderately, but see that your horse be rubbed, fed, and bedded.

12. “Every where recommend *cleanliness*. Cleanliness is next to godliness.”

From these excellent documents, I forbear to make any farther quotations, and come immediately to the general object which I had in

view; and to which, I trust, you will, in the fear of God, seriously attend.

Remember, God is the Fountain of all good: whatever comes from Him will lead to Him. His blessing is on His own productions, and His curse on every thing besides. *Son of man, saith the Lord, receive the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.* Deeply consider that, to be successful in bringing souls to God, you must bring the *spirit* of the gospel into the work of the ministry.—In order to this, see that you retain a clear sense of God's mercy to your own soul, and of your call to the work; and while you feel His love in your heart, it will not only support you in all trials and difficulties, but will induce you cheerfully to spend and be spent for the salvation of those for whom Christ has died.

2. You preach, not merely to explain God's word, but to save souls: whenever you forget this, you go astray.—Now, as no man can see the worth of the salvation which God has provided for him, till he be convinced of his want of it; therefore, preach the Law and its terrors to make way for the Gospel of Christ crucified. But take heed, lest while you announce the terrors of the Lord, in order to awaken sinners and prepare them for Christ, that you do not give way to your own spirit, especially if you meet with opposition. Remember that admirable advice, given by the greatest preacher God ever made, to a young man just setting out in the work: "The ser-

vant of God must not strive, but be gentle towards all ; apt to teach ; patient : in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves." 2 *Tim.* ii. 24, 25. From an indescribable law in the economy of the intellectual world, the spirit that acts upon another, begets in it its own likeness.—You will get a profusion of light on this subject, if you take care to carry the Spirit and unction of Christ with you into all your public ministrations ; and preserve them in all your private communications with the people. I have known ministers, and of no mean note either, who seldom have a soul comforted under their ministry, merely because of their harsh, austere manner of preaching the gospel. Others, far their inferiors in point of ministerial qualifications, get souls for their hire wherever they come, principally (under God) through their affectionate manner of recommending the gospel of the grace of Christ.—Of the former it has been justly said, *They make even the promises of God too hot to be held.*

3. Beware of discouraging the people ; therefore, avoid continually finding fault with them. This does very great hurt. There are some, whose sermons impress nothing but terror : and though they point out the heights and depths of holiness ; yet they leave the hearers no courage to follow on to know the Lord. There are others who become *Censors general* of the different societies to whom they preach. This (imperceptibly to themselves) spoils their own tempers, begets a spirit of unchari-

tableness, and greatly injures their usefulness. If you find a society *fallen* or *falling*, examine as closely as you can to find out all the good that is among them; and, copying Christ's conduct towards the seven Asiatic churches, preface all that you have to say on the head of their backsliding, with the good that remains in them; and make that *good* which they still possess, the reason why they should shake themselves from the dust, take courage, and earnestly strive for more. If you ground your exhortations to increasing diligence and zeal on what they have *lost*, instead of on what they yet *possess*, and may *speedily gain*, you miss your way, and lose your labour. I tried the former way, and did no good: I abandoned it, and adopted the latter, and God blessed it.—Mr. Wesley used to give the significant appellation of *Croakers*, to those who were always telling the people, “Ye are fallen! ye are fallen!” and he observed that such injured the work of God wherever they came. I have in general found, that those who are most frequent in the above cry, are such as have suffered loss in their own souls; and taking a *prospect* of what is *without*, from a *retrospect* of what is *within*, they imagine that all they see are in the same apostate condition with themselves.

4. Man is naturally prone to act in extremes: therefore, take good heed that while you avoid the above evil, you fall not into that other of slightly passing by the transgressions of the

wicked, or the backslidings of the people of God. Cases may occur, that will require public and cutting reproof: but, as I hinted before, in all such cases copy the example of our blessed Lord to the seven Asiatic churches.—There you have an infallible directory. May God help you to follow it!

5. On this head I will venture to give you another piece of advice, to which you will seriously attend, if you regard your own peace, and the good of the people.

Avoid the error of those who are continually finding fault with their congregations because more do not attend. This is both imprudent, and unjust.—*Imprudent*, for as people do not like to be *forced* in what should be a *free-will-offering*; so they are infallibly disgusted with those who attempt it: *unjust*, it being contrary both to reason and equity, to scold those who come, because others do not attend. I have known this conduct scatter a congregation, but I never knew it gather one. Indeed, it savours too much of pride and self-love. It seems to say, “Why do you not come to hear ME? Am I not a most excellent Preacher? What a reproach is it to your understanding that you keep away when *I* am here!”—Bring Christ with you, and preach His truth in the love thereof, and you will never be without a congregation, if God have any work for you to do in that place.

III. Concerning the Choice of Texts.

1. Never take a text which you do not fully understand ; and make it a point of conscience to give the *literal* meaning of it to the people. This is a matter of great and solemn importance. To give God's words a different meaning to what He intended to convey by them, or to put a construction upon them which we have not the fullest proof He has intended, is awful indeed ! Any person who is but even a little acquainted with spiritual things, may give a spiritual interpretation (according to his own opinion) to any text : but it is not every person that can give the *literal* sense. The spiritual meaning must ever be drawn from the literal ; and indeed when the first is well known, the latter, which is its use and application, will naturally spring from it : but, without all controversy, the literal meaning is that which God would have first understood. By not attending to this, heresies, false doctrines, and errors of all kinds, have been propagated and multiplied in the world.

2. Remember you are called, not only to explain the *things* of God ; but also the *words* of God. The meaning of the *thing* is found in the *word* : and if the *word* which comprises the original *idea*, be not properly understood, the meaning of the *thing* can never be defined ; and on this ground the edification of the people is impossible. We often take it for grant-

ed, that the words which are in common use are well known, especially when we understand them ourselves: but this is a very false opinion, and has bad consequences; for elementary matters being not well known; it is no wonder if the intellectual improvement of the people do not keep pace with our labours. No man can read a language, the alphabet of which he has never learned. Every mathematician feels it a matter of imperious necessity to define all the terms he uses in his demonstrations.

3. Never appear to contradict the Holy Spirit by what is called treating a subject *negatively* and *positively*. I shall waive all strictures on the barbarism of "showing *negatively* what a thing *is not*;" and will only beg leave to state, that the following instances of this injudicious and dangerous mode of handling the word of God have fallen within the compass of my own observation.

A Preacher took for his text, Isa. xxviii. 16. *He that believeth shall not make haste.* On this he preached *two* sermons. His division was as follows: "I shall first prove that he who believeth *shall make haste*; and, secondly, show in what sense he that believeth *shall not make haste.*" On the first, which was a flat contradiction of the text, he spent more than an hour: and the congregation were obliged to *wait* a whole month, before he could come back to inform them that, he who believeth *shall not make haste.* I would not be thought

to insinuate, that the first sermon was not sound doctrine and good sense, as to its matter ; but I say it was injudicious.—And, besides, it was absurd to found his work upon a text, the very letter of which it contradicted in the most palpable manner.

Another, a citizen of no mean city, not a thousand miles from the place where I write, took his text from Psa. xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but God delivereth him out of them all.* His division was as follows : “ In handling this text I shall first prove, that there is *none righteous.* Secondly, That the afflictions of the *righteous* are many : and, Thirdly, That the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” The honest man’s meaning and design were undoubtedly good :—but who could hear his division without trembling for himself and his text !

Another took Luke xii. 32. *Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* In opposition to the *letter* of his text, the Preacher laboured to prove, that the flock of Christ is not a *little*, but a *very large* flock : and in order to do this, brought in multitudes of pious heathens, vast numbers who sought and found mercy in their last hour, together with myriads of infants, idiots, &c.

Who does not see, that in each of the above cases, ignorance of, or inattention to, the *literal* meaning of the text, was the grand cause of this absurdity and contradiction ? Choose,

therefore, such texts as you understand ; and, after having conscientiously given the literal interpretation, improve the whole in the best manner you can to the edification of your hearers.

4. Seldom take a *very short* text; because a short one may not afford you sufficient matter to entertain and instruct your congregation. There are not many to be found who have the ability to use a *few words* of Scripture, as Addison and Steele did the Greek and Latin mottoes of their Spectators: and those who have the ability, should not use it in this way, for this plain reason; that in preaching, *God* should be heard *more than man*. But where imagination and invention are put to the rack to supply the place of the words of God, the hearers may admire the address of the Preacher, but are not likely to be fed with the bread of life.—In such cases *man* speaks *most*, *God* *least*. Such preaching must leave the people ignorant of the *Scriptures*. With many at present, preaching is become more of a *human art*, than of a *Divine science*; and when this is considered, we need not wonder that the pulpit is so often employed, without becoming the mean of salvation to them that hear.

5. Never take a text which out of its proper connexion can mean nothing.—I travelled once with two Preachers who trifled the whole year in this way. Their texts were continually such as these. *Adam, where art thou?—I have somewhat to say unto thee.—If thou wilt*

deal justly and truly with my master, tell me.— I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?— Thy mouth is most sweet, &c. I need not add, that these solemn triflers did the people no good; and it will not surprise you to hear that they are both, long since, fallen away. Such texts as the foregoing may be preached from without any study; for two reasons: first, Because they are not subjects for study, and should not be studied; and, secondly, Because the person who takes such, speaks on them whatever comes uppermost, as one explanation will suit them just as well as another: for, taken out of their proper connexion they mean—nothing. Beware of this, and never do violence to the word of God, by taking a text out of the connexion in which His Spirit has placed it. Let God speak for Himself, and His words will bear convincing testimony to their own excellence.

6. It might be very proper to say something here concerning the *abuse* of Scripture, by what is termed *Allegorical Preaching*; but as the good sense both of preachers and people has nearly banished this *deceitful handling* of the *word of God* from the nation, observations on this head are rendered comparatively unnecessary. Yet the custom still *lives*, though it does not *prevail*. A very great man, and one of the most learned of his day, ORIGEN, was the father of this most thriftless and unedifying art. *His* learning and reputation have gained it a sort of credit in the world with

superficial people; though every scholar knows that Origin himself, far from deriving any credit from it, was degraded by the unsubstantial craft, which, with the wisest and best men, ranks among the *sullenly departing shades* of the whole herd of "unreal mockeries." Mr. Benjamin Keach's work on *Scripture Metaphors*, has done more to debase the taste both of preachers and people, than any other work of the kind. Fortunately, some years ago, a large edition of this work was printed: it got thereby into the hands of many private individuals. Many preachers in making a liberal use of it in the pulpit, were, according to the popular phrase, "*found out*;" this has made them cautious, and Keach on *Scripture Metaphors* is now in less repute than formerly. Two instances of this *finding out*, came within my own knowledge.—Mr. Wm. C. was eminent for explaining Scripture Metaphors and Allegories; the people admired his *deep knowledge* and *ability*;—in one of the principal congregations where he frequently preached, a gentleman luckily had in his library Keach's *Scripture Metaphors*, and found that it was from this publication that Mr. Wm. C. derived all his excellencies—he spoke of this publicly; and an unlucky person giving the name of *Billy Keach* to the preacher, spoiled his popularity.

Another, having taken his text, said, "I shall divide this into *twenty-one* heads;" and so saying, he produced them all in *detail*.—

A gentleman in the congregation said, "When I return home I shall examine *Keach on the Metaphors*, and see whether you have missed any." He did so, and found that he could speak more for the fidelity of the preacher's memory, than he could for the honesty of his heart; as in this respect he had most servilely and disingenuously stolen the word from his neighbour. Let these accounts not only deter you, but all that may read them, from a conduct as disgraceful in a literary as in a moral point of view; and which, in the end, must involve its author in shame and highly merited reproach.

Independently of all this, the *principle* is bad: it is degrading to the dignified doctrines of the gospel to be treated in a way by which no rational conviction was ever produced; and by which no truth was ever proved.

Even *Metaphors* and *Parables* prove nothing: they only illustrate; and are never allowed to be produced in support of any doctrine. This is a maxim in Theology to which all polemic Divines are obliged to bow. *Theologica symbolica non est argumentativa. Similia ad pompam, non ad pugnam: illustrant, at nihil probant.* Added to all this, what is called *Allegorical Preaching*, debases the taste, and fetters the understanding, both of Preacher and hearers.

7. But there is another species of Preaching against which I would most solemnly guard you, viz. what is termed *fine* or *flowery*

preaching. I do not mean preaching in *elegant, correct, and dignified language*; as every thing of this kind is quite in place, when employed in proclaiming and illustrating the records of our salvation; but I mean a *spurious birth*, which endeavours to honour itself by this title. Some Preachers think they greatly improve their own discourses, by borrowing the *fine sayings* of others; and when these are frequently brought forward in the course of a sermon, the Preacher is said to be a *flowery Preacher*. Such *flowers*, used in such a way, bring to my remembrance the custom in some countries of putting full blown roses, or sprigs of *rosemary, lavender, and thyme* in the hands of the *dead*, when they are put in their *coffins*. And may I be permitted to say, that the unnatural association of words and sentences in a fine dignified style, with the general tenor of a discourse which is often of a widely different character, is to me as ridiculous and absurd as the union of a *cart-wheel*, with elegant *clock-work*.

But the principal fault in this kind of Preaching is the using a vast number of words *long and high-sounding*, to which the Preacher himself appears to have affixed no specific ideas, and which are often foreign, in the connexion in which *he* places them, to the meaning which they radically convey.

Such Preachers are remarkable for the multitude of words of a *similar meaning*, which they often heap together. Their *substantives*

are lost in the overbearing crowd of *adjectives* brought to explain them: and the case is not rare, where two or three of these epithets mean precisely the same thing; only, unluckily for the person who uses them, one happens to be derived from the *Latin* or *Greek*, another from the *French*, and the third, the only one he appears to understand, comes from his mother's tongue; and perhaps the most proper on the occasion. Words used in such a way, either lose all meaning, or, like equal antagonist forces, destroy one another. Thus, "they draw out the *thread* of their *verbosity* finer than the *staple* of their *argument*." They are precisely such as a good woman used, who having completed a task of spinning, for a part of which she had been previously paid, returned to her employer, who was himself a correct and elegant speaker, with a speech which she thought would please him, and in which she was, no doubt, greatly helped by her benevolent neighbours: "Sir, I have brought back the *rest*, of the *residue*, of the *remaining part* of the work you gave me to spin." The simplicity and ignorance of the poor woman, became a subject of innocent merriment; but a Preacher who speaks thus, will not so easily escape: his *affectation* and *pedantry* will, among sensible men, become the subjects of the most caustic animadversion.

IV. *Concerning your Behaviour in the Pulpit, and mode of conducting the Public Service.*

1. Go from your knees to the chapel. Get a renewal of your commission every time you go to preach, in a renewed sense of the favour of God. Carry your authority to declare the gospel of Christ, not in your hand, but in your heart. When in the pulpit, be always solemn: say nothing to make your congregation laugh. Remember you are speaking for eternity; and trifling is inconsistent with such awful subjects as the great God, the agony and death of Christ, the torments of hell, and the blessedness of heaven.

2. Never assume an air of importance, while in the pulpit; you stand in an awful place, and God hates the proud man. Never be boisterous or dogmatical. Let your demeanour prove that you feel that you are speaking before Him who tries the spirit; and to whom you are responsible for every word you utter. Self-confidence will soon lead to a forgetfulness of the presence of God; and then you speak your own words, and perhaps in your own spirit too.

3. Avoid all quaint and fantastic attitudes. I once knew a young man who, through a bad habit which he had unfortunately acquired, made so many *antics*, as the people termed them, in the pulpit, as to prejudice and grieve many. A very serious and sensible person who

constantly heard him, really thought he was afflicted with that species of *paralysis* termed *St. Vitus's Dance*: and hearing some blame him, entered seriously on his defence, on the ground of its being the visitation of God! As there are a thousand reasons why a young man should not wish the people to form such an opinion of him, so there is all the reason in the world why he should avoid *queer nodding*, *ridiculous stoopings* and *erectings* of his body, skipping from side to side of the desk, knitting his brows; and every other theatrical or foppish air, which tends to disgrace the pulpit, and to render himself contemptible.

4. Never shake or flourish your handkerchief; this is abominable; nor stuff it into your bosom; this is unseemly. Do not gaze about on your congregation, before you begin your work: if you take a view of them at all, let it be as transient as possible.

5. Endeavour to gain the attention of your congregation. Remind them of the presence of God. Get their spirits deeply impressed with this truth, *Thou, God, seest me!* and assure them, "He is in the midst, not to judge, but to bless them; and that they should wait as for eternity, for now is the day of salvation." I have ever found that a few words of this kind spoken before the sermon, have done very great good.

6. The pulpit appears to me analogous to the *box* in which the witnesses are sworn in a court of justice, "To say the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."—You

are a *witness* for God ; and are bound by more, if possible, than an oath, to speak the truth in righteousness and love ; and to declare faithfully and solemnly, according to the best of your knowledge, the whole counsel of God.

7. Give out the *page*, and *measure* of the hymn, and the hymn itself distinctly, and with a full voice ; always giving the singers time sufficient to set a suitable tune ; and do not hold the book before your face while giving out the hymn, for this hinders the progress of the sound.

8. While praying, keep your eyes closed : at such a time you have nothing to do with outward objects ; the most important matters are at issue between God and you ; and he is to be contemplated with the eye of the mind. I cannot conceive how it is possible for a man to have the spirit of devotion in prayer, while he is engaged in gazing about, on his congregation. Such an one may *say* his prayers, but he certainly cannot *pray* them.

If you wish the people to join with you in this part of the worship, speak so as to be heard, even at the beginning: *whispering* petitions to God, may be *genteel* for aught I know ; but I am certain it is not to the use of edification. In your prayers avoid long prefaces and circumlocutions:—You find none of these in the Bible. Some have got a method of complimenting the Most High on the dignity of His nature, and the glory of His heavens: this you should studiously avoid. He that cometh to

God must know that HE IS : and a proper consideration of His Being, Power, Holiness, and Mercy, cannot fail deeply to impress your mind, and lead you at once even to His seat. You should never come into the congregation but in the spirit of prayer. Let your mind be wound up into that spirit in your closet ; and then, in your prayers in the congregation, you will appear what you should be, *a man familiar with God*. Examine the Scriptures, and you will find that all the holy men of God prayed in this way : they came directly to the Throne, and preferred their suit. Ever considering themselves in *the presence of God*, the very commencement of their supplications seems no other than an external continuance of prayers in which their hearts had been long previously engaged.

9. Say the Lord's prayer in the same tone and elevation of voice in which you said your own. I have observed many, when they came to this solemn form, suddenly dropping their voice, and repeating it as if it made no part of their devotion. Is this treating the institution of Christ with becoming reverence ?

10. If you read the Liturgy of the Church,* and this should be done in every large congregation on the morning of the Lord's day, read it with a full and solemn voice—Hurry nothing—Whisper nothing. Many are prejudiced against this most comprehensive, important, and impressive service, because it is generally *ill read*. Do it justice ; get into the

* See the Note, p. 138.

spirit it breathes; and both you and your congregation will soon find, that it is no dry, formal service—no lip labour. As a *form* of devotion it has no equal in any part of the universal Church of God. It is founded on those doctrines, which contain the sum and essence of Christianity; and speaks the language of the sublimest piety, and of the most refined devotional feeling. Next to the Bible, it is the book of my understanding, and of my heart.

11. Read your text distinctly, and begin to speak about the middle of your voice, not only that you may be readily heard, but that you may rise and fall as occasion may require, which you cannot do if you begin either too high or too low. Never drop your voice at the *end* of a sentence; this is barbarous and intolerable. In a multitude of cases, where the *last word* is not heard, the whole sentence is lost. Every sentence you speak should tend to edification; and it cannot edify, unless it can be heard: therefore, never begin too *low*; this is a greater evil than even *screaming* itself.

12. Be sure to have the *matter* of your text well arranged in your own mind before you come into the pulpit, that you may not be confused while speaking. But beware of too much *dividing* and *subdividing*: by these means the word of God has been made to speak something, any thing, or nothing, according to the creed or prejudices of the Preacher. How little of this *division work* do you meet with

in the discourses of the Prophets, the sermons of Christ, or the preachings of the Apostles. Besides, this mode of preaching is hackneyed to death; and can never succeed but in judicious hands. Unless the matter of the text be abundant, it rather fetters than enlarges the mind; and that which is ominously called the *skeleton*, i. e. a system of *mere bones*; is in general but ill clothed with muscles, worse strung with nerves, and often without the breath either of a spiritual or intellectual life. By this mode of preaching, the word of God is not *explained*; from it, scarcely any thing can be learned but the Preacher's creed, and his ingenuity to press a text into its service. His divisions and subdivisions explain his own mind and views; but they generally leave the Text and Context as they were before. No Congregation can grow in *the knowledge of the Scriptures* by such teaching as this. On this subject, a man of deep sense and piety once observed; "The major part of what we hear at present in sermons is, *Three heads, and a conclusion.*"

13. In whatever way you handle your text, take care, when you have exhausted the matter of it, not to go over it again. Apply every thing of importance as you go along; and when you have *done*, learn to make an *end*. It is not essential to a sermon, that it be half an hour, or an hour long. Some preach more in ten minutes than others do in sixty. At any rate, the length of time spent in preaching, can never compensate for the want of matter;

and the evil is doubled when a man brings forth *little*, and is *long* about it. There are some who sing long hymns, and pray long prayers, merely to *fill up the time*; this is a shocking profanation of these sacred ordinances, and has the most direct tendency to bring them into contempt. If they are of no more importance to the Preacher or his work, than merely to *fill up the time*; the people act wisely, who stay at home and mind their business till the time in which the sermon commences. Have you never heard the following observation? "You need not be in such haste to go to the chapel; you will be time enough to hear the sermon, for Mr. X. Y. always sings a *long* hymn, and makes a *long* prayer." Therefore, never sing long hymns, pray long prayers, nor preach long sermons—these last are intolerable, unless there be a great variety of interesting matter in them, accompanied with great animation. I have often preached only *ten* or *fifteen* minutes at a time. Why? Because I had no more to say on that subject, and I did not think that what I had already uttered was of consequence enough to entitle it, then and there, to a *second* hearing.

14. As to the *matter* of your preaching, I will only say, preach Jesus, preach His atonement, preach the love that caused Him to die for the redemption of a lost world; and through Him, proclaim a *free, full, and present* salvation, provided for every human soul; and God will bless your labours wherever you go.

15. You may easily find many treatises written on the Gift of Preaching, the Eloquence of the Pulpit, the Composition of a Sermon, &c. &c. both in our own language, and in foreign tongues; and he who has a good judgment may profit by them. But I must confess, all I have ever read on the subject has never conveyed so much information to my mind on the original, and, in my opinion, only proper mode of preaching, as Neh. c. viii. v. 8. "So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." A few moments spent in considering this subject will not be lost.

The Israelites having been lately brought out of the Babylonish captivity, in which they had continued 70 years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, c. xxv. 11. were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears they had, in general, lost the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to such a degree, that when the book of the law was read, they did not understand it: but certain Levites stood *by and gave the sense*, i. e. translated it into the Chaldee dialect.—This was not only the origin of the Chaldee *Targums*, or translation of the law and prophets into that tongue; but was also, in all probability, the origin of *preaching from a text*: for it appears, that the people were not only ignorant of their ancient language, but also of the *rites and ceremonies* of their religion, having been so long in Babylon, where

they were not permitted to observe them.— This being the case, not only the *language* must be *interpreted*, but the *meaning* of the *rites* and *ceremonies* must also be *explained*; for we find from Neh. c. viii. v. 13, &c. that they had even forgotten the *feast of Tabernacles*, and every thing relative to that ceremony.

As we no where find that what is called *preaching on*, or *expounding* a text, was ever in use before that period, we may thank the Babylonish captivity for producing, in the hand of Divine Providence, a custom the most excellent and beneficial ever introduced among men.

What the nature of preaching was at this early period of its institution, we learn from the above cited text.

First. They read in the book of the law of God. The words of God are the proper matter of preaching, for they contain the wisdom of the Most High, and reveal to man the things which make for his peace.

Secondly, They read *distinctly*; מפרש *m' phorash*, from פראש *parash*, to expand; they analyzed, dilated, and expounded it at large.

Thirdly, They gave the sense; ושוים שכל *v' som sekel*, put weight to it; i. e. showed its importance and utility; thus applying verbal criticism, and general exposition, to the most important purpose.

Fourthly, They caused them to understand the reading; ויבין במקרא *vaiyabinu bammikra*,

and *they understood*, had a mental taste and perception of the things which were *in the reading*; i. e. in the letter and spirit of the text.

This mode of expounding is still more necessary to us. *First*, Because the Sacred Writings, as they came from God, are shut up in languages no longer vernacular. *Secondly*, Ninety-nine out of a hundred know nothing of these languages. *Thirdly*, Provincial customs and fashions are mentioned in these Writings, which must be understood, or the force and meaning of many texts cannot be comprehended. *Fourthly*, Sacred things are illustrated by arts and sciences, of which the mass of the people are as ignorant as they are of the original tongues. *Fifthly*, There is a depth in the word of God, which cannot be fathomed, except, either by Divine inspiration, which no idler has reason to expect; or by deep study and research, for which the majority of the people have no time. *Sixthly*, The people trust in general to the piety, learning, and abilities of their ministers; and maintain them as persons capable of instructing them in all the deep things of God; and, believing them to be holy men, they are confident, they will not take their food and raiment under the pretence of doing a work, for which they have not the ordinary qualifications.

You may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things? and I may with equal propri-

ety answer, He who is taught by the Spirit of God, and neglects not to cultivate his mind in the knowledge of his Divine Testimonies.

16. While you are engaged in the pulpit in recommending the salvation of God, endeavour to *feel* the truth you preach, and diffuse a Divine animation through every part. *As* the preacher appears to preach, the people hear and believe. You may set it down as an incontrovertible truth, that none of your hearers will be more affected with your discourse than yourself. A dull, dead preacher, makes a dull, dead congregation.

17. Shun all controversies about politics : and especially that disgrace of the pulpit, political preaching. I have known this do much evil ; but though I have often heard it, I never knew an instance of its doing good. It is not the *bread* which God has provided for His children ; and from the pulpit, it is neither profitable for doctrine, for reproof, nor for instruction in righteousness. If others will bring this *chaff* into the house of God, copy them not : you are called to *feed* the flock of Christ ; and this you cannot do but by the *sincere milk* of the word, and the *bread of life*. For what is the *chaff* to the *wheat* ? saith the Lord.

18. A sentence or two of affectionate prayer in different parts of the discourse has a wonderful tendency to enliven it, and to make the people hear with concern and interest. On this subject, a great, foreign orator gives the

ministers of the gospel the following advice. "When you have proved the truth of the principles you laid down, you have done but little of the great ministerial work. It is from this point, the proof of your doctrine, that you are to set out to triumph over the passions of your auditory ; to strip the sinner of every subterfuge and excuse, that *conviction* may lead him to *repentance*. To produce this effect, leave your proofs and divisions behind you ; address yourself to the conscience in powerful interrogatives ; repeat nothing that you have before said ; you have now to produce a new effect, and must use a new language. Employ the utmost energy of your soul to show them that happiness is to be found no where but in God. What should I say more ? Forget method, forget art itself.—Lift up your soul in affectionate prayer to God ;—become the intercessor of your auditory, that the multitude which withstood your menaces, may be constrained to yield to the effusions of your love." So preach and pray, that your congregation may be made better, or purpose to become better, in consequence of your labour.

19. Seldom quote *poetry* in your sermons : if you avail yourself of the sentiment of the poet, give it in plain prose. To say the least of this custom, it certainly is not agreeable to the rules of congruity to interlard *prose* discourses with scraps of *verse*. It is nothing but *custom* that renders this impropriety at all supportable. Reverse the business, and see how oddly a poem will appear which has here and

there scraps of *prose* in it. I suppose the Europeans borrowed this method from the Asiatics: but it is more tolerable in their languages than in ours. All the Eastern tongues are highly figurative, and such a language put into numbers will easily form Poetry. The transition, therefore, from their poetic prose to verse, is by no means so great and uncouth in their language, as in ours. It must be granted, that many public speakers use it sometimes; but, the very best speakers use it very seldom. I wish it to be generally avoided; not only because I believe it does no good, but also, because there are few who know how to do it well, and the poet is often murdered by his injudicious rehearser. How can a man, who has scarcely a dignified sentiment in his prose, quote, with any propriety, a sublime thought in verse?

20. While I have you in the pulpit, I will give you a concluding advice relative to this part of the business. Never *ape* any person, however eminent he may be for piety, or ministerial abilities. Every man has a *fort*, as it is called, of his own; and if he keep within it, he is impregnable. The providence of God has caused many of the natural manners of men to differ as much as their persons: and it is nearly as impossible for a man to imitate the peculiar manners of another, as it is to assume his features. It is on this account that no one has ever succeeded who has endeavoured to copy another: and as the aiming to do it, is

easily discoverable, the man who acts thus, is despicable in the eyes of the people. And that man is justly despised by others, who has so far despised himself and his Maker, as to endeavour to throw off his natural *self*, in order to act in another man's character. In former ages, such a person was termed *HYPOCRITE*; i. e. one who endeavours to personate another. I need not tell you how much and how deservedly this character is execrated in sacred things. By such conduct all is risked, and all is lost: that which you had of your own is ruined in attempting to get that which belongs to your neighbour; and *his* excellencies not suiting *you*, you fail in the attempt to personate *him*, and are thereby rendered ridiculous. The fable of the *dog* and *shadow*, will fully illustrate the residue of my meaning on this part of the subject.

21. Besides *prayer* and *preaching*, you will often have *two* other important duties to perform: viz. to *baptize*, and to *administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. These I advise you, and, indeed, it is the advice and direction of the Conference, to administer *according to the Form prescribed by the Church of England*.* You may *abridge* this form, and

* This advice is only applicable to the Preachers in England, where, in many places, they use the Form prescribed in the Liturgy of the Established Church. In this country, the Discipline of our Church contains Forms of Prayer (abridged, indeed, from those used in the English Church,) both for Baptism and the Lord's

this you will find often necessary ; but you cannot *mend* it.

