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Ministerial

A LETTER TO A PREACHER

By

Adam Clarke, LL.D. F.A.S.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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**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. F. A. S.

*[Endnotes have been placed after the Appendix, at the very end of this file.]

*[Transcriber Note: Within the text of this fine work by Clarke, I have replaced many "our" spellings, such as: labour, honour, neighbour, etc., with the more modern "or" spellings. Also, immediately to the right of some words or phrases, I have inserted within brackets a synonym, definition, interpretation of the sense, or an observation. Other than these changes, the text is quite the same as Adam Clarke wrote it in 1819. I highly recommend this treatise as very appropriate material for those who plan to enter the ministry. While indeed certain items within it belong to a different time and place than those of modern, American, prospective ministers, much of Clarke's advice is very relevant and much needed by them here and now.]

"Study to show 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," I Tim. iv, 12.

**ADVERTISEMENT
TO
A LETTER TO A PREACHER**

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 labored 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 edition has been repeatedly required; and now a fourth.

In revising this 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 labored 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 borne, 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, January 1, 1819.

A LETTER TO A PREACHER

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 honor 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 honor, 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 rest: 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 naught 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 afterward 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 savor; and, in our connection, 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.

1. In what are called the Larger Minutes, which contain the doctrine and discipline of the Methodist Societies, and in which the wisdom and experience 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 any 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 toward 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 permit: not of cleaning your own shoes, nor those of your neighbor.

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 gentleman thus: "Qui inter se eodem sunt nomine ab ingenuis oriundi, quorum majorum nemo servitutem 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 sprang 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. Wesley 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 common sense, is a 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, savor 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. [Transcriber Note: Translated for preachers today: Take good care of your car.]

12. "Everywhere 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 in to the work of the ministry. In order to do 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 servant of God must not strive but be gentle toward all; apt to teach; patient: in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves," 2 Timothy 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 off uncharitableness, 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 toward 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 labor. 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 freewill 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 [to] scatter a congregation, but I never knew it [to] gather one.

Indeed, it savors too much of pride and self-love. It seems to say, "Why do you not come 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 off 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 granted, 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 labors. 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 is 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 Psalms 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 labored 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 means of salvation to them that hear.

5. Never take a text which out of its proper connection can mean nothing. I traveled 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 thy 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 connection they mean nothing. Beware of this, and never do violence to the word of God, by taking a text out of the connection 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 Origen 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 excellences -- 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 words from his neighbor. 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.

When 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 endeavors to honor 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 connection 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 neighbors: "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 favor 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 demeanor 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 defense, 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 erections 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 a 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 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, *[See Endnote #1] 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 spirit it breathes; and both you and your congregation will soon find, that it is, no dry, formal service -- no lip labor. 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 then 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 labors 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. viii, 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 seventy years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, 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. viii, 1 3, &c., that they had even forgotten the feast of Tabernacles, and every thing relative to that ceremony.

As we nowhere 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; "m' phorash," from "pharash," to expand; they analyzed, dilated, and expounded it at large.

Thirdly. They gave the sense; "u 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; "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 pretense 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 propriety 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, endeavor 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 labor.

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 endeavored 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 endeavor 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 endeavors 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 neighbor; and his excellences 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. Beside 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." *[See Endnote #1] You may abridge this form, and this you will find often necessary; but you can't amend 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 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, clerk, 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, and 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 orders, 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, afterward 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 afterward 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 Bristol; 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 Canterbury. 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; on the 8th of September, 1762, he baptized the Prince of Wales, and afterward several of their majesties' children. We hear nothing of his ever having been rebaptized. If his

baptism was not a Christian, sufficient, 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 clergy man 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 ascended 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 an 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 degree 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

connection, 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 laborer 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, [to] 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 soberness of temper will endeavor 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. Whitefield 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 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 hanged. 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., everywhere; the consequence was, they were despised or pitied, without being esteemed.

