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A

DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
QUALIFICATIONS

NECESSARY TO

A GOSPEL MINISTER,

CONTAINING

ADVICE TO MINISTERS AND ELDERS, HOW TO CON-  
DUCT THEMSELVES IN THEIR CONVERSA-  
TIONS AND VARIOUS SERVICES, AC-  
CORDING TO THEIR GIFTS  
IN THE CHURCH  
OF CRHIST.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same  
one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,  
If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God : if any  
man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth,  
&c. 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

BY SAMUEL BOWNAS.

PHILADELPHIA:

WILLIAM D. PARRISH & Co., 4 NORTH FIFTH STREET,  
1847.



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

THE publisher of this second edition has prefixed to this volume the preface to the journal of Samuel Bownas, written by Joseph Besse, as it contains a short discription of him. But for a more full account, the reader is referred to his instructive journal, printed in London in 1795 ; by which it appears that he made two visits to America, the first in the year 1702 and returned in 1706, and of his second visit, he says, in page 171 :

“In about twenty-two months and odd days I finished this journey, from the 22d of the Tenth month 1726, to the 2d of the Eighth month 1728, and in that time I travelled by land and over rivers about five thousand three hundred and twenty-two miles, besides passing and repassing the great ocean; and as I had been out of that country somewhat more than twenty-one years, and found so great an increase of the professors of truth, I had a curiosity to examine a little into it, finding most of the old meeting houses very much enlarged, some to hold double, and some treble, and some four times the people that the old ones would in my first going thither, and even now some wanted to be either enlarged, or new ones built at proper distances ; besides the account of new houses built in that time, in places where were none, nor meetings but what were kept in private houses, which grew so numerous, that



necessity put them upon erecting houses to accommodate themselves. In New England and Rhode Island are twelve: in the government of New York are six: in both east and west Jersey are nine: in Pennsylvania thirteen: in Maryland four: in Virginia nine: and in North Carolina three. In all, there have been fifty-six new meeting houses built within these two or three and twenty years past, and in these provinces there are about ten places more that want where they have none, and many old ones want to be enlarged, not having room for half the people. Now the extraordinary increase of professors is much to be attributed to the youth retaining the profession of their parents, and marrying such: for indeed most of the people in Pennsylvania are of this profession, as well as in the Jerseys, and Rhode Island, so that young people are not under the temptation to marry such as are of different judgments in religion, as in some parts."

Although at the time this work was first printed, "it was not thought fit to be made so generally public, as such tracts which were intended for general benefit and may concern all;" yet at this time it is believed that the republication would be serviceable, as it embraces the substance of the principles of Friends in relation to the subjects treated of.

JOHN TOWNSEND,

*West Philadelphia.*

7th month, 1847.



## BESSE'S PREFACE TO BOWNAS'S JOURNAL.

THE following sheets exhibit to thy perusal a plain man's plain and undisguised account of his own progress in religion; an artless narrative of his sincere and hearty endeavours, as much as in him lay, to promote the doctrine of the gospel of Christ in the earth.

The motives inducing him to undertake the office of a preacher, appear to have been perfectly consonant to the precepts of holy writ, and to the practice of Christ and his apostles, viz :

1st. A clear, cogent and convincing evidence of a divine call, and heavenly impulse thereunto.

2d. An indispensable sense of his duty necessarily obliging him to yield obedience to that call. And

3d. The sweet returns of inward peace and divine consolations accompanying his obedience therein, did greatly conduce to his confirmation and preference in the way of his duty.

To the performance of which he found him-



self measurably prepared and qualified; for his own experience of the love of God, and of the operations of his holy Spirit, in gradually purging out the corruptions of his own heart, did excite and augment in him a Christian love to his fellow-creatures, attended with an ardency of zeal, and an incessant desire for their conversion.

An inward purgation from sin is so necessary, and so essential a qualification of a gospel minister, that no man can be such without it;

Nor doth God send any unclean messengers on his errand:

It being the constant method of his divine wisdom, under the gospel dispensation, through the purging of his holy Spirit, to cleanse and purify the inside of every vessel, which he permits to be made use of in the service of his sanctuary. Wherefore,

Every unsanctified pretender to preach the gospel of Christ, deserves to have his mouth stopped with that unanswerable query of our blessed Saviour to the Pharisees of old; "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" Matt. xii. 34.

A practice of this nature abounds with the grossest of absurdities, and stands emphatically exploded, even in the time of the Mosaic law, by the royal psalmist, in these words: "Unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to"



declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?" Psalm 1 : 16.

But alas ! self-interest prompts men to turn a deaf ear even to the most divine expostulations, and unholy persons will, in despite of the most express prohibitions, continue to intrude themselves beyond their bounds ; and will be still busying and employing themselves about external circumstances and ceremonies, while the life, spirit and substance of true religion is placed above their reach, and unattainable by them, until it shall please God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, to cleanse their hearts from all unrighteousness ; of which conversion we heartily wish for a nearer prospect than we can discern at present.

We now return to the author of the ensuing narrative, who was another sort of preacher ; a free giver of what himself had freely received, a liberal and open-hearted communicator of his religious experiences unto all other men, without respect of persons.

He directed all the sheep of Christ to follow the voice of Christ himself, the good Shephard, whose omnipresence renders his voice audible to every one of his sheep, however separate or dispersed throughout the world.

His conversation was free, generous and affable ; neither did he shun the society of those whom he was sent to convert ; his mission being somewhat correspondent to that of his Lord and master, who declared concerning himself : " I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mat. ix. 13.



He was of a grave deportment, and of a tall, comely and manly aspect : his public preaching was attended with such a divine authority and majestic innocence, as commanded the attention of his hearers ; and his voice being clear, strong and distinct, was capable of conveying his profitable exhortations to the ears and understandings of a very numerous auditory ; of which a remarkable instance appears in his preaching at Jedburgh in Scotland, mentioned in page 38 and 39, of his account.

His literal accomplishments were but small, extending little farther than to enable him to read the scriptures in his mother tongue ; yet by constant use and application, he became thoroughly versed therein, and enabled by the force of their testimony, to confront and confute the gainsayers of his doctrine, which was in all points strictly agreeable to, and consonant therewith.

In the religious society to which he was joined, he conducted himself as a man of peace and prudence, choosing to walk in the plain and middle path, without declining to any extreme ; so that he neither idolized forms, nor contemned good order.

His estimation and repute among his friends and neighbors, may appear by the testimony of the monthly and quarterly meetings of Bridport in Dorsetshire, to which he belonged, given forth since his decease, wherein they say, "It pleased the Lord to endue him with a large gift in the ministry, in which he was a



faithful labourer, and gave himself 'up for that service ; that he had a gift of utterance, superior to many, sound in judgment and doctrine, and very convincing to the understandings of those that heard him."

This testimony concerning him is true, and a man of his penetration and capacity could not but discern his own improvement in the gift he had received : wherefore he stood upon his guard, lest through self-love and conceit, he should depart from that humility, which is the ornament of every gospel minister, as in page 31, he has particularly observed.

Which Christian virtue was generally his concomitant, during the course of his pilgrimage ; and is remarkable in the composure of this account, in keeping it clear from, and unsullied with any the least tincture or symptom and self-applause.

As in preaching, his declarations proceeded from his heart, so in writing, his relations of his services, and his exhortations, sprang from the same fountain.

Wherefore we recommend to thy serious consideration what he has written, as comprehended in that excellent description of a good man, given by Christ himself, Luke vi. 45. "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good."

May the good brought forth out of this good man's heart effectually reach unto thine, and through the divine blessing operate to thy spiritual benefit, growth and improvement in that which is good.



So shall the design of the deceased author, in leaving behind him this account of his life and travels, be in some degree answered, and the prefixer of this preface shall have the end he aims at, who, with sincere desires for the saving health and welfare of thee and all mankind, takes his leave, and bids thee heartily farewell.

J. BESSE.



## P R E F A C E.

THE intention of the author, in this treatise, being chiefly to give directions, which may be as way-marks to such who are called into the work of the ministry, and to the elders of the church, how to conduct themselves in their care over them whilst young in the ministry, it is not thought fit to be made so generally public, as such tracts which are intended for a general benefit, which may in some degree concern all, and are of that universal nature, that every member of society ought to be acquainted with, in order for their government and practice; but as it is not the will of the All-wise disposer, who governs his house (which is his church) in wisdom, nor the order of his providence, to give the like gifts to all, but as the apostle speaks, "He gave some, apostles; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," (Ephes. iv. 11,) whom he appointed to the work of the ministry, for.



the perfecting of the saints (or those in whom the work of sanctification was begun) and the edification of the church.