When you baptize, let it be, if possible, in the face of the congregation, and not in the *vestry*, nor in *private*. Take occasion in a few words to explain its nature and importance, both to the congregation, and to the parents : and insist on the personal attendance of the latter, that you may give them those directions and charges relative to their bringing up their children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, which the case requires ; and take heed that all whom you baptize be properly *registered* ; and let the *register book* be kept in the most secure place, because it is of great importance ; and in all cases in which a baptismal register can be applied, these registers are complete evidence in law.

Should any tell you that your baptism is not

Supper ; and so appropriate and excellent are they, that no one ought either to mend them, or substitute others in their place.

In respect to the observations on the validity of their Baptism, though the decision of the English Judge is very important in respect to settling the controversy between the Dissenters and members of the Establishment, in a legal point of view, yet it does not apply with equal force to us in this country, where Church and State are disunited, and where our civil institutions recognize all denominations of Christians, in all their rites and ceremonies. If any, therefore, dispute the validity of the ordinances as administered by us, they must be silenced by a scriptural vindication of our ministry, and of the organization of our Church.

sufficient or legal; convince him of his mistake if you can, and show him that his assertion is *false*. YOUR baptism is as legal and as effectual to all *Christian* and *civil* purposes, as that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This was ever the *sense* of our *law* in reference to the baptisms performed by Dissenters: but it had not fully expressed that sense till a few years back. I attended the arguings in the court of Arches before Sir John Nicol, in the case of *Kemp v. Wickes*, Clk. who *refused* to grant Christian burial to the child of the former, being a *Dissenter*; because he alleged it had not Christian baptism, being baptized by a Dissenting minister. But the learned Judge, examining the practice and doctrine of the Christian church, from the Apostles till the final revision of our Liturgy, proved, that in all cases, where *water* was used as the element, and the sacred name of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, invoked in the act of sprinkling or immersion; there, baptism was administered to all Christian ends and purposes, without any particular reference to the *person who* officiated:—that the church always abhorred the *iteration* or *repetition* of baptism, even in cases where persons officiated who were deemed *heretics*, when it was fully proved that *water* was used; and the person was sprinkled or dipped in the name of the ever-blessed *Trinity*. He then gave it as the Judgment of the Court, that such a baptism, administered by any Dissenting minister, or person in holy or-

ders, pretended holy orders, or pretending to holy orders, was an efficient and legal baptism to all Christian and civil purposes. This is, therefore, the doctrine of the *Church and State* relative to this point; and this ever was the doctrine of both, previously to this declaration; for the interpretations of Mr. *James Wheatly*, and the *Rubrics* of king James, in the Common Prayer, are of *no legal authority*, and consequently worthy of no regard as to the subject in question. The opposite is both a false and dangerous doctrine, utterly unworthy of the charitable and dignified spirit of Christianity. It is dangerous, as it might involve one of the most important state questions that could come before a British public. Mr. Thomas Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was the son of a Dissenting minister, born in 1693, was baptized after the form of that church, and studied at three Dissenting schools, successively, until he was 19 years of age; when he went to the University of Oxford, and afterwards entered the communion of the Church of England. He was, in 1732, nominated one of the chaplains of the king; in 1733 was appointed rector of St. James's: January 5, 1734, he was elevated to the bishopric of Bistol; to that of Oxford in 1737: in 1750 exchanged the prebend of Durham and rectory of St. James's, for the deanery of St. Paul's; and in 1758 he was named and confirmed to the Archbishopric of Can-

terbury. He officiated at the funeral of king George II.; and at the proclamation of his present majesty, whom he had baptized when rector of St. James's; and whom, with his queen, he married and crowned, 8th September, 1761; and on the 8th of September, 1762, he baptized the prince of Wales, and afterwards several of their majesties' children. We hear nothing of his ever having been *re-baptized*. If his baptism was not a Christian, efficient, and legal baptism, consequently he could not baptize or confer *orders*; but he did both. Now, were we to allow the Antichristian and dangerous doctrine, that no baptism is either efficient or legal, but that which is conferred by a *Popish Priest*, or a *Clergyman of the Church of England*; then, these monstrosities and abominations would follow:—Our blessed King is no *Christian*, for he was *baptized* by a person who was never himself baptized; and he is no *rightful sovereign*, for he was *consecrated* by a man who was no Christian! And, added to all this, the true succession in the church is interrupted and broken; for all the baptisms and *ordinations* of Archbishop Secker, not only while presiding in the see of Canterbury, but also while he was a country clergyman, and successively bishop of Bristol and bishop of Oxford, were invalid and Antichristian; and all the *Ecclesiastics* and *high church dignitaries* which have descended through that line are *spurious*; and the whole state of the English church is

unsettled and corrupt! God save us from such Antichristian, unholy, and unconstitutional doctrines!

In administering the *Sacrament of the Lord's supper*, be deeply reverent and devout in all your deportment. Pour out the wine into the cups *leisurely*, and take heed that you spill not one drop of it.—*Shedding the wine* on the table cloth, to say the least of it, is highly unbecoming and ungraceful: keep firm hold both of the *bread* and of the *cup*, till you feel that the communicant has hold with yourself. The *dropping the bread*, and *spilling the wine*, has, in several cases, when the communicant was about to receive them, produced great disturbance in weak and scrupulous, though pious minds.

Treat the sacred elements with great respect; for, although they are not the body and blood of Jesus Christ *in any sense of the word*, yet they *represent both*; and, consequently, they represent the sacrificial offering of our Lord Jesus for the redemption of a lost and ruined world. Impress this on the minds of the people: get them to fix their hearts upon the sacrificial offering thus represented; and then they will discern the Lord's body; and not eat and drink their own condemnation.—Where the minister conducts this solemn ordinance as he should, no institution of Christianity is of more use to the souls of the faithful.

V. Concerning your Behaviour in your Circuit,
or Place where you exercise your Ministry.

1. Never disappoint a place : this would be contrary to your covenant with God, your agreement with your brethren, and your engagements to the people. Keep your own *watch* always to true time, and begin precisely at the time appointed. Never be a minute later than true time, except in the country, where there is no public clock : then *five* minutes may be allowed for the difference between clocks and watches. But these five minutes may be as well *before* as *after* common time in other places. Do not many preachers, of all denominations, sin against God and their own souls, by not attending to this ? Let us consider the subject ? Suppose preaching be published for *seven* o'clock, and you go not in for five, ten, or fifteen minutes after ; what can your congregation think of you ? You publish preaching for such a time, and you do not come in till considerably *after* ; and this is your *usual* custom.—Then, (harsh as the saying may appear) you are certainly a habitual and public liar ; and though such conduct may pass without much reprehension from the good-natured people ; can you imagine that there is no enormity in it in the sight of the *God of Truth* ? Surely you cannot. I never knew a preacher who acted in this way who did not lose the confidence of the people to such a de-

gree, as essentially to injure his public usefulness. Add to this, that the congregations are ever ruined by such conduct. A Methodist preacher who acts thus, breaks that rule which, on his admission into the connexion, he solemnly promised to keep : *be punctual ; do every thing exactly at the time.* See Rule 10, of the twelve rules of a Helper. *How* can he answer this to God, to his conscience, to his brethren, and to the people ? A mere subterfuge, or an excuse, increases the sin.

2. Be punctual in getting in proper time to the place where you are to dine and lodge.— Do not make a whole family wait upon *you*. This is both injustice and insolence. While I readily grant, with our blessed Lord, that *the labourer is worthy of his meat* ; yet he should certainly come to receive it in due time : and he who *habitually* neglects this, disappointing and confusing the families wherever he comes, is not worthy of a morsel of bread. I have known some, of more than common ministerial abilities, lose their importance, and ruin themselves in the opinion of the people, by their want of punctuality in this respect.

3. Never leave any place you visit, without reading a portion of Scripture, and praying with the family : and seize the most convenient time for family-prayer in the houses where you lodge. Just before they sit down to meat is, in my opinion, the best time : *Then* the several members of the family are generally present. But I have often observed, that one, and

another, after having *hurried* down their victuals, have either gone, or have been called away to business; so that before the whole family had finished their meal, one-third of the members of it were not to be found. There are, it is true, some families so well regulated, that this *secession* is never permitted; yet, even among these, I have always found it the best way to have prayer before meals, and especially at the breakfast hour. Should you be invited to any place where you are not permitted to pray with the family, never go thither again; and give them your reason. An ambassador of God should be transacting the business of his Master whithersoever he goes; and where he is not permitted to do it, there God has not sent him. Be steady, keep a good conscience, and a good conscience will keep you.

4. If you wish to keep a good conscience, you must walk as in the presence of God. Extremes beget extremes. Take heed then, that while you avoid *levity* on the one hand, you fall not into *sour godliness* on the other. There are some who have the unhappy art of making a *jest* out of every thing; and even apply Scripture in this way. Such conduct is execrable. There are others, who, being of an *unhappy* cast of mind, through a kind of natural or factitious melancholy, strip a man of salvation for a smile, and condemn him to the pit for being cheerful. Avoid both these extremes; and remember that *levity* will ape *religious cheerfulness*, and *sourness of temper*

will endeavour to pass itself off for *Christian gravity*. But do not judge from such appearances. There are some who are naturally of a *quiet, grave* turn of mind; which, in general, gains them credit for much more godliness than they possess. There are others who are naturally of a *merry, volatile* spirit. These often get credit for *less* religion than they enjoy.—Mr. Whitfield once judiciously observed on this subject, that an *ounce* of grace went farther in some than a *pound* in others. For light on this and many other matters of importance, remember that every human spirit has its own *peculiar, natural* CHARACTERISTIC which was given it by its Creator; and which He never changes, nor designs should be changed. The business of Divine grace in converting the soul, is not to destroy its natural characteristics; but to purify, refine, and adapt their vast *varieties* to the *innumerable* purposes of His wisdom and goodness displayed in their creation.

5. Tell your secret trials and temptations to very few.—Your weakness, &c. should be known only to God and yourself. No one should be trusted, except that friend whom you know well, and to whom you can at all times trust even your life. I have known some who were telling their trials, weaknesses, &c. every where; the consequence was, they were despised, or pitied, without being esteemed.

6. Wherever you go, discountenance that disgraceful custom (properly enough termed)

Bibliomancy; i. e. divination by the Bible. I need scarcely observe, that this consists in what is called dipping into the Bible, taking passages of Scripture at hazard, and drawing indications thence concerning the present and future state of the soul. This is a scandal to Christianity. So also are those religious trifles, impiously and ominously called *Scripture Cards*. Thank God! these have never been very common among us; and are certainly not of Methodist growth. In an evil hour they were first introduced; and have since been criminally tolerated. I have found them the constant companions of religious *gossips*; and have seen them *drawn* for the purpose of showing the success of journeys, enterprises, &c. Very great mischief they have done to my own knowledge; and sensible persons have through them been led to despise the whole of that system from which they never sprung, on which they have never been ingrafted, and in which they have never been more than barely *tolerated*. Giving the authors of them all the credit we can for the goodness of their intention, we cannot help saying of their productions (and this is giving them the very best character they deserve) that they are the drivellings of religious *nonage*, or of piety in *superannuation*. I do not find that Mr. Wesley ever made, used, or approved of these things; but as they were tolerated in his time, they have been attributed to himself. Hence the following calumny in a late publication, the

Encyclopædia Perthensis: “We have heard it affirmed (say the editors,) that those well-meaning people called Methodists have long practised Bibliomancy, with regard to the future state of their souls; but that some of their members having been driven to despair by texts occurring to them, that threatened the most awful judgments; their late pastor, Mr. Wesley, to prevent such fatal consequences from recurring, improved upon this system of *sacred lottery*, by printing several packs of cards with a variety of texts, containing nothing but the most comfortable promises: and thus his disciples drew with courage and comfort, in a lottery where there were various prizes, great and small, but no *blanks*.” I am sorry that there should ever have been the least shadow of ground for the above calumny: but let these gentlemen know, and let all men by these presents know, that the great body of Methodists never used them; that the preachers in general highly disapprove of them; and that what is said about Mr. Wesley’s fabricating them, &c. is, to use a Lilliputian expression, *the thing that is not*. I am glad to find that they are daily *dying* among the few that did use them: I hope soon to hear that they are all finally *buried*; and earnestly pray that they may never have a RESURRECTION, except to shame and everlasting contempt.

7. Never go in debt for food, clothes, or any thing else: it is no sin to die in a ditch through hunger or cold; but it is a crime to go in debt,

when there is not the fullest prospect of being able to pay. It is the most certain and honourable way, never to sit down to the food, nor put on the clothes, till the bills for both are discharged. By these means you will keep clear of the world, and make most of the little you have. Every word of the old adage is true: "Live not on *trust*, for that is the way to pay *double*."

8. Never go out on parties of pleasure, however innocent they may be: what, in this case, would be considered as no evil in another, might be reputed a crime in you. Excursions for the benefit of health, and these may often be needed, are not included here.

9. Never choose a circuit for yourself. If you do, and succeed in getting the object of your choice; make up your mind to bear all the crosses *alone*, which you may meet with in it: for how can you look to God for strength to support you under trials, which you may reasonably conclude are of your own procuring? You are God's messenger; pray Him, therefore, to send you where you may *do* and *get* most good. In such a place the crosses you meet with are God's crosses; and He is bound not only to support you under them, but to sanctify them to the good of your soul.

10. Get a genuine friend whenever you can, and prize him much when you have got him. Beware of forming *hasty* friendships: they are seldom solid. Confide little in the person who *suddenly* professes uncommon affection for you.

He may be *sincere*; but depend upon it, he will not be *steady*. Remember the proverb, *Hot love is soon cold*. Those who form hasty friendships are always fickle. This is bad, but it is not the worst in this business; for these very persons, through the changeableness of their hearts, soon withdrawing their affections from you, will accuse *you* of ingratitude and unkindness; while the whole is owing to the uncertainty of their own character, and the fickleness of their own hearts. Shun such, as you would an enemy: for they are not less injurious. On this subject I will give you two Asiatic proverbs: 1. Never trust to appearances; behold, the *drum*, with all its noise, is *empty* within. 2. If you have a friend who takes offence at trifles, break entirely with him, for he is not to be trusted.

VI. Concerning your Behaviour in the House where you lodge.

1. On your arrival, get as speedily as possible to private prayer; and earnestly beg God to bless your coming;—to bless you to the family, and to the congregation, so that you may leave that place with an increase of spiritual life, and with the comfortable satisfaction of having been a messenger of peace to that house, and to the people of that place.

2. Show yourself satisfied with every thing you receive. Be not nice in your food. Do not keep a lordly distance from the family:—

Be so familiar with them as to gain their confidence ; that you may the better succeed in talking with them concerning their souls. At the same time keep a due distance, that, while you are esteemed as a *brother* in Christ, you may be acknowledged as His *minister*. There is much truth in that proverb, "Too much familiarity breeds contempt."

3. Speak closely and lovingly to every person in the family : but let it be as much apart as possible ; for members of the same household seldom speak freely before each other.

He who despises *little things*, shall fall by *little and little*. Do not, therefore, disregard the following *small* advices.

4. Give the family where you lodge as little trouble as possible : never desire any of them, not even the servants, to do any thing for you that you can conveniently do for yourself. It is an odious thing to see a person, whose character should be *the servant of all*, pressing every body into *his* service ; giving unnecessary trouble wherever he comes ; turning a house upside down ; and being dissatisfied with every thing that is done for him. I have always seen that those who require most attendance are the most difficult to be pleased ; for they are generally of a proud or discontented spirit ; and such a spirit is never satisfied. A man of a truly Christian and noble mind, finds it his highest interest to have few wants ; and esteems it a luxury to minister to his own necessities.

5. Never pull off your boots, shoes, or gaiters, in a parlour or sitting-room. Leave your hat, whip, great-coat, &c. in the hall, lobby, or some such place. Do not leave your foul linen, dirty clothes, shoes, &c. about in the room where you lodge. After having left your bed uncovered for some time to cool and air, lay on the clothes neatly when you quit your room; and always throw up your windows when you go out. Empty the basin in which you have washed your hands, &c. and leave it always *clean*. Don't splash the walls nor the floor. Wipe every drop of water off the wash-stand, and spread your towel always to dry; and when dry, fold it loosely up, and place it on the head of the water-bottle. Never comb out hair in a sitting-room, or before company; this is an unpardonable vulgarity: nor brush your clothes in a bed-room;—this spoils the furniture. See that you spill no ink on the floors, tables, &c. Leave every thing in the place where you found it; and habituate yourself to put every chair you sit on in its proper place when you rise. Our deceased father used often to say, "He who lives not by rule, lives not at all." I would just observe, that a rule for every part of a man's conduct is not easily obtained; but *example* teaches more forcibly, and more effectually. Thirty-three years ago I was appointed to travel in the Plymouth circuit with the late excellent Mr. J. Mason. I never met with a more upright, or-

derly, regular, decent man.* From his conduct I learned more on the above subjects, than from all the precepts I ever received, or from all the books I ever read. When you meet with such a person, thank God for the privilege, and endeavour to profit by it.

6. Observe rule and order in every thing; and it will not only be much to your own comfort, but will acquire you credit wherever you come. Remember, that cannot be considered as a *small* thing to you, which either prejudices

* Mr. Mason made it the study of his life to maintain his character as a *Preacher*, a *Christian*, and a *MAN*, the latter word taken in its noblest sense: and he did this by cultivating his mind in every branch of useful knowledge within his reach; and his profiting was great. In the History of the World, and the History of the Church, he was very extensively read. With Anatomy and Medicine he was well acquainted; and his knowledge of Natural History, particularly of Botany, was very extensive. In the latter science he was inferior to few in the British Empire. His Botanical collections would do credit to the first museum in Europe; and especially his collections of English plants, all gathered, preserved, classified, and described by himself. But this was his least praise. He laid all his attainments in natural science under contribution to his Theological studies; nor could it ever be said, that he neglected his duty as a Christian minister, to cultivate his mind in philosophical pursuits. He was a *Christian man*; and in his life and spirit adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour. The decency, propriety, and dignity of his conduct, through the whole of his life, were truly exemplary. And his piety towards God, and his benevolence towards man, were as deep as they were sincere. I am constrained to add, "he was a *man*, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again."

a family against you, or is instrumental in acquiring you their good graces.

7. Shun tea-drinking visits: these, in general, murder time, and can answer no good purpose either to your body or soul. If you go out in this way at any time, let it be only where you have every reason to believe your visit is likely to be useful to the souls of the people. But is it likely to be very useful where there is a large party?

Thirty-seven years ago I met with Mr. Wesley's *Letter on Tea*. I read it, and resolved from that hour to drink no more of the juice of that herb till I could answer his arguments and objections.—I have seen that tract but once since; yet from that day until now, I have not drank a cup of tea or coffee. For these things I mostly found a substitute in the morning; and when I could not, I cheerfully went without breakfast: and in their place, I never took any thing in the *evening*. By this line of conduct, I have not only joined hands with God to preserve a feeble constitution; but I can *demonstrate* that I have actually saved SEVERAL *whole* YEARS of time, which otherwise must have been irrecoverably lost; and perhaps my soul with them: for I have often had occasion to observe, that tea-drinking visits open the flood-gates of various temptations.

How can those exclaim against needless self-indulgence and waste of time, who go out on such occasions in the *evenings*! It is a mystery to me which I never wish to be able to unra-

vel, how men can act in this way, and *preach afterwards*. I have often wondered that this matter is never spoken of to the young preachers when they are admitted. But who can, with propriety, warn them against this evil? Only those who are guiltless:—and where are they?—Alas! alas! do we not make a great outcry against evils, however discreditable to us as Christians and ministers, which are in themselves, and in their necessary consequences, of little moment, in comparison of this epidemic and dangerous disorder? But if our own conduct in this respect reproach us, should we, while honest men, withhold the word of caution and advice from our brother?

8. Go out as little as possible to eat and drink. Why is the positive command of Christ, on this head, so generally disregarded? *Go not from house to house*, Luke x. 7. The acting contrary to this precept has often brought great disgrace on the gospel of God. Stay in your own lodgings as much as possible, that you may have time for prayer and study. I have heard pious people (who received the preachers of the gospel into their houses) remark, “that they always found that preacher to be most useful, who kept most in his closet.” Seldom frequent the tables of the rich or great. If you do, it will unavoidably prove a snare to you: the unction of God will perish from your mind; and your preaching be only a dry, barren repetition of *old things*.—The bread of God in your hands will be like the dry, mouldy,

Gibeonitish crusts, mentioned Joshua ix. 5.— Visit the people, and speak to them about their souls, as often and as much as you can ; but be not at the mercy of every invitation to go out for a morsel of bread. If you take not this advice, you will do no good, get no good, and utterly evaporate your influence and consequence. The people should see to it, that such a provision be made for their preachers at home, as to lay them under no necessity of going out for a morsel of bread ; but this is not always the case. When you do go out, let your visits be short. The only time that a man of *study* and *business* can spare is the *evening*, after all his work is done :—But take care, if you sup out, never to do it to the prejudice either of early rising, or morning preaching.

VII. *Concerning the Cultivation of your Mind.*

1. Pray much, read much, write much. Have always some essay, dissertation, &c. upon the anvil ; and be sure you finish whatever you undertake. *Beginning* a number of things, and *finishing* none of them, begets in the mind a habit of *indecision* and carelessness.

2. Read the book of God. Read it regularly through, at least once in the year ; and take down in order every text you think you have light sufficient to preach from. By these means you will ever be acquiring *new* subjects, and be preserved from the curse of harping on the

same string in all the circuits where you preach.

3. Always carry a New Testament about you; and let God's word be your constant companion.—Read the Scriptures as the word of God: read them with deep attention, and read them with reverence. Read a chapter or two every day upon your knees; and earnestly beg the Father of lights to give you the spirit of wisdom in the revelation of Himself, that you may *know, feel, and preach the whole truth* as it is in Jesus.

In this work every morning should be employed; and then take care to mark down the texts which you may have occasion to preach on in the course of the day. Never leave this subject to any other part of the day: you may be called upon unexpectedly to preach, when there is not time for you to go and search for a text. In such a case, if you are not prepared, confusion is the least evil you can expect to meet with. Therefore, see that the morning always provides for all the possible calls of the day on this head. It is a sore evil to see the preacher, who should himself accompany the people in every act of worship, employing the time they are singing the high praises of God, in fumbling through his Bible to get some text to preach from.

4. But while you read the Bible as the revelation of God, and the fountain of Divine knowledge, don't let your reading *end* there. I said before, read much; but take care that

all your reading be directed to the increase of your knowledge and experience in the things of God. With an eye constantly directed to this end, acquaint yourself as much as possible with every branch of science. No man can fully explain the Bible, who has not a general acquaintance with the most important sciences and arts. The Bible, considered even as a human composition, is a book of the greatest learning under heaven: and there is scarcely an art or science which is not alluded to in it; and images frequently borrowed from them to illustrate those sacred truths which the Spirit of God declares. It would be the easiest thing among ten thousand, to prove that there are multitudes of texts in that blessed book, which no man can explain, who has not a tolerable knowledge of History, Chronology, Geography, Astronomy, Anatomy, and Chemistry. If this be the case (and it would be easy to demonstrate it,) what pretensions can an ignorant person have, however pious, to explain this book? Illiterate piety may be useful in exhorting sinners to return to God, and pointing out, in a general way, the path that leads to God by Christ; but it certainly cannot, without immediate inspiration, explain and apply the deep things of God. I am not speaking now of that learning which is the result of a proper acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek, the original languages in which the Sacred Writings were given by God to man: No. I am referring to that literature which any man

of good common sense may, by proper application, acquire from writings which abound in his mother tongue. Yet I would not be thought to discourage those other pursuits: I think it is of great consequence to a preacher of the gospel to be able to read the old and new covenants of his God, in those languages in which they were originally given. But should I insinuate that this is at all *necessary*, I should offend some of the generation of his children, who, not through envy, but ignorance of their utility, speak against the acquirement of these languages. It is well if such do not spend more time in unnecessary visits, and unimportant letter-writing, than would be requisite to learn all the Hebrew and Chaldee of the Old Testament, and Greek of the New. I have often advised *young men* to devote a part of their time in this way: but though I have known many who have *begun*, yet I have not been so happy as to find one who had strength and determination of mind sufficient to bring his studies to any profitable conclusion. However, this I have known, that while they employed themselves in this way, they were saved from tea-drinking visits, and the various snares which those who frequent them generally fall into. This was, *so far*, clear gain.

5. Don't be afraid of *philosophy*, i. e. *the love of wisdom*; nor of *reason*, which, under the light of the Divine Spirit, is the only true interpreter of the Sacred Records.—Some have taken upon themselves to speak against these,

who neither understand their name nor their nature; and others have decried them, who, being of a lazy, indolent habit, wish hereby to excuse and sanction their oscitancy and slothfulness. Pursuits of the utmost importance to the ministerial character and success are termed by these *dry studies*: because *they* know not how to study: they cannot study to any good purpose; they refer not all to *one end*—viz. God's glory in the increase of their own salvation, and their usefulness among men. What is the consequence? Why, they idle away that time which is an invaluable gift of God; and either sleep away their moments, or become what one justly terms "the most detestable of all negatively sinful characters, *smokers of tobacco*." There are some, it is true, who smoke and study too: the latter they should do, and leave the former undone. But these are angels in comparison of him who reads little, studies none, and is continually at the pipe.

6. The *indolent* preacher is soon known by his preaching: he has little or no *variety*. He cannot bring out of *his* treasury things both *new* and *old*; alas for him! *treasury* he has none; *his* coffers are all empty.

Whatever his other increase may be, he increases not in biblical knowledge: the knowledge which is necessary to explain, defend, and apply the word of God. A man of this stamp preaches now, just as he preached twenty or thirty years ago, on the same text.—It is

exactly the same discourse, without the accession of a single *new idea!* What! has not the man got his eyes a little farther opened to behold wonders in God's law? In him, is there no increase in the grace and gift of preaching? Is not light sown for the righteous; and if that seed had been well watered, would it not have brought forth *some* fruit? Certainly it would. Is this no crime before God? Is it no sin against his people? Has not the great Shepherd promised His flock that He will give them *pastors after his own heart, who will feed them with knowledge and understanding?* Jer. iii. 15. How can such persons answer to God for the non-improvement of the powers He has graciously given them?

7 But "you fear lest, while seeking after knowledge, you should lose your simplicity, and your relish for Divine things; and it is better to have religion without knowledge, than knowledge without religion." There is, I grant, a kind of knowledge which puffs up; but this is that knowledge which is shallow in itself, is sought *out* of God, and refers not its attainments to *him*: but that knowledge which has for its objects *God* and His *works*, can never rob you of your religion, nor deprive you of your simplicity; but, on the contrary, will be a powerful mean of increasing both. True knowledge ever keeps its possessor *humble*; because it alone shows him how much is to be known, and how little he has learned. However, I scruple not to say, that, as mere know-

ledge is of no use to the soul, while *possessed*, without religion; so religion is discredited, while *professed*, without knowledge. But, “you despair of making any progress, because there is so much to be learned.” The well of *science*, as well as that of *religion*, is exceedingly deep, I grant; but where the water is so abundant, some may be carried away; and remember, for your encouragement, the Asiatic proverb: “Partial knowledge is better than total ignorance: he, therefore, who cannot understand every thing, should learn what he can.”

8. In our case, candour will make allowances for partial ignorance, because of our supposed disadvantageous circumstances; for such allowances we should be duly grateful: but I am fully of opinion, our circumstances are not of that disadvantageous nature which at first view might appear. We have abundant opportunities of gaining knowledge of the most excellent and useful kind; the knowledge of God’s work, and the knowledge of human nature. We travel about every where; see persons in almost every situation in life; and may acquaint ourselves, if not inexcusably indolent or deplorably stupid, with most of the existing and possible varieties of *men* and *things*. This is knowledge gained by *experience*; the *truth* of whose principles you will have the opportunity of seeing continually evinced, by their being brought into constant action.

9. *Ignorance* is one of the effects of the Fall; and, like all other faults of human nature, the mind is strongly wedded to it: so that, though light is come into the world, men love darkness rather than light. Some really seem to love ignorance even for its own sake; and think knowledge to be a very dangerous thing. Indeed some have gone so far as to insinuate, that those who endeavour to cultivate their minds, necessarily lose their zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of their souls. Thus the truly infamous maxim that disgraces both God and nature, *Ignorance is the mother of devotion*, is attempted to be set up by persons who should know better; and who have endeavoured to gain credit to their doctrine, by putting themselves under the protection of some of the most venerable fathers of our church; who, to their own great honour, and the edification of thousands, have taken more successful pains to cultivate their own minds, than the whole tribe of those who are continually (in self-defence) ringing the *Goth* and *Vandal* changes, on the Popish *eulogium* of *ignorance*!* If these persons be in the prime

* There is here an allusion to a letter in vindication of ignorance, and against all kinds of study, except reading the Bible, addressed to Mr. Mather, and printed in the Methodist Magazine. I believe the writer was a well-meaning woman, long since gone to a place where she has better employment: but the insertion of the letter shows that the *Editors* were of the same mind. We should all *watch*, lest the basest maxims of Popish

of life, and do not speedily acquire an affection for close reading and study, I would not venture much for the title of an estate, the emoluments of which should be continued to me, only during the *stability* of their religion. To the utter confusion of all men of this stamp, it might be easily proved, that there is a very intimate connexion between vital godliness and a studious cultivation of a man's mind: but, as far as heaven is from earth, so far are lounging and slothfulness distant from true religion.