6. Wherever you go, discountenance that disgraceful practice (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 sprang, on which they have never been engrafted, 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 drivelings of religious nonage [infancy], 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 *Encyclopaedia Perthensis*: "We have heard it affirmed (say the editors) that those well meaning people called Methodists have long practiced 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 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 honorable 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 [credit], 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 within 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 offense 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, [coverings of cloth, leather, etc. for the leg below the knee, or for the ankle.] in a parlor 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., out 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 washstand, 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, orderly, regular, decent man. *[See Endnote #2] 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 endeavor to profit by it.

6. Observe rule and order in everything; 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 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've seen that tract but once since; yet from that day until now, I have not drunk 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 unravel, how men can act in this way, and preach afterward! 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, moldy, Gibeonish 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, 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 been, 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 would 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 nature; and others have decried them, who, being of a lazy, indolent habit, wish hereby to excuse and sanction their oscitancy [negligence] 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 an 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 while 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 nonimprovement 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 ruffs 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 means 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 knowledge 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 exceeding 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, candor 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 everywhere; 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 endeavor 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 endeavored 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 honor, 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-defense) ringing the Goth and Vanda-changes on the popish eulogium of ignorance! *[See Endnote #3] If these persons be in the prime 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 connection 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 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 connection. 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 Deathbed 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 *Connections* 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 with the geography of the countries where the scene of their labors 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. Jude 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 imagine 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' 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, 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 traveled 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' Improvement of the 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 Lettres* 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 [flat, insipid] 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 [clashes] and contentions, persecutions, heresies, and crimes. The collection of the Greek ecclesiastical historians, published from the edition of Valesius, by Mr. Reading, Cantab. 1720, Greek and Latin, 3 volumes folio, 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, folio. 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. 8 vo., 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 Spenser; 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 Spenser; and certainly there was not a better judge of poetry in the nation in his time. He told me once that he believed Spenser, 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 Shakespeare: 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 labor.

Although I have been of considerable standing in the connection, 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 favor, 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 favor. 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 connection: 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 traveling 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 toward 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.

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 love 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 behavior, 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 had natural tempers, loses that life of God by which they were controlled or kept at bay, she becomes intolerable. Avoid a person of this character, though as rich as Croesus, 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 self, 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 [too insistent upon beauty] 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 a 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 hindrance, 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! [even when] 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 favors 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 anywhere 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 signify 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 cetera. The bad effects of these you may in some measure endeavor 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. *[Clarke himself died through exposure to Cholera while faithfully doing the work of his ministry. See the biography of Clarke by J. W. Etheridge.]

2. The best I can say to you on this subject is, Never join hands with your unfavorable 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 upward 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 practiced 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 practice this frequently in traveling in hot weather, all fever 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 traveling 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 traveling 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 typhus 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 toothache, 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 labor; 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 [weak liquid foods] in the morning: -- these exceedingly relax and weaken the fibers of the stomach, and prevent it from performing its proper functions.

8. It is of vast consequence to have the feces expelled from the body as soon as nature indicates the necessity of it. On this delicate subject I must observe, that the feces, 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 feces, 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 feces 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 feces 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 endeavored 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 forbade him to obey the urgent demands of nature; and the consequence was, the premature death of one of the greatest philosophers in the universe. *[See Endnote #4]

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 the 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 [a quack doctor] 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 I am not writing about the restoration of health, but about its preservation. And, 3dly, 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 burden 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 very 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 traveling, 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. iii, 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, therefore, of the people is, to inquire in the most serious manner how they are to hear so as to be saved.

1. Endeavor 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 fulfill 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 means 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 unerring 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 neighbor; 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 blessed 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 gives it to you such as it is: and remember, if he give 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 acquaintance; 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 harness 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 plow, 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, and 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 honored 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 whom today 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 labored; 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 is 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 laboring 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.

ENDNOTES

1 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 supper; and so appropriate and excellent are they, that no one ought either to amend 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. -- American

2 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 toward God, and his benevolence toward 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."

3 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 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 grammaticas, tanto pejor theologus;" the better grammarian, the worse divine; and Claudius Espeaesus, one of the doctors of the Sarbonne, acknowledges, that among their best authors, Graecum nosse suspectum fuerit; Hebraico proprie haereticum; if a man understood Greek, he was suspected; if he knew Hebrew, he was considered a heretic.

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