Now as it was with the head, Christ Jesus, so it is with the members (that is his ministers,) for "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron," as saith the Apostle. (Heb. v. 4.) And therefore advice, that may be adapted to the states, trials and temptations of such, who are in any degree preparing, or setting in order for this work, and how to shun the dangers and mistakes, and surmount the difficulties which such may be liable to, who may have made farther progress in it, may be of great service to them; though to others who are not called to this work, it may be in many respects as a book sealed. Which advice is as a hand of help held forth, and is of service many times to the honest but doubtful inquirer, who is like the traveller in an unknown path, often beset with many fears of losing his way; and as it is a kind office, and what calls for respect from all who stand in need of it, so it is a duty we owe, and what God is pleased to enjoin his servants and ministers to be found in



the practice of, one towards another ; and such was the case of our worthy ancient friend the author, who thought it his duty, as he hath had great experience of that work, in a course of many years exercise, and much labour and travel on that account, both in his own country and in foreign parts, to give some account of the steps that God is pleased to lead his children on in, whom he is preparing for this great work, and to point out where the enemy of the work of God and our happiness is lying in wait to mislead, beguile, and betray such who are not watchful ; and although he hath not studied excellency of speech, nor the enticing words which man's wisdom teacheth, yet such who have had their eyes opened to discern the work of God, as also the mysterious transformations of our grand adversary, will have occasion to say, that it is in the demonstration of the spirit, having the true marks and evidence of that inspiration which giveth a right understanding in the things of God, and mysteries of his kingdom ; for hereby it will appear how necessary it is for men and women to experience the sanctification of the spirit to precede, or go before, that they may be duly



qualified to help and advise others ; this being the order our Lord and Master observeth in his advice to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke xxii. 32.)

Another mark which demonstrateth from whence it proceeds, is the care he hath taken to inculcate, in those who are called to the ministry, the necessity of low thoughts of themselves, and of a constant guard over themselves, lest the enemy prevail to lift them up, because the Lord hath appeared with them, and strengthened them at times to discharge themselves to his glory and their comfort and satisfaction, which hath also given them acceptance, with Friends. Now herein is great danger, lest the creature take that honor to itself, which only belongs to him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift ; and being so lifted up, fall into the snare of the devil, for want of distinguishing what it was which procured them this acceptance ; not duly considering the weight of that saying of our Lord, "Without me ye can do nothing:" (John xv. 5.) This therefore ought to be the constant care of a minister of Christ, to dwell in hu-



mility, and in a daily dependance on him who is only able to preserve to the end.

But if any should object, You profess to have the spirit of truth which guideth into all truth, and to have received that anointing, that you need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, (John xvi. 13.) what need have you then of such instructions or instructors? (1 John ii. 27.)

We answer, this hath been the practice of the Gospel Church from its first institution ; for though all have received the spirit of truth, and this anointing which teacheth of all things, yet all come not up in obedience to it, neither are all so grown into that knowledge and acquaintance with it, as to be perfectly taught by it and established in it ; and the same objection may be made against the practice of preaching, which is generally allowed to be necessary and the same reasons given for the continuance of it, viz.—to stir up the believers to remember their duty ; for after this manner the Apostle Peter writes to those of his time, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these



things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth, yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance ;” (2 Pet. i. 12, 13,) and further he saith—“This second epistle, beloved, I write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,” (2 Peter iii. 1.) And agreeable hereto is his advice to the elders and overseers of the church, 1 Peter chap. v. from verse 1 to 6. And Paul in like manner exhorted the Elders of the church of Ephesus, as may be seen in the 20th chapter of the Acts, who thought there was need to caution them, though they were, according to their degree and growth in the same precious faith, saying, verse 27, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God ;” and verse 28, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” And for this end he wrote his two epistles to Timothy, to put him in mind of his duty and charge, giving him directions how to discharge himself, and how to act in



particular cases, and of what to beware ; and to Titus in like manner, giving him directions concerning his doctrine and conduct amongst his fellow-believers ; and the same things have been practiced amongst those whom God hath raised up, in this last age, that those of experience found it their concern to minister to others, not only in general doctrines, but also more particularly to those who had a gift in the ministry committed to them, for their instruction, by way of encouragement to such who stood in need of encouragement, declaring their experience to them, and by way of caution to such who stood in need of it, to warn them to beware, who might be in danger of going too fast, and taking too much upon them ; or on the other hand, of neglecting their gifts, to whom the advice the Apostle gave to Archippus, might be necessary : say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it," (Gal. iv. 17.) For it is evident, ministers have fallen, and may be as liable to fall as others, and therefore they stand in need of prudent advice and caution as well as others, and this is no more than fulfilling the Apos-



tle's injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," (Gal. vi. 2.) And these things are, and may be done without contradicting the texts above mentioned; for if these are the fruits and effects of the spirit and its teaching, whether mediately or immediately given, it is the same spirit of truth, and the same anointing, which speaks through the instrument to the edification of the body and every member of it, as the Apostle observeth, when he is speaking of spiritual gifts, "All these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 11,) and that there ought to be an ear open to hear such, whom the Holy Ghost has appointed overseers, whether ministers or elders, observe what the Apostle saith, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you," (Heb. xiii. 17.)

To conclude, as all instruction both by writing and preaching, is that the ignorant may be informed, and the faithful preserved



in the right way to the discharge of their duty, it is much to be desired, that those who may be concerned in the advices contained in the ensuing treatise, whether ministers or elders, may be so disposed to receive instruction, that they may reap the advantage intended by this labour of love; so will the end of the author herein be effectually answered, even the glory of God and the good of Souls.







# QUALIFICATIONS

## NECESSARY TO

### A GOSPEL MINISTER.

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#### CHAPTER I.

That sanctification is a previous qualification for the reception of a Divine Inspiration to *Minister*.

As the design of the following pages is to set in a true light the nature and necessity of an *Inspired Ministry*, and the advantages that we receive thereby, I shall, as introductory thereunto, briefly take notice of a *qualification* suitable to the receiving of that inspiration, without which it is not reasonable to suppose any one to have it.

*First.*—There must be a state of sanctification (in degree) known, by the spirit of judgment and burning, before any can be proper



objects to be receivers of this inspiring gift, that can only assist a minister, and make him instrumental of doing good to others. The tree must be good, e'er the fruit can be so ; and right and true ministers are to be known by their fruits. This being granted, which I think can't be denied, then it follows that none, without being thus qualified, can be called to the work of the ministry by a divine inspiration of the holy Spirit ; and therefore all vile and ungodly persons, while they continue in that natural and unregenerate state, are excluded from any part in this gift ; and although some such may pretend, that either with their learning, or by their money, or both, they may have acquired or made a purchase of orders for liberty to preach, and may on this foundation undertake to expose what they have to sell ; but what they sell is no other than what they have bought, while in this unregenerate state, empty and vain, and cannot be of profit to the hearers ; for, as saith the Psalmist, " Unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and casteth my words behind thee."—



(Psalm i: 16, 17.) And let me say, that whosoever undertakes the work of the ministry, not being first reformed themselves, cannot justly expect to be inspired by divine wisdom for the reforming others by the word of truth; for she dwells in holy souls, and makes them friends of God and prophets. Then it is reasonable to conclude, that all who live in "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings," (Galat. v. 19, 20, 21,) and such like works of the flesh, are excluded from any inheritance in the kingdom of God, and consequently from having any part in that excellent inspiring gift of the ministry, so necessary to our assistance and direction in our way thither.

*Secondly.*—I shall therefore say something of the qualification necessary to receiving of this excellent inspiring gift of the ministry; and in order to it, we ought first to examine our own hearts with care, praying in secret that God, by his spirit, will vouchsafe to direct us in a right search after truth; and hereby we



shall find a law in our hearts that we have broken, and a spirit in our inward parts that we have rebelled against, and in our ignorance, being hurried in the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh, and vanities of this life, have overlooked, though we have been followed by it, and it has strove with us. For the spirit worketh in us secretly, and we know not at the first what it is; but finding ourselves very uneasy, and in great trouble of mind, being under sorrow and heaviness, not rightly and coolly examining the reason, it is often mistaken to proceed from a natural cause, and so outward means are sought for to relieve from this uneasiness; some by taking their bottle with their companions, others diverting themselves with their sports and gaming, others again take medicines to help them against what they call melancholy; some one way, and some another, thus mistake, and make merry over the witness in them, and stiffen their necks against the reproof of instruction, which is the way to life; not minding the text, which says, "He that being often reprov'd, hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. 1.)



*Thirdly.*—But though some are thus rebellious and careless, others take a better course, by strictly examining their words and actions, company and conversation, and finding it to be their great sorrow and burden, instead of endeavouring to get from under the load of trouble by any indecent method of sporting, gaming, drinking, physic or company, such rather, as the prophet said, “sit alone and keep silence, putting their mouth in the dust,” (Lam. iii. 28,) praying in secret, that God will assist them by his grace and good spirit, that the cause of this sorrow may be removed by an humble and sincere repentance of all their follies and sins, wherewith they have offended God, and that for time to come, they may, by the help of the spirit, and direction of that law in their hearts, which they had hitherto overlooked and neglected, now lead a new life ; *first*, by denying all ungodliness and abstaining from every appearance of evil, which must first be done, e’er they can perfectly practice that which is right in the sight of God ; for no man can be righteous and wicked at one time ; and we must first expect a being brought from under the bondage of



corruption to spiritual Pharaoh and Egypt, into the wilderness, e'er we can offer acceptably unto God : This state is figuratively called a wilderness, a way we have not trod in, shewing thereby the necessity of depending on our guide, our spiritual Moses, that must go before and take care of our support. For in this wilderness-state we have no food, no water, viz. no right refreshment, but what this our leader provides and administers to us. In this state we can neither pray, nor do any religious act, without the direction of our leader. So that we find the case is much altered with us to what it was in time past ; for then we could pray, sing, preach, and perform other religious duties in our own time, feeding and satisfying ourselves therewith ; but now we are brought into the wilderness, where there is neither ploughing nor sowing ; we cannot now help ourselves by our own contrivance, and workings in our own wills, but here we must live a life of faith, wholly depending on him that will (if we faint not in our minds) bring us through to the Heavenly Canaan. Thus we shall come in the Lord's time to experience the substance of those types and



figures, under that legal dispensation, to be substantially and spiritually fulfilled in our own minds, by the operation of the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, the substance and foundation of all true religion and ministry that is really profitable to the hearers.