10. You must never forget, that our congregations are at present far more *intelligent* than they formerly were. If this were not the case, it would be a proof, that God had never sent *us*: but as it is so, it is much to the credit of our ministry, for it proves that God has blessed it:—It proves that sound knowledge, civilization, and genuine piety, have marched with us hand in hand all over the nation. But that which passed formerly in the daybreak of our revival, will not pass now:—The people are more enlightened: they have grown up in religious knowledge under our

darkness should be introduced into the most reformed and pure state of Protestantism: we know that among their Doctors this was a maxim, "*Quanto eris melior Grammaticus, tanto pejor Theologus*;" the better grammarian, the worse Divine; and *Claudius Espenæsus*, one of the Doctors of the Sarbonne, acknowledges, that among their best authors, *Græcum nosse suspectum fuerit; Hebraico propriè hæreticum*; If a man understood Greek, he was *suspected*; if he knew Hebrew, he was considered a *heretic*.

ministry; and they now require stronger nourishment. By earnest application to God by prayer, and diligent cultivation of our minds, we should keep the *distance* before them we had in the beginning: we have formerly fed *babes* in knowledge, we must now minister to *young men* and *fathers*. Therefore, we should be, in the most extensive manner, stewards of the mysteries of Christ, and patriarchs in knowledge.

11. To direct to any particular plan of study would far exceed the limits of a *Letter*; for to do this successfully, the choice of books in the different departments of literature, the best editions of those books, the comparative merits of the different popular works on the same subjects, &c. &c. must all come into review. This one branch would require a pretty large volume to do it justice. *Elementary* books on the Sciences, if judiciously compiled, might be read with great advantage. For *Theological* works you need not step a hair's breadth beyond your own connexion. Meddle as little as possible with religious Controversy; for *Controversial* writings on *Theological Subjects* seldom tend to improve the mind, or *sweeten the temper*. I know, however, two exceptions to this: Mr. WESLEY'S *Predestination Calmly Considered*, and Mr. FLETCHER'S *Polemical Essay on the Twin Doctrines of Christian Imperfection and a Death-bed Purgatory*. These two pieces are written in the *fear* and in the *love* of God: the former most amply proves, that Jesus

Christ died for every man; and the latter most clearly and forcibly shows, that it is the privilege of every believing soul to be cleansed from all sin in this life. These two Tracts, beyond all that I have ever read on Polemical Divinity, *speak the truth in love*: a rare thing in religious controversy.

Geography and *Chronology* should not be forgotten; for without these, who can interpret the *History of the Bible*: he who knows most of these, has an amazing advantage in explaining the facts both in the Old and New Testaments. On these subjects *Prideaux's Connexions* is an invaluable work

You will frequently have occasion to recommend, counsel, and instruct *Missionaries*. Show them the absolute necessity of acquiring the principles of *general Grammar*, which will be a great help to them in acquiring foreign languages: and let them acquaint themselves well with the geography of the countries where the scene of their labours may lie; and with the best books of Travels in those parts.

12. As you should be well acquainted with the *Law of God*, so should you be with the *Laws of your Country*. Judge BLACKSTONE'S *Commentaries on the laws of England*, will not only show you what the *essential Principles of Law and Justice* are; but will also convince you, that your *Country* has the *best political Constitution ever framed by the wisdom of man*; a Constitution so perfect, as scarcely to have left room even for *Utopian Theorists* to ima-

gine any *practicable* improvement. Not to have read these Commentaries would be at once the fault, the misfortune, and the reproach, of any minister of the Gospel, who calls himself a *Briton*. To these may be very profitably added Burns's *Parish Justice*. A Preacher, as such, will derive many advantages from a careful perusal of the former; and an acquaintance with the latter will enable him to be very useful wherever he travels.

To these you should add the *History* of your own Country. RAPIN's *History of England* is, in the main, the most correct and the most impartial History I ever read. Its facts are founded on the *State Documents*, which are deposited in our *Public Archives*, the only authentic sources from which our *true history* can be derived. I can vouch for the general accuracy of Rapin, having frequently travelled over the same Records. Dr. HENRY's *History of Great Britain* is also a very valuable, useful, and correct work.

If you wish to acquire a correct taste in writing, and a proper style both in writing and speaking, you must have recourse to what are called the standard and classical works of our own Authors. For this purpose the *Spectators* and *Guardians* of Addison and Steele, are invaluable. Swift wrote in pure English; and his style is excellent; but the general matter of his works is little calculated to edify the mind, or mend the heart.

Bacon and *Boyle's* works may be safely recommended: they are an immense treasury of science. *Dr. Watts's Improvement of Mind*, and the works of *Mr. Locke* in general: *Langhorne's Plutarch*, *Middleton's Life of Cicero*, and *Melmouth's* translation of *Pliny's Letters*, have been recommended by good judges, as proper models for a pure English style. *Rollin's Belles Letters* is an excellent work. His *Ancient and Roman Histories* are very valuable; as is the *history of the Roman Emperors* by his amiable and pious pupil *Crevier*. *Josephus* should be carefully read by every preacher: the best translation, on the whole, is that of *Whiston*. If you have recourse to the original, *Havercamp's* edition is to be preferred to all others.

With the *history of the church*, you should not be unacquainted; though the study is the most jejune and unsatisfactory in the whole compass of human knowledge: for, except that which is contained in the *Acts of the Apostles*, what is called the *history of the church* is, in most instances, a history of jars and contentions, persecutions, heresies, and crimes. The collection of the *Greek ecclesiastical historians*, published from the edition of *Valesius*, by *Mr. Reading*, Cantab. 1720, Gr. and Lat. 3 vols. fol. is the most ample and correct: it includes *Eusebius*, *Socrates Scholasticus*, *Hermias Sozomen*, *Theodoret*, and *Evagrius*; and extends from the incarnation to the year of our Lord 594.

The second edition of a good translation into English of Eusebius, Socrates, and Evagrius, with all the notes of Valesius, was printed at London, 1709, fol. This is greatly to be preferred to the preceding edition; and has some valuable maps and tables. Of all modern church histories, that by *Mosheim*, translated by Dr. *Maclaine*, 6 vols. 8vo. is indubitably the best. With others constructed on party principles, and published for party purposes, you had better not intermeddle.

I might recommend some *Poets*: but I have often found young men who, by reading, acquire a relish for Poetry, abandon themselves to this alone; and, fancying that they have caught the spirit of those they read, begin to make verses, and thus trifle away and lose much time.

Some of our ancient Poets have written on moral subjects inimitably. The *Fairy Queen* of *Spencer*; the *Purple Island*, *Christ's Victory*, and the *Piscatory Eclogues* of the two *Fletchers*, *Giles* and *Phinhas*, are not only beautiful, but highly instructive. Mr. Wesley had a very high opinion of *Spencer*; and certainly there was not a better judge of Poetry in the nation in his time. He told me once that he believed *Spencer*, in the 7th Canto, Book ii. of the *Fairy Queen*, where he describes the *Cave of Mammon*, had far excelled in correctness of character, dignity of description, and true poetic fancy, every thing both in *Homer* and *Virgil*.

It is a pity we have no proper selection from *Shakspeare*; no man knew human nature, nor perhaps the human heart, better than this writer. By his wondrous pen every virtue and vice is not only *personified*, but assumes a *body*, and is rendered *palpable*: but, alas! the *underwood* and *brambles* of this vast forest are sufficient to burn up all his majestic *cedars*.—But I have entered into a field which I must immediately abandon.

13. To conclude on this point, I earnestly advise you to begin, continue, and end, all your works and studies in the name and to the glory of God. Never neglect to visit the sick; and be sure you go wherever you are asked. Every study and every gratification should be sacrificed to the performance of your ministerial duty; but you will have time enough for all, if you husband it properly. Divide your time for your work, and arrange your work to your time; and let not one part of your business break in upon another.

VIII. *Concerning the persons with whom you have to labour.*

Although I have been of considerable standing in the Connexion, yet I do not think that, on that account, my opinion can be entitled to much attention: but as I have taken some pains to form it, and you wish to know it, it cannot be unacceptable to *you*. The abilities

of a workman are best known by his work: judging in this way, I conceive the Preachers in general to be a most extraordinary body of men. The work that is performed by their ministry, is, (I speak, I trust, with a pure conscience,) the most extensive, and the most glorious, of which I have ever heard or read.— Now I judge, if these men were not very high in God's favour, He could not bless their work in so eminent a manner: and if they did not, in general, so walk as to please Him, they could not stand so high in His favour. Therefore, I conclude, that the great body of Preachers is a body of eminently useful and holy men, whose great actuating soul is the Spirit of the Most High. I think I know the Preachers as well as any man in the connexion: for I have made it a sacred point to hear all their preaching, both evening and morning, at every Conference I have attended, for many years. And after having seriously considered the *matter* and *manner* of their preaching, I scruple not to assert that they are (for pure doctrine, good sound sense, various knowledge, and impressive natural eloquence,) at least equal to any body of ministers I know in the nation. And I am satisfied, that nothing but the glorious *strictness* of their doctrine and discipline prevents them from being the most popular Preachers in the land. “But is there not a *declension* of the work? And on your own ground, does not this prove that there is a *defect* in the workmen?” If I could credit the premises, I

must certainly admit the conclusion. But I cannot. I have been thirty-seven years a travelling Preacher; I have had every part of the work under my eye in many of the little places, and in some of the greatest. I have diligently consulted all the records of our revival; I have compared the former with the present times: and rigid impartial justice obliges me to draw the following conclusion—The work of God among the Methodists is at present abundantly more extensive, more scriptural, more rational, and at least as *deep*, as it has been from the beginning. I judge thus from what I have seen, from what I know, and from what I have read. Whatever has been suggested *against* the holiness and usefulness of the Preachers, and the extent and purity of the work, by individuals among ourselves, or by any others, (comparing the former with the present times,) I religiously believe to be utterly unfounded. And while I magnify the grace of the Lord Jesus towards us, I heartily pray that we may exceed our former selves, and walk more and more worthy the vocation wherewith we are called. I need scarcely add, that our *missions* are among the most extensive, and the most successful, in the world.

IX. Concerning Marriage.

1. I feel little encouragement to hazard any advice upon this subject: in general, people

do not in this matter consult their *own* judgment, nor receive the counsel of their friends; but act according to the impulse of their passions. It is almost the only case in the concerns of human life where reason and prudence are obliged to be inactive; and where they are, notwithstanding, most interested. However, a *Christian* should act otherwise: and a Christian minister, who is not delivered out of the hands of his own passions, is a disgrace to the sacred character he bears. I was always an advocate for *marriage*; and as I have tried that state for more than *thirty* years, and have been blessed with a good wife, and with twelve children, it is no wonder that I should continue to recommend it. I say, by all means get married; for I am satisfied that few men can be truly comfortable who live a single life. But remember, your everlasting all may depend upon the choice you make. Seek for genuine piety—nothing can compensate for the lack of this: look for sound sense, and an agreeable manner—that while your wife is a *help to you*, she may not, by her awkward behaviour, be disgusting to *others*. Good natural tempers are of great consequence. Get a wife who possesses these *before* she was brought to God: and, should she at any time lose ground in religion, her good natural disposition will still remain, and your comfort will not be materially interrupted. But when a woman, who has had bad natural tempers, loses that life of God by which they were con-

trolled or kept at bay, she becomes intolerable. Avoid a person of this character, though as rich as Cræsus, and as beautiful as an angel. Let the person be nearly of your own age. A young man marrying an *old woman*, and an old man marrying a *child*, are both an abomination to common sense and reason. Your wife should ever be considered as your *equal*; and, therefore, should not be of such an age in reference to you, as might demand the respect of a *mother*, or the correction of a *child*. Don't seek for money: it is a shocking reproach to a man of God to be hunting after pelf, and getting a wife merely for the sake of her possessions. I scruple not to say, that those who marry for money are committing adultery as long as they live. I say nothing concerning beauty, &c. but would just observe, that a man who is himself of a homely appearance, should not be nice in the choice of a wife; and, that a pious sensible woman, of a good natural disposition, be she ever so ordinary, is an inestimable treasure. Beware of a woman that meddles with politics, or with the government of the church of God. Such an one cannot fail to embroil you with the people, wherever you go; and will be a source of misery to you as long as you breathe.

Marriage to you can never be an *indifferent* thing: it will *make* or *mar* you; it will be a *blessing* or a *curse* to you. It will either help you to heaven, drive you to hell, or be a heart-rending cross to you while you live. Nor

will a *bad* or *improper* marriage affect *yourself* alone: it may be the ruin of every *child* that issues from it. And, dreadful as this evil is, it will not rest *there*; they may propagate the plague to interminable generations; and millions be injured, if not lost, by your improper or vicious marriage. Add to this, that as far as you are connected with the work of God, it will be a great hinderance, a deep blot, and a leprous curse, to the church of Christ. I have heard it asserted by a sensible man, a keen observer of human nature, and one intimately acquainted with religious people, that “some of the direst evils that threaten the present revival of religion, are deducible from this source. Young ministers have rushed in *shoals* into the *net*; and I cannot add, said he, ‘*For all there are so many, yet is not the net broken.*’ They are entangled in the *meshes*; but, alas! the net is broken! They are neither brought to *land*, nor are free in the *water*. They have little domestic happiness; they present no edifying example.”

Think of these possible evils—examine the circle of your acquaintance, and see them realized. *Look before you leap*; add not to the number of

“—— The wild herd of nymphs and swains
Who thoughtless fly into the chains,
As custom leads the way.”

Take this step with that godly fear and scrupulous caution, which a man should do, who

feels he has his all at stake. If God direct you not, you will draw in a fearful lottery, where there are many blanks to one prize. And what I say to *young men* here, I would say to *young women* also, were they the objects of my instruction.

2. I need lay down no rules for your treatment of your wife : because, if you love her as you ought, you will ever treat her well; and, if you do not love her, rules and directions would be mere cobwebs to you. One thing I must say, that when you are in company, you should pay as much attention to your wife as to any person present; avoiding, at the same time, that puerile monkeyish fooling and toying, which is a disgrace to man, and an insult to a sensible woman.

3. Abul Fazl, author of the *Ayar Danush*, (Touchstone of Wisdom,) gives the following advice to a person who was going to marry : “ Take (says he) the daughter of a religious friendly man, whom you may make your confidant on all occasions. But have nothing to say to three kinds of women—1. A widow, if she be always extolling her deceased husband. 2. A woman whose relations have conferred great favours upon you. And, 3. one who, whenever she sees you, speaks in a faint tone, and affects a delicate languid air.” These advices show an intimate acquaintance with human nature; and are so full of good sense and meaning, that a volume might be written on without exhausting them.

4. If ever God should bless you with *children*, see that you dedicate them unreservedly to Him. Never dress them in the fashion, i. e. the unmeaning, unnecessary, and absurd foppery of the times. Give them no *red shoes*, *glaring buttons*, &c. This fills them with pride, and debases their minds; for by this mode of conduct they are taught to attach a value to things which are of no intrinsic worth; and false perceptions and ideas, impressed upon the mind in so tender an age, are rarely obliterated through the whole course of life.

5. Never, or very rarely, take them out with you to dine, &c. for the following reasons: 1. Because they are generally too much indulged by getting food, which in *quantity* and *quality* is injurious to their health. 2. Being treated better abroad than at home, necessary domestic restraint becomes irksome to them, and they would rather be any where else than in their parents' house. 3. By being too much indulged among strangers, they acquire too great a degree of forwardness; which, for lack of judgment, often degenerates into intolerable impudence. 4. They give great trouble to the families where they come; by which you cannot fail being brought into contempt, especially when you make it a custom to take them where they are neither asked nor desired. As directions of this nature are not yet requisite for you, this will

plead my excuse for not entering so deeply into this matter as its nature and importance might demand.

X. *Concerning the Care you should take of your Health.*

1. On this point it would be easy to give many advices of the utmost consequence.—But what signifies the best directions, when it is impossible to attend to them? You are encompassed with difficulties; and almost every part of the glorious work in which you are engaged is unfriendly to that life which you have devoted to God, and to the service of His church. From the nature of your work, you must be unavoidably exposed to all kinds of weather:—Damp houses, bad beds, innutritious food, and a terrible catalogue of *et cætera*. The bad effects of these you may in some measure endeavour to counteract, or to suspend for a time; but you cannot ultimately prevent them from hurrying you into eternity. Whatever deference I may feel myself inclined to pay to the assertion of a great man, viz. That a *Minister of the Gospel is immortal till his work is done*; yet I am satisfied, that he who preaches the Gospel as he ought, will, unavoidably, sooner or later, become a *martyr* to his work.

2 The best I can say to you on this subject is, Never join hands with your unfavourable circumstances to injure your constitution, and hasten your death. Concerning that abominable and fatal *drain* of human life, the *pipe* and the *quid*, I need here say nothing. My opinion has long since been before the public. I am sorry to say that I know several young men who are to this day murdering themselves in this way : but they are by me incorrigible.— I leave them in the hands of God, and say to you, Never imitate them ; they disgrace themselves, and would disgrace you.

3. If you regard your health, never suffer your bed to be *warmed*. This is a species of needless self-indulgence, which is a scandal to the character of a *man*. If you suspect the bed to be *damp*, then let it be aired with a pan or two of coals ; but be sure you turn the clothes down, and let it cool at least two hours before you lie down. Never sleep in a damp bed :—this is certain death, especially to a delicate constitution. Thirty-two years ago I lay in a damp bed at Beer-Alston, in Devonshire : for several months after, I was at death's door. Through mercy I recovered a little ; but got a very bad cough through it, from which I have not been one day free for upwards of thirty years : and have every reason to believe, should all other mortal causes be inactive, that alone is sufficient to give me an untimely grave. If you perceive the sheets to be damp,

take them immediately off, and lie with your stockings and waistcoat on between the blankets.

Do not keep the same shirt on during the day in which you have slept the preceding night: the matter of insensible perspiration is expelled from the body because it is noxious, and cannot be reabsorbed without doing the constitution great injury; and reabsorbed it must be, if you continue to wear the same linen during the day, in which you slept all night.

4. Never dry your wet clothes while you have them on: this is very injurious. If you have no change of raiment, (and it often happens that a Methodist Preacher has but one coat) walk in the open air till they are dry, or go to bed that they may be dried at the fire. But by all means keep from the fire while they are upon you; otherwise the heat, causing the wet to retire before it, will strike it into the skin, produce immediate obstructions, and prove the parent of many miseries.

5. It is natural for persons, spent with fatigue in hot weather, to wish for some cooling drink: and some have rashly, in such circumstances, taken a draught of *cold water*; which has, in several cases, produced almost instant death. Others have taken *spirituous liquors*, and got a pleuritic fever in consequence. A proper consideration of the danger on either hand will make *you* cautious. When the body is greatly heated by the warmth of the weather, and excessive fatigue, some fluid may be

necessary to supply the deficiency occasioned by the excessive evaporation of moisture from every part of the body : in such a case a few mouthfuls of *tepid water* is precisely the best thing you can take. Do not mind the vulgar prejudice that *it will occasion vomiting* ; it will occasion nothing of the kind : however, if you have at hand a little *lemon juice*, you may add it, with a small quantity of *sugar* ; and you will then have not only a *safe*, but *pleasant* beverage.

6. There is a most safe and effectual method of cooling the body when overheated by fatigue, or the excessive warmth of the weather, which I wish to be generally known.— Take a basin of cold water, dip your hands in it, and frequently lave the water on the *wrist* and *back of each hand* ; this will cool the whole body in a gradual and yet speedy manner, without the smallest danger to the general health. The extra quantity of *caloric* or principle of heat, accumulated in the body, will communicate itself to the cold water ; and the warmth of that in the basin will soon show you what a quantity of this consuming matter you have lost. I have frequently practised this in a very hot climate, with the most beneficial effects. After thus sufficiently cooling the hands and wrists, even a moderate draught of cold water may be taken without danger. Getting the hands and wrists *pumped on* will have the same beneficial effects ; and if you practise this frequently in *travelling* in hot weather, all *fe-*

ver will be prevented, and the body kept cool, comfortable, and in a state of continual refreshment. This is my general plan, when hot and feverish on the sabbath evening after my day's fatigue. I either go to the pump, or take a basin of cold water and lave it on my hands and wrists; and the consequence is, a lowered pulse, and general refreshment of the whole system. In travelling by coach, I pursue this practice at almost every *stage*; and have often most heartily thanked God for this additional benefit of *cold water*.

If, in travelling to the Chapel at any time, you should be thrown into an extraordinary degree of heat, accompanied with profuse perspiration, and get yourself *chilled*, while preaching, by a current of cold air; as soon as you get out, walk till you are brought into the *same state* of profuse sweating you were in when you entered the Chapel. Then go into a warm room, and continue till you gradually cool: or, strip off your clothes, rub yourself dry with a towel, put on clean linen, and you will not suffer the slightest injury from what would otherwise have produced a pleurisy, or typhous fever, and probably terminated only with your life. From *suddenly obstructed* perspiration, many valuable lives have been lost. The plan I recommend will infallibly prevent such casualties.

7. Never take that food which does not agree with you, however well you may relish it. Drink no spirituous liquors, nor poor, bad

table-beer. *Water*, in which a toast has been steeped, and covered for an hour, is beyond all comparison more nutritive, and more wholesome, than either. Wash your face, hands, and feet often : and neglect not every morning to rinse your mouth with cold water, and to cleanse your teeth well with a soft brush. He that begins this custom early, and continues in it, will never have the tooth-ache, nor an offensive breath. If you have a bad digestion, or should your meat lie ordinarily heavy upon your stomach, observe the following rules : never eat to repletion ; leave off while you have an appetite for more ; and let not a morsel of any kind of food enter into your stomach till you have chewed it as small as possible. This saves the stomach at least one half of its ordinary labour ; and remember, what all should know, and what few properly observe, that it is for this very end that the God of nature gave you your *teeth*. Many use their teeth to make their food just small enough to be swallowed, and culpably leave the whole process of mastication to be performed in the stomach ! No wonder that such are troubled with flatulencies, indigestion, and many other evils. A few mouthfuls of hot pure water will generally relieve the stomach, and forward digestion. Never eat your food too warm ; nor drink any kind of hot slops in the morning :—these exceedingly relax and weaken the fibres of the stomach, and prevent it from performing its proper functions.

8. It is of vast consequence to have the *fæces* expelled from the body as soon as nature indicates the necessity of it. On this delicate subject I must observe, that the *fæces* being too long retained, grow corrupt, irritate the intestines, and produce a morbid alteration in the mucus which lines their internal surface. The absorbents, from the preternatural distention of the vessels into which they open, become abundantly more active; and, taking up the morbid matter, return it to the blood; where, circulating with the whole mass, it lays the foundation of incalculable mischief. Sometimes, by long retention of the *fæces*, the extreme state of tension in which the nerves have been held, renders them paralytic, so that the muscles to which they were distributed become incapable of obeying the dictates of necessity; hence, neither the solid nor fluid *fæces* can be expelled. The *sphincter* muscles, being kept long in a violent state of contraction, lose their elastic power. At other times a contrary effect is produced: the paralytic affection is so great, that the muscles become so completely relaxed, that the *fæces* cannot be retained for the ordinary time: hence *diabetes*, and similar complaints. Most persons, after having suffered much through too long a retention of urine, have found the torment they at first experienced abate; and, when a convenient time offered, have fruitlessly endeavoured to obey a command which nature no longer urged.

What was the reason?—Why, either nature (of two evils choosing the least) had caused the matter which could be no longer retained in its proper place, to be taken up by the absorbent vessels, and thrown back into the blood; or the long-contracted muscles had now lost their distensive capacity, and the matter could not be expelled.

9. I have proved this often through an obstinate attachment to some particular study, and through false delicacy. That I might be able fully to ascertain this matter, and the more effectually to warn others, even at my own expense, I have voluntarily submitted to repeat these experiments on myself. I can in consequence say, I advance no hypothesis on this subject; and wish that all who read this paper would rather take my word for the fact than submit to the trial. I have only one remark to make on this subject: that, in respect to the urine, the absorbent vessels never take it up and return it into the circulation till the vessel in which it is lodged has been distended by a supernatural quantity to its utmost capacity. Then the absorbents, becoming more active by pressure, take up the superabundant quantity, and soon restore it to the blood. I need not tell you that this matter was secreted from the blood at first, because it was injurious to *it*, and to the whole system; and, that returning such a quantity back into the circulation must produce the most melancholy effects. A person who wishes to enjoy good health,

should have his *regular* and *set* times for those evacuations which nature dictates, as he has for his daily food. Regularity in observing a set time will soon produce a *habit*, which will prevent costiveness, and all its attendant evils. Who has not heard of the tragical death of the famous *Tycho Brahe*? Being in the carriage with the Emperor Rodolphus II., his false delicacy forbad him to obey the urgent demands of nature; and the consequence was, the *premature* death of one of the greatest philosophers in the universe.*

10. These may appear to be small things; but they are matters of the utmost importance. A constipation of the bowels, a stricture of the urethra, a diabetes, a contamination of the whole mass of blood, are dreadful evils which carelessness in the above respects may easily produce, and which due attention to the imperious voice of nature may fully prevent.

11. You perceive I have recommended no *medicine*: 1st, Because none but an empiric would recommend any but in the presence of the disorder, after having considered the state of the constitution, the combinations of disease, and a variety of local circumstances which might make the same mode of treatment improper in one case, the usefulness of which was strongly indicated in another. 2dly, Because

* There are some very excellent observations on this head in that invaluable tract of M. Tissot, entitled, "De la Santé des Gens de Lettres."

I am not writing about the *restoration* of health, but about its *preservation*. And, *Sdly*, Because I believe nature, if she get fair play, will require very little medical assistance.

12. Let not nature be impeded in the process of her work—Let her never be obliged to carry a *burthen* of meat, drink, or clothes—Keep your head in general cool by day, and moderately warm by night—See that your feet be always moderately warm and dry; and avoid all quack medicines as you would the pestilence. Let your *moderation* in all things be known unto all; the Lord is at hand. Finally, As your life, from the nature of your work, must hang so constantly in doubt, live for eternity, and be every moment prepared to meet your God. Let this be your motto, and let your heart *feel* that it is true,

For me to live is Christ; to die, is gain.

I leave these Advices with you; and earnestly commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified; and am, affectionately,

Your companion in tribulation,

And in the kingdom and patience of Jesus,

ADAM CLARKE.

APPENDIX.

A few Directions to the People relative to their profiting by the Ministry of the Word.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

HAVING ventured, through the medium of a junior brother, to give several Advices to the Preachers, both local and travelling, relative to their success in declaring the testimonies of the Most High ; I shall now take the liberty of giving a few directions to *you*, how you may hear these Preachers so as to be profited.

You will readily grant with me, that if the people do not hear in a proper spirit, the most eminent and faithful ministers may preach in vain. Let it be ever remembered that the great Bishop of souls, the Lord Jesus, who had every ministerial qualification in absolute perfection, preached the everlasting gospel to many who were not profited by it ; and that he departed from a certain place in which he could do no mighty works, because of the people's unbelief, Matt. xiii. 58. In this case it is manifest, that the fault could not be in the *Preacher*, nor in the *matter* of his discourses, but in the *hearers* only. The grand business, there-

fore of the people is, to inquire in the most serious manner, how they are to bear, so as to be saved.

1. Endeavour to get your minds deeply impressed with the value of the ministry of God's word. One of the most terrible judgments which God ever inflicted on the unfaithful Jews was, hiding their Preachers in a corner, and producing a famine of the bread of life.— See Amos viii. 11, 12, 13.

2. If possible, get a few minutes for private prayer *before* you go to the house of God, that you may supplicate His throne for a blessing on your own soul, and on the congregation.

3. When you get to the church or chapel, consider it as the house of God, the dwelling-place of the Most High: that He is there to bless His people, and that you cannot please Him better than by being willing to receive the abundant mercies which He is ready to communicate.

4. Mingle all your hearing with prayer.— When the Preacher mentions any of the threatenings of God's law, beg the Lord to avert them; when he mentions the promises, pray God instantly to fulfil them. When he describes what a Christian should be, determine to set out afresh; and let your heart immediately purpose, in the strength of God, to give up every evil way, and to follow Jesus.

5. Hear with faith. Receive the Scriptures as *the words of God*: and remember that you are not come to the chapel to reason about

them, but to credit them. God speaks, and His own authority gives absolute credibility to all that He says. Whatever He promises He is able and willing to perform : and if the blessing promised be requisite to you *now* ; why, now, this moment is the time in which God is ready to give it—here, nothing can hinder, nothing injure you, but your unbelief.

6. Receive the Preacher as the ambassador of God, sent particularly to *you* with a message of salvation—Listen attentively to every part of the sermon—there is a portion for *you* somewhere in it ; hear *all*, and you are sure to discern what belongs to yourself.

7. Don't suppose that you know even all the outlines of the plan of salvation : there is a height, length, breadth, and depth in the things of God, of which you have as yet but a very inadequate conception. Every sermon will be a mean of discovering more and more of the wonders of God's grace to you, if you hear it in a proper spirit.

8. Do not think that this or the other Preacher cannot instruct *you*. He may be, comparatively speaking, a *weak* Preacher : but the meanest servant of God's sending will at all times be directed to bring something to the wisest and holiest Christians which they have not fully known or enjoyed before. You do not depend upon the man's abilities : if he be a Preacher of God's making, he is God's mouth ; and by him the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of un-

erring counsel, of infinite wisdom, and eternal love, will speak to you.

9. Never absent yourself from the house of God when you can possibly attend. Remember, it is God that invites you, not to hear this or the other man; but to hear *Himself* through his messenger, that you may be saved. Therefore, go to hear God speak; and let who will be the Preacher, you shall never be disappointed.

10. Consider how great the blessing is which you enjoy. What would a damned soul give for the privilege of sitting five minutes in your place, to hear *Jesus* preached, with the same possibility of being saved?

11. Don't divide the word with your neighbour, hear for yourself; share your clothes, money, bread, &c. with him, but don't divide the word preached; it belongs to you;—it belongs to him;—every man may have his part by himself, but no man can hear for another. It is your enemy who says to you, "That suits such and such persons." It suits *you* perhaps more than them: if they are present, let them take it to themselves; you are not your brother's keeper; if they are not present, you have no business with them.

12. Consider, this may be the last sermon you shall ever be permitted to hear! Therefore, hear it as if it were your last; and you will hear it then to your unspeakable profit.—O hear for eternity at all times: remember the eye of God is upon you.