*Fourthly.* Now this work of preparation by the spirit being thus begun, and carried on, is a shorter or longer time in accomplishing, so as the parties thereby may be qualified to receive a divine inspiration to minister from to others, according to the will of him that calleth; and when it happeneth to be but a short time, between persons beginning to be serious and religious, and the time that such persons commence ministers (labouring according as they apprehend themselves to be called to that work for the good of others) it may happen, that some of their hearers, forming their judgment respecting the worthiness or unworthiness of the parties so concerned, from their past conduct, while in so vile a state, may conclude, how can such be fit to teach others, who themselves but the other day were guilty of such follies as are inconsistent with a true minister to touch with? Thus in some



respect it was with that great apostle of the Gentiles, viz. Saul, afterwards Paul.

*Fifthly.* For we find, while he was in the very heat of persecuting the church, and breathing out threatenings against the brethren, so that they were afraid of him ; as appears when Ananias was commanded of the Lord, during that peculiar visitation which at that time he was under, to go to his assistance ; Ananias's answer was, " I have heard by many of this man, (Saul) how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." But the Lord said unto him, " Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me." Then Ananias went his way, having this special call to visit Saul. But it plainly appears, that this good man could not easily believe Saul's so sudden and short change, from an open opposer and persecutor of the faith, and faithful professors and followers of the son of God, to be an open professor and preacher of the same faith and doctrine with them he so persecuted : and as this was the case of Saul, it has been the case, in some degree, of others of later date ;



that is, their *sudden* change from a vain conversation to be preachers against it, hath so narrowed up their way in the minds of some of their hearers, that at the same time (some of them that have wished well to the cause of religion) supposing such preachers would be a means of stumbling to many, have therefore in a zeal that has been without true consideration and right judgment, not giving time for trial, whether what they have heard was of God or the creature, (as not minding Gamaliel's counsel) would pull them down before they could see whether they were right or wrong.

To prevent this rash judging, it is needful, that the hearers be careful to judge nothing before its time, but let every such person have the opportunity to make full proof of their ministry, that it may appear, whether what they do in the way of ministering, be of God or of themselves: if it be right, it will be self-evident, and carry with it that which in time will give satisfaction to such who have doubted of the ministry of such persons, whether they were right or no; and their hearts will be filled with charity towards them.



*Sixthly*, Now if we consider the thing right, this rash judging is very dangerous and hurtful, greatly tending to the discouraging of young ministers ; for this censorious and critical temper is a great block in the way, and may hinder some from coming forth in that gift, though they may be rightly concerned therein : and some that may make a little appearance that way, may be put to silence e'er they have had time sufficient to make or to give full proof of their ministry. 'This temper therefore ought carefully to be watched against, and have a timely curb and discouragement in every mind, viz: every hearer ought in fear to request of God to be directed aright in judgment, that under a pretended care to promote the cause of religion, they may not in a blind zeal be instrumental to discourage so useful a gift.

*Seventhly*, Now we find this critical temper, that was so apt to judge without judgment, and to find fault without cause, our Lord did frequently reprove when it appeared, as may be seen in the instance of the woman, whose penitence and humiliation induced her to wash her master's feet with her tears, and



wipe them with her hair, (Luke vii. 37.) Whose demonstration of love to our blessed Lord, (when Simon was ready to censure him for admitting) he by a very lively comparison commended, and in the application thereof smartly reproved the want of judgment, as well as charity of that Pharisee, who did so little for him himself, and yet was so ready to find fault with her; and by that means rather brought him to justify what he had before condemned. Which is often the case of self-righteous professors, who are so apt (without just and mature consideration) to judge those, who from vile and ungodly sinners may suddenly become purified by the work of the spirit, and by the same may be fitted and required (though some may be apt to think it too soon) to come up in public service for God; whilst themselves, who have not loved so much, nor been so zealous to follow divine conviction, are lingering behind in the work; and yet these are most apt and ready to judge and censure those who are more faithful, and thus suddenly brought into obedience, as too hasty and forward.

And also in his answer to those who cen-



sured him for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, he plainly declared the end of his coming, which was the reason of his conduct in that, as well as other respects.

*Eighthly.* From all which it appears, that it has happened sometimes, the more vile and wicked any one hath been before conviction, the more thorough and quick hath their conversion been : they to whom much is given, love much ; and the more they love, the more hearty and zealous they are to go on with the work unto which they are called ; and having known the terrors of the Almighty for sin, are the more earnest to persuade men ; and I dare not say, but that such may in their zeal and warmth of spirit, a little stretch (at times) beyond their authority ; but when they do, they no sooner retire to their gifts, but they find sufficient smart for it in their own minds : but this begets them enemies ; and because they appear wrong in part, they must by some be concluded wrong in the whole ; which is an unwarrantable conclusion to make on any person.

*Ninthly.* Now if we do but rightly consider of the matter, there may be a just cause for



this zeal, if we will but give them this allowance, that as they have been like brands plucked out of the burning, and known the terror of the Almighty for sin, they are the more earnest to persuade men to repentance and amendment, both by reproof, warning of sinners, and threatening them with judgment, as having themselves so narrowly escaped. And this being the cause of that fervour and zeal such have appeared in, it will no doubt on strict examination be found, that the root of all this is love, and a design of good to the souls of men. Such therefore ought to be treated with great charity and meekness, and the good design in them encouraged; and that over-forwardness in them rather shewn to them than reprovèd; and when they see it, they will not need to be told of it, for shame will come fast enough upon them, (if they are true ministers) and may lie heavy; which may hinder some tender spirits from improving in their gifts, and render them less serviceable than otherwise they might, if they did moderately keep on their way, minding to keep pace with their gifts, neither going before, nor staying behind their leader; but



wanting both judgment and experience, being children in the work, they can't do it all at once, and therefore in patience must be borne with for a time.

*Lastly.* Now this preparation by the spirit for the ministry, so qualifies the receiver of this excellent inspiring gift, when called to the work, that he can experimentally say, What I have tasted, felt, and heard of the good word of life, and the powers of the world to come, I declare unto you. But what can such (as the apostle speaks of, concerning whom he avers they shall not inherit God's kingdom) say of their experience of the work of God's power in them, while they continue in their gainsaying in the works of the flesh, such as adultery, idolatry, pride, covetousness, envy and drunkenness, minding the pleasures of this world above anything else ; surely (as above) they have no experience to speak of to the people, nothing to say that will bring them to a fellowship with the Father and his son Jesus Christ.

Having said thus much concerning a true qualification for the receiving of this gift of inspiration, so absolutely necessary to every



right minister, that without it he cannot be a true minister, I shall now speak of inspiration itself, which is to be the subject next in course to be treated of, concluding this chapter with part of that excellent prayer of David's (so apt to this purpose) in the fifty-first Psalm, from the 9th to the 14th verse. "Hide thy face from my sins ; and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation : and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach (but not till then) transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." A short but full description of the right qualification of a gospel minister.



## CHAPTER II.

The necessity of Divine Inspiration to the being of a gospel minister, and to conduct him in his ministry.

HAVING said so much of the *needful qualifications*, in order to be inspired by the holy spirit, and enabled thereby to minister good to others, it is necessary also to say something of *inspiration* itself, which is by many too much exploded, and slighted as a thing at an end, and long since ceased : they suppose all things needful for instruction to piety and virtue, already revealed in that excellent book, called the Bible, which I prefer to all books extant, and request the diligent reading thereof with due attention and regard, to what the apostle says of them, viz. : “ That all Scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; ” (2 Tim. iii. 16,) and able to make wise to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Now it is this faith in Christ which makes the Scriptures really and truly profitable ; but a man, with-



out this faith, may read the Scripture until he has them by rote, and can repeat by heart a great part of what he has so often read ; and for all this receive no profit from them ; for as holy men writ them by inspiration of the Spirit, so by it we must come to a right understanding of them, otherwise they will be as a book sealed, and the bare reading of the letter will be no other than a bare report of things at a distance ; for when we read the words of Moses, that he spoke in the ears of Israel, importing that “ thou need’st not say in thy heart, who shall ascend into Heaven, or go beyond the sea,” viz. : to fetch the *word of command*, &c.—I say, he would not have them look at a distance for it, because (adds he) “ It is nigh in thy heart and mouth.” Now the Apostle, expounding the words of Moses, saith, “ But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise : say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into Heaven ? That is, to bring Christ down from above. Or, who shall descend into the deep ? That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it ? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart :



that is, the word of faith which we preach," (Rom. x : 6, 7, 8.) Now this word that is in the heart and mouth of inspired ministers, is that by which they must be acted, if they do right in the work of the ministry ; and indeed, without this word in the heart opens the understanding, there can be no right preaching. It is true, men may by study and frequent reading acquire to themselves a form of words, and frame a set and studied speech in a regular way, methodically dividing and sub-dividing their matter, raising uses and applications from the present subject before them ; and all this may be done by the *man*, the *creature*, and *natural part*, having nothing of inspiration or power of the Spirit in it. And pray, what will this ministry do for the hearers ? It comes from the head, and the contrivance of the man's part, therefore it can reach no further ; for no stream can arise higher than its fountain : and that ministry which is of man, though it may be very pleasing to the creature, and acceptable to the itching ears, who with the Greeks of old, seek after wisdom, but not that which is from above, is not profitable to the hearers ;



for the Jews sought after a sign, and the Greeks after wisdom, but neglected the preaching of Christ crucified, and risen from the dead, as foolish doctrine, and not worth their regard; but unto as many as believed in the word preached by the inspiration of the Spirit, they found it to be (both Jews and Greeks) "the mighty power of God to salvation." Now what made this spiritual ministry so profitable to them that received this doctrine, is the very same that makes the Scriptures profitable to those who rightly read them, namely, faith in Christ, who is the living word and light of men; which word is preached by every true minister, inspired thereunto by the spirit of truth.

Now I say, this inspiration ought to be rightly understood and believed in: from my own experience, I understand it to be an *inbreathing* of the *divine word* into our minds, giving a true understanding of divine things, that we may make choice of, and walk in the paths of wisdom, which is the just man's path: I say, the *inbreathing* of this word, which is truth, life, and the light of men; that spirit which "searcheth all things," yea,



the deep things of God," which by Jesus Christ is made manifest unto all men : I say, this inspiration ought to be waited for in all our religious assemblies especially, and believed in, as being the foundation and spring of all right ministry, devotion, and worship of the true God : yea, I always find this, from my own experience, to be most edifying, thus to wait for this divine inspiration in all our religious assemblies ; and when I find my understanding inspired, and influenced by this blessed gift to minister to others, I give up thereto, speaking to the assembly according to the present ability I receive thereby ; and I know this to be the true beginning of a right gospel ministry, which I shall speak to more at large in its proper place.

Now, I understand by the inbreathing of the spirit of Christ into our minds, thus much ; namely, as the apostle asserts, " We know (says he) that the son of God is come ;" and for proof adds, " for he has given us an understanding." Now this was to themselves undeniable : but what means he by saying, " He has given us an understanding ?" He can mean no other than a *spiritual* one ; for



they doubtless had understandings as natural men before ; but by that natural understanding they could not perceive the things of the spirit of God, nor comprehend the light which shined in darkness ; which is still the same, even until now. But the true knowledge of the coming of the Son of God in spirit and power, is by inspiration from heaven, or the revelation of the father by the son ; and this is the foundation of the true church and ministry, against which no opposition can ever prevail. Now by this understanding, they knew him that is true, and were in him ; and so must all true believers experience the same, if true members of Christ's church, and ministers of his word. I say, this spiritual understanding, which they received by revelation, was an undeniable evidence to them, and so it is to us. But how shall I prove this to a demonstration, to such as are in a natural and unenlightened state, that *I have this revelation, and am thus inspired?*

*Answer.* It is not possible to do it, until they who are in unbelief, come to believe in the same power, and receive inspiration by the same spirit, to give them a right know-



ledge of the things of God ; “ for the natural man receiveth ” them not, because they “ are foolishness unto him ; ” ( 1 Cor. ii. 14, ) neither can he in this state know them. This makes it highly necessary for all that profess faith in Christ to apply themselves to God for the gift of his holy Spirit : for, says our blessed Lord, “ Which of you having a son, if he ask bread, will give him a stone.” And thus applies it, “ If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him ? Ask and it shall be given you.” ( Luke xi. 13. ) What greater encouragement can be given to us than this ? It is therefore greatly to be desired and hoped, that all people, especially such as profess faith in Christ, would in humility and godly sincerity ask of God a portion of this spirit, whereby we may know the things of God ; for it is this spirit, which is the “ Comforter,” ( John xiv. 16, ) that our blessed Lord promised to pray the Father to send in his name, which, when we receive, will lead us into all truth. This is that spirit that will reprove the world of sin, because



they believe not in the only begotten Son of God. This is that spirit which gives life, and will make thee a living member of the true church ; and if thou art devoted in thy mind to follow it, thou wilt become fruitful in religion, and thy faith will be both living and powerful in thee, to give victory over the world, that natural part in thee that would not submit to the testimony of Jesus, nor believe in the only begotten Son of God.

I say, then, inspiration or revelation from God by his spirit, is of absolute necessity to guide a minister in his ministry ; and a minister so conducted by a gospel power and light, inspiring his mind with the *how* and the *what* he shall say, will speak with the spirit, and understanding also ; that is, he will understand by his own experience the work of the spirit, and word of faith in his own mind, and that what he says is true : and although he hath this experience, as above, yet it is not meet for any one, in his own time and will, to speak thereof in an assembly ; but we are to wait for both authority and power, that in the Lord's time we may speak, (of what our



eyes have seen, our hands handled, and what we have felt of the good word of life, and powers of the world to come) to the people, with the same view as they, the primitives, did, i. e., to bring their hearers into a right fellowship with the Father and his Son our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and so shall they be one with all that truly believe in him.

But then some may object, that we may be deceived, by supposing ourselves inspired, when we are not; and that we have a revelation, when it is nothing but an imagination and delusion. In such a state a man may be deceived himself, and all who think of him as he does of himself, will in like manner be deceived, and how shall this be avoided?

*Answer.* It is granted, some have been deceived themselves, and have also deceived others, but the cause of this deception is in themselves, for want of an humble waiting to know what they are about; for a true inspiration from God is as plainly to be distinguished from the pretended false one, as light is from darkness; for divine inspiration quiets the mind under all opposition and contradiction,



and gives power over the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and worketh the redemption of such as are endued therewith, and are subject to it; these are very humble and low of heart, and the more their minds are enlightened by divine inspiration, the more they see a necessity to watch over themselves, so that the innocency, meekness, and humility suiting a true and right minister, will appear in all their conduct; such are slow to speak, and ready to hear and receive instruction, and are known by them that are spiritual to be such.

But they who conceive themselves to be inspired when they are not, supposing they have a revelation when it is nothing but an imagination of their own brain, are exalted in their minds, being very heady and stubborn, slighting instruction; more apt to teach than learn, being swift to speak, but slow to hear, judging every body that will not receive them as true ministers, by fortelling the ruin and downfall of all their opposers; working themselves up to a strange degree of imagination, endeavouring to drive all before them; and such as will neither hear nor heed what



they say, they will be apt to call for vengeance from heaven upon such who offer to oppose them. This, and much more that might be mentioned, is the conduct of these deceived and deluded souls.

Now this error, by the party thus deluded, might be easily discerned by themselves, if they would but give themselves time to think and consider aright in coolness, and desire that the Lord would shew them the right way. Here is therefore great need to be cautious, and try the spirit; viz., I mean not to receive any thing for inspiration or revelation, without being first well satisfied in thyself that it is such; and this cautious fear will not be any way displeasing to God, but thou wilt find thy doubts will be removed, and thou wilt be confirmed, that what thou hast is of God, and will stand. Now this agrees with the practice of Moses and Gideon, and with what the apostle advised, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God:



he that knoweth God, heareth us : he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (John iv. 1, 5, 6.)

But supposing I or any others may be inspired, as is aforesaid, from a right spirit : how shall proof be made thereof to another, that he may receive our word that we have by revelation, not as our word only, but as given us of God?

*Answer.* In this thou wilt find no hard task with thy brethren, if thou wilt but do thy endeavour to live according to that doctrine given thee to preach to others, in the first place : and next mind, that thou, without being inspired, undertake not this work of preaching, neither in thy own time nor will, nor by thy own contrivance, collecting and casting what thou shalt say ; for by so doing thou wilt be at a loss and confounded in thyself, and give great occasion of offence to them that hear thee ; not only to them that are unacquainted with the gift, and unbelievers therein (for they will see that thou art wrong) but thy own brethren will be greatly loaded and uneasy with thy so appear-



ing ; for they will soon find that thou art out of thy place in thy speaking ; it not being from inspiration, but imagination of thy own brain ; for the ear trieth words as the mouth tasteth meat ; and them that are spiritual will see where thou art, better than thou thyself.

But then I say, it will be a hard task to make proof of thy ministry, though thou speakest as the oracle of God, and ministrest of that ability which God giveth, to such as are in unbelief, and in a state of nature. "For the natural man (says Paul) receiveth not the things of the spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually concerned." (1 Cor. i. 14.) I say, therefore, it will be impossible that such unbelievers, or those in a state of nature, (whilst they are in that state and unbelief) should receive thy word, not as thy word only, but as given to thee of God ; because they believe no such thing concerning any man. If, therefore, thou seemest to them as a babbler, be not thereat discouraged ; because Paul was so accounted before thee. Yet, however, though some may so look upon thee, others may perhaps be reached by thy word ; and as thou dost often minister from a right spirit, and



keepest in thy gift, thou mayst be instrumental to beget faith in them that believe not, so that they will soon conclude thou art a right minister, not of the letter, but of the spirit, and thy brethren who are spiritual will give thee encouragement to go on, having fellowship with thee in thy gift as a right minister, approved by them as appointed of God for that work unto which thou art called. For no man ought to take this honour unto himself, by any human or external call, until first he is called of God, as was Aaron.

I now shall come to speak of the gift itself.

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### CHAPTER III.

Advice to Ministers in a state of infancy.

As to the gifts of the ministry, the better to set it in a true light, these three things are first to be considered.