13. Consider, your being *blest* does not consist in your remembering heads, divisions, &c. but in feeling the Divine influence, having your eyes enlightened to see more of the worth of Christ, and the necessities of your own soul:—in having your heart invigorated with Divine strength, and your soul more determined to follow on to know the Lord.

14. Don't despise or reject the ministry, because it is not so excellent in every respect as you could wish. Be thankful that God give it to you such as it is: and remember, if he gave blessings according to *your deserts*, and according to your *improvement*, they would be such as would scarcely deserve to be sought for, or retained when found.

15. If you believe the Preacher to be a holy man of God, don't find fault with him: you may depend upon it he feels his soul at stake; and while he is in that awful place, the pulpit, strives with all the sincerity of his heart to do that solemn work in the very best way he can, and to the uttermost of his power.

16. After the sermon is over, get as speedily home as you can, and spend a few moments on your knees in private, earnestly beseeching God to write indelibly on your heart what you have been hearing.

17. Meditate on what you have heard:—At first, Divine ideas may be but slightly impressed—a little meditation often serves to deepen this impression; therefore do not immediately begin to talk with any of your friends and ac-

quaintance ; the mind that was before collected in itself to meditate on what was heard, becomes hereby distracted ; and the fowls of the air pick up the good seed.

18. As your Preachers have many trials peculiar to their work which you cannot *know*, and probably could not *bear* were they laid upon you ; take heed how you increase their load. Satan will harass them sufficiently : O let not God's people join issue with the great adversary, to distress the hearts of their teachers.

19. They have left *all* for your sakes, and for the sake of the gospel : and if this *all* were only the anvil, the plough, the fishing-boat, or the carpenter's bench, it was their *all*, and the all they got their bread comfortably by ; and he who has nothing but a net, and leaves that for the sake of doing good to the souls of men, leaves *his ALL* : and remember that, in becoming the servant of all for Christ's sake, he often exposes himself to the want of even a morsel of bread. Let the *proud* and the *profane* exult and say, "Such preachers cannot be much injured by their sacrifice of secular property ; though they have left their *all*, that *all* was of little worth." Stop, friend, and take this maxim with you, that it may moderate your glorying : that man forsakes *much* who reserves *nothing* to himself ; and who renounces all expectations from this world, taking what *you* would not trust to, *God alone*, for his *portion*.— It is readily granted that the Preacher is a poor

man, and you are rich. But did he not enter into the world with as good *prospects* as you had? and has not God furnished him with as much common sense, sound judgment, and other necessary *accomplishments* for *business*, as you have ever possessed? Had these been employed in *trade*, is there not a million to one he had been this day as rich as you are? And had God honoured you with *his vocation*, and you had been as faithful and upright in it as he has been, would not you have been the *poor man* which to-day you *despise*? Think of this, and be humble.

20. Pray for your Preachers, that God may fill them with the unction of His Spirit, and make them messengers of peace to you. While Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, the Israelites prevailed over their enemies.

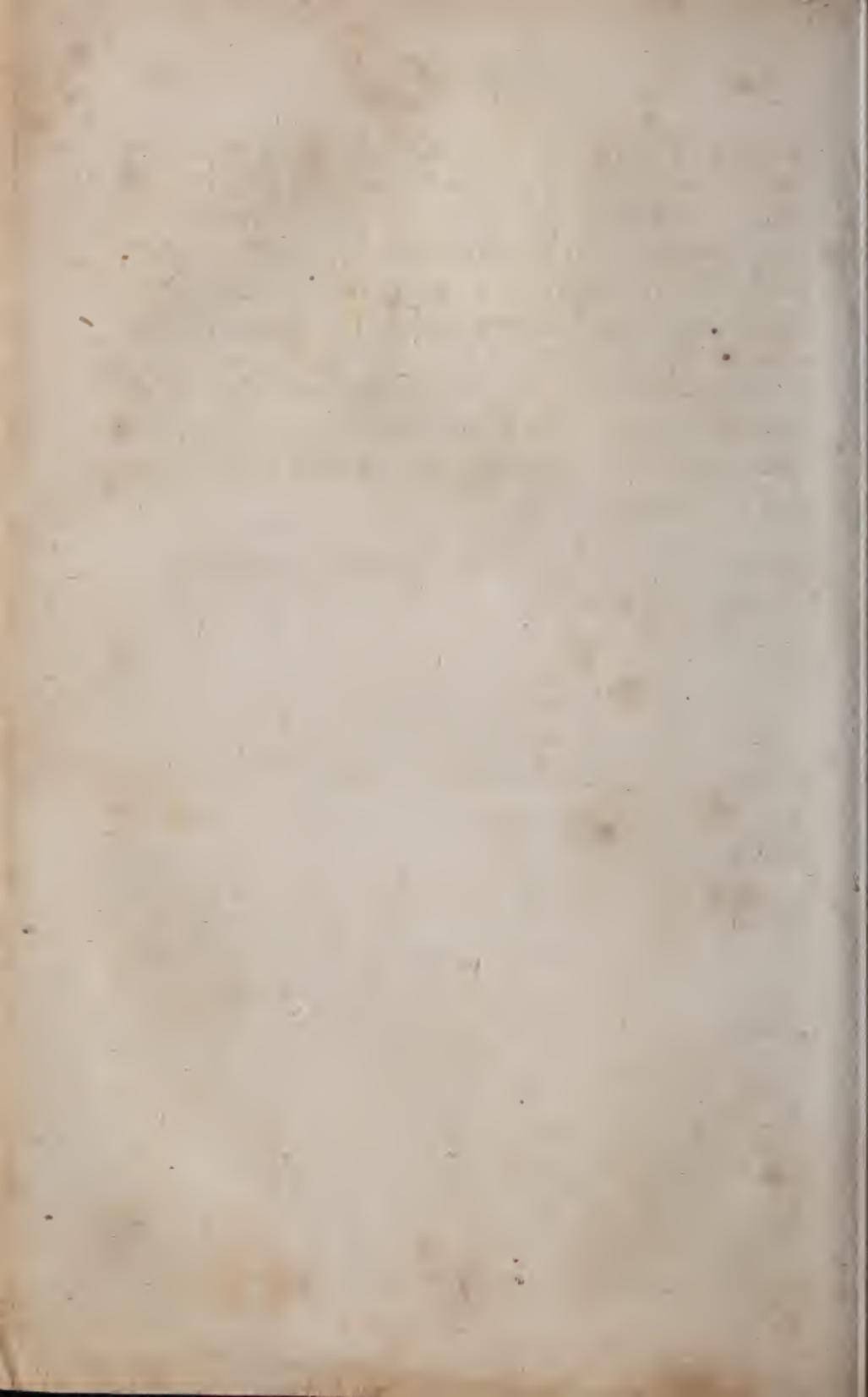
21. Before I conclude, shall I be permitted to add one thing more? Perhaps it may come better from one who has served you long, and who has never been chargeable or burdensome to that good cause for which he has laboured; and who has reason to believe, from his increasing infirmities, that he shall not long be permitted to be either a blessing or a burden to mankind. Then, I say, make your Preachers comfortable. Men who have taken the other world for their inheritance, will expect no more than the bare necessities of life in this. Let the Stewards of every Society examine the provision which is made for their Preachers and families: let them consider the

time in which it was fixed, the *depreciation* of money, and the enormous *advance* in every article of consumption : and by comparing the requisite expenditure of the family in question with that of their *own*, allowing for the descending or ascending proportions, let them determine on such a provision as their prudence and piety may dictate. From a pretty general acquaintance with the Methodists, I can confidently assert, that wherever there is a deficiency of support for the Preachers and their families, it is where the Societies are utterly ignorant of the matter; for, wherever such grievances are brought before them, they are instantly redressed. There are very few Preachers who will complain, let them suffer what they may : the Societies commit the business into the hands of the Stewards; they should not wait for complaint or information from the Preacher, but investigate every circumstance themselves. To such I say, and to all who are concerned with them, never suffer, through your neglect, worldly cares to intrude themselves into the closets and hearts of the men who are labouring for your salvation. How can he preach comfort who is not comforted? And how can he be comforted, who has pressing wants in his family, which he has no power to relieve? Give his children bread, and the man of God will cheerfully lay down his life in his work; and when he is gone to his God and your God. you will be enabled, without compunction of heart, to say, He who

preached unto us JESUS, by whose ministry we were blessed, and to whose necessities we have had the privilege of contributing, is gone!—gone to live with God; and we shall soon rejoin him where the whole heavenly family shall know each other in the light of their God! Even so, Lord Jesus! Amen.

That we may all so *preach* and *hear*, as to glorify God, and be finally saved, is the sincere prayer of your affectionate servant in the gospel of Christ,

ADAM CLARKE.



FOUR
DISCOURSES
ON THE
DUTIES OF A MINISTER
OF THE GOSPEL.

BY THOMAS COKE, LL. D.

Of the University of Oxford.

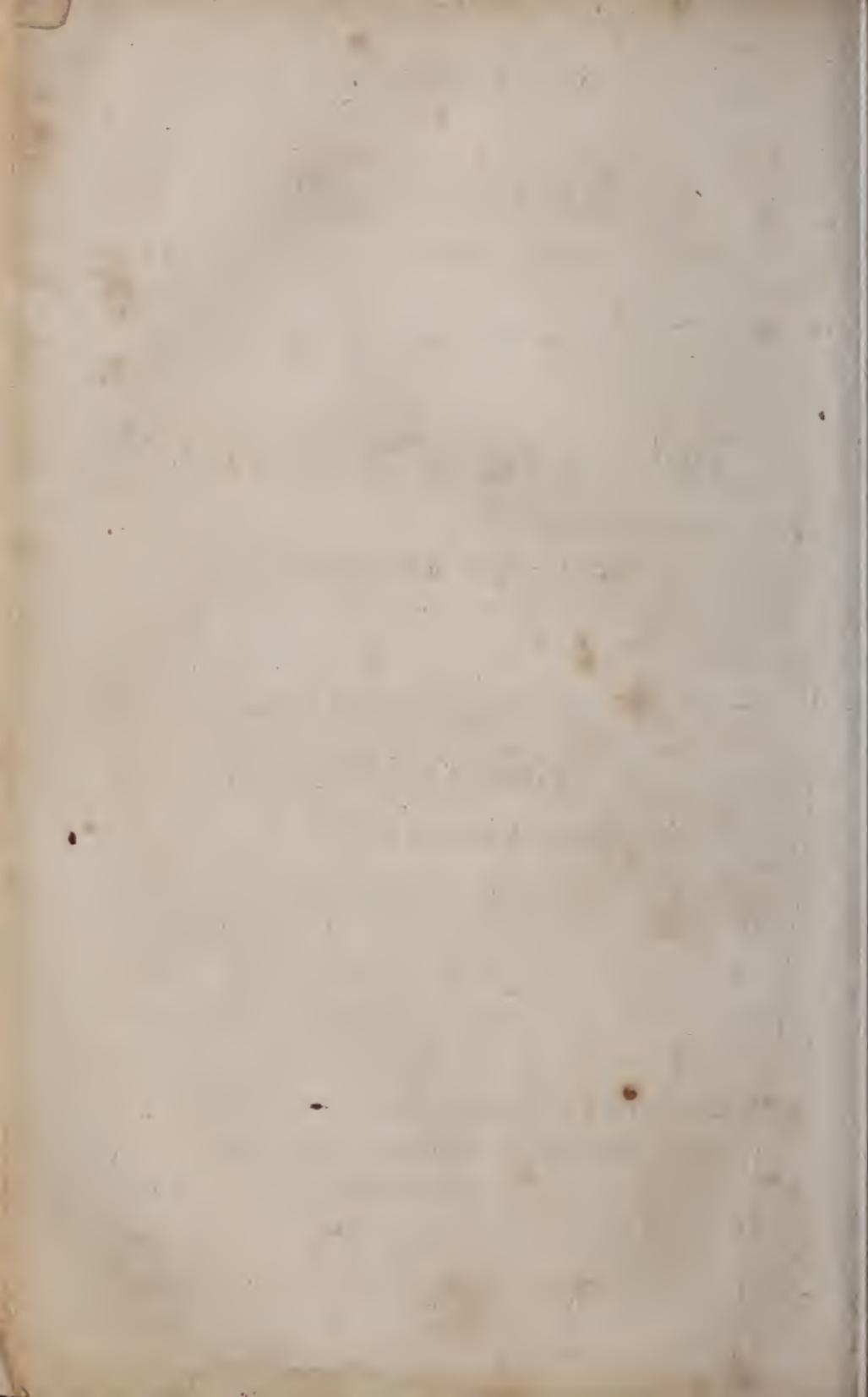
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1820.



PREFACE.

THE work of the ministry must be acknowledged by all who believe the truths of Revelation, and hope for happiness beyond the grave, to be the most important in which a human being can possibly engage. It extends, in its effects and consequences, beyond the boundaries of time, and involves the future happiness or misery of millions, by leading them to felicities or woes which baffle all our calculations.

The political decisions of senates may afflict nations with calamity, or deliver them from it; but the good and evil which they administer, must terminate with the present life. It is not so with the ministry of the gospel. The effects which result from the pious or unfaithful labours of those who act as ambassadors for God, may, indeed, be perceived in every stage of human probation; but they will appear more conspicuous

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as life draws towards a close:—they will remain unextinguished at death, and assume, in eternity, a visible and permanent form.

The man who engages in this solemn work, is not merely accountable to God for his own soul, but becomes responsible also for the souls of those who have been committed to his care. The sacred writings have guarded his office with the most awful sanctions. Both promises and threatenings conspire to keep alive his hopes and fears, by holding out, in the most pointed language, the rewards or punishments which await him in a future world. On the one hand, we are assured that “they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever;” while, on the other, we are clearly informed, that “those watchmen who see the sword coming, and neglect to give the people warning, shall have *their* blood required at their hands.”

Impressed with these momentous realities, the author of these discourses, having at an early period of life undertaken the sacred task, turned his thoughts to an ex-

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amination of the various duties which became his station. In this survey, he saw them to be both numerous and diversified, blending and incorporating themselves with every department of life; and he was soon convinced, that nothing but a strict attention to these varied connexions, could preserve that consistency of character which should always distinguish the heralds of everlasting peace. With an eye to this end, occasional incidents became his monitors;—real life furnished him with many instructive lessons;—and experience and practice have since confirmed him, in his adherence to obligations which were first adopted from principle. These discourses may, therefore, be considered as the result of practical observation, rather than of learned inquiry; and of real experience, rather than of deep reflection.

But, though the author turned his attention to this subject in the manner that has been hinted, and for reasons that have been assigned, he had no design to publish his thoughts to the world. This originated in another circumstance.

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Having been called upon, occasionally, to preach before the Methodist Conferences, where the great bodies of Preachers belonging to the connexion were assembled, he could not but express his ideas of the nature of the gospel ministry, and advert to the duties which should be sustained, by all those who conscientiously engage to preach Christ, and him crucified. The approbation with which his views were received, particularly in America, induced many, who heard his observations, to solicit their publication; from a persuasion that they might prove as useful in the closet, as they had been satisfactory to those who had received them from the pulpit.

These importunities he, however, for a long time withstood; till in crossing the Atlantic Ocean on one of his voyages, the pages now presented to the reader assumed nearly their present form, undergoing such amendments and corrections, and receiving such additions, as were thought necessary to prepare them for the public eye. A train of favourable circumstances concurred during the voyage to facilitate the completion of

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the author's understaking. He was secluded from the world, had nothing to fear from interruption,—was going on a ministerial errand,—and had with him the works of some French authors, particularly those of M. Massillon, the pious bishop of Meaux, whose views on the subject were congenial with his own.

Thus circumstanced, he began to arrange his thoughts; but found, as he proceeded, that what he had originally compressed into a single discourse, actually branched itself into four; no part of which he could possibly retrench, without doing injustice to a subject that he was endeavouring to elucidate, or rejecting that assistance of which he was anxious to avail himself. In years that are past, he trusts, that these sermons have been rendered a blessing to many; and, as truth is not to be impaired by age, he has reason to hope that their republication will continue to be attended with the divine blessing. This is his primary inducement to send a new impression of them into the world. He feels confidence that the leading features of the ministerial cha-

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racter and duties, are delineated agreeably to the doctrines of the gospel, as he endeavoured in every part to take the Prophets and Apostles for his guides. Relying, therefore, on the promises of Him who has declared that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church, he commits this little book to the world, with an earnest hope that God will make it a blessing to many souls.

That the united exertions of all who faithfully labour in the patience and tribulation of Jesus, may lead to the universal spread of the gospel, till a nation shall be born in a day, and till all shall know God, from the least unto the greatest, is the sincere desire and earnest prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

May 24, 1810.

DISCOURSE I.

2 TIMOTHY iv. 1—5.

I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

PART I.

1. **THE** ministerial office is the most important to the human race of any which is exercised on earth: for, according to the order of the dispensation of grace, the preaching of the gospel is indispensably necessary to raise mankind out of the ruins of their fall, to deliver

them from all the miseries which spring from an everlasting banishment from God, and to bring them to the eternal enjoyment of Him the Sovereign Good, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

The ministers of the gospel are particularly charged with these high interests of mankind: they are like those angels, whom Jacob beheld on the sacred ladder, ascending and descending to and from heaven: they are the mouth of the congregation at the throne of God, and open the bosom of his mercies upon the miseries of man. They officially speak in the name of Christ, whom the Father always hears.

2. In a word, my brethren, a faithful ministry is the greatest blessing God can bestow upon a people: it is the greatest he ever did bestow, except the gifts of his Son, and of his Spirit. What were the *peculiar* blessings, which the Lord promised by his prophets to the Israelites, if they would turn to him, and obey his laws? Were they not the conquest of nations, the entire destruction of their enemies, the final period of all the miseries and calamities which afflicted them, and a country which flowed with milk and honey for their own habitation? These were the magnificent promises he made them; and yet they prevailed not upon them to yield obedience to the divine law, nor restrained them from prostituting their homage to the gods of the heathen. He then ceased to press upon them these promises, which were so flattering, and

so likely to operate on the minds of a people who in general were influenced by worldly motives; but it was to make them one promise more, which was a thousand times greater and more precious than all the rest: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."*

3. "Raise then in thy church, O most gracious Lord, a sufficiency of faithful pastors according to thine heart; and particularly call forth from our connexion chosen vessels to carry the savour of Christ's name to all people; and, in separating them for the work of the ministry, separate them also for the sanctification of those to whom they may be sent. We do not so much request the end of any trials or calamities which afflict us; we ask not favourable seasons, abundance or prosperity; we only request a sufficiency of holy ministers who will die by thy cause, and with them thou wilt give us all things else."

4 If we thus consider the gospel in the light of the sanctuary, we shall not be surprised at the awfulness of the charge which the Apostle, in my text, gives to Timothy, his spiritual son: "I charge thee before God," the Omnipotent Jehovah, who sees and marks every word and action of our lives, who tries

* Jer. iii. 14, 15.

the heart and reins; from whom no covert can screen us, no darkness hide us; "but the night
 "shineth as the day; the darkness and the
 "light are both alike"* to him. I charge thee
 also before "the Lord Jesus Christ," your
 Redeemer, who shed his blood for you, and
 for the souls intrusted to your care: before
 him whose minister you are, and to whom you
 must account for the use or abuse of all your ta-
 lents: Before him "who shall judge the quick
 "and the dead at his appearing, and his king-
 "dom:" Before whose awful bar you must
 stand in the presence of an assembled uni-
 verse, when he shall appear on his throne
 with all the splendour and glory of the King of
 kings, to establish the eternal reign of his
 saints, and to banish all evil ones, and all evil,
 from the glory of his power for ever: when
 thou, O Timothy, shalt receive the exceeding
 great reward of thy faithful ministry, or the
 greater condemnation which awaits the abuse
 of the most precious gifts which can be in-
 trusted to man.

Let us now proceed to the particulars of the
 Apostle's charge, omitting to enlarge upon the
 reasons which he gives in the 3d and 4th verses,
 as they primarily respect the people, and
 would lead us into too large a field of dis-
 course.

I. 1. First, "Preach the word"—the word
 of God, which is able to save the soul. You

* Psalm cxxxix. 12.

are not ignorant, my brethren, what multitudes of immortal beings have been brought by this divine word "from darkness to light, and from "the power of Satan unto God." In those happy moments when a whole congregation has been softened by this quickening fire, and the hearts of the people all opened to receive the word, a single expression has pierced to the quick, and produced its full effect. Hundreds of thousands in the course of the present revival have been enlightened by it, and have been undeceived concerning the abuses and pernicious maxims of the world, which they once thought innocent, because authorized by the common usage of mankind, or by the preaching of blind guides. Innumerable have been the profanations and disorders which have been prevented; and innumerable the precious souls which have been drawn out of the abyss of misery and sin, in which they had so long lain. It is impossible for any, but God, to number up the cries of compunction which have arisen from awakened hearts, or the holy desires inspired into them. Scores of thousands have been brought to God, and established in grace, who either have been safely lodged in Abraham's bosom, or are now living witnesses of Christ's power to save. It is impossible to enumerate the graces and blessings which have been conferred upon the world, and especially upon these kingdoms, by the means of the present revival. Surely, it may be said of every faithful minister, as it was of

his Lord, that " he is set for the rising again
" of many in Israel."*

2. The good which one single minister, true to the cause in which he has engaged, can do in the course of his life by a faithful ministry of the word, is not easily to be described: How many of the ignorant he may instruct, how many sleepy consciences arouse, how many daring sinners confound; how many mourners he may bring into the liberty of the children of God, how many believers confirm in grace, yea, lead into the enjoyment of perfect love! Blessed be the Lord, we have had our ministers, who were formed according to the model of Jesus Christ, according to his simplicity, his unction, his sacred zeal. We have had our WESLEYS, our FLETCHERS, our GRIMSHAWS, and our WALSHES. Every thing was borne down by their holy eloquence, and by the power of the Spirit of God, who spoke through them. The villages, the towns, the cities, could not resist the impetuosity of their zeal, and the eminent sanctity of their lives; the tears, the sighs, and the deep compunction of those who heard them, were the commendations which accompanied their ministry: The strictness of their manners left nothing for the world to say against the truths which they delivered: The simplicity of their spirit, and the gentleness of their conversation and con-

* Luke ii. 34.

duct towards others, but severity towards themselves, belied not the gospel of which they were ministers: Their examples instructed, persuaded, and struck the people almost as much as their sermons: And the Spirit of God, who inflamed their hearts, the divine fire with which they themselves were filled, spread itself through the coldest and most insensible souls; and enabled them almost every where to raise chapels, temples to God, where the penitents and believers might assemble to hear them, and each return inflamed like themselves, and filled with the abundance of the Spirit of God. O what good is one apostolic man capable of working upon earth! There were no more than twelve employed to begin the conversion of the world.

3. Elijah, ascending to heaven, and leaving his spirit of zeal to his disciple Elisha, was designed as a type of Jesus Christ; who, after he had ascended to the right hand of the Father, sent down on his disciples that spirit of zeal and of fire, which was the seal of their mission; by which they were to set on fire and purify the world, and carry to all nations the knowledge of salvation, and the love of truth and righteousness. Scarcely are they thus filled with the Holy Spirit, but these men, before so timid, so careful to hide themselves, to withdraw themselves from the fury of the Jews, leave their retreat like generous lions, know danger no more, bear in their

countenance an intrepidity in the way of duty which sets at defiance all the powers of the earth, boldly bear their testimony for Christ before the assembly of chief priests, and depart from the council, rejoicing to be thought worthy to suffer reproach for Jesus's holy name.

4. Judea cannot satisfy the ardour and extent of their zeal. They pass from city to city, from nation to nation; they spread themselves to the extremities of the earth; they attack the most ancient and most authorized abuses; they tear away from the most barbarous people, the idols which their ancestors had at all times adored. They overturn the altars, which continual incense and homage had rendered respectable; they preach up the reproach and foolishness of the cross to the most polished nations, who piqued themselves most upon their eloquence, philosophy, and wisdom. The obstacles which all things present to their zeal, instead of abating it, only give it new force, and seem every where to announce their success: the whole world conspires against them, and they are stronger than the world: crosses and gibbets are shown them, to put a stop to their preaching; and they answer, that they cannot but declare what they have seen and heard; and they publish on the house-tops what was confided to them in secret: they now expire under the axe of the executioner: new torments are invented to extinguish with their blood the new doctrine

which they preach; and their blood preaches it still more after their death; and the more the earth is watered with it, the more does she bring forth new disciples to the gospel. Such was the spirit of *the ministry and apostleship* which they received, for these are in some sense but one and the same: every minister of the gospel is an apostle and ambassador of Jesus Christ among men. O that God would increase the number of those who are willing to preach and to die for Jesus Christ!—"Preach," then, "the word."

II. But I proceed to the second particular contained in the Apostle's charge: "Be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

1st. *Be always ready and always zealous for the public duties of your office.*

1. You are perhaps afraid of dissipation of mind, and of all the unavoidable dangers to which your zeal will expose you; but it is this fear, which, through grace, will support you under them: we cannot fill our office with fidelity and safety without possessing much of this holy, filial fear. You think yourself unworthy of a ministry so holy and so glorious; but it is this sentiment itself, which makes you evangelically worthy of it. No one can exercise it in a manner worthy of God, who does not feel himself extremely unworthy of it. You have a taste perhaps for retirement; but is this the

taste or the rule which should determine your duties? Are you become a public minister, that you should live to yourself alone? Indeed, your taste for retirement, if properly used, and duly restrained, will, under the blessing of God, assure the success of your public labours. Perhaps you are diffident concerning your gifts; but is it not a great gift to possess an ardent desire for the salvation of souls? With a heart penetrated and inflamed by this desire, a minister will always succeed; it is in some degree a substitute for other talents: What shall I say? *It forms them in him.* Whereas, with the most shining talents, without this tender love for souls, this apostolic zeal, we are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Only put yourselves into the hands of those who are appointed to govern; they will employ you according to your gifts and strength; it is not in you that in this instance it appertains to judge. Blessed be the Lord, the field is various; *they* will find out for you the place which suits you; and if nature has not bestowed on you all the powers of oratory, the grace of God, and the spirit of the missionary, will give you every thing necessary.

2. Let us all, fathers and brethren, remember, that whatever be our talents, whatever be our views, we are essentially wrong, if we suffer them to lead us out of the path of duty, or the order of our station. We are commanded to "be instant in season, and out of season:" a minister, therefore, must perish in

the inutility of a life of retirement and repose; the duties of his ministry, and the wants of the church of God, permit him not to enjoy them. "Nothing is more opposed," says St. Chrysostom. "to the spirit of the ministry to which the church of Christ has joined us, than a quiet and retired life, which many erroneously regard as the kind of life the most sublime and perfect." No, my brethren, nothing is safe for us but that which God requires of us. True devotion is not the work of human taste and caprice; it is a divine fruit, and always in the order of God. The distrust of ourselves is a great virtue, when it makes us more attentive to the fulfilment of our duties; but it is an illusion, a vice, when it draws us from them.

3. Let us now, my brethren, in concluding this division of our subject, call to mind the different sources from whence arises the defect of zeal in ministers of the gospel. Indeed, we cannot too often set them before our eyes; for they are the poisoned fountains, from whence flow all the evils of the church of Christ. *The first* is, the love of this world and its conveniences: no sooner does every thing commodious in the present ilfe offer its tempting baits, but with too many *that fire of zeal, that flame of love* for the salvation of souls, vanishes away like the morning-dew, to the astonishment of the discerning beholder. *The second* is, a defect of the love of God: it must be nearly extinguished in our hearts, if

we can daily behold the disorders, and infidelity, which continually dishonour the name and holy religion of our God, without embracing the most effectual method, if we be really called to the ministry of the word, to stem the torrent. *The third* is, a defect of love to mankind: for can those who are chosen of God to the great work of snatching immortal spirits out of the burning, love them, and yet calmly see them perish? *The fourth* is, such a respect for men as makes us seek their friendship and esteem at the expense of truth; I mean, that baseness of spirit, which ties our tongues before them, and makes us prefer our own glory, and our own interests, to the love of Christ and the interests of his church. Fortitude, disinterestedness, a holy generosity, a wise and heroic firmness, are the constant fruits of the true ministerial grace and office; and if these sentiments be effaced from the heart of a minister, the grace of his vocation is utterly extinct. *The fifth* is, the indulgence of some secret vice; for what true zeal can that preacher have against the vices of the world, who indulges himself in any secret sin? *The sixth* is, a dull, lukewarm spirit: zeal is a holy fervour, which gives its first attention to ourselves. Alas! he, who can indulge in himself a stupid lethargic spirit, will make but a miserable reprover of the deadness of devotion which he observes in others. *The seventh*, and last, is a timid and misinformed piety. Some refuse to devote themselves wholly to the work of the

ministry, or give it up when they have entered upon it, through a pious delusion. They make piety itself a pretext to dispense with the rules of piety: they are afraid to lose their own souls; but they are not afraid to lose the souls of those whom they are called of God to be the instruments of saving. They believe they ought to fly from those dangers, to which the order of God, and of the church to which they belong, calls them: and this flight is the only danger of which they are ignorant, and yet the greatest they have to fear.