1st. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. (1 Cor. xii. 4.)

2d. "There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." (ver. 5.)



3d. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all." (ver. 6.)

*First.* "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit," i. e. every gift of God is from the one and the same spirit of truth that is come by Jesus Christ; for which reason, though we may seem to differ in our gifts one from another, yet the design and end is the same, and the same spirit as is one, so in all, assisting to that end, which is to turn people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, that they may be edified in the true (gospel) receiving a remission of their sins, and an assurance of an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified through faith in the only begotten Son of God.

Now there must be some time to gain experience and understanding, before any one can come to a settlement and true and perfect knowledge of his own gift; and for want of a right settlement and true knowledge of this gift, and keeping to it, and in it, is the cause of many of the mistakes that are committed in the exercise of it.

Then we ought to consider the ministry in



these three states. 1st. Infancy. 2d. A Young Man's State. And last, the Father's State.

*First* then. A state of infancy ought to be looked upon with great allowance of charity, and if any thing appears manly in such a state, that ought not to be made the standard of others to walk by, but we must attribute it rather to the giver, than the instrument, that giveth to every one as he will, to some a greater, and to others a smaller portion of his spirit, but to every one, both preachers and hearers, such a manifestation thereof, as by faithful obedience thereto they may profit by it; but the gift of the ministry is our present subject.

Then as to the state of infancy in the ministry, let it be considered, that the ministry is a birth; and when any one at first comes under the exercise hereof, he will find a great perturbation in himself; the cause of which he may be as great a stranger to, as Samuel was to the voice of God in the temple, who being called the third time, was at length informed by Eli how to answer. So have some, both young men and women, done of late date,



(that is) applied themselves to such as they have apprehended had more experience of the work of the Lord than themselves, and after all have found it very hard to give up to the heavenly vision; and when they have given up, it has been in so much weakness and fear, yea, sometimes confusion, that they have hardly known themselves what they have said. And if in such a state any one should over-run, miss in expression, or appear in a behaviour not so agreeable to the minds of their brethren, let such brethren exercise charity; and see to thy own gift thou that art a hearer, and try by virtue thereof, whether thou findest not something of God in this infant minister to answer his gift in thy own mind; and if on such a search thou findest not that satisfaction thou couldst desire, yet as it is not proper to lay sudden hands on any one to set them up, so neither be thou rash to pull them down, but give time for proof, and consider the patience of the husbandman, how he waits for a crop after the seed is sown. Having said so much to the hearer, let me now advise this infant minister.

I know thou wilt find very hard work in



thyself; thy heart will be often very heavy and sorrowful, and in great fear and weakness thou wilt appear as a minister, and it may be much against thy will to appear as such; yea, thou mayst perhaps dearly repent that ever thou gavest up to this service, and more especially, if thou answerest not thy expectation, which I may venture to say, none at all times do; but as thou keepest humble and low, being honestly given up to be and do just what the Lord by his spirit would have thee, resignation to the will of God being absolutely necessary for a minister to come to; and as thou gettest here, patiently waiting the Lord's time, then thou wilt find a greater degree of excellency by the Spirit to enlarge thy understanding in divine openings; which when this grows upon thee, beware of pride, and self-conceit, for that has ruined many. But give the honour hereof where due; and the more thou art enlarged, labour to be the more humble, and in so doing thou wilt find safety.

But under these various trials in thyself, I advise to an inward waiting upon thy gift, to feel the moving thereof in thy own mind, which will by a gentle illumination clear thy



understanding and judgment, whereby thou wilt clearly see thy place and service in the Church ; and if thou findest it thy place to minister to others, be willing to do thy Master's will, and stand up in the meekness of the spirit which moveth on thy mind, and speak the word thereof according to the present opening that is before thee, regarding strictly on the one hand, by speaking too fast and too loud, thou do not over-run thy natural strength, gift and opening, which, if thou happens to get into it will bring thee into confusion, and thou wilt not know when to conclude, and so mayest shut up thy own way in the minds of thy brethren, and bring thyself under a just censure; therefore whenever it happens so with thee, sit down; for by endeavouring to mend it, thou mayest make it the worse. So on the other hand, be not too low, nor too slow in thy speech, so as to lose the matter that way ; but carefully keep to thy opening, avoiding both the extremes. Stand up in a calm and quiet frame of mind, as free as possible from either a fear or care how thou shalt come off ; but follow thy guide in all circumspection and humility, beginning, ~~going~~ on, and concluding in thy gift. Thus



wilt thou experience, what the wise man said to be true, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men."— (Prov. xviii. 16.)

Now the state I have considered this infant minister in, is such as requires help by tender advice from faithful friends of experience, so that I may compare him to a babe that wants both the breast and nursing, which should be tenderly and with great care administered, so that if he be corrected, let it be in love; if encouraged, let it be with prudence; both may hurt him, if not well timed, and given discreetly.

But now we will suppose him a little grown, and to know himself better than a babe can, in which condition he will meet with exercises according to his growth and experience, against which it is needful to be prepared and watchful.

Then *First*. After thou beginnest to know, and see a little where thou art, and what thou art about, there will be an observing eye in thee, to look at the exercises and ministry of others, and an aptness in thee to compare thyself with others, which may have some ill



effects upon thee, if not prudently guarded against. For if thou apprehendest on such a view, that thy gift excels and is preferable to some others, this may lift thee up and prove hurtful ; so on the other hand, if thy brother's gift in thy thoughts is more desirable and acceptable, this may cast thee down, and beget too mean an opinion in thee of thy own gift.

*Secondly,* If thou lookest out at the excellency and beauty of another's gift to be more than what is in thy own, a desire may arise in thee to render thyself like him, and so endeavour to mimic and imitate their delivery, accent and manner ; and thus leaving thy own gift, and devoting thyself to follow, or be guided by others, thou wilt soon be under a cloud, and lay a stumbling block in thy own way, and shut up the hearts of thy brethren towards thee. To prevent which thou must consider, that as there are 1st. Diversities of gifts, but the same spirit, therefore mind thy own gift and not another's, and regard the spirit that moves thee in it ; that being the same that is in thy brother or sister ; and if thou keepest thy place therein, thou wilt likewise see, that though thy gift is different from theirs, it is the



same spirit. So 2dly. The administration (or delivery thereof) differeth, but it is the same Lord that maketh thee to differ from them, and them to differ from thee ; therefore let not the seeming excellency that appears in another's gift above thy own, tempt thee to an imitation of either delivery, manner, or accent, lest thou insensibly fall into that theft, against which the Lord by his prophet complains, " I am against the prophets (saith the Lord) that steal my words, every one from his neighbour."— (Jer. xxiii. 30.) Besides the way thou hereby takest to get credit, and a place in the church, will be the shortest way to lose it, and at best thou wilt be taken for one that apes and mimies what thou canst never attain to ; and the more thou strivest this way, the worse it will be ; therefore I advise thee, keep thy own gift, manner of delivery, and the matter that is opened in thy mind by the spirit.

To make this point yet more plain, it is needful thou first learn to know there is diversities of gifts, and though thine may differ from another's gift, yet mind to keep to it, and by this thou wilt know, that thou art in thy gift ; if after thou hast been exercised therein, thou



feeblest inward satisfaction and comfort to flow in thy mind ; but if thou findest trouble and heaviness, consider whether thou hast not been out of thy place, either in the manner of delivering thyself, which relates to the administration which may justly differ, and yet have a beauty in it, though thou mayst not see it thyself ; or it may relate to the matter delivered, and though that may differ from that of another, whose doctrine thou mayest think more acceptable and in more apt terms, which may tempt thee to imitate him ; this will bring an uneasiness and a cloud over thy mind ; therefore keep to thy own way, both in thy opening and delivering thereof, guarding against all affected tones of singing or sighing, and drawing out thy words and sentences beyond their due length, and by speaking too much in a breath, and by adding an ah ! to the end of them, and drawing thy breath with such a force and groan, as will drown thy matter, and render thee unacceptable to hearers ; likewise guard against superfluous words, impertinently brought in, such as, " I may say ; As it were ; All and every one ; Dear friends ; and friendly people," with sun-



dry others of the like kind, which add nothing to thy matter, spoiling its coherence and beauty of expression ; likewise avoid all indecent gestures of thy body, as throwing thy arms abroad and lifting up thy eyes : such gestures not suiting the dignity of the ministry ; neither lift up thy voice beyond thy natural strength, nor strain thyself beyond due bounds, vainly supposing, that when thou makest most noise with an accent and tone, that pleaseth thy own imagination, that the power is most with thee when indeed it is nothing but the heat of thy own spirit, and sparks of thy own kindling, which whoever are overtaken by, and give way to, must expect no less than to lie down in sorrow.

I therefore advise thee to wait for the descending of the gift of the Spirit, which will bring an exercise over thy mind, in which thou mayest be opened with some matter suiting the present occasion ; and when thou findest it is thy place to speak, stand up ; for it is not to be supposed that all thou mayest have to say on this or that subject, can come before thee e'er thou begins to speak. And if thou shouldst suppose it, and so wait, endea-



vouring to prepare thyself like a school boy, thou wilt be greatly disappointed, not speaking what thou intended, but something else that thou intended not, which may be thy trouble and grief; therefore, when thou findest a subject brought before thee, be not desirous of any thing more than the virtue of the spirit of wisdom to direct thy mind in rightly dividing the word; carefully observing as aforesaid, to stand up with a calm and undisturbed mind; for if thou art under a fear in thyself, of either the assembly, or any one in it, it will much hurt thy service, thy understanding will not be clear; therefore it is better thou shouldst wait until thou gettest over that fearful temper, and thy gift will help thee over this weakness in due time, as thou in sincerity keepest to it; neither suffer thyself to think of doing something extraordinary to be admired, nor have a desire to appear, when it is thy place to be silent, but remember at first it was a cross to speak, let it not be so to be silent, but in a true resignation be contented to be just what the gift assists and helps thee to be at that time.

Then I say, being thus prepared as afore-



said, mind the time of thy offering, that thou mayst not hinder the service of another, nor hurt thy own, by either standing up too soon or standing too long ; all which will be prevented, as thou keepest in a quiet, cool frame, retaining thy understanding, that thou mayest speak with the spirit and understanding also : thus, all will be comforted and edified together, and thou wilt find it most safe to begin, and go on in thy ministry, just as thy strength in the gift is upon thee ; so will thy matter and voice be filled with divine virtue and power, and thy hearers will be confirmed, that thou dost speak by authority from above ; herein will thy joy be very great.

But this resignation spoken of, is such that we should be always under, still submitting to the gift ; so that if we find some divine openings in our minds, which may be intended by the Giver for our own instruction, when we find it so, beware of giving that to others which is designed for ourselves, but let us entreat the Divine Being, to assist us by his grace, to make a right application of such openings, and this will still add to our qualifications and improvement in the work ; but



if for want of this care to know thy place, thou shouldst attempt to preach, when it is thy place to be silent, from the opening aforesaid, thou wilt by so doing give that away to others which thou ought to feed upon thyself, and so become a formal and unprofitable minister: the true knowledge of the time when to speak, and when to be silent (so needful to the very being of a minister) will be lost, and thy labour will be in the dark, and weakness will surround thee on every side. Then when thou findest it thy place to speak, begin as if thou were going to relate any matter of fact to a single person, taking care at least, however, not to appear in a more unbecoming manner in an assembly, than thou dost in thy common affairs; but some have in their ministry delivered themselves more awkwardly and unbecomingly than at other times: not that I would be supposed to conclude any should, in the same manner and accent, deliver his ministry as his common discourse, but then the difference should be, that he should deliver his ministry with a better grace, in pertinent matter to the subject before him, than he does his discourse in



common, according to the degree of assistance received by the Spirit at that time ; and this will be a confirmation to them that hear, that such speak as having authority : but a deportment different from this, and appearing in terms not agreeable to sound doctrine, gives reason justly to suspect the contrary ; and such bring contempt upon themselves, being looked on as no other than pretenders to what they have no right to meddle with ; besides, to father such conduct upon inspiration, still adds to and heightens the offence ; and therefore to avoid these faults, begin with temper, in coolness of mind, and go on as thou seest thy way open, and findest thy understanding enlarged : thus wilt thou have pertinent words to express, and scriptures which will suit thy matter, and confirm it, will be brought in memory that may not have been thought of, nor read by thee, long before ; here thou wilt see a reason for what thou sayest ; thy understanding being clear and bright, thou wilt be able to render a reason for what thou hast preached for doctrine : and if thou shouldst not in thy words exactly suit with the sense of some that are thy elders, yet this



friendly, cool temper of mind, will render thee open to receive from some kind Aquilla or Priscilla instruction in the way of the Lord more perfectly, all which will end to thy advantage and improvement:} besides, this calm and easy going on in thy delivery, will give thee an advantage to raise thy voice, as thou findest inward strength and virtue from the Spirit to increase; and as that grows upon thee, thou wilt find thy voice to alter and fill with virtue, and thy delivery beautified with an acceptable mein and deportment: thus will thy words be filled with spirit and life; but if thou raisest thy voice higher, and speakest faster than thou findest spiritual strength to assist, thou wilt over-run thy opening, and natural strength also, and unavoidably fall into confusion; therefore, as thy gift differs from thy brother's, so may thy delivery, and thy opening also, which I beseech thee to keep to; then wilt thou acquit thyself as a man of God, a "workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This brings me to speak more particularly to the difference of the operation or opening,



being the third and last head under the apostle's notice, who says, "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all," (1 Cor. xii. 6.)

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## CHAPTER IV.

Advices as to the matter and manner of expression, &c.

"THERE are diversities of operations, but the same God," &c. This relates to the opening, which may likewise differ in the manner of its being expressed, seeing there are sundry ways of expressing the same thing.

1st. By parables, or comparisons suitably adapted.

2d. By allegories.

*First.* By parables, is the beauty, excellency, and virtue of truth often set forth in lively and moving terms, producing in the hearers the passions of sorrow, anger, or joy, as the matter set forth affects them, so that hereby they are drawn unawares to pass a severe judgment upon their own doings, as in the case of David, when Nathan had by a



parable set forth the rich man's injustice, in taking away the poor man's ewe-lamb, which was his all, to entertain his guest with, and thereby sparing his own flock : now David hearing this so movingly described, was struck with an abhorrence against so vile an act, that he said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, and restore the lamb four fold, because he had no pity :'' and Nathan made the application, and said to David, "Thou art the man:" and David soon was sensible he had past a just judgment upon himself. Sundry examples might be brought to set this way of speaking in a truer light ; but to avoid prolixity, I confine myself to only three more ; the first is in Isaiah, where God sets forth the house of Israel under the parable of a vineyard, and the men of Judah as his pleasant plants ; having bestowed great husbandry on the vineyard, he looked for fruit agreeable thereto, but being disappointed, he thus complains, "When I looked for grapes, (meaning thereby the fruits of righteousness, judgment and truth, agreeable to the law of that just God from whom they had received so many and unparalleled



favours) they brought forth wild grapes :” meaning thereby, oppression, cruelty, disobedience and injustice, such fruits as the Gentiles (who had not been favoured like the Jews, but been without God in the world) brought forth agreeable to the nature of their degenerate and corrupt hearts.

The second parable is our Saviour’s, wherein he sets forth the injustice of the Jews by the same kind of figure : “ There was a certain householder planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and when the time of fruit came, he sent his servants, whom they beat ; he sent again and again his servants, and they met with the same treatment ;” but at last he said, “ I will send my son, perhaps they will shew reverence unto him ;” but instead of that, say they, “ This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.” This so pricked the Jews to the heart, that they soon perceived it related to them, and were sore offended with it.

The third and last that I shall observe here, is in Luke viii. “ A sower (says our Saviour) went forth to sow ; some fell by the way-side,



and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. Some fell upon a rock, and it withered away, because it lacked moisture: and some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up with it and choked it. Some fell on good ground, and brought forth some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty," as in Matt. xiii: 8.

These, with sundry others of the like kind, interspersed here and there in the text, show the wonderful excellency and beauty which are given to and opened in a minister, by the divine word, in speaking by parables, comparisons, or allegories, thereby gaining great attention; and it is very moving, and of good service to them that hear, being given and opened by the Spirit alone: and for this reason thou mayest be tempted to imitate; which when any one undertakes, who is not qualified, nor opened by the Spirit therein, it makes confused work, and instead of edifying the hearers, grieves and loads them with trouble and sorrow, to hear solid and divine truths so darkened and perplexed, by multiplying words without true knowledge; thus



religious people are grieved : but on the other hand, this makes diversion and sport for the looser sort, who are too apt to make a mock at all religion and preaching ; for which reason it behoves every one to consider how they are qualified for the work of the ministry, lest by undertaking what is above their capacities, and present strength to go through with, they should cause laughter and lightness, by delivering impertinent parables, comparisons and allegories, not opened to them, nor given them by the Spirit of God ; that Spirit which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God ; and is the foundation of all the true ministry and ministers. I say, if these or any other things be undertaken to be expressed, without the spirit guiding and opening the understanding, it will give too much occasion for that proverb to be renewed, “ that comparisons are odious.”

*Secondly.* By allegories, as the apostle says, Gal. iv. “ For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh : but he of the free-woman was by promise. Which



things (says he) are an allegory ; for these are the two covenants. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all (meaning true believers) that are become the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ ;” for none ever received him by faith, but with him they did receive power to become free-born children of the new Jerusalem. Another of this kind is in Hebrews the 7th touching the priesthood, and office of our Saviour as the high priest of our profession and ministry, from whom we are to receive power for that work.

There are yet other ways of the operations of the gift to be spoke to, which to be more intelligible in, I conclude them under the following heads :

1st. By narration of God’s dealing with his people in past ages.

2d. By recounting the goodness of God to ourselves.

3. By declaring the great encouragement we have to virtue, from the blessings that others have met with.



4th. By expatiating on some particular text.

5th. And lastly, by setting forth the sundry dispensations of God to mankind, by opening the mystery of the law that came by Moses, as figurative of the gospel, and how the prophets did point at the same thing.