4. In short, my brethren, it is in vain that our morals are otherwise irreprehensible: it is not sufficient to lead a prudent and regular life before the eyes of the world: if we be not penetrated with a lively sorrow at seeing the lost estate of the souls around us; if we do not arm ourselves with the zeal of faith and love, and with that sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, to bring them out of their ways of error; if we do not exhort them "with all long-suffering and doctrine;" if we be not "instant in season and out of season;" if, content with our own fancied righteousness, we imagine ourselves safe in reproving and rebuking by our examples, or, like old Eli, in only *softly* condemning the vice of others; our pretended virtue or holiness, indolent, inactive, lethargic, is a crime, an abomination before God: we feel not ourselves charged with the interests of God upon earth; we live only for ourselves; we are no more ambassa-

dors of Jesus Christ; we are easy, useless spectators of the reproaches cast upon him and his holy religion; and, by our silence and insensibility, consent to the crimes, and are partakers of the guilt, of those who crucify him afresh. No, my brethren, let us not deceive ourselves; for, as I have already said, and must repeat again, however well-regulated the life of such a minister may seem, he has but the appearance of piety; he has not the foundation and truth of it: he seems to live, but he is dead in the sight of God: men perhaps may praise him, but God curses him: the regularity of his life now lulls him to sleep; but a terrible sound, and the clamours of the souls which he suffered to perish, shall one day awaken him thoroughly: he calms his mind, because he bears a cold dry testimony in favour of evangelical truths; or because he compares the regularity of his life with that of many others *called* ministers; but he shall one day see that his righteousness was but that of a Pharisee, and shall in the end be ranked with the hypocrites and unprofitable servants.*

5. Ah! What, my brethren! A minister of Jesus Christ, sent to do his work upon earth, to enlarge his kingdom, to advance the building of his eternal city—for him to see the reign of the devil prevail over that of Jesus Christ in the place or places where he labours; and his faith, his love, his pretended piety to suffer

* Matth. xxv. 30.

him to be quiet and at rest! Can a minister of the gospel hear the name of Jesus, and the truth as it is in Him whose place he fills, and whom he professes to love and honour, daily derided or denied by word or deed, and not be filled with zeal for the cause of his great Master so opposed! What shall I say? Certainly he would speak with the authority which the dignity of his office always gives him, and endeavour to inspire sentiments more worthy of religion in those perverse corrupted men: or, he would be a base coward, a prevaricator, a minister who betrayed his ministry, if a criminal insensibility, or a carnal or timid prudence, could on such occasions shut his mouth: And he all this time believe himself innocent of the blood of souls! Can a faithful shepherd see his sheep precipitate themselves into the abyss, without running after them, and making them at least to hear his voice? Nay, when a single sheep had wandered, he would traverse the mountains, and endure the most painful toils, to bring him back again on his shoulders.* No, my brethren, the man just now described, is not a shepherd, not a minister of Jesus Christ; I reclaim the name; he is an usurper, who falsely bears that honourable title; and, notwithstanding all his profession, has wilfully made himself a vessel of reprobation and shame, placed in the temple of God!

* Luke xv.

6. But it may be urged, that a travelling preacher in our connexion is responsible only for the societies under his care. The objector must certainly have forgot, or never have read, the rules of a preacher, which we have all so solemnly promised to obey. The eleventh runs thus : “ You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work ; and go always not only to those that want, but to those that want you most.— Observe ! It is not your business, only to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many souls as you can ; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and, with all your power, to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.”

PART II.

2dly.—*A faithful minister of the gospel will be “ instant” for the cause of his great Master, in every company into which he may happen to fall.*

1. *Our manners, our walk, our language, our whole exterior conduct, should upon all occasions support the holy dignity of our calling. The most accustomed familiarities of the world, the discourses of pleasantry the most entertaining, are for us real indecencies : all that is unworthy of our ministry, is at all times*

unworthy of us. Some ministers persuade themselves, that it is necessary to *accommodate* themselves to the taste, the language and maxims of the world, that they may not appear bad or morose company : but remember, my brethren, a minister is never in his place, whilst he suits the taste of the world ; never, unless he be what is called *bad company for the world*. From the time that the world seeks him, adopts him, associates with him, and is pleased with his company, he gives a certain proof, that he respects not the propriety and decency which should invariably accompany his office. And we may continually observe, that those ministers whom the world seeks, whom the world applauds, and with whose company the world in general is delighted, are carnal men, who have reserved nothing of their holy vocation but the name: the spirit of the world shows itself in their whole exterior deportment ; it discovers itself in the impropriety of their dress, in the lightness of their conversation, and even of their walk ; nay, often in the little true gravity and sanctity manifested in the performance of their public duties. “ If ye were of the world,” says Christ, “ the world would love his own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”* No, my brethren, the men of the world seek not the company of a holy and respectable minister ;

* John xv. 19.

nor is he desirous of associating with them.— It is, when they want consolation under affliction : it is, when the approaches of death make them feel themselves near to eternity : Ah ! it is *then* they have recourse to a holy minister ; they *then* regard not those of whom they were before so fond ; they are *then* conscious that such ministers can be of no service to them, that they may be good for the things of the world, but are useless as to the things of heaven. Depend on it, my brethren, it always costs us something of the dignity and holy gravity of our office, to purchase the friendship and suffrages of men of the world : it is not *they*, who will abate of their prejudices and false maxims to unite themselves to us ; it is *we* only, who must abate of the holy rules of the gospel, to be admitted to their societies. Let us then never lay down before the eyes of the men of the world the holy gravity of our vocation, or the due and respectable appearance of a minister of Jesus Christ : let them not be able to distinguish between the minister in the pulpit, and the minister in his usual commerce with mankind. Let them find him *throughout* the same ; *throughout* respecting his character, and making it respectable to others ; *throughout* discovering the spirit of piety, yea, even by his presence alone.

2. Then, my brethren, if we be at any time witnesses of those vices which the customs of the world justify, we have a right to condemn them. If the people of the world, whether

rich or poor, indulge themselves before us in such discourses as are but too common, and which offend either piety, Christian love, or modesty, our character authorizes us to reprove them. Nor will the world in general find fault with us, if we endeavour to sanctify their conversations with pious edifying remarks; for, as it is somewhere observed in the Apocrypha, the Lord has dispersed us among the Gentiles, among the people of the world, who know not God, that we may make known the wonders of his holy law. No, my brethren, it does not become a good minister to depart from the company of the people of the world, without having mixed with their discourse some spiritual and edifying reflections. When a minister is duly touched with the truths he preaches; when he daily meditates upon them at the footstool of the throne; when he is penetrated with an ardent holy desire for the salvation of souls, it will be difficult for him to see them wander and perish, without at least complaining to them, without taking occasion from their errors and prejudices to say to them some word of salvation. And how know you, but a simple and edifying reflection, delivered at a time when he expects it not, may become to your brother a word of eternal life? He may be on his guard, if he hear you in public, and come prejudiced against the truths you are delivering, but in a familiar conversation truth takes the sinner unawares. Candour, meekness, and simplicity, with the grace of God,

will sometimes, in private discourse, give to a truth, when least looked for, a strength which it would not otherwise have. The unforeseen arrow is the most sure to reach its mark. At least, you have done honour to your ministry, and been faithful to that command of God, "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

3. When I entered on this division of my subject, I only intended to touch it cursorily. But considering the magnitude of it, and how seldom it has been fully treated, I afterwards determined to enlarge. And need I here remind you, brethren, of that peculiar characteristic of the Methodists, that *they are a race of reprovers*. It is their reproach, it is their honour, it is the glory of the cross they bear, that every Christian, of every sect and party, who dares become a reprover of vice, is immediately stigmatized with the name of *Methodist*. May we never lose that cross, that glory, till vice is banished from the world, and "the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!"

4. "But is there not reason to fear, that by becoming thus importunate, we shall often expose the truth to the contempt and derision of those to whom we speak?" No, my brethren. A dissipated worldly preacher, I allow, could but with an ill grace introduce observations of a spiritual nature into the conversations of people of the world. He has by his vain conduct lost his right. He would render himself ridiculous indeed, if he should labour to recall

to the minds of others, truths which he himself appears to have forgot. The doctrines of piety would blush in his mouth; he would be heard with contempt; and might be asked with a sneer, "Is Saul also among the Prophets?"* But, on the contrary, a holy minister gives respectability to all his wise and edifying counsels; the men of the world themselves will grant him attention, and, even if tired, will not be surprised; they may reject the truth, but must in secret esteem him who declares it.

I grant, that this duty, as well as every thing else, should be guided by Christian prudence. Christian love, which only desires to be useful, labours to find out the most opportune moments; and many such will present themselves in the course of the useless conversations of the men of the world. They speak together of their affairs, their projects, their embarrassments, their subjects of complaint against their enemies or competitors, of their disappointments, and of their misfortunes. Now, cannot the Spirit of God, which actuates a holy minister, find in all this, innumerable occasions to deplore the sad and agitated life of those who love the world; to describe to them the peace, the sweetness, the consolations of a holy Christian life; and to mourn over them, as enjoying no genuine happiness in the present life, but preparing for themselves in this

* 1 Sam. x. 11, 12.

world a thousand disturbances, a thousand pains, and misery eternal in the next ?

5. On the other hand, my brethren, there are occasions, when the fear of offending should be entirely banished. A minister of the gospel is a public character, charged with the interests of the glory of God, and the honour of religion, among men : he ought, therefore, never to suffer men of the world, whoever they may be, to pass without a bold, though holy, reproof, when the respect due to the majesty of God is wounded, when the precious and sublime doctrines of the gospel are treated with derision, when vice is justified, or holiness and virtue turned into ridicule : in short, when licentiousness or impiety in discourse dishonours the presence of God, and the presence of his ministers. Ah ! It is then that the piety and dignity of a minister should no more prescribe to him any other measure or bounds but that of zeal—the zeal which is the flame of love, mixed with the just indignation of a lover of God. It is then, that, charged by his office with the interests of religion, he should know no one after the flesh ; he should forget the names, the titles, the distinctions of those who forget themselves ; he should remember, that he is appointed of God a preacher of righteousness, and endued with power from heaven to oppose all manner of sin ; and, especially, to set himself with a sacred intrepidity against that impious and detestable pride, which would exalt itself against the knowledge of God.—

Whatever persons they be, who do not treat with respect in your presence that which is the most respectable of all things in the universe, should not be respected by you: we ought to hear them with that kind of indignation, with which we believe Christ himself would have heard them. I am persuaded, that the pointed strength of reproof is the only kind of propriety which our character then imposes upon us; we are not then required to use soft expressions, "Nay, my son, it is no good report that I hear." Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, we should deliver our own souls.

It is esteemed honourable by the world, to support the interests of a friend pointedly and boldly, if he be insulted in our presence.—Have we then *at such a time* a right to impose silence with firmness on the calumniator? Shall we disgrace ourselves, and be accounted treacherous, yea, base and dastardly cowards, if we can suffer our friends to be abused in our presence without undertaking their defence? And shall we not have the same zeal to stop the mouths of the impious, and support aloud the interests of Jesus Christ? Can we imagine that we are *his friends*, according to that saying of our Lord, "Henceforth, I call you not servants, but I have called you *friends*;"*—can we suppose that we have performed all which that tender and honourable title requires, by

* John xv. 15.

dissembling,—by contenting ourselves with strengthening through our dastardly silence the insults with which he is treated, and by sacrificing, through a dishonourable weakness, through the fear of man, *his* name and *his* glory? No, my brethren, we are not *the friends* whom Jesus Christ has chosen—this title disgraces us, if his insulted name does not rouse in us all our love and all our zeal for his adorable person.

6. O that I could impress these important truths with the fullest conviction upon all our hearts! What a flame would soon be kindled in the world! What could not a thousand travelling preachers in Europe and America do for their Master, if all were thoroughly filled with this spirit of holy zeal! But should we confine our observation *to these alone*? Certainly, our local preachers, exhorters, and even our leaders, are in their respective degrees called to reprove, rebuke, and exhort.—The whole together probably make not less than fifteen thousand lights to illuminate the world. O that they were all faithful. “O God, inspire them all with the love of thy glory!” Yes, fathers and brethren, I know and rejoice in the mighty good which has been wrought upon the earth by your instrumentality: but you may still do abundantly more: yea, we might all of us have already been much more useful than we have been. “Lord, humble us before thee for our past unfaithfulness.”

7. But I must here observe, brethren, that a minister faithful to his duty, who respects his office, and loves the people intrusted to his charge, will find but little time to sacrifice to the useless conversations and dissipated spirit of the world. He seldom appears among the people of the world ; for having no taste for their pleasures or amusements, or even for their company, the unavoidable calls of duty or propriety which require him to be among them, are but rare. We cannot often be in their company, without not only injuring the divine life within us, but more or less debasing ourselves and our sacred office in their eyes. All corrupt as the world which lieth in the wicked one is, it exacts *from us* virtue without spot, without clouds, and even without any of those infirmities which are inseparable from humanity.

8. The more the world is indulgent to itself, the more severe it is in respect to us : it believes that it may indulge itself in every thing, and yet in us will pass over nothing. It has perpetually upon us the eyes of malevolent censors. A word out of order, a simple inattention, the least motion which may be construed into impropriety, a compliment paid without due reflection, become in us faults which will not soon be forgotten. The men of the world, if possible, will give a shade to all our words and actions ; draw from them the most invidious consequences ; and even in those moments when we relax ourselves in

their favour from the gravity of our character, they will attribute the whole to a taste of their spirit, and to a secret approbation of their views which we dare not avow, rather than to condescendence and complaisance towards them. They will at last be bold enough to tempt us to imitate them in the liberties they take ; will treat our precautions and reserve as the fruits of a minute and contracted spirit ; and for the little we abate in the dignity of our character for the sake of pleasing them, they will in our absence pay our complaisance with the most insolent derisions and dishonourable reflections.

9. There is nothing, therefore, my brethren, more deceitful than the idea of gaining the esteem and good opinion of the world, by familiarizing ourselves and mixing often with it. The more the world sees us, except in our public duties, the more will it either hate or despise us. It hates us from the instant it feels that we will not put up with its manners. Let us very rarely have any thing to do with it, and we shall appear in its eyes with greater dignity, and be treated with greater respect. Let us attend to every due and proper call which the world may justly require of us, as well as to all the demands of charity and good works ; but let us always conduct ourselves as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, as in some sense filling his place. It is then only, that our ministerial character, under the grace and providence of God, will be to us a safeguard

against very temptation. But if we seek the world for the sake of the world, we must conform to its taste and its manners. We should be badly received *upon the present ground*, were we to carry there that holy gravity which should never forsake us. We should derange its pleasures, disconcert its assemblies, and its liberty of speech. We should be an intolerable burden to it. Our presence alone would be horrible; and it would say of us, as the enemies of holiness say of the righteous man in the Wisdom of Solomon, "He is grievous to us to behold!" There is no alternative. We must die to the world, or partake of its spirit. We cannot serve God and Mammon.

10. I am very conscious, brethren, that our Itinerant Plan is to be preferred to any other *in this* as in a thousand respects. *We* are seldom tempted to be in the world. *We* must love it exceedingly if we find many occasions to be in it. Our time is spent betwixt the mount, the multitude, and our own people. We almost continually reside in families which look for, and which love and honour, the seriousness and gravity of their preacher. It is their delight to converse with us on the things of God: if it were not so, they would be disgraceful members of our Society. Yes, it is food to the souls of our people to have what they have heard in the pulpit pressed upon them in conversation at the fire-side: and *we* should be the most inexcusable of men, if we did not improve these precious opportunities

among the families we visit. "The Methodist Preachers," said the late Rev. Charles Wesley to me once, "do not fully consider all the blessings of their situation; one of the greatest of which," added he, "is *that wall of contempt*, with which you are surrounded, and which preserves you from a thousand temptations to which the clergy in general are exposed, *by keeping the world at a distance from you.*" But though our calls to mix with the men of the world are but rare, let us never on such occasions betray our Master, but conduct ourselves as faithful servants, ambassadors, and friends of Jesus Christ.

11. I may sum up the whole in those words of the Apostle, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, love, patience, meekness."* If you were of the world, its interests, its prejudices, its vanities, would be your portion: You would be obliged to conform to its maxims and language, to justify it, and to rise up against all those who dare condemn it: but *you are men of God*; you are *in* the world, but you are not *of* the world: You are charged in the midst of it with the interests of God, with the care of his glory, and with the honour of his spiritual worship. The ambassador of a king speaks only in the name of his employer: he knows no other man, whilst he acts from the authority, and is concerned with the interests, of the

* 1 Tim. vi. 11.

kingdom he represents : he lays aside the private character, and appears always in his public capacity. And shall *we*, brethren, who are ambassadors for the King of kings, *men of God* in the midst of a world which is at war with him—Shall *we* lay aside our holy and public character with which he has invested us, and become *men of the world*, his enemies friends ? Shall *we* blush to speak the language of him who employs us ? Shall we suffer him to be insulted in our presence without supporting his interests and his glory—without using the authority with which he has clothed us, to set ourselves with a holy zeal against the despisers of his name, his laws, and his truth ? Shall *we*, my brethren, forgetting the majesty of him we represent, and the honour he has conferred upon us by intrusting his embassy and authority to us—shall we authorize by our conduct the maxims of the world, his enemy ? Shall we appear to hold intelligence with it, that its errors and prejudices may prevail over *his* divine doctrines and sacred morals, of which he has made us the public dispensers and defenders ? No, my brethren ; let us bear our holy title of *men of God*, as it were upon our foreheads, and through all the minutest particular of our conduct : Let us *throughout* be *men of God* : Let all our most common actions, conversation, fellowship, and commerce with mankind, be ennobled and sanctified by this holy and honourable character : Let us never abase ourselves by laying it aside for a

moment; and let us remember, that *the world* will always respect it *in us*, as long as *we* respect it *in ourselves*.

12. Destroy, then, O our God, in the hearts of thy ministers the strength of all those obstacles which the world, the flesh, and the devil, incessantly oppose to *that zeal*, which renders them instruments of thy mercies to mankind: inflame them with that spirit of fire and wisdom, which thou didst shed abroad in the hearts of thy first disciples; let the succession of this apostolic zeal be transmitted with increasing abundance in thy church, with the succession of *that* ministry which thou hast promised to be with always, even unto the end of the world.* Send forth more labourers into thy vineyard, men “mighty in deed and word,” whom the world may not intimidate, whom all the powers of the earth may not be able to shake, whom worldly interests may never influence, whom thy glory and the salvation of souls may regulate and animate in all their undertakings; and who will esteem the opinions of men *as nothing*, but as far as they contribute to make thee adored and glorified in all ages!

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

DISCOURSE II.

2 TIMOTHY, iv. 5.

Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

PART I.

IN my discourse on the former part of the Apostle's charge to Timothy, I considered *the zeal*, which the ministers of the gospel should constantly manifest for the salvation of souls; particularly, in all the public duties of their office, and by the improvement of every opportunity afforded them, to bear a testimony for God to the people of the world. We now proceed to speak upon the remaining particulars of this solemn charge.

I. "Watch thou in all things." The duty of watchfulness cannot be too strongly impressed on every private Christian; for, without the constant exercise of it, the life of God cannot possibly be preserved in the soul. But to enlarge on the duty as it respects the private character, would carry me beyond the limits of a discourse; and, therefore, I shall chiefly consider it, as it belongs to the office of a minister of the gospel.

The spirit of our ministry is a spirit of separation from the world ; of prayer and secret intercession for the souls of men, and especially for the church of Christ ; of labour ; of firmness and fidelity ; of knowledge ; and of piety. Our watchfulness, therefore, as ministers, should be particularly directed against those things which oppose the above essential properties of the spirit of our calling.

1st. Against the spirit of the world, because the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of separation from the world.

1. That unction from above, which reserves us, sanctifies us, sets us apart for the ministry, (and if we have not received it, we are no ministers,) withdraws us also from all the other public functions of society ; not that we cease from being citizens of our country, or from the obedience and submission due to the king, and all that are in authority—to the powers which are ; for “ the powers which are, are ordained of God :” * but the ministry of the word is become our great employment ; the public temples of God, “ where his honour dwelleth,” are our places of public resort ; the visitation of the sick and the poor, and all the other works of piety and charity, our subordinate tasks ; and prayer and praise our recreation and pleasure.

* Rom. xiii. 1.

2. All things then should be holy in a minister of the gospel, and separated from common use. His tongue should only discourse of God: useless conversations at least, however harmless in themselves, defile his tongue; as, under the law, a holy vessel would have been defiled by common meats. His eyes have entered into covenant not to behold vanity; or if they do, they lose, without genuine repentance, the right of entering into the interior of the tabernacle, to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. In short, the whole person of a minister of Christ should be a living example of true religion, which ought always to be surrounded with decency, gravity, and respect.

3. This then is the first point—to watch against the desire of worldly things: for the cares, the solitudes, the employments of the world, when you enter into them, will rob you of your unction, however your natural or improved talents may remain; and will not only profane, but in time entirely destroy all the genuine virtue of your vocation, and bring you thoroughly under the yoke of the world. The vessels and ornaments which were used in the temple under the law, were never appropriated to common use; it would have been a crime which would have defiled their consecration: now a minister of the gospel, consecrated to God by his own blessed Spirit, in a manner infinitely more holy than that of the sacred vessels and ornaments under the law,

defiles and profanes abundantly more *his* consecration, if he makes his person, his talents, his spirit, his heart, to serve to dead works and the common employments of the world. O thou holy doctrine of the cross, how little art thou known by those ministers, who enter into the affairs, agitations, and commotions of this miserable world! The Apostle has warned them in vain, that "no man who warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."* Alas! These become principal actors on the stage of the world. The dispensers of the truths and blessings of Heaven become the ministers of carnal views and projects: those whom God has charged with the eternal interests of the people, neglect them, and make it their glory to spend their strength in carrying on worldly affairs.

2dly. *We must watch against the light and trifling spirit of the world, because the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of prayer and intercession.*

Although it is the privilege of a faithful minister to have a river of peace continually flowing in his soul, yet, paradoxical as it may appear, his life, at the same time, is a life of prayer, lamentation, and complaint. The prophet Isaiah, on a prophetic view of the great Millennium, "when all flesh should come to

* 2 Tim. ii. 4.

worship before the Lord," cries out, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that *mourn* for her."* When we see so large a part of the inhabitants of the globe lying in the wicked one, covered with Heathen or Mahometan darkness; or, what is still worse, when we see infidelity reigning in the midst of the blaze of gospel-day, it is impossible, if we breathe the true spirit of the gospel ministry, but we shall be daily, yea, habitually praying between the porch and the altar, with groanings which cannot be uttered.† Jesus Christ, the Prince and model of ministers, wept over Jerusalem, when he saw her hardened in her blindness. Yes, my brethren, as long as Satan reigns upon earth, the true ministers of God will more or less mourn and lament. As long as the children of Israel, on the plain, employ themselves in dances and revels, forget the God of their fathers, and madly prostitute their homage to the golden calf, the true Moseses on the mountains will tear their garments—will break their hearts before the Lord. "The world will rejoice," says Christ to his Apostles: its children will run on dancing and sending forth cries of joy, till they precipitate themselves into the abyss. Let their laughter and their sports be their portion: let that holy sorrow which is consistent with constant joy in the Holy Ghost, be ours. The world,

* Is. lxvi. 10. 23.

† Joel ii. 17. Rom. viii. 26.

in the midst of which we live, will be continually to us a spectacle of grief and concern; and even when they persecute us not, though crosses and gibbets do not attend us, their entire depravation will itself alone be an unexhausted source of lamentation before God!

3dly. *We must watch against indolence, because the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of toil.*

1. We fill a laborious office. The church of Christ upon earth, is a vineyard, a field, a harvest, a building which should be daily rising and growing to perfection, and a holy warfare—all terms which announce cares and fatigues, all symbols of labour and application.

2. Thus the time of a minister of the gospel is due to the church: All the days and moments which he employs in the commerce of the world, in dissipation, or in the vanities of worldly society, except where occasional duties call him, are days and moments which were due to the salvation of his fellow-creatures, and of which those souls which suffer through his neglect will demand a strict account at the tribunal of Jesus Christ. By the divine unction he has received, and by his devotion of himself to the ministry, the church of Christ has acquired a peculiar property in his person, his leisure, his occupations, and his talents. These are all now consecrated things, which form part of the property of the church of

God. He is only the depository of them, and has no right to dispose of them at his pleasure: he is responsible for them to God and his church. It is not for himself, that he has been numbered among the ministers of Christ, but for the church, that he may bear his part in her toils and ministry. He degrades the title she has given him, when he abandons the labours she has appointed for him: he ceases to be *a minister*, from the moment he ceases to be *a labourer*: He spends in worldly commerce and frivolous occupations *that time*, on which rolls the salvation of the souls among whom he should have toiled—*that time*, on which depends the eternal destiny of his brethren—*that time*, to which God has attached the salvation of sinners, the strengthening of the weak, and the perfecting of the strong. “May the Spirit of the Holy One increase our zeal!”

4thly. *We must watch against the betraying of our trust—against unfaithfulness, because the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of firmness and fidelity.*

1. We are appointed to “reprove, rebuke, exhort, in season and out of season, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” The public vices should always find us inflexible, inexorable. The countenance of a minister of Christ should never blush at the reproaches, which never fail to accompany the liberty and faithful

execution of his office. He bears written on his forehead, with much more true majesty than the High Priest of the law, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.* The divine unction which the Spirit of God has bestowed upon him for the ministry of the gospel, is a grace of strength and courage: It inspires the soul marked by this divine zeal, with an heroic disposition, which raises it above its own natural weakness; which puts into it noble, great, and generous sentiments, worthy of the dignity of its ministry; and gives to it an elevation of mind, which raises it above the fears, the hopes, the reputation, the reproaches, and every thing else, which rule over, and regulate the conduct of the generality of men: Yea, which bestows upon us that ministerial vigour, and Apostolic fire, which so gloriously manifested itself in the first founders, and first heroes of our divine religion.

2. Now this spirit of firmness and fidelity is precisely the character the most opposed to the spirit of the world. For the spirit of the world is continually shown in a commerce of attentions, complaisance, art, and management: it seems to have hardly an opinion of its own: It can overlook, if not applaud, an improper sentiment covered with art and delicacy: It can *bend*, yea, *accustom* its ears to the witty, but cruel touches of smooth malevolence; and can suffer, without reproof, rebuke, or

* Exodus xxviii. 36.

exhortation, the preference which is daily given to the gifts of nature over those of grace. In short, the minister (so called) who will live in the bustle of the world, must think, or at least speak, as the world does: He must not discover the firm and serious spirit of a minister of God: If he did, he would soon become its butt and its laugh; and all his worldly plans would be entirely defeated. No: *We*, who should be the salt of the earth, would in such case be obliged to *lend* ourselves, to *accommodate* ourselves, and *putrify* with the children of this earth. *We*, who are called to be the censors of the world, would soon become in some sense its panegyrists: *We*, who should be the lights of the world, would, by our open suffrage, or by our base dastardly silence, perpetuate its blindness: In short, *We*, who should be instrumentally the resource and salvation of the world, would miserably perish with it.

3. Nothing, my brethren, so softens the firmness and fidelity of the ministerial spirit, as the busy commerce of the world. We enter by little, and imperceptibly, into its prejudices, its excuses, and all its vain reasonings. The more we meddle with it, the less we find it culpable. We can at last even plead for its softness, its idleness, its luxury, and its ambition. We begin, like the world, to give soft names to all these passions and indulgences; and that which confirms us in this new system of conduct, is, that we have the universal

plaudit of worldly men; for they will give to our baseness and cowardice the specious names of moderation, elevation of spirit, and a talent for making virtue amiable; whilst they give to the contrary conduct, the odious names of littleness, rusticity, excess, and hardness of heart, only fit to withdraw men from goodness, and render piety hateful or contemptible. Thus we treat obligingly a world, which gives our baseness and unfaithfulness all the honours due to prudence; and we believe it not to be so guilty as is commonly imagined among believers, from the time we love its esteem. For, alas! my brethren, there are too few of the Sauls and Barnabases, who would not relax from the truth, though they thereby caused themselves to be stoned *even by those people*, who, a few moments before, would have offered incense to them as gods just descended from heaven!

4. The spirit of ministerial firmness and fidelity is therefore absolutely incompatible with the busy commerce of the world: You will no more find any thing there to reprove, in proportion as you familiarize yourselves with those things which are reprehensible in it: You will lose the views of those great rules of conduct, which have governed the faithful ministers of God in all the ages of the church: You will no longer cultivate those seeds of divine science, which, through grace, have helped to make you useful in the Lord's vineyard: The scriptures, and the writings of the best di-

vines, will become strange and tiresome : You will soon have lost your taste for them ; and you will prefer to those serious studies, so conformable to your ministerial duties, books which, *to you*, should be comparatively vain and frivolous ; but which render you more serviceable and agreeable to the world to which you have delivered up yourself. These observations lead me to a fifth reflection on this head ; namely, that,

5thly. *We should watch against a neglect and distaste of study, because the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of divine science.*

1. The lips of a minister of the gospel are the public depositaries of the doctrines of divine truth : We are required, like the prophet, to devour the book which contains the law and the gospel, notwithstanding all the bitterness which may accompany our studies and watchings : We must nourish our souls with the bread of the word of God, as it were by the sweat of our brow ; and adorn our souls *internally* with the divine law, as the Jewish priests adorned themselves *externally* with their sacred garments. The divine writings are the basis and substance of our gospel ministry, which we may compare to the two great lights which God has set in the firmament : Like them we should rule over the day and the night ; over the day, in guiding the faith and piety of believers ; and over the night, in clearing our

minds from all darkness of error, and filling them with spiritual light. We are the chief interpreters of the divine law and gospel, the guides of the people, the seers and prophets appointed by Christ to clear their doubts, and from the divine word to discover to them the whole will of God.

2. But can these titles be supported in the hurry of worldly commerce? Alas! nothing is so fatal as that to a taste for study and retirement. I am not now speaking of *profound* studies, of sounding all the depths of antiquity for the elucidation of the doctrines and discipline of Christianity, or of furnishing the church of God with new and useful publications: these are not the things which the spirit of your vocation exacts from you: these are studies and talents manifested in an eminent degree by only a small number of the wisest ministers, whom God has raised up to be *general* lights of their age. But I say, that for those common, ordinary studies, which are indispensably necessary to qualify a minister to “divide the world of truth aright, and to give to each their portion of meat in due season;” in short, to be in a situation to exercise his functions with light and success: I say, that for these studies, he must have a spirit accustomed to think, to meditate, and to be *with and in himself*; he must fly from that commerce with the world, which soon annexes to his books a weariness which is insupportable; he must have a desire of increasing in divine know-

ledge ; a character of mind, which is an enemy to frivolous employments ; a *habit* of retirement and reflection ; an arrangement of life, whereby he can give an account to himself of his progress, and whereby the moments set apart for the different duties of his situation will always find themselves in their own place, and conformable to their destination ; in a word, a kind of uniform, occupied, regulated life, which can in nowise have the least alliance with the perpetual variations and derangements of a worldly life and conversation.