First then, by narration of God's dealing with his people in past ages. Such was the sermon of Stephen, Acts the 7th, and of Paul, Acts the 8th, both which have the same tendency ; for that of Stephen, Acts the 7th, the first part of what he said, was by enumerating God's dealings with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Israel, to gain the attention and notice of his hearers ; and the historical part of what he said, may be compared to the leaf gold which physicians inclose their pills in, they being thereby better concealed from the palate, that they might go down with the patient more glibly : for the substance of that sermon was to let them see, they were acted by the same spirit as were their fore-fathers who stoned the prophets, and put them to death. For (says he) as your fathers did, so do ye, always resist the Holy Ghost. This



so pricked and galled them, that instantly they made his words good, stoning him with stones until he died : by which we may learn, the way of the spirit which sometimes leadeth into, and openeth in our minds, matter which only serveth to gain upon the affection and attention of them that hear ; for if one should fall directly upon their present states without a parable, comparison, allegory, or historical relation, as introductory thereto, it might render our labour useless and ineffectual ; but such an introduction, given us by the spirit, may make way for a more searching and close ministry, in setting the states of the hearers in a true light before their eyes. I now come to the second head.

Secondly. By recounting the goodness of God to ourselves, in his great mercy visiting our souls while in the full career of disobedience ; and this requires great care and caution, that boasting may be excluded, and the honour of his name, whom we preach, exalted in our ministry, confirming the same by scripture, and the experience of holy men recorded therein : such was that of Paul before Festus and King Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 22. Having



therefore (says he) obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great," vers. 23. "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." So that when Paul appealed to the King's faith, urging, verse 27, "I know that thou believest;" and he confessed himself, verse 28, "almost persuaded to be a Christian." Thus Paul magnified the goodness of God to himself, yet set forth therein, that Christ is the true and proper object of faith.

Thirdly. In declaring the great encouragement we have to pursue virtue, from the blessings that others have met with thereby, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Samuel, David, &c. The author to the Hebrews, in the 11th chapter, giving us a large account of the faithfulness of the faithful, both men and women, which are enumerated to this very end (as himself declares) that we may be provoked by the strongest examples and inducements to follow the same steps in our pursuit of virtue: for when he sums up the evidence (as it may be properly termed)



in the 12th chapter, he begins, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. And let us run with patience the race that is set before us." I now come to the fourth head.

Fourthly. By expatiating on some certain texts, in the openings of life upon the same, which is still for procuring to them who hear, the same end, by begetting faith in Christ the Saviour of the world; for faith comes by hearing with a believing heart: such therefore was the preaching of Philip to the Eunuch, Acts 8th, for it is written, "Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." And somewhat like unto this is that of our Saviour in Luke the 4th, where "He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read, and there was delivered unto him the book of the Prophet Esaias: and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c. And he closed the book, and gave it



again to the minister, and sat down : and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him." Then he opened his mouth, expounding the same, saying, " This day (verse 21,) is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears : " proceeding to the amazement of them that heard him. I now come to the fifth and last head, which I propose now to intimate to my reader.

Fifthly, And lastly, by setting forth the sundry dispensations of God to mankind, as to Abraham and Lot : and in opening the mystery of the law that came by Moses, as only preparatory to the gospel, and how the prophets did point out Christ, the substance, which was figured forth by the offerings and shadows under that dispensation. Now we find the dispensation of angels to Noah, Abraham, and Lot, agreeing with the prophets that came after ; for unto Abraham was promised the blessing of all nations : likewise opening the true and spiritual meaning of Israel's travels, after their being delivered from Pharaoh's power and thralldom, and shewing by the spirit, that these things in the history have a meaning to believers in the



mystery, such as their going through the Red Sea, and being pursued by the power of Egypt, and their deliverance by an almighty arm, which overturned their enemies; and their being proved by want of bread and water, as also their gross mistake in setting up the Egyptian idol, the golden calf, and dancing before it, with this acclamation of joy, "these be thy gods O Israel!" &c. Now I say, all these things that happened to Israel in Egypt, through the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, have a true resemblance of believers travelling from spiritual Sodom and Egypt, so called; which is no other than coming from a state of fallen nature in the first Adam, in which all are dead, and strangers to God, being in the enmity, are children of wrath, unto a state of grace and life through Jesus Christ, our spiritual Moses, being reconciled to God through him who is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who never fell. And thus as we are opened by the spirit, in the ministry of the letter, to hold forth the true meaning of the spirit, therein we may be instrumental to bring many souls out of the enmity and wrath, to be reconciled



to God through Jesus Christ. And this ministry is called the word of reconciliation. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) Now I say, a minister ought first to experience the veil, that is in the history of the letter, taken away by the operation of Christ's spirit in his own heart, and the substance of the figures under the law, given to him in experience, and this will give him boldness to declare what God has done for his soul, as said the apostle; "Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men," (2 Cor. v. 11,) viz., we labour to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan (the spiritual Pharaoh) unto God, &c. And as is before observed, the sense of these terrors may be so acute and sharp upon the spirits of our young preachers, that they may with more charity be excused that warmth of zeal in warning and forewarning others to forsake those evils for which they have so lately and severely smarted: I say, they may be borne with, and charity



should be uppermost in our minds towards such, where this is the truth of the case.

Now all these afore-named openings of the spirit, in any of the aforesaid methods, as we are conducted therein by the word of life, are of great use and service in the church, to beget faith in unbelievers, and to build up and confirm them that have had some taste and feeling of the heavenly gift; and this may so affect some, that have obtained part of the same ministry, that they may be in danger of borrowing one of another, and endeavouring to imitate the same; but not having the same virtue and power attending, the nakedness of such will soon appear. But the danger of borrowing may lie as near, respecting the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, with any other books that may affect our minds, as what we have heard delivered in the openings of life. For it is no more lawful for us to preach what we have read, because we have read it, than it is for us to preach what we have heard, because we have heard it. Nay, I may further add (what thou wilt find by experience true in due time) that it is not lawful for thee to



repeat thy own experience, and former openings, merely in thy own strength of memory and will ; for if thou dost treasure up and furnish thyself this way, thou wilt be greatly disappointed, and thy doctrine will be like the manna kept out of season ; worms bred in it, and it stank. Now a spiritual minister is, and ought every day to be, like blank paper, when he comes into the assembly of the Lord's people, not depending on any former openings or experience, either of his own or others, that he hath heard or read ; but his only and sole dependence must be on the gift of the spirit, to give, and bring to his understanding matter suitable to the present state of the assembly before him. Thus will thy words be fitly spoken, and like apples of gold in pictures of silver, and thou wilt appear as the oracle of God, ministering out of that ability which God gives, and under his conduct thou wilt be safe : thy words being full of spirit and life, will edify the hearers, and thy own heart will be full of comfort and peace, the comfort of the Holy Spirit ; which will bring thee great honour and respect from thy brethren, which ought with great care to



be received ; and the more thou hast thereof, the more humble and circumspect oughtest thou to be in rendering the honour where due, viz., to thy lord and master, *the Lord Jesus Christ, the great minister, and apostle of our profession.*

Having brought our young ministers thus far, we will consider them fitted for other services in travelling, which shall be the subject of the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER V.

Advices to a cautious conduct and deportment in their travels in the work of the ministry.

WE will now consider our young minister, as having an enlargement of both understanding and love, engaging his mind to labour for the good of others ; and this cannot be confined to thy own meeting, church, or county, where thou hast thy residence : but the constraining power of love, arising from the operation of the gift in thy own mind, may bring thee under a weighty concern to visit the churches abroad, in which work there generally is a



gradual beginning; first, in visiting thy neighbouring meetings; and in this work, as thou keepest thy place, thou wilt gain experience, and thereby come to be more fit to undertake weightier service.

*First*, then, be not over-forward to visit friends abroad, lest thou shouldst bring thyself under a suspicion of running too fast; neither be too backward, lest thou shouldst hurt thyself by hindering thy growth in that love which would enlarge thy mind for the edifying of the church, and thy own comfort: in order therefore to both, I request a due attention in thy mind, to feel the constraining power of love to draw thy spirit before thou goest, which will, with a divine affection, and ardent desire, move strong in thee for the good of them thou art to visit. Let this rest upon thee, with a resignation, that if it be thy place, thou art both ready and willing to go. Now if these desires arise in thee from a right spirit, thou wilt feel great peace in so giving up, with a clear sight and satisfaction in thyself to go. Now after thou hast given up to visit thy neighbouring meetings, and art come among strange friends and faces, thou



wilt find thyself under great fears and doubts, how thou shalt come off; and perhaps it may be, poor enough in thy own esteem, so that thou mayest think thou hadst better have staid at home; and a jealousy may possess thy mind, that the friends judge thou art out of thy place: and thus thou mayst return under a cloud for thy undertaking, and more especially so, if thou findest thyself guilty of slips in expression or doctrine, either in misapplying or misciting the text; this may dull thy spirits, and flag thy inclinations for the present exceedingly: but thou must not rest here, for the gift thou hast received will not thus be smothered, if thou regardest it as thou oughtest, and the trouble thou meetest with may be of good use to thee, which hereafter thou mayest see, (though it does not now appear) therefore, as thou keepest thy place, thou wilt find thy heart more ardently inclined to go again, when no doubt thy last visit will be remembered as a block in thy way to so good a work; but that ought not hinder, though it will humble thee; but in hopes to succeed better, go again, chiefly regarding to look in the proper place for help, where thou hast in