6thly, I shall finish this head with one reflection more ; namely, that *we should watch against the least alienation of our minds from God, because the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of piety.*

1. By this spirit of piety, I understand not only blamelessness of morals, but that condour of conscience, that tenderness of religion, *that taste of God*, that delicacy of soul, which the appearance alone of evil alarms. Behold that spirit of piety, which is the soul and safeguard of our ministry !

2. We live, as it were, in a continual commerce with holy things. But what a life of prayer, of retirement, of circumspection, of faith, and of rigorous attention to the senses, ought we not to lead, that we may be always prepared for our holy duties ! All the dispositions, desires, and affections of our hearts, should be purified, sanctified, consecrated by the unction of the Holy Spirit, residing within

us. How can we appear before the congregation of the Lord, in their name to raise ourselves up to the footstool of the eternal throne, there to humble ourselves with the dominions and powers of heaven into a sort of self-annihilation, there to sing praises with them to the majesty of God, when just before we were drawn a hundred different ways through the dirt of the world? How can we in such case ascend the pulpit, and manifest to the people all the seriousness and grief of true zeal! With what grace can we speak of a death to the world, of avoiding the dangers to which it exposes us, and the snares which Satan there lays in our way, of the necessity of prayer, retirement, and watchfulness, of the eye which should be plucked out, of the hand and foot which should be cut off,* of the account we must render even for every idle word,† and in short of all those crucifying maxims, so unknown to the world, and so contrary to its manners? To be good preachers of Jesus Christ, and of him crucified, we must ourselves be fastened to the cross of Jesus Christ: To inspire a taste of God, and the things of heaven, we must feel them ourselves: To touch the hearts of the people, our own hearts must be touched with the living coal.

3. I grant, as observed in my former discourse, that our itinerant plan keeps us at a considerable distance from the world in general. But among the families which we visit, are

* Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

† Matt. xii. 36.

there not, in most of them, some who do not make even a profession of religion? How cautious should we then be, that we do not enter into their spirit, thereby hardening them against the truth, and injuring the minds of those who are truly religious! And of our own people, alas! all are not Israel who are of Israel. To such, instead of indulging them in their vain conversation, how closely, how faithfully should we speak, as being peculiarly responsible for their souls! If in a family there be any mourners in Zion, how dangerous, how dreadful would it be for such to hear any thing trifling from the lips of *him*, to whom they are looking for a word of comfort! No time can be lost in labouring to bring such to Christ. All reading and study should be laid aside, whilst the opportunity is afforded us of leading to the Saviour's blood an immortal soul under the convincing operations of the Holy Spirit. Such occasions should be peculiarly prized—occasions of fixing jewels of the highest value in our crown of glory, for “they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”* Again, When we meet with souls which enjoy the love of God, how careful should we be to feed them with spiritual food,—how careful to say nothing which might injure the tender spiritual life within them, or grieve that Holy Comforter who has thus far brought them on their

* Dan. xii. 3.

way to heaven! But, especially, when we meet with those who have *drank deep* of the waters of life, and live in close fellowship with God, then we should improve the precious moments for the welfare of *our own souls*; and from their spiritual observations learn more to enlarge in our public addresses on the most important of all subjects, *Christian experience*. Here is a field of action! Here are opportunities for doing good! What mighty privileges do we enjoy as travelling preachers! “May the Lord enable us to improve them to the uttermost, for his glory and the salvation of millions!”

4. But I must here observe, once for all, that these discourses are addressed only to ministers of the gospel. The private members of the church of Christ have a different calling; and if they improve the means which the Lord affords them, he will preserve them in the midst of all their business; and use many of them in their respective stations in his church for the advancement of his kingdom upon earth. One grand truth which I have been labouring to establish is this,—that when any receive a full call to the ministry, it is their duty to sacrifice every secular employment to it; and if not, that the divine unction which they received for their office—that peculiar apostolic spirit which, according to their measure, was bestowed upon them, and which none can comprehend but those who possess it, will soon be extinguished; and they them-

selves will incur the guilt of unfaithfulness to the vocation of God, in the high office to which he has called them, or in which he has been pleased to station them.

PART II.

I now proceed to consider the next grand particular in the Apostle's charge to Timothy: "Endure afflictions."

1. We have reason to bless God, that we are not called to suffer like the faithful ministers of Christ in former ages. A spirit of civil and religious liberty has accompanied even the spirit of infidelity; whereby the enemies of revelation have, in a considerable degree, disarmed and incapacitated themselves from injuring the church of God; and the earth has been made in a wonderful manner to help the woman.* We have succeeded to the ministry of that noble army of martyrs, who suffered "for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,"† and we are sent forth like them as sheep in the midst of wolves.‡ No thanks are due to our opponents, if we be not persecuted like our predecessors. If we had reason, like the martyrs of old, to fear the barbarity of the enemies of our religion—

* Rev. xii. 16.

† Rev. xx. 4.

‡ Matt. x. 16.

if the most cruel torments were the only recompense we could promise ourselves in this life for all our zeal and labours, we also should be brought to the alternative of renouncing Jesus Christ, and the sacred ministry with which he has honoured us, or to face these dangers with a holy joy. But on the contrary, what in comparison have we to suffer? Only the insults occasionally of the vilest of the people, which will not touch even the skirts of our clothes, if we suffer them not to affect our hearts; *and those crosses*, which are indispensably necessary to keep us at the feet of Jesus Christ, and to render us fit instruments for *his* service, who will not give his glory to another.

2. If we will be disciples, much more ministers of Christ, we must daily take up his cross.—Without this, he refuses to acknowledge us as his disciples, or to make us partakers of that glory, into which he entered not himself but by the way of the cross. “Who-soever doth not bear his cross,” says Christ, “and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”* “If [we be] children,” says St. Paul, “then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”†

1st. *But, perhaps, you will say, I am too weak to endure afflictions.*” Alas! It is because we

* Luke xiv. 27.

† Rom. viii. 17.

are weak ; because the least disappointment in our favourite pursuit makes us revolt against the will of Providence ; because contradiction raises our anger, or commendation and success our vanity and pride, that the Lord sees it necessary we should pass through tribulation and trials.

2. In short, What is it *to be weak* in the present sense of the word ? It is, to love ourselves excessively : it is, to live more by nature than by faith : it is, to suffer ourselves to be conducted by the vivacity of our own natural inclinations, and not by the wisdom from above. Now, with this excessive fund of self-love, if the Lord were not to manage our weakness, and to humble us by affliction ; if he did not strike our bodies with some habitual languor, to render the world insipid to us ; if he did not prepare for us some losses in our substance ; if he did not defeat some of our most favourite projects ; if he did not place us in such situations, that the most trying and yet unavoidable duties should fill up our happiest hours ; if he were not to raise up against us opposition by false brethren or by true brethren : In a word, if he were not to fix betwixt us and our weakness, some kind of barrier, which might be strong enough to arrest and retain us, we should soon be deceived by our false peace and prosperity ; we should soon be without a bridle for ourselves or our desires. The same weakness and self-love which makes us so sensible of trials and afflic-

tions, would make us still more sensible of, and less prepared for, the dangers of pleasure and prosperity.

3. If, therefore, we be discouraged under trials and afflictions, let us not endeavour to excuse ourselves, by saying *we are weak*. The weakness of our hearts arises only from the weakness of our faith; the soul of a Christian should be a strong soul, proof against persecutions, reproaches, infirmities, and death itself. The Christian may be oppressed, but he cannot be subdued; you may snatch from him his goods, his reputation, his whole fortune, yea, his life itself; but you cannot rob him of the treasure of faith and grace, which lies at the bottom of his heart, and abundantly compensates for all his frivolous and temporary losses: you may, perhaps, make him shed tears of sensibility and sorrow, for religion does not extinguish the feelings of nature; but his heart in an instant resists, disavows as it were his weakness, and turns even his tears into tears of piety. What shall I say? A Christian *rejoices* even in tribulations; he regards them as marks of the benevolence and watchful providence of his God, as precious sureties of future promises, and as the happy characters of his resemblance of Jesus Christ.

4. All the precepts of the gospel require strength from above; and if we have not sufficient to support the crosses which the Lord is pleased to lay upon us, we have not sufficient for those other duties which the gospel pre-

scribes. It requires strength of grace to pardon an injury ; to speak all the good we can of those who calumniate us ; or to hide the defects of those who would destroy our reputation or usefulness. It requires strength of grace to fly from a world which allures us ; to snatch ourselves from pleasures, or to oppose inclinations, which would draw us into evil ; to resist customs to which the usage of the world has given the authority of laws, or to use prosperity in a Christian spirit. It requires strength of grace to conquer ourselves ; to repress the rising desire ; to stifle the pleasing sentiments ; continually to recall to the strict rules of the gospel, a heart which is so given to wander. In short, were we to review all the precepts of the gospel, there would not be one, which does not suppose a strong and generous soul, fortified by grace. *Throughout*, it is necessary that we do violence to ourselves. The kingdom of God is a field, which must be cleared and rooted up ; a vineyard, in which we must bear the heat and burden of the day ; a career, in which we must perpetually and valiantly fight the battles of the Lord. In a word, the whole life of a true disciple of Jesus Christ bears the character of the cross ; and if we lose for an instant this strength of grace, we fall. To say then that you cannot endure afflictions *because you are weak*, is to say that you are destitute of the spirit of the gospel.

5. But, besides this, my brethren, however weak we may really be, we should have a con-

fidence in the goodness of our God, that he will never prove, afflict, or try us beyond our strength; that he always proportions the afflictions to our weakness; that he gives his chastisements, as he does his judgments, in weight and measure; that in afflicting he wills not to destroy us, but to purify and save us, and qualify us for greater usefulness in his church; that he who aids us, himself bears the crosses, which he himself imposes upon us; that he chastises us as a father, and not as a judge; that the same hand which strikes us, supports us; that the same rod which gives the wound, brings the oil and the honey to soften it. He knows *the character of our hearts*, and how far our weakness goes; and, as in afflicting us, his will in Christ Jesus is our sanctification,* he knows how far to weigh his hand, and lay the burden upon us.

6. Alas! What other design can our gracious Lord have in afflicting his ministers and disciples? Is he a cruel God, who takes pleasure in the sufferings of his servants? Is he a barbarous tyrant, who finds his grandeur and safety only in the tears and blood of the subjects who adore him? It is then for our benefit alone that he punishes and chastises us; his tenderness suffers, if I may so speak, from our woes; and yet his love is so just and wise, that he still leaves us to suffer, because he foresees that by terminating our afflictions, he would in the end

* 1 Thess. iv. 3.

increase our misery, and prevent our usefulness and glory. He is like a skilful surgeon, who has pity indeed on the cries and sufferings of his patient, and yet cuts to the quick all that he finds corrupted in the wound; he is never more kind or beneficent to his servants, than when he *appears* to be most severe; and it is indubitably evident that afflictions are necessary and useful to us, since a God so good and so kind can resolve to lay them upon us.

We read, in the histories of the martyrs, how weak girls could set at defiance all the barbarity of tyrants! how children, before they were able to support the labours of life, could run with joy to meet the rigours of the most dreadful deaths! how old men, sinking already under the weight of their bodies, seemed, by their cries of triumph, to feel their youth renewed like that of an eagle, in the midst of the torments of slow martyrdoms! And are you weak, my brethren? Then *that weakness itself*, if you be faithful to the grace of God, will bring glory to the faith and religion of Jesus Christ. It is *on that account* that the Lord has chosen you, to make known *in you and by you*, how much stronger grace is than nature. He “hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things

which are not, to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."* If you were born with any spiritual strength, you would do no honour to the power of grace; *that patience* which is now the pure gift of God, would then be justly attributed to man. Thus in a sense the weaker we are, the fitter instruments we become for the designs and glory of God. He delights to choose the feeble for his greatest purposes, that man may attribute nothing to himself; and that the vain constancy of the wise and the philosophers may be confounded by *their* example. His first disciples were but feeble lambs, when he sent them into the world, and exposed them in the midst of wolves. These are the earthen vessels which the Lord is pleased to break, like those of Gideon, that in them the light and power of faith might shine with greater splendour and magnificence. And if you enter into the designs of his mercy and wisdom, your weakness, which in your eyes justifies your murmurs or unfaithfulness, would prove one of the sweetest consolations of your trials.

8. "Lord," you would say to him all your days, "I ask not that proud reason or philosophy, which seeks all the consolations of its pains in the glory of suffering with constancy. I ask not that insensibility of heart, which either feels not its miseries, or despises them.

* 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

Give me, Lord, that sweet simplicity, that tender sensible heart, which appears so little fit to support its tribulations and trials: only increase thy comforts and thy graces. Then, the weaker I appear in the eyes of men, the greater wilt thou appear in my weakness; and the more will the children of this world admire the power of faith, which alone can raise the feeblest and most timid souls to that point of constancy and firmness, which philosophy has never been able to attain." "Endure," therefore, "afflictions."

2dly. 1. *Nothing is more common, than for ministers and private professors to justify their murmurs or unfaithfulness, by the character or peculiarity of the afflictions themselves.* We easily persuade ourselves, that we could bear crosses of another nature with resignation; but those which the Lord has laid upon us, are of such a character as can yield no consolation; that the more we examine what passes among men, the more singular we find our trials or afflictions to be, and our situation almost without example.

2. But to remove this feeble defence of self-love, so unworthy of genuine faith, I would answer, That the more extraordinary our trials or afflictions are, the more clearly may we discover the hand of Providence in them; the more evidently may we observe the secret designs of a God ever attentive to our interests; the more may we presume, that

under such new events he conceals new views and singular designs of mercy, for the welfare of our souls, and for our future usefulness in his church.

3. Now, what is the most powerful consolation under trials and afflictions? "God sees me:" He counts my sighs; he weighs my afflictions; "he puts my tears in his bottle;" he blesses the whole to my present sanctification and usefulness in his church, and to my eternal happiness. Since I have felt his heavy hand upon me, in so singular a manner that there seemed to be no resource remaining here below, I feel myself more than ever under his immediate inspection. Oh! if I had enjoyed a more tranquil situation, his eyes perhaps would not have been upon me as they are at present; perhaps I should have been forgotten, and confounded among those who have their portion in this world. Lovely sufferings! which, in depriving me of all human succour, restore to me my God, and make him my refuge and resource through his blessing. Precious afflictions! which, in making me forget the creatures, have rendered me, through the co-operation of rich and suffering grace, a continual object of the remembrance and mercies of my Lord!

4. But is there any one among us, who wishes that he may not be called to endure afflictions! Alas! Take care that the Lord does not hear thee in his wrath: take care that he does not punish thee in granting thee thy de-

sire ; that he does not find thee unworthy of his temporal afflictions ; for “ whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”*

5. To all these truths, so consoling to an afflicted soul, I could still add, my brethren, that if our pains and trials appear excessive, it is only through the excess of corruption in our affections, which gives strength to our sufferings: our losses or afflictions become so grievous to us, only through those attachments which bind us to *external* objects ; and the excess of our sorrows or chagrin is always the excess of an unjust love of the creatures. Alas, brethren ! the woes and afflictions of others are too often nothing in our eyes. We do not observe that the trials of thousands around us, are greater than our own ; that our afflictions have innumerable resources, which theirs have not ; that in our habitual infirmities, or in our trials in the church, we find in the number of persons who are still attentive to our wants, an abundance of comforts denied to others :—when we have lost a warm and faithful friend, we have many ways to soften our bitterness ; when persecuted by our relations or families, we can find in the tenderness and confidence of our friends and brethren, attentions and kindness which we found not at home. In short, we have an abundance of *human* sources of satisfaction, to compensate for our trials ;

* Heb. xii. 6.

and if we put into the scale, on one side our comforts, and on the other our afflictions, we shall find that our comforts, if improved, far overbalance our sorrows, BESIDES THE CONSOLATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

6. Truly, my brethren, it is not only the excessive love of ourselves, but *hardness of heart towards our fellow-creatures*, which magnifies in our eyes our own afflictions. Let us daily enter under the unfurnished and miserable roofs of the poor, where shame frequently conceals miseries the most frightful and affecting: let us go to those asylums of wretchedness, where calamities seem to be heaped together: it is there we shall learn what we ought to think of *our own* afflictions: it is there, that, touched with the excess of so many and great miseries, we shall *blush* to have given names to the lightness of our own: it is there that our murmurs and unfaithful intentions will change into expressions, and into the very spirit of gratitude and thankfulness: and less occupied with the thoughts of those light crosses which we bear, than with the many from which we have been delivered, we shall almost begin to fear *the indulgence* of our God, so far from complaining of his severity. “Endure,” therefore, “afflictions.”

3dly. 1. I will conclude this head of the Apostle's charge with the following important reflection: That *God, in all the trials and afflictions which he lays upon, or suffers to happen to, his zealous ministering servants, has but two ends in his view and in his gracious intention; first,*

their sanctification and eternal happiness; secondly, their usefulness in his church. Every thing he permits or does for them here below, he does it, or permits it, only to facilitate these gracious designs: every agreeable or afflictive event which any way concerns them, he has prepared for them, to make them more holy, useful, and eternally glorious. All his plans concerning them, have reference to these purposes alone: all that they are in the order of nature, their birth, their talents, the age in which they live, their friends, and their vocation—all these, in his views of mercy towards *them*, and mercy towards *the world*, have entered into his divine impenetrable designs for the eternal salvation of themselves and others; and not all the powers of earth and hell, NO, NONE BUT THEMSELVES, can possibly defeat or counteract them. All this visible world itself was only made for the world which is to come: all that passes here, has its secret connexion with eternity: all that which we see, is only the figure of things invisible. This world would not be worthy of the care of an infinitely wise and merciful God, but as far as, by secret and wonderful connexions, its various revolutions tend to form *that church in the heavens*, that immortal assembly of the redeemed, where he will be eternally glorified: he acts not in time but for eternity; and he is in this the great model which we should in every thing follow.

2. “ Ah! When shall it be, O our God, that our souls, raised by faith above all the crea-

tures, shall no more adore but thee in and through them all ; shall no more attribute to them events, of which thou alone, in thy immediate or permissive providence, art the author ; shall acknowledge in all the various situations in which thou hast placed us, the adorable conduct and wisdom of thy providence ; and in the midst of crosses themselves, shall taste that unutterable peace, which the world and all its pleasure can never bestow !”

3. Religion alone, my brethren, can afford us solid comfort under all our trials and afflictions. Philosophy may stop our complaints, but can never truly soften our grief. The world may stupify our anxiety, but can never heal it ; and in the midst of all its employments or amusements, *the secret sting of sorrow* will remain always deeply plunged in the bottom of the heart.—God alone can prove the effectual comforter of all our pains ; and is there need of any other for the faithful soul ? Weak mortals, by their vain discourse and ordinary language of tenderness and compassion, may speak to the ears of the body ; but it is the God of all consolation who alone knows how to speak to the heart.

4. It would perhaps be presumption in me to call any afflictions heavy, which I have experienced ; and it was probably owing to my want of grace, that they to me appeared to be great. But I can bless God, that ever I was tried and afflicted ; and hardly know for which to thank him most, his disguised or undisguised

mercies. O how he has broken my stubborn will, and humbled my proud heart, and moderated my ambitious views (though all seemed to be for his glory) *by trials and afflictions!* And I doubt not, but many of my brethren, as well as myself (though not in the same degree with me, because they did not equally need it,) can bear testimony to the grace and power of God in the use of this profitable means. Let us then, my brethren, “endure afflictions:” Let us “take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand.”*

5. “O God, it is thou alone who canst support us under all our trials: we are weakness itself without thee. It is thy grace alone, which can sanctify the means, and make our afflictions profitable. Lord, teach us to depend wholly upon thee: it is with thee alone, we desire to forget all our trials, all our pains, all the creatures. But, alas! too often have we wished, that the foolish projects of our own hearts should serve as the rule of thine infinite wisdom! We have wandered, and been lost in our thoughts: our imaginations have formed a thousand flattering dreams; our hearts have run after phantoms. We have desired more favour from men, more health of body, more talents, more glory, as if we had been wiser and better acquainted with our true interests, than thou, O omniscient Lord

* Eph. vi 13.

God! We have not entered, as we might, into the gracious designs of thy love in our favour. But O! from this time, thou shalt be our only Comforter; and we will seek, in the meditation of thy holy law, those solid and lasting consolations, which the creatures can never afford. Lord, take us into thyself; be thou the joy of our hearts, be thou the delight of our eyes, be thou our portion for ever! Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen."

[Faint, illegible handwriting, possibly a signature or scribble.]

DISCOURSE III.

2 TIMOTHY iv. 5.

Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

PART I.

1. **I**N my former discourses on St. Paul's charge to Timothy, we considered the necessity of true zeal in all the public duties of the ministry, and in our intercourse with the people of the world, and the necessity of watchfulness and enduring afflictions. We come now to enlarge on the two remaining particulars of the charge, "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

2. The Apostle's solemn and pointed manner of writing to Timothy, not only for his own sake, but for the benefit of the church in all ages, will appear the more necessary and indispensable, if we recollect that the corruption of the ministry has been always the grand source of the corruption of a people, of the general depravation of their manners, and of the extinction of all true faith.

3. Those who are acquainted with the religious history of Christendom, well know, that in proportion as the ministers of a church are holy, holiness will reign among the people. The purity of Christianity, wherever it has flourished, never has begun to decay but with the fall of the ministry, and disorder has generally begun at the house of God. Thus it is in a considerable measure *we* who decide, if I may so speak, on the salvation or damnation of the people: upon *us*, in some sense, depends the increase or diminution of the reign of Jesus Christ upon earth, the consummation or destruction of his work, the utility or inutility of his blood and mission, the glory or reproach of his religion, and all the designs of God concerning the salvation of man.

4. From the moment we enter on the ministry of the gospel, we become either holy pillars, to support the feeble; or stones of offence, against which the strong themselves may break in pieces: we become either brazen serpents raised on high, to heal through grace the plagues of the multitude; or golden calves placed in the camp of the Lord, to be an occasion to them of apostacy, wickedness, and idolatry. We are so situated, that we can neither stand nor fall alone: the destiny of those souls over whom we are set, is in a considerable degree awfully attached to ours!

5. Now, what a frightful situation is this for an *unfaithful* pastor! He may continually say to himself, "I am employed in the church to

destroy and not to build up: I am become the tempter and murderer of those souls, of which I ought to have been instrumentally the saviour and the father. I am charged with a dispensation of the gospel, and yet only make every thing which should facilitate the salvation of souls, turn out to their ruin; and I in effect employ *against* religion, all that which religion has intrusted me with for its maintenance and support." Behold here, without exceeding the truth, the character of a *bad minister*. Certainly, my brethren, a bad minister is the greatest plague which the wrath of God can suffer to spring up among any people.

6. But the more the situation of an unfaithful pastor is to be deplored, the more full of consolation is the character of a true minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. He continues on earth the mission and ministry of his adorable Master. He co-operates with him in the consummation of the happiness of the saints, in the edification of his mystic body, and in the accomplishment of all his designs of mercy towards man. He is instrumentally here below, as Christ himself, a saviour of his people, a reconciler of Heaven and earth: and when he shall one day appear before the throne of the great Judge of quick and dead, with all his own, he will be able to say to him with confidence, "Behold me, and the children thou hast given me. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is

lost. I render them back to thee, because thou didst deliver them to me, that they might be sanctified through thy truth, and might sing with all thy redeemed the eternal praises of thy grace."

7. O what a heavenly calling, my brethren, is ours! But our duties are as great and as heavenly as our vocation. Let us then together animate each other, both by the eminence and importance of our ministry, and by the glorious and comfortable fruits which are the consequences of its faithful administration!

8. Can we now be surprised at the repetition, in effect, which we find in the Apostle's charge; or rather the different points of view, in which he holds forth the duties of the gospel ministry? 1st. "Preach the word." 2dly. "Be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." 3dly. "Watch in all things." 4thly. "Endure afflictions." 5thly. "Do the work of an evangelist." 6thly. "Make full proof of thy ministry." The first four of these we have enlarged upon. We now come to the fifth, "Do the work of an evangelist."

The word *evangelist*, in its most comprehensive sense, implies a *preacher of glad tidings*, or, in other words, a *preacher of the gospel*, with all his concomitant duties. In the apostolic age, it more particularly signified an *extraordinary minister*, appointed to assist the Apostles in preaching and publishing the gospel—in watering what the Apos-

bles planted: and in this sense also it contained a very extensive meaning. But at present, it is generally applied to those inspired writers, who were employed by the Spirit of God to record the life and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must here, however, consider the word in its most enlarged sense; for Timothy was, without doubt, in every point of view, *a minister of the gospel.*

1st. In considering this division of our subject, *we shall, first, take a review of the numerous advantages of a zealous gospel ministry.*

1. A faithful minister, who consecrates himself to every good word and work, who enters into the minute examination of all the miseries and wants of his brethren, and labours to find a remedy for them all—represent, if you can, all the works of salvation and mercy among men, of which such a minister will be the instrument, through the blood of the covenant and the grace of the Spirit! He heals those hearts which are sick and alienated from God: he pierces the darkness, with which shame so often covers the indigent, and in affording them, by the means at least of his benevolent friends, a secret succour, spares them even the confusion of being relieved: useful institutions for the instruction or relief of the poor and the stranger, which come within his circle, find in his care, or in his zeal, resources which es-

tablish them, or which preserve them from falling, and give them a new solidity. O what public disorders does he prevent; what occasions of salvation does he improve! He stirs up the pious, and makes them useful in the conversion or sanctification of others: he presides at every holy enterprise; he is, at it were, the soul of piety in his circuit; even the greater part of those sinners who attend his ministry, but still live in sin or vanity, feel a hope that some day they shall be converted by his means. He animates all; he finds remedies for all. There is no public good within his circle, and consistent with his calling, to which he does not sacrifice himself; no good undertaking which he prevents; no sinner, who does not appear worthy of his zeal. In short, there is nothing which can quench or stop his divine ardour, or the holy fervour of his love; "and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."*

2. We read,† that the corpse of a man being thrown near the dead body of Elisha, it instantly revived; those eyes which death had closed, open again; his tongue is unloosed; and we see him come from the abode of death, and again to enjoy life and light. Alas, my brethren! Carcasses the most putrified, souls in which spiritual death and the corruption of sin have reigned abundantly longer, can hardly

* Ps. xix. 6.

† 2 Kings xiii. 21.

approach a holy minister, an ambassador of God, dead to himself, to the world and all its hopes, but they instantly, through grace, feel a virtue go from him, a breath of life which begins to reanimate them, to inspire into them good desires, and to rouse them from their lethargy; and which, in those who are faithful to these beginnings, will produce the fruits of grace and salvation.

3. And then his example! His piety, his disinterestedness, his mortified spirit, his modesty, his ministerial gravity, have such a secret, constant, powerful influence, that he may be truly said to be sent for the salvation of many. It is true, that neither the example nor labours of the holiest ministers can have the least influence in the regeneration or salvation of souls without the unction of the Holy Spirit; but the person, the words, the actions of a devoted ambassador of Christ, are all anointed, and breathe forth the savour of Jesus's name. What a happiness must it be then to a people, when God raises among them holy ministers, whose deep piety and crucified lives serve, so to speak, as spectacles to angels and men! They are a continual gospel before their eyes! "Do," therefore, "the work of an evangelist."

2dly. From hence appears the necessity of eminent zeal; in order to inflame with divine love the hearts of the people, and to bear down

all the obstacles which oppose the spread of the gospel.

1. Frozen discourses will never set on fire the souls of the hearers. Indeed, how can those ministers even *appear* to the people as animated with that divine fire which carries the sparks of grace to the coldest and most insensible hearts, who themselves are all ice in the practice of every duty; and who feel not themselves all alive for the salvation of either their brethren or themselves? If we fill up our public duties with an air of custom, of weariness, of reluctance, (which is inseparable from a life of lukewarmness,) and of unfaithfulness, in the pastoral office, we shall leave the same dispositions in those who hear us. Our labours will rouse neither our faith nor piety, and will leave the same spiritual death on the minds of our audience. Alas! my brethren, even in a holy and fervent minister, it calls for prodigies of zeal, application, patience, and labour, to bear down all the obstacles which the world, the devil, and the present corruption of manners, oppose to the success of his ministry. What then can the cowardly idle minister promise himself from his baseness and idleness? What fruit can he expect from a field, to which he never puts but a feeble languishing hand; and which seems to be intrusted to him, to be the sport of his cruel neglect, rather than the object of his care?

2. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth,"* says Christ. If a private professor, who lives in the spirit of lukewarmness, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven, and is rejected out of the mouth of Christ, as a lukewarm and disgusting drink which raises the stomach; what is a minister good for, who does the *particular* work of God negligently? What an object of disgust for a God who is jealous of his gifts! What an afflicting spectacle to that part of the church of God which beholds it—to see a place in *that ministry* which is designed for zeal, for labour, and for the salvation of souls, filled by a lukewarm idle minister, instead of a faithful labourer; instead of one, who would have enlarged the kingdom of Jesus Christ, who would have snatched from their miseries a glorious number of sinners, who would have edified and built up believers, and been the glory of Christ.†

3. Could the gospel have been spread through so large a part of the world, and the foolishness of the cross have triumphed over numerous and great nations, if those apostolic men who have preceded us, had regarded the oppositions which the people, yea, which the whole pagan world, made to the progress of the gospel? Where should *we* have been, if difficulties insurmountable by human prudence, had abated their zeal or suspended their la-

* Rev. iii. 16.

† 2 Cor. viii. 23.

labours ; or if, in the persuasion of finding us as we were, savage and rebellious, they had unhappily left us to the darkness of our primitive ignorance ? Do you fear inconveniences ? But what is there to fear, for a pastor who fills up his ministry with edification and fidelity ? “ What ? ” it may be answered, “ Contempt, reproaches, and contradictions.” But these are his glory, and form part of the present consoling reward of his zeal. “ What ? ” it may be added, “ Evil treatment and insults of various kinds.” But these are the most honourable seals of his apostleship. I grant, however,

3dly. 1. That *all this zeal should be continually guarded ; and that the universal maxim, which binds every private member of the church of Christ, should be particularly written on the hearts of his ministers—“ Let your moderation be known unto all men.”** There is a modesty which should run through the whole character of a minister of Christ, and should manifest itself in all his words and actions ; yea, even upon those occasions when he most unbends his mind.

2. Nothing is of more importance than the moderation and modesty of ministers who are consecrated to the Lord. The same decency, the same circumspection, the same majesty, which accompanies them in their public duties, should follow them every where ; and as

they are every where to consider themselves as the ambassadors of Christ, they ought every where to support the dignity of this character, in the wisdom of their words, in the chaste decency of their dress, and in the seriousness of all their actions. I have already, in a former discourse, spoken on this subject; but I would wish to enlarge a little farther, on account of its importance.

3. If the sacred writings, by which we shall be judged, make every idle word a transgression; if the gospel exacts from every *private* Christian such circumspection, reserve, and modesty in his conversation—what does it not require from the *immediate* ministers of Jesus Christ! The lips of ministers are, next to the word of God, the depositaries of divine knowledge, which they are incessantly to administer to the people; and when the Spirit of God calls them to the ministry, he says to them in some sense, as formerly to the prophet, “I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people:”* That is to say, to the end that you may make as a new heaven and a new earth, or at least as a part of it, the people intrusted to your care; that you may accustom them to regard me as the only God who deserves their affections and homage; that they

* Isa. li. 16.

may learn to regard themselves as a holy people consecrated to me alone ; that the heaven and earth which they behold, are the works of my liberal hand, which, with all things they contain, deserve not their affections ; and that I have prepared for them a heaven infinitely more glorious and eternal, where they shall enjoy, with my redeemed, pleasures for evermore. What follows from hence ? But, that our tongue is no more our own : that it is consecrated to the word of God, and the edification of the people : that witticisms and vain discourses are unlawful amusements in the mouths of believers ; but that they are profanations in ours !

4. Far be it from me to speak against the relaxations of innocent society : but that which I would say, my brethren, is this—that *our* conversation should be always marked with a peculiar character of piety, gravity, and modesty ; that, in conversing, we should with a holy joy endeavour to edify each other, and all around us, with words of love and truth : and that we should banish from our discourse all profane and immoderate joy, and all the low and all the genteel pleasantries of the world.

5. I would just add, that all our relaxations, even when we most unbend our minds, should have in them a peculiarity of decency, reserve, and seriousness. I know that both the soul and body need relaxation ; but those moments which we give to nature are neither useful nor

permitted, but as they dispose us for our duties, and prepare us for further toil. Repose is appointed for us, to the end that we may gain new strength to continue our course; and therefore every kind of relaxation which tends to estrange us from it, to discourage us, or to inspire us with a distaste of our toil and public labours, is to us improper, yea, criminal.

6. But as for you, my brethren, permit me to finish this head of my discourse with those words of the Apostle, "Ye have not so learned Christ."* No, brethren: it is not thus that you dishonour your ministry: it is not thus, that you turn into a stumbling-block the sacred character which you have received from Jesus Christ for their salvation. Continue then, my brethren, to conduct yourselves before your people in a manner worthy the holiness and gravity of your vocation. We live in times, when infidelity moves with gigantic strides; when the licentiousness of the public manners leaves us nothing to avoid the malignity of suspicion, and the contempt of the world, but this respectable gravity, modesty, and piety, supported throughout the minutest particulars of our conduct and manners. Irreligion is come to a point; and the world is charmed to find so many ministers like themselves. It seems to be a victory and gain to them, when they can persuade themselves, or when they can perceive, that any ministers

* Eph. iv. 20.

tread under foot the duties of their station.— They see not, that the unfaithfulness and misconduct of ministers consecrated to the service of religion, is the greatest judgment God can inflict upon a people, except the entire removal of the candlestick of the gospel.* Let none of *us* then, my brethren, increase the blindness of the world, by confirming it in its errors through our example. O! Let none of us become stones of stumbling, and the most grievous plagues to those, to whom we should be guides in the way of salvation!

7. In a word, my brethren, feed the flock which is intrusted to your care, with the tenderness of fathers, with the vigilance of guides, and with all the modesty, simplicity, and holiness, which become ministers of Jesus Christ. Let your example, under the grace of God, give you assurance of the fruit and success of your ministry: appear not occupied or touched with any thing but their salvation: forget, as it were, your own temporal interests; or never put them in the balance with the interest of *their* souls. Consider yourselves as *theirs*. Your calling, your mission, your functions, are only for *them*: give yourselves then wholly to them, as if you were created only for *their* benefit. “Do the work of an evangelist.”

* Rev. ii. 5.

PART II.

*I now proceed to the last head of my subject—
“Make full proof of your ministry:” So fulfil
the whole, that none may charge you with the neg-
lect of your duty. Let the world see, that you
make it your own and only work to win souls.*

1. How strong and comprehensive is this commandment! Should we not therefore frequently examine ourselves, concerning the purity of our zeal, and of our motives in respect to all the parts of our ministerial office—Whether we “make full proof of our ministry” in the sight of God as well as man? When we enter on any employment, should we not first inquire, Will God be glorified by this undertaking? Is it *his* work which I am entering upon? Is that which I purpose to myself, really my duty? Does divine love influence me to comfort the afflicted, to strengthen the weak, and to bring sinners to Christ? Does divine zeal urge me to cultivate in secret the fruits of my public labours; to support the rising conversation by spiritual discourse; to heal domestic dissensions by the counsels of meekness and wisdom; to reconcile fathers to their children; to restore to wives the affections of their husbands; and to carry the peace of Jesus Christ into all the families I visit? Does the spirit of ministerial vigilance and holy solicitude lead me into every work of mercy and piety: Do I “make full proof of my ministry?”

2. *Do I visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions?** Do I prefer “the house of mourning to the house of feasting?”† Can a father see his children on the point of being taken from him, without running to their succour, and leaving with them at least some farewell marks of consolation and tenderness? And is he a shepherd, or a savage, who sees his infirm, perhaps dying sheep, and condescends not to offer them at least his spiritual assistance? No, my brethren; a pastor, who neglects the sick of his flock must have a heart as hard as a stone, or as light as vanity. “I was sick,” will Christ say, “and ye visited me not.”‡

And if a poor sinner on the verge of eternity, though not a member of our society, implore my assistance at that awful period, shall I refuse him my aid? How little must I know of, or at least how little regard, the value of a soul, if I do not fly to his rescue? for who knows but he may be called, even by my instrumentality, at the last hour of the day? And what shall I answer before the tremendous Judge at his awful bar, when all the intricate threads of human events are fully unravelled, if I find that *that immortal soul*, now lost for ever, would have been saved, if I had been faithful? Will not his blood, will not his soul, *be required at my hands?* God enable us to “make full proof of our *ministry!*” But again,

* Jam. i. 27.

† Eccles. vii. 2.

‡ Matt. xxv. 43.

3. Do I faithfully visit the poor? If such as neglect to feed the poor with *material* bread, shall on the great day be placed on the left hand of the Judge, how can those escape condemnation, whose office is to dispense to them *spiritual* bread, if they neglect so sacred a charge? I well know, that the generality of our Travelling Preachers are unable, out of their little pittance, to afford much to the poor, for the supply of those temporal remedies or comforts which their miseries demand; and therefore this is not what the gospel particularly requires of them; nor do the poor in general, who know them, expect it from them: though I have no doubt but *you*, my brethren, give according to your ability, yea, and many of you, as the Apostle says, beyond it; softening at least by your cares, your sensibility, your advice, and your prayers, the pains and distresses of your poorer brethren, and suffering and sympathizing with *those* whom you cannot temporally relieve. We are, you know, ministers of things future; and the riches which God showers upon the people by our means, are the riches of grace and eternal glory.

Let us then be, if possible, more ready to succour, with our prayers and advice, those among our people, whose poverty incapacitates them from recompensing our labours, than those who might reward them by temporal kindnesses, and at the same time least need our counsels. Let us not divide our cares among our people, according to the means

they possess to compensate for them, but according to the need they have of the assistance of our ministry. Let the name of *the poor* be honourable in our eyes. Let us not have the hardness of heart to add to the distresses of their situation, that of our neglect and indifference; but let us make ample amends for our want of power to supply their bodily necessities, by our zeal and assiduity in the things which relate to their souls: let us make them conscious, that their poverty is a title which only endears them the more to us, as making them more dependent upon us, and ourselves in consequence more responsible for them. Let us consider them as the most privileged part of our flock; as, in their outward condition, most resembling Christ when he abode upon earth in the flesh. Let us consider ourselves happy in a constant interest in their prayers. "The Lord heareth the poor,"* says the Psalmist. When they are poor in spirit also, then it is the voice of that Dove which is always heard and answered, that groans within them. Let us suffer with them in compassionating their pains: let us remember that our mission, like that of our adorable Redeemer, is peculiarly *to the poor*. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," says Christ by Isaiah, "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel *to the poor*;" and "this day," says he in the synagogue,

* Ps. lxi. 33.

“ is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”*
 “ Go,” says our Lord to the disciples of John the Baptist, “ and show John again those things which ye do hear and see : the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, *and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*”† As if he had said to them, Your Master is so perfectly acquainted with the nature of the Messiah’s kingdom, and the entire crucifixion to the pomps and vanities of the world which its members must necessarily experience, that one of the strongest proofs to him that I am Christ, will be this—that “ the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” Let us then, my brethren, be thankful that we labour among a people who are in general poor; for it is among such, that the grace of the Spirit of God is most abundantly shed abroad. *We* receive, it is true, but little from their indigence; but the harvest is always rich for Jesus Christ! Well did the primitive bishop, on the demand of the Roman emperor, that he should deliver up all the treasures of his church, bring to him the poor indigent members of his flock, who, though destitute of worldly comforts, were rich in faith! So it has been, is, and probably will be, till the great millennial year rushes in upon the world.

* Is. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. 21.

† Matt. xi. 4, 5.

Let us then take delight in daily visiting *the poor*: let none of us manifest so little faith, and crucifixion to the world, as to regard those ministers most happy, who labour among the rich. They may be better paid; but will their usefulness be greater? They may find those who are most ready, because most able, to supply their temporal wants; but will they find those who are most ready to profit by their instructions? The thorns and anxiety accompanying riches, generally choke and stifle the word of God:* The field may be more adorned, but the soil in general is barren and ungrateful. Whilst on the contrary, a minister, who faithfully labours among a poor people, possessing simple and teachable spirits, penetrated with a love of the great obvious and essential truths of the gospel, and submissive in their indigence to the divine hand which corrects them—such a one, I say, has the consolation of daily seeing his ministry abundant in fruits for heaven. Let us then consider it as one of our highest duties *to visit the poor*: Let us not account our labours in any wise recompensed, but when they produce the fruits of life and salvation; and let us not estimate concerning our duties or station, except by the gains we can make thereby for Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. When all these holy duties, privileges, and vocations, are duly estimated, may not the

* Matt. xiii. 22.

minister of the gospel profitably enter into some such soliloquy as the following? "I can neither through my unfaithfulness damn, nor through grace save, myself *alone*. From the time that I enter the holy ministry, I must necessarily be either a plague sent from God, or permitted in his wise providence for the punishment of mankind, or a gift from heaven for their blessing and felicity. I must resemble either that dragon in the Revelation, who, in falling, drew with him the third part of the stars of heaven, or that great antitype of the brazen serpent, Jesus Christ, who being lifted up draws all who believe to himself, and heals all the diseases and infirmities of the people. I have only this alternative.

"What a most powerful motive is this for fidelity in my office; for watchfulness over my conduct; for zeal in my ministry; for filial fear in my situation; for a continual renewal in the spirit of my vocation; for glowing hope, or confusion, in the expectation of the coming of the great Bishop of souls, who will then demand from me an account of the use or neglect of my talents, and who will present to me those souls which he had intrusted to my care, either as my condemnation, if they have perished through my neglect; or as my glory and crown if they have under his grace found life and salvation by the means of my ministry!"

5. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are

pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.’*’

“Whatsoever things are true,”—Hold in its purity that most sacred depositary of faith and truth, the holy world of God. Draw from the pure sources, from the Scriptures, all the principles of holiness and morality, by which you should regulate your own conduct, and that of your flocks. Never depart from those rules of truth, without which all that bears the name of piety, is nothing but hypocrisy, and a scandal to others.

“Whatsoever things are honest,”—Show a due reservedness in your manners and conversations. Let nothing which is in the least degree indecent, or contrary to the sanctity of your ministry, ever escape you. Bear always on your countenance a holy modesty, and that ministerial gravity, which makes religion respectable even to those who love it not: avoid all suspicious familiarities; and remember, that *your* wilfully saying or doing any thing which may cause suspicion, is a crime in a minister, which innocence itself cannot justify.

“Whatsoever things are just,”—Let the most delicate and inviolable equity be manifested in all your conduct, disinterestedness in all the exercises of your ministry, prudence and love in your zeal, and an equal affection (as

* Phil. iv. 8.

ministers) towards all the faithful who are intrusted to your care, as you are equally the spiritual fathers of them all ; no animosity, except against vice ; no predilection, but in favour of holiness ; no acceptance of persons ; but let the wants alone of your flocks regulate all your cares and all your attention.

“ Whatsoever things are pure,”—Inspire the people with a due respect for all the ordinances of the gospel, by administering them yourselves in the fear of God and with holy dignity. On all such occasions, appear as the elders before the throne of the Lamb, struck with the majesty of God, and expecting a revelation of his love to your own souls and those of the people ; and let such modesty, awe, and depth of piety, be manifested in all your administrations, that your people may learn from your whole deportment, what dispositions are necessary for themselves on such occasions. But, above all, and in all, and through all, let us press upon every one the necessity of *holiness*. Let us never forget our calling—that we were called and sent forth to raise a *holy people*. Let all your doctrines, and all your discipline, all your labours, and all your conversation, centre in this. Let this be the grand burden of your testimony—“ *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*”

“ Whatsoever things are lovely,”—Render yourselves amiable in the eyes of your people, if you would be useful to them ; amiable, not by improper familiarities, but by partaking of

their afflictions, and becoming their comforters in all their distresses. Gain their hearts, and draw their souls to Jesus Christ. Render not your sacred function odious, by the rudeness, the moroseness, or the caprice of your humours; nor contemptible, by a baseness of sentiment. Refuse not upon any occasion, to the believers or penitents who are committed to your charge, your assistance or advice, since you owe to them your very life. Be *their* consolation, and they will be *yours*; love them as your children, and they will love you as their fathers.

“Whatsoever things are of good report,”—Neglect nothing which can preserve your reputation pure and spotless in the judgment of your people. Abstain from every thing, even the most lawful, which can become a cause of offence to your brethren. Remember, that the fruit of your ministry is in a great measure attached to the good opinion they have of you. Disgrace not therefore our holy religion, by disgracing yourselves. Let your examples prepare the way for the success of your instructions. Let no one have occasion to reproach you for doing that, which you are obliged to testify against to others; and let the sweet savour of your lives spread through your circuits, and become itself a constant censure of the vices or faults of others.

In short, my brethren, if the remembrance of the glorious army of martyrs, whose blood became the seed of the church, can affect

you ; if the example of your late venerable father in the gospel, and of the first Methodist preachers, who endured the heat and burden of the day, and bore the ark of the testimony against an opposing world, can move you ; if you have ruling within you (as I doubt not you have) the principles of holiness and truth—“ if there be any virtue, think on these things.” If our most excellent discipline, so faithfully enforced by your predecessors, inspire you with a sacred emulation ; if you be ashamed to degenerate from the holy fortitude of those who have gone before you, whose praise is in all our churches,—“ if there be any praise, think on these things.” Then, under Almighty grace, you will continue to do honour to your holy ministry ; you will be the blessed means of sanctifying the people, and “ the God of peace will be ever with you.”

DISCOURSE IV.

ACTS vi. 4.

*But we will give ourselves continually to prayer,
and to the ministry of the word.*

PART I.

1. **A**TENTION to, and fidelity in the exercise of the duty of prayer, is not one of those obligations, which are peculiar to the ministry of the gospel. It is one of the most essential duties of Christianity. Every real Christian is a man of prayer: his views, his desires, his hopes, his affections, yea, even his conversation, are all in heaven. Every Christian is a citizen of the world to come, and a stranger here below: All exterior objects which here surround him, should be to him only so many ties and obstacles, which, retarding his course and prolonging his banishment, ought to increase and inflame his desire after his country: All the temptations which the world offers or throws in his way, all his secret conflicts with his passions—all these should lead him to lift up his eyes continually to heaven; there to send up his sighs and prayers, and to address

himself in secret, and in every place, to that faithful, heavenly, invisible witness of all his dangers, and all his struggles, from whose protection alone he expects his consolation and his strength. Every Christian then is a man of prayer; and he who lives not in the exercise and spirit of prayer, is a man without God, without divine worship, without religion without hope; and if this be an incontestable truth, what instructions are not due to the people, to animate them to the love and exercise of prayer.

2. But, my brethren, if the spirit of prayer be the soul of Christianity; if that homage of love which we render to God in publishing his greatness and loving kindnesses, or in soliciting his mercies and succours—if all other ordinances of the gospel are only helps and assistants to this spirit of prayer; if all external worship be established, only to form of the simple believer *the man of devotion*, the man of prayer; if he who calls himself a Christian, and possesses not this spirit, and of course lives not in the exercise of it, be without religion, without God, without hope: what a monster must be the minister of this religion, an interpreter of its laws, an expounder of its doctrines, a dispenser of its graces, a public intercessor before God for the faithful, if he himself be not a man of prayer, if he be not faithful to this essential duty! O my brethren, if there be any among you, who do not feel the full power of these truths, what cause have we to lament on

your account, before that holy Dove, that true source of the spirit of prayer, who groans and prays incessantly in the hearts and by the mouths of his ministers!

3. St. Peter went up upon the house-top to pray.* In our text we are informed, that all the apostles were resolved to give themselves continually to prayer: and from the gospels we find that our Lord himself spent whole nights in prayer, on mountains, and in other secret places:† And shall any of us presume to live in the omission of the frequent and habitual exercise of this supporting, nourishing, quickening, indispensable duty? But I have known many of you, my brethren, for years; and am confident, that one of the most leading features of your character, is the exercise of this holy duty in its spirit and power. I therefore chiefly desire to stir up your pure minds to remembrance: and O that I may be the means, under divine grace, by this little mite of love, of confirming you in your present spirit: yea, of animating you to still greater fidelity, and to higher degrees of fervour, in this blessed conversation with Heaven.

4. We are called to be the lights of those who are in darkness: but it is prayer and study, always accompanied to the sincere minister of the gospel with the Divine light, which truly render us lights to the people. Prayer may be termed the science of the heart, that

* Acts x. 9.

† Matt. xiv. 23, &c.

alone renders useful those studies, which form the science of the mind.

5. It was the indubitable and experimental conviction of this truth, confirmed to them by the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, which induced the college of Apostles to come to the determination in my text, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word:" not, that they did not before live in the exercise and spirit and very life of prayer; but they were determined now to lay aside every weight which duty could dispense with, and give themselves up more entirely than ever, to their holy communion with God.

6. It is probable, that, like Moses of old, the Apostles had, from motives of pure love, taken an active share in all the minutest parts of the temporal affairs of the church: but a murmuring arising between the Grecians (that is to say, such converted Jews as had been dispersed abroad among the Greeks) and the Hebrews, in respect to the distribution of the church's money among their widows respectively, the Apostles embraced this opportunity of shaking off that heavy burden, which so intruded upon the more important parts of their ministerial and apostolic functions; declaring, that they would give themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

7. We must here observe, to prevent mistakes, that though the Apostles delivered up

the management of the poor, and other inferior points, to the direction of subordinate officers of the church, they still reserved in themselves the ultimate power of decision, in all matters which they judged of sufficient importance to call for their interference: this is evidently clear, from the following chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. But we proceed to show how indispensably necessary the duty of constant prayer, which the Apostles themselves could by no means dispense with, is for every minister of the gospel; having already enlarged upon the other subject, *of the ministry of the word*, in my former discourses.

8. In considering the present subject, we shall, first, show the necessity of continual prayer, as it respects *ourselves*, particularly considered in our ministerial capacity; and then, secondly, as it respects *our flocks*.

I. First, As it respects *ourselves*.

1st. *The temptations we meet with, to distaste and weariness in our duties, can only be overcome by the exercise and life of prayer.*

If we would fill up our ministry with fidelity, we must wholly devote ourselves to it; we must sacrifice our ease, our rest, to fill up its various calls; we cannot dispose of our time as we please: It is a holy servitude, which makes us no longer our own, but wholly the people's: We must be able to say with the Apostle, that heat and cold, fatigue, difficult roads,

hunger and thirst, are some of the fruits of our ministry, and signs of our apostleship. We even often labour among the ungrateful : our pains are often recompensed with indifference, unteachableness, and murmurs ; yea, they sometimes draw upon us the aversion of those, whose salvation we seek. When we are under these trials, we have reason to guard against disgust and discouragement. We are ready, perhaps, to throw up the great work in which we are engaged, when we see not the end of it, and but little of the fruits. On such occasions, self-love, unsupported by the wished-for success, reclaims its rights, and secretly insinuates, that such painful and, apparently, almost useless cares cannot be our duties. Now how can we possibly support ourselves under such temptations to disgust as these are, which are so dangerous, and so frequent in the course of a long and laborious ministry, if we do not continually renew our strength at the feet of Jesus Christ—if we have not the consolation of continually drawing near to him, to open to him all our sorrows and discouragements, as to the great Shepherd whose place we occupy. It is *there* we shall be confounded before him, for making any account of the light troubles of our functions, when compared to those of the first propagators of Christianity, who sacrificed their lives for the truth : It is *there* we shall blush to have indulged a temptation to have laid down our arms almost before we had begun the combat, and to have

been disheartened and discouraged by labours so light ; when those holy ministers of God had defied tribulations, anguish, hunger, nakedness, persecution, fires, gibbets, and all the fury of tyrants, who would have separated them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord : It is *from thence*, my brethren, that we should always return with a new taste for all the functions of our office—with a new zeal for the salvation of souls : returning from thence, what before appeared burdensome and painful, would now become light, yea, delightful to us ; and the fatigues and contradictions of sinners, inseparable from the duties of our office, would be to us a most comfortable proof of our calling to the ministry of the word. Let none of us, my brethren, deceive ourselves : Without the constant exercise and life of prayer, we continually feel every thing which is disagreeable and distressing in our ministry : We draw in a yoke which overpowers us : We bear with reluctance the burden and heat of the day. But by prayer all is sweetened : the yoke is no more heavy : the labours increase ; but the pain, the disgust, the discouragements, vanish away. You sometimes, my brethren, perhaps, are ready to complain of the oppression and weariness of spirit, which the multitude and difficulties of your avocations bring upon you, and of your inability to fulfil your duties : But if you address yourselves constantly to *Him* who changes our weakness into strength—if you be faithful to the duty of

prayer, these difficulties will disappear; the mountains will become plains; you will find yourselves *new men*; and you will no longer complain, but that you have not laboured or suffered enough for Jesus Christ.

2dly. *If prayer alone can sweeten all the pains and discouragements attendant on the exercise of our sacred functions, it alone can prevent, or deliver us from, all the dangers to which they expose us.*

1. As there is nothing, perhaps, more dangerous in our situation, than the dissipation of mind, which is, almost unavoidably, more or less produced by the constant administration of exterior duties, I will venture to assert, that the exercise and spirit of prayer can alone preserve us from its bad effects. It is in reality but too true, that the inward man weakens, and the life of God decays in the soul, in the midst of all the public exercises and constant activity which our ministerial office requires, *if we do not continually give ourselves to prayer.* We are real losers ourselves, while we give up ourselves incessantly to the wants of others; we lose the secret and hidden life of faith, in which consists the whole soul and life of piety: we accustom ourselves to be *all outward*, always from home, and never within our own hearts: we at last appear before the people to perform the public duties of our office with dissipated spirits, divided by a variety of foreign and tumultuous images which occupy

them ; and we no more experience *the silence of the senses, and of the imagination*, in respect to every thing but the great and solemn work on which we are entering, which is so necessary to call us back to a holy recollection, and to a secret consciousness of our utter unworthiness and incapacity of ourselves to stand betwixt the living and the dead. Alas ! We are no more acquainted with these things ! Thus, in labouring always for others, and hardly ever for ourselves, the spiritual strength of the soul wears out ; we live entirely out of ourselves ; we give ourselves up to this life of hurry and agitation ; and we at last become incapable of any profitable communion with ourselves or with God ; we even seek for occasions and pious pretexts to fly from retirement ; we cannot be in any wise comfortable without the company of others, and are immediately tired with God alone.

2. Now, this conduct and disposition of mind, which has nothing blameable in it in the judgment of the world, appears in a very different light in the sight of God. Alas ! We quite exhaust our spiritual strength, if we be not continually repairing it at the footstool of the throne of Grace ; all our cares and solitudes are confined to external things ; we act and stir *outwardly* for God, but we do not commune and wrestle *privately* with him, though true love thinks all hours too short in communing with its Beloved : We run, but we run *alone* : the Lord, whom we neglect to call to our as-

sistance, leaves us to our own weakness ; and our ordinary humour, temper, vivacity, vanity, and love of popularity, rule us, rather than the genuine love of our duty, and the love of souls.

3. There is nothing but faithfulness in the exercise of prayer, which can save us from these rocks : And, without neglecting in the least degree the necessary functions of our ministry, we may live in this blessed exercise ; we may continually carry with us that spirit of piety and recollection, which moderates, regulates, and sanctifies all our external duties, and even makes them so many preparations for returning with still greater advantage to retirement, recollection, and communion with God. It is for these reasons, that we are repeatedly informed in the gospels, that our Lord warned his disciples to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation :* In St. Luke he says, “ Watch ye, therefore, and pray always ;” † and in St. Mark, “ Take ye heed, watch and pray.” ‡

3dly. *Our necessary intercourse with the world makes the constant exercise of prayer an indispensable duty.*

1. Though the exercise, the spirit, the very life of prayer, is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every private Christian, we ministers, more than others, have continually need of the help of prayer. The more our duties lead us

* Matt. xxvi. 41. † Luke xxi. 36. ‡ Mark xiii. 33.

into the midst of the world, the more do they expose us to its vanity and seductions, if they be not supported by the spirit of prayer. It is not sufficient, that we are not infected or debilitated by the contagious air which we must there breathe; we are required to appear among men, clothed with more strength, more modesty, more virtue, more holiness, than the generality of professors themselves, in the midst of whom we must daily be: *We* ought every where to be the sweet savour of Jesus Christ. But how difficult must it be for a minister, if the habit of prayer has not established in him a certain solidity of virtue, to find himself continually in the midst of the abuses and dissipations of a vain world, to hear daily the apologies which the world makes for itself, and not to be shaken or weakened in the spiritual life thereby! He carries with him a heart, void of all those deep sentiments of religion, which the habit of prayer alone can engrave upon the soul, and influenced by all those inclinations which can render the world amiable to him! There are but too few among believers, who do not, sometimes, feel themselves inwardly seduced and shaken by the objects which surround them: What then can that minister do, who carries nothing with him but his weakness and his frailties? And though decency may keep him within certain bounds, yet still the world is in his heart; he adopts it for his own; and there is nothing now to be observed, even in his public admin-

istrations, of that firmness, and becoming majesty, which announce the minister and ambassador of God: he is now like salt which has lost its savour; and which is not only unable to preserve other things from corruption, but is itself changed into rottenness and putrefaction.

2. A minister, therefore, who lives without the habit of prayer, without fidelity to that sacred and indispensable means of grace, however irreprehensible he may otherwise be in the eyes of men, is but the shadow of a minister: he is but a bare representation of a pastor of the flock of Christ: he has not the soul, the reality of that holy vocation; and his whole ministry has nothing in it but an empty title; which neither binds him to God, with whom he has no communication, nor to the church of God, to which he is of no manner of use.

3. When I speak of the necessity of prayer for a minister of the gospel, I do not mean that this holy exercise should occupy the greatest part of the day: he owes himself to his flock, and his public duties ought never to suffer by the length of his prayers. But I understand hereby, that prayer should always precede his public duties, and sanctify them; I mean also, that the spirit of prayer should accompany him *throughout*; that he should in every thing, even in the most indifferent of his actions, show forth that "inward man, which is renewed" through prayer, "day by day"*—that

* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

secret commerce with God, wherein consists the essence of religion and piety ; that he render his ministry in all places respectable, and make his very presence alone an instruction to all those who approach him. Behold what I understand by the spirit of prayer, so essential for a minister of the church of God.

4. We are, my brethren, divinely appointed to combat the vices and unruly passions of the world, to destroy the empire of the devil among men, and to establish and to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Our ministry snatches us from external repose, and clothes us with armour : but our arms are only prayer and faith working by love. It is from these divine arms, under grace, that all our instructions, all our labours, and all our efforts, derive their whole strength and success : Without these, we are but weak rash men, exposed without defence in the midst of enemies, with whom we ought to have been prepared to fight ; and soon become the miserable sport of their seductions, and of the snares which they continually throw in our way : that is to say, We soon ourselves become like to them, whom we ought to have converted to God and gained for Jesus Christ. *Like minister, like people !* Would to God, my observations were never verified. But, alas ! from long experience in the ministry of the word, I am indubitably convinced, that a minister, without the spirit of prayer and habitual recollection, cannot long be supported in the divine life ; he becomes dissipa-

ted : he neglects his duties, especially where a cross accompanies them ; or he performs them without piety, without any of that deep inward sentiment of true religion, and often without that respect and holy dignity which the world itself expects : till at last he becomes a stumbling-block and an offence to the flock, and sometimes even a public reproach to the church to which he belongs.

PART II.

II. I now proceed to the second head of my discourse ; namely, to show the necessity of our living in the constant exercise and spirit of prayer, as it respects the interests of *our flocks*.

1st. *The exercise, spirit, and life of prayer, are necessary, not only to preserve us from disgust and discouragement in our duties, and from all the dangers with which we are surrounded in all our pastoral engagements, in our intercourse with the world, and otherwise ; but also to assure fruit and success to our ministry.*

1. It is not sufficient, that we run no hazard of losing our own souls ; (if that were possible, in respect to any prayerless person ;) it is still more necessary for the church of God, that we be useful to others. Now, you well know, my brethren, that we may cultivate the ground,

we may plant and water, but it is God alone who gives the increase :* But how can we expect it, if we be not faithful in asking it—if we do not, by our fervent and continual prayers, draw down from heaven those blessings on our labours, which alone can make them fruitful? Too many labour without fruit, without success, because they labour *all alone*, and as if the success depended only on themselves. They expect it from their own gifts, their own cares, and the improvement of their own understandings. They call not HIM to their assistance, who alone can give the blessing to all their toils, and render them useful.

2. I repeat it, my brethren, The little usefulness of many ministers, even when they fill up all the public parts of their office, is entirely owing to the want of living in the spirit of prayer. They think they have discharged every thing required, when they have fulfilled all the external duties of their ministry; and never infer from the little fruit of their labours, that there is some secret vice or essential neglect which renders them useless.— Thus, whilst they engage not God by their prayers in the success of their undertakings; whilst they begin them without solemnly and earnestly addressing themselves to him, that he himself would prepare the hearts of those they are going to instruct,—they spend their days, as at one time did the Apostles, in cast-

* 1 Cor. iii. 6.

ing their nets, and taking nothing. They live, perhaps, a long and painful life, (if they do not entirely plunge into the world,) and at last die, with having done little, if any thing at all, in the gaining of immortal souls for Jesus Christ.

2dly. *The constant exercise and spirit of prayer are indispensably necessary to obtain divine unction.*

1. What success can that minister promise himself, on scripture-grounds, who accustoms not himself to live within the vail—who comes not constantly to the throne of grace, there to fill himself with the love of those truths which he is about to declare, and with that spirit of unction which alone can render them lovely and profitable to the people—to draw from thence, that affecting zeal, that grace, that strength, which is irresistible? What success, I say, can he possibly promise himself, who comes to address his audience as *from* God, who yet never himself speaks *to* God? What dryness in his discourses! He announces truths; but they come from his mouth, and not from his heart; nor are they those, which the Father has revealed to him in secret. He instructs with spirit; but it is with the spirit of man, and not with the Spirit of God. He shows forth the truth; but he does not make it amiable. Those external actions, which he gives himself in order to persuade,

do not even *appear* to persuade, to touch, to penetrate *himself*. A spiritual person easily perceives, that he speaks a strange language, which is not drawn from the bottom of his heart. Solomon, from the language of the two women, quickly discovered the true mother. It is very easy for a truly spiritual person, to distinguish between a true and a false shepherd, from their language and discourses—to determine, which is the true father of the flock ; which is he who speaks the language of paternal love, who bears his children on his heart ; who is continually employed before God in their behalf, and who is abundantly more jealous of *their* safety and salvation, than of *his own* titles of shepherd, minister, or ambassador of Christ. And I appeal to you, my brethren, for the truth of my observation—That a holy minister, a man of prayer, with only moderate talents, will be more successful, will leave his congregation more affected and influenced by his discourse, than many others, whose talents are vastly superior, but who have not by prayer drawn down that unction, *that tender taste of piety*, which alone knows how to speak to the heart. A minister speaks very differently the truths he loves, and which he is accustomed to meditate upon, and taste all his days at the feet of Jesus Christ ! The heart has a language, which nothing can imitate. In vain does a minister thunder from the pulpit, and put his studied actions and forced clamours in the place of zeal and piety.

We may always perceive *the man* : we may always feel that it is a fire which descends not from heaven. All that vehement and forced noise in the preacher, never announces the descent of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of those who are assembled to hear. I am not now speaking of the genuine cries of sinners and mourners in Zion, when struck and humbled under the word. I well know, that thousands, in these lands, can refer, under grace, their conviction or conversion to those times of weeping, of melting, of crying, of apparent confusion in the sight of the world, but of blessed order in the sight of God. I speak only against the substituting on the one hand of human wisdom and human art, or on the other of noise and clamour, for the unction of the Holy One of Israel.

2. I cannot, my brethren, help dwelling on this important subject. I must repeat the question—What success can our discourses produce, if the habit, and life, and spirit of prayer draw not down upon them *that grace*, that unction, which alone makes them useful to those who hear? Without this, the whole is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The preacher speaks only to the ears of his audience, or at best to their understandings, merely because the Spirit of God speaks not by his mouth. The spirit, by which he speaks, and which animates his tongue, is not that spirit of *unction*, of force, of fire, which, as it formerly moved on the face of the waters, so now moves

upon the passions of the heart quiet in its sins, troubles it, agitates it, and then separates and clears up the chaos. It is in vain for him to thunder or borrow his zeal from without—*throughout the whole*, he only, as the Apostle speaks, beats the air: his language is as cold, as barren, as insipid as his heart; and the ministry of the word is no longer to him but a forced duty, which disgusts him, which overwhelms him, and from the labour of which he excuses himself as much as possible; or otherwise, it is a theatre of vanity, where he rather seeks for the vile commendations of those that hear him, than for their conversion and salvation.

3. How can that minister make the people taste the sweetness and power of the truths of God, who has never tasted them himself, or does not at least *now* taste them at the footstool of the throne? How can he ever inspire the people with a love of prayer, or a conviction of the necessity of it, who experiences not the consolations, nor feels the wants, which make the habit of prayer so essential to every true believer? How can he form real Christians, that is to say, *spiritual men*, “whose life is hid with Christ in God,”—*he*, whose whole life is a life out of himself and out of God, and whom the life of prayer does not cause to enter into himself, and into an examination of his own heart? No, my brethren! Take from a minister the spirit of prayer, and you take from him his soul, his strength, his life:

he is no more than a dead carcass, which quickly infects those who approach it.

3dly. *Ministers of the gospel* “are ambassadors for Christ, to pray the people to be reconciled to God;”* and not only so, but to plead with God through the great Atonement in their behalf.

1. But how can they who are not known or acknowledged of God plead with God for the people, when the want of the spirit of prayer has shut up all access to his throne; when they have not contracted, by their fidelity in the exercise of prayer, that holy familiarity with him, which authorizes them to lay before him with confidence the wants of their flocks, and to bring down into the hearts of the penitents the blessing of pardoning love, and into those of believers the blessings of establishing grace, strength against temptation, and the perfect love of God; in a word, to use a sacred violence to the mercy of God in Christ, and to speak to him all the language of tenderness, pity, faith and zeal in behalf of their flocks—that language, which the constant habit of prayer alone can teach us?

2. “Howbeit,” says our Lord, speaking of bodily diabolical possessions, “this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting:”† And can we imagine, that less prayer is necessary

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

† Matt. xvii. 21.

to overturn the kingdom, the power, yea, the very nature of the devil in the souls of men? What is then sufficient for this? I answer, *faith* and *prayer*, with the promises and blessings annexed thereto. “Verily, I say unto you,” says Christ to his disciples, “if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree; but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”* O that we had all of us but faith and piety sufficient to give full credit to the word of God! then should we know and be astonished at the truth of those words of our Saviour, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father: and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”† Accordingly, the great Apostle, that close copier of the life of Christ, writes to the Colossians,—“We—do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,”‡ &c. and to the Thessalonians, “What thanks can we render to God again for you, &c. *night and day praying ex-*

* Matt. xxi. 21, 22. † John xiv. 12, 14. ‡ Col. i. 9, &c.

ceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith."* And we may be assured, that the Apostle would never have prayed so continually and exceedingly for his flocks, if he had not been certain that his prayers would be heard for many of them in a glorious manner.

Therefore, 4thly.—*If prayer were not so indispensable for ourselves in particular as it is, we owe it to our people.*

1. Are we not charged, by our character of pastor and minister, to pray for them without ceasing? Is it not a duty incumbent on us to lay before God the wants of our flocks, and to solicit for them the riches of his mercy? Should we not groan before him by reason of the vices with which too many of our hearers, among whom we labour, are infected; and which all our cares and all our zeal are not able to correct? Are we not bound to ask at the throne, strength for the weak, compunction for hard-hearted sinners, and perseverance for the righteous? The more numerous are the wants of our people, the more earnest and frequent should be our prayers. We should never appear before God, but like the High-Priest of the law, bearing before the Most High the names of the tribes written on our hearts; that is to say, the names of the

* 1 Thess. iii. 9, 10.

people intrusted to our care : this should always be a principal subject of *our* prayers.— Such is the order of the dispensation of grace. Though every genuine Christian is a king and priest to God and the Father, ministers especially are the public conduit-pipes, through which the divine grace and blessings run to the people : they form the grand public resource, by the instrumentality of which the goodness of God in Christ corrects the disorders which reign among men.

2. You see then, my brethren, on the whole, that prayer is the most intimate and inseparable duty of a gospel-minister : it is, if I may so speak, the soul of his office : it is, under the grace of God, his only safety. This alone sweetens all the distastes and discouragements he meets with : this alone guards him from all the dangers, with which he is surrounded from his intercourse with the world, or from the spirit of professors themselves : this alone, under grace, assures success to his ministry ; alone imparts the divine unction to his discourses ; alone enables him to give a taste of the divine truths to the people, having first tasted them himself in communion with his God ; alone qualifies him to plead successfully with God in behalf of his flock ; and therefore is an absolutely indispensable debt, which he owes to his people.

I shall now conclude the whole with a few general deductions from what has been advanced.

1. A minister, who lives not in the spirit and exercise of prayer, who prays only in a formal manner at set seasons, to satisfy a hardened conscience, is no pastor; he is a stranger, who is no wise interested by the wants of his flock: the people who are intrusted to his care, are not his children; they are poor orphans without a father; his heart, his bowels, say nothing in their behalf; he loves the title which puts them under his direction, but he loves not *that* which is a grand means of their conversion and salvation: he loves not *the office* of a shepherd: he loves not the flock: for if he loved it, could he omit any essential duty in behalf of the faithful, the mourners, or the sinners, intrusted to his care, to the end that none of those whom the Father had given him might perish? What say *you*, my brethren? A pastor, who lives not in the exercise of prayer for his people, not only loves them not, but deprives them of that which they have a right to exact from him: in depriving them of his prayers, he deprives them of a resource, to which God is always pleased to adjoin many graces, many blessings: he fills the place of a holy shepherd, whose prayers *would* have drawn down a thousand blessings on the poor flock, and is absolutely guilty, in a great degree, of all the crimes which the prayers of that holy man would have prevented. Examine, therefore, if you be faithful in representing to God all the wants of your people; if you be solicitous, importunate, to draw down

upon them the gracious regard of a good God. O brethren, the fervent prayers of a faithful pastor are rarely useless. *That* God, who has charged us to pray for our people, has also promised to hear us.

But, 2. May I venture, without offence, to urge the following objection (conscious how inapplicable it is to most, if not all of you, my brethren)—“How can a travelling preacher have much leisure for prayer, in the midst of the vast multiplicity of business which a circuit requires?” Alas! In the midst of all our labours and cares, how many vacant, unemployed moments have we? Can a pastor, an ambassador of Christ to mankind, God’s minister, charged with the important office of presenting the wishes and prayers of the congregation before the throne, not have time to present his own!—a dispenser of the doctrines and graces of the gospel, not hold constant intercourse with Him who has intrusted to him this glorious ministry, and in the name of whom he speaks and acts!—never render an account to God of the gifts and celestial riches with which he has been intrusted! The royal Psalmist says of himself, “I give myself unto prayer.”* And again, “evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice:”† And once more, “Seven times a day do I praise thee.”‡ Now, can any of us imagine, that the concerns of a mighty empire,

* *Psa. cix. 4.*† *Psa. lv. 17.*‡ *Psa. cxix. 164.*

which lay on the mind of the royal Psalmist, were less than the care of a circuit? Again, the Scripture informs us, that Daniel, when prime minister of the greatest kingdom in the world, “kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before God.”* O that the Lord would now pour out upon us all, more abundantly than ever, the spirit of grace and supplication!

But, 3. It is not, my brethren, the devotion of a part of your lives in the exercise of prayer, which we so much press upon you, as the privilege and consolation of *those souls*, retired into themselves, who are occupied in meditating on the wonders of the law and grace of God; and who taste, far from the world and in the secret places of his tabernacle, *what happiness they enjoy* who love nothing in comparison to him, and who hold communion incessantly with him. That which is essential to us, is *the spirit* of prayer, which we ought to carry with us continually and into all our duties: that which is particularly requisite for us, is, before we enter on our public offices, always to go to the feet of Jesus Christ, there to fill ourselves with that spirit, which enables us to perform our duties holily for ourselves, and usefully for others: it is, when we have finished our public duties, to go for some precious moments to refresh ourselves before God, and there to recover fresh strength to begin them again with new zeal: it is, to accustom

* Dan. vi. 10.

ourselves to this secret and almost perpetual intercourse with God; to find him every where; to find ourselves always with him; and in every place, and every thing, to find occasion to raise ourselves up to him. Behold in what sense a minister of the gospel should be a man of prayer. O my brethren, if this spirit of prayer animate not all our duties, we shall have much reason to complain, while we are performing all that is painful in them, and omitting the only thing which can soften them, support us under them, and give them, under God, the wished-for success.

4. What a misfortune then is it, for a people to have over them a prayerless pastor; I mean one, who does not live in the life and spirit and exercise of prayer; one, who is governed by a spirit of dissipation, destitute of the spirit of prayer and recollection; who is kept only by the fear of man from falling into scandalous disorders! What assistance can this unfortunate people promise themselves from such a minister! Can he administer to them those words of piety, unction, and consolation, which can only be received from Him, "in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells for the Church which is his body?" Can he successfully oppose the vices and public disorders which surround him? O! to be properly affected by these, he must be filled by that zeal which is the flame of love; he must feel the value of the souls among which he labours: but to have a heart susceptible of this zeal and this sympa-

thy, he must be often softened and melted down at the foot of the cross, in meditating on the price which these souls have cost our adorable Redeemer. I therefore once more say, in what a miserable state is that unfortunate people, who are cursed with a prayerless minister! He *should* have been like a salubrious cloud, placed between the heavens and the precious field confided to his care. He *should* by the habitual exercise of prayer have received from on high those holy influences, with which he should incessantly have watered, enriched, and rendered fruitful, that land which he is charged to cultivate. But having no communication with heaven by prayer, he is only one of those "clouds without water, carried about of wind."* No heavenly dew flows from his bosom; he imparts nothing, because he receives nothing: or if he do impart any thing, it is only some dreadful rumour, a stench and a public noise of his scandal and fall!

5. Let us, my brethren, lay to heart these sacred truths. Let us never lose sight of them through the course of our lives. *The spirit of prayer is the essential spirit of Christianity: But* IT IS THE SOUL, THE SUBSTANCE, THE LIFE OF A GOSPEL-MINISTRY. Every thing in our exterior duties tends to unite us to God—to raise us up to him: and shall our spirit and our heart *only* be unmoved, in the midst of so many

* Jude 12.

sacred employments, which call us back to him: in the midst of so many graces and loving-kindnesses, as we are continually endeavouring to dispense in the ministry of the word, and which flow from him alone: in the midst of so many errors, disorders, and vices, which we daily see increasing among the people who surround us, and which call so loud upon us to implore *his* pity, and to have recourse to him who alone can correct them? All these things considered, is it possible for any one of us to regard a secret and constant intercourse with God as a pain and a cross; and, in respect to present experience, be obliged to consider him as the people did formerly in the midst of Athens, AN UNKNOWN GOD!

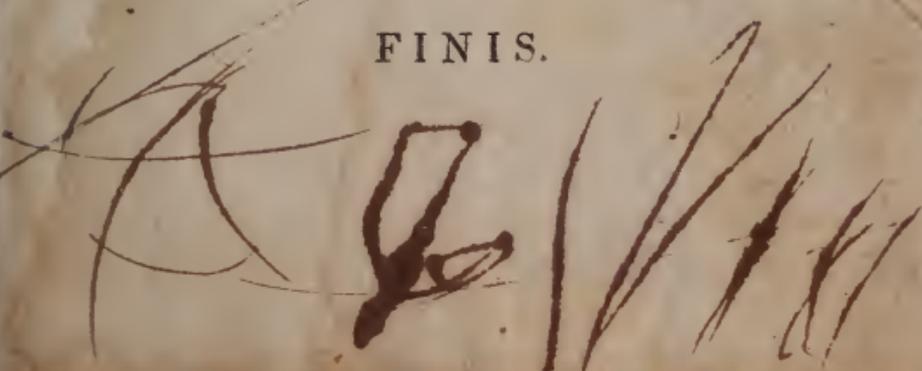
6. In short, a real minister of the gospel is a *man of prayer*. Prayer is his grand employment, his safety, his first and perpetual duty; and, I may add, is, under grace, the grand source of his consolation. Our instructions will be always barren, if they be not watered with our tears and prayers. Even if our gifts be small, but we support them by our prayers, our defects will be in a great measure supplied, and *divine unction* become the blessed substitute.

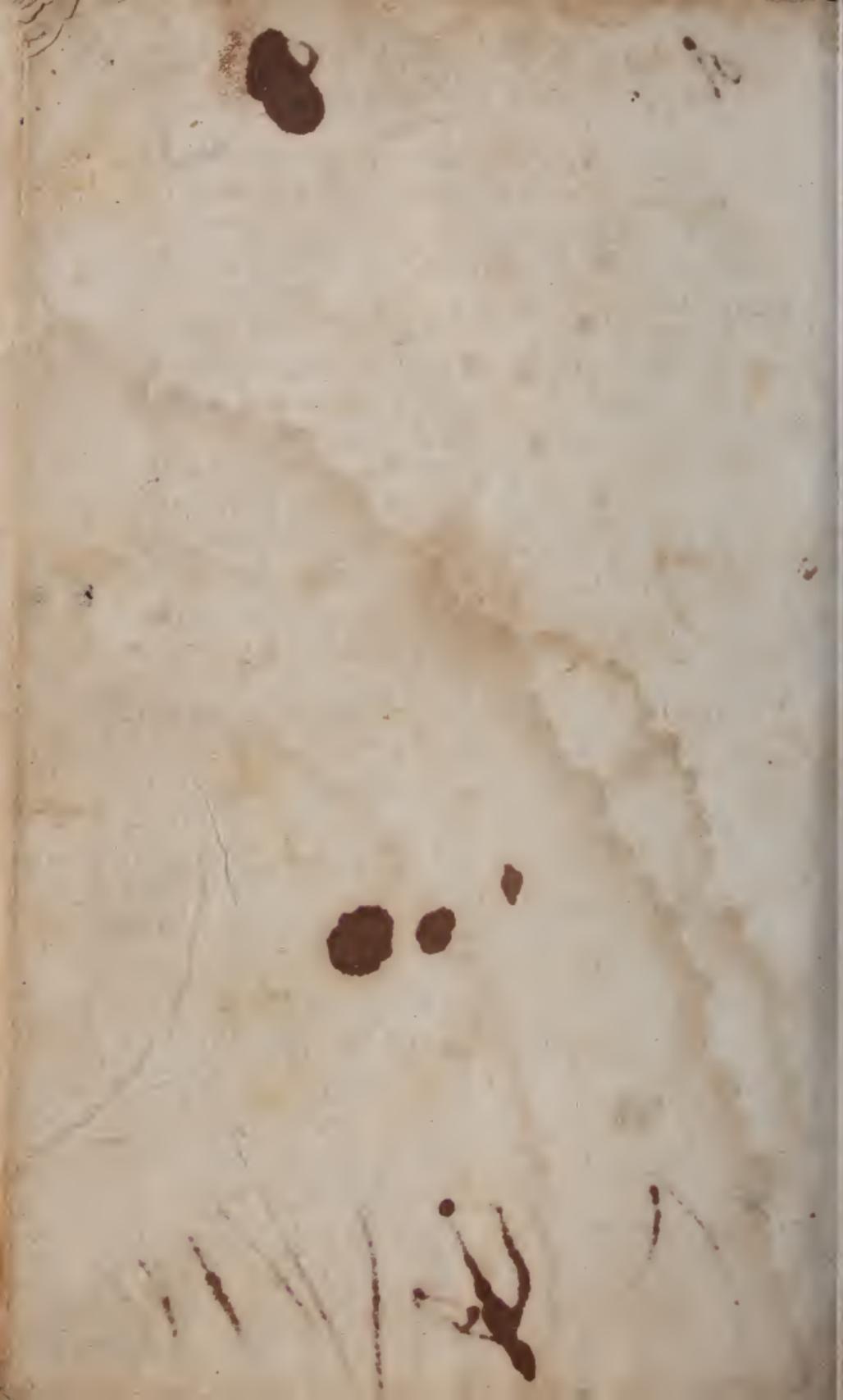
7. Therefore, I once more for all repeat it again, a minister who prays not, *who is not in love with prayer*, is not a minister of the church of God: he is a dry tree, which occupies in vain a place in Christ's garden: he is

an enemy, and not a father, of the people: he is a stranger, who has taken the place of the shepherd, and to whom the salvation of the flock is an indifferent thing. Be then, my brethren, faithful in prayer, and your ministry will be more and more useful; your labours will be more and more delightful to you; and the evils of the church of Christ, and of the world in general, will daily diminish.

“ O my God, give to all the ministers of thy gospel a tender and paternal heart towards their people; then will they always know how to address thee in their behalf; then will their zealous spirits be one continual prayer, speaking to thee for the souls which lie so near to their hearts! But more particularly, bless the preachers of our connexion, throughout Europe and America, with the abundance of thy grace, and of this spirit of prayer. Glory be given to thee, thou hast already bestowed much of it upon them: O! preserve it, increase it, enflame it, till their very life be one constant sacrifice to thee: till, by being daily stamped with brighter and brighter characters of thyself, they continually bring down, like thy servant Moses, a bright shining from the Mount.”

FINIS.





~~James M. Smith~~

~~James M. Smith~~

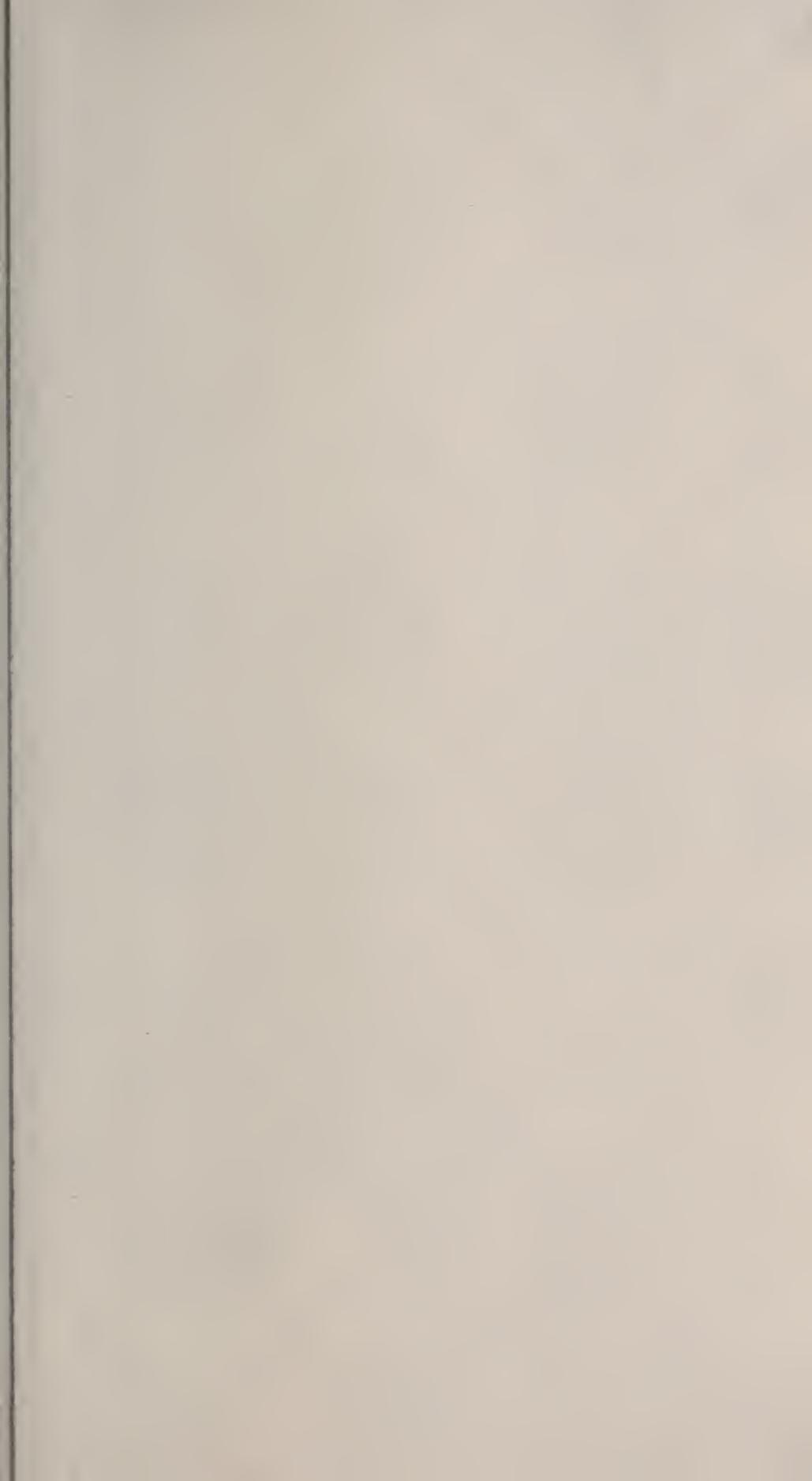
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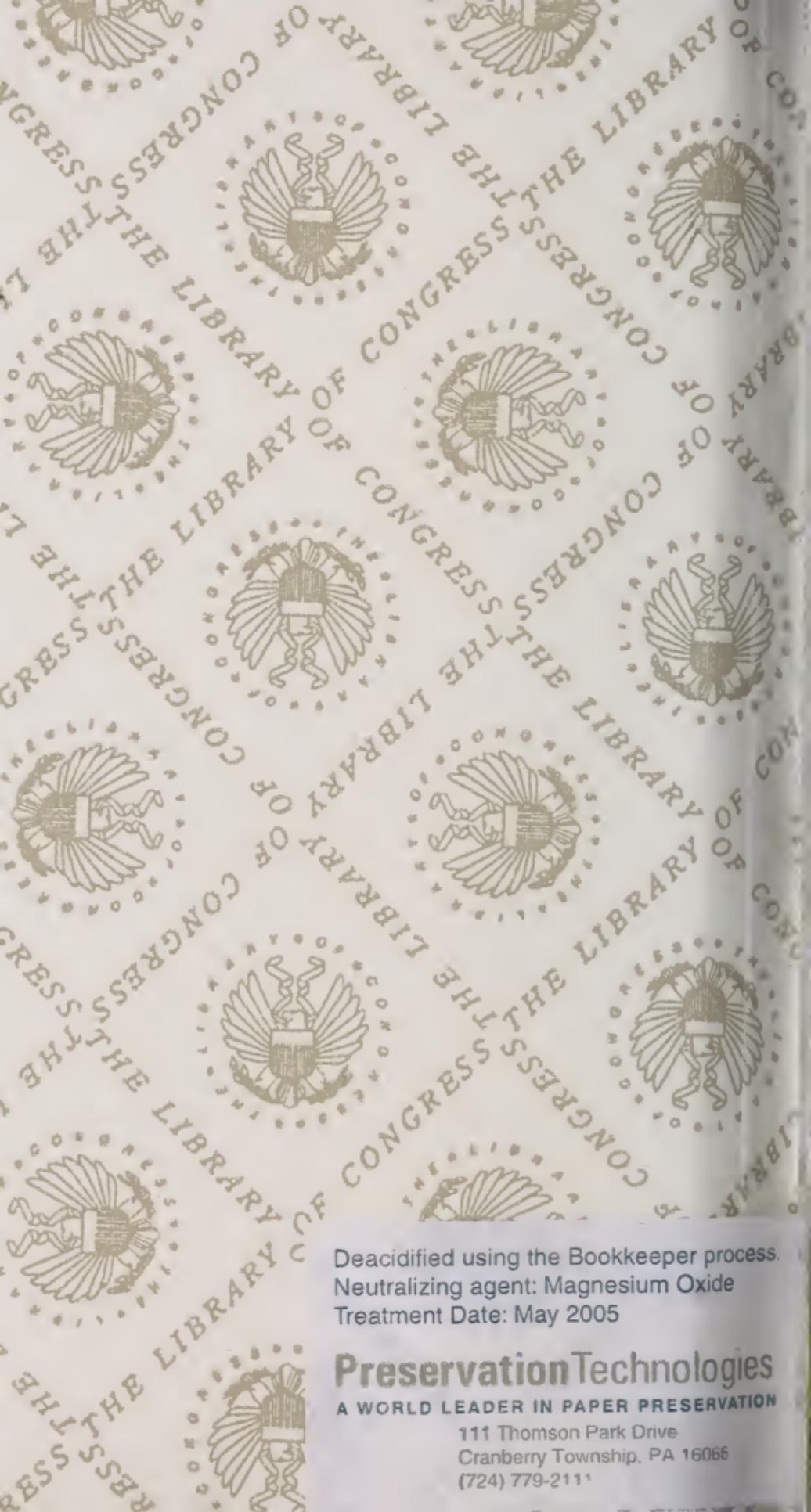
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