time past met with it ; and if thou comest off well now this second visit, finding all pleased, this may raise thee in thy own thoughts more than may be for thy good, if thou dost not watchfully call to mind the foundation of that excellency in which thou hast appeared, and give the praise thereof to the Almighty, discouraging in thyself, or any other, any thing that may appear contrary thereto. Thus by degrees thou wilt be more acquainted and inured to strange faces and meetings, and wilt get strength over that slavish fear and uneasiness, occasioned through want of experience ; and as thou witnesses a growth in thy gift, the word of life, a concern of greater moment and consequence may fall upon thee ; for as thy heart is enlarged in the word of life, thy love will be farther extended towards the children of men, and inclinations will be raised in thy mind (in proportion to that love which is begot in thee, by the gift of the spirit thou hast received to minister from) to make farther visits to the meetings and people of God, in some adjacent county or counties ; under the impulse whereof, thou wilt find many difficulties and hardships laid in thy



way, which will bring thee under a great strait what to do, sometimes concluding this, and sometimes that ; but whilst thou art under this doubting, it will be proper to advise with some ministers, who have had some experience in the like case, and let them know, how it is and hath been with thee, respecting thy present concern, and they may be assisting to satisfy thy mind, and thou mayest from that conclude to give way, being easy and well satisfied it is thy place to go , but before thou takest thy journey, lay the matter before thy brethren, in order for a proper certificate, or a letter of recommendation, signifying the satisfaction and unity of thy brethren with thy undertaking. All this being done, the consent of thy friends and brethren obtained, and nothing appearing now to obstruct, give up freely to make this intended visit, always minding, that thou keepest close to thy gift, and followest the leadings thereof both in thy journeyings and doctrine ; so wilt thou find thy strength inwardly to increase, and experience will be daily added to thy knowledge, and thou wilt be preserved from going too fast in thy travels, or from being persuaded to go out



of thy right line, and concern ; or from lingering too long in particular places, all which are hurtful mistakes when fallen into ; but as thy mind is preserved under the conduct of the spirit and word of truth, thou wilt see when it is thy place to return ; and the same constraining power of love in thy heart, which drew thee forth, will lead thee home again ; and when thou art there, endeavour to keep thy place in humility, lest thou shouldst miss thy way by endeavouring to appear as an able minister, supposing, because thou hast been abroad a little, thou must now give some proof of thy apostleship by enlarging on such matters as come before thee, apprehending that thy friends at home may expect such a performance from thee ; and if thou shouldst let thy mind out to answer them therein, thou mayest disappoint thyself as well as those that hear thee. To avoid which, be mindful to regard thy opening, proceeding no farther than led by the spirit in thy ministry, let it be little or much, without endeavouring to make it more or less ; neither covet to appear well read or learned : for by giving way to such a temper thou mayest discover thy weakness,



and appear both foolish and impertinent to them that hear thee. It is safe for a minister to desire no other knowledge than the work of regeneration in his own mind, that he may speak to others the things of the spirit (in such words of plainness as are received from it) because he knows them to be true in his own experience, always remembering, that it is not lawful for us to speak our own experience in our own time and will, but we must wait to feel some spiritual virtue, and divine assistance in our minds, enabling us, by opening our understandings, to declare to others with power and authority, in the word of life, what God has done for our souls; and this will be delivered in such terms and plainness of speech, as they that are unlearned, and of low capacities, will understand; but if we undertake the work in our own time, and depend upon strength of memory, either from what has been opened to us before, or from what we have formerly had in our experience, we shall easily fall under that temptation of endeavouring to appear eloquent, by embellishing our discourse with such terms and phrases as we may not rightly understand,



and therefore may misapply ; and thus by aspiring to appear knowing, well read and eloquent, we may discover our nakedness by aiming at forbidden knowledge, as our first parents did : our safety therefore stands in keeping to the root of the ministry, the inspiration of the spirit, patiently waiting at all times to know our places and services in the ministry, that when we speak, it may be the word and mind of the spirit, and not our own ; and when we minister, it may be in that strength and ability which God is pleased to give, and not our own ; and thus shall we gain strength ; and our labour will be acceptable ; the hearts of our brethren will be opened and enlarged towards us, as we thus approve ourselves workmen that rightly divide the word of truth ; herein neither we ourselves nor those that hear us, will have any just cause to be ashamed.

Now as thou thus keepest thy place in thy gift, thou wilt grow therein, and thy desire and inclinations will likewise with ardent love grow in proportion with thy gift ; for the tendency of a spiritual ministry, and its nature, is such, that it enflames the mind, wher-



ever it is, with a desire of doing good to the souls of men, and to be instrumental to promote their happiness, both here and hereafter, according to that ability received ; and this is no other than the love of God in Christ Jesus, working on the intellects of thy mind, and gently constraining thee to so good a work ; and thou wilt now clearly see, that a dispensation of the gospel is given thee in charge, and thy care ought to increase with thy gift, how to discharge thy duty therein ; but thou wilt also find at times very strong reasonings against thy undertaking, nay perhaps stronger than before, and wilt be ready to think, and to say to thyself, Why should I trouble my mind about these things ? I had best mind my own work now I am young, and endeavour to improve myself in the affairs of this life, which will be both prudent and commendable ; this I will endeavour, and likewise be as religious and careful of myself as I can ; and let others look to themselves for me ; that's their duty not mine. Such like reasonings as these will at times rise very high in thy way ; but notwithstanding, as thou



keepest to thy gift, and waitest in it, all these clouds of reasoning will vanish, and thy mind will be secretly enflamed with love to promote faith on the earth.

Now the first journey I supposed very short; soon out and soon home; but presuming the next to be longer, it will be more needful than it was at the first time to have the approbation of the Monthly meeting of which thou art a member, and it may so happen, that some of thy brethren may think that thou art not qualified for such an undertaking, but they may advise thee to tarry at home till thou art (in their thoughts) better fitted for such a visit; and this may be a very hard trial, which if not rightly taken, may prove hurtful to thy mind; for if thou art apt to be dejected, this may bring thee very low, and stagger thee so far, so as to call in question the very foundation which thou hast thus far proceeded upon in thy ministry; but if thou keepest thy place in thy gift, this will be of great benefit to thee, in gaining experience. I say, here will be a great need of keeping a close watch over thy own temper and spirit, lest prejudice should beget hard thoughts in thy mind



against those whom thou mayest look upon as opposers, because they scruple giving consent to thy travelling so long a journey as is proposed : so that if thou art of a vindictive temper and apt to resentment; this may, if thou art not very watchful, tincture thy ministry with bitterness which will appear by giving slant and side strokes in thy preaching, or by suffering thyself to think, that what they offer in opposition to thy travelling, proceeds from some private pique or resentment, and not from any just cause of objection that they have to thy ministry, but out of a captious humour they set themselves against thee ; and thou to be even with them, giving way to passion and resentment, so that thy mind is soured, and thy ministry tinctured with anger and revenge, giving side blows with a view to oppose thy opposers ; but whatever thy successes may be respecting them, thou mayest assure thyself, by this conduct thou will expose thyself to contempt with thy best friends, and make thy way more straight, by increasing the number of dissatisfied brethren by thy preaching so full of resentment, and void of gospel love ; the more thou strivest this way for victory and enlarge-



ment, the greater and stronger the opposition will be against thee, and thou wilt become an object of both scorn and contempt. Therefore to avoid all these inconveniencies that may arise on this account, it will be fit to consider that for every fault or error thou art guilty of in thy travels, whether it be in doctrine or conversation, the meeting and Friends that have recommended thee as a minister, must share largely with thee, both in the blame and shame thou bringest upon thy profession and ministry, by thy ill conduct or disagreeable doctrine; and therefore every friend and brother in thy own meeting ought to be satisfied, both respecting thy ministry and conduct as a minister, e'er they sign letters recommendatory on thy behalf; nay, it is the indispensable duty of every member, having a just cause of objection, to oppose thy pretensions to travel as a minister, with this caution, that he in a brotherly and gospel spirit shew the cause of his objections; and whether it may relate to thy doctrine or conversation, or both; let this mind be in thee, that it is designed for the good of the whole, and with a view to prevent any uneasiness to the society, and not in any prejudice to thee, but for thine and



the church's good ; therefore guard against a spirit of envy and resentment, and keep in love and charity with all those that may appear against thee, desiring above all to be endued with an humble and forgiving spirit ; put the best meaning on what thou hast met with, that it was and is designed for thy good, with a view to save both thine and the monthly meeting's credit, where thou art a member, making thy humble application in spirit to God for true wisdom, and the spirit of a sound mind to conduct thee in this time of trial, by opposition from such as may wish both thee and the cause of religion right well in general, keeping close to thy gift, forbearing to appear in the ministry, if thou feelest any tincture of sourness or resentment, but wait in silence until all that is purged out and taken away, by the prevailing power of love in Christ Jesus, that so the ministry of reconciliation from him may fill thy mind ; and in this, as thou art kept and preserved, thou wilt through patience overcome all that may oppose thee : Thus wilt thou, by divine aid, be able to turn thy water (which hath been afflicting) into wine, and thy way will be open-



ed, all objections removed, and some whom thou mayest have looked upon as enemies, may appear now thy best friends, who have watched over thee for good ; and finding all their objections answered, and uneasinesses concerning thee removed by thy humble, meek, and prudent conduct, may with both freedom and pleasure consent to sign thy credentials as a minister in unity with them : though they may not all come in at once, but some may receive such impressions, by contesting the point, that it will require time to wear out ; but thy strength will increase, and the love of thy brethren grow strong towards thee, for the work's sake.

Thus by faith, having through patience surmounted all these difficulties, thou wilt find the words of the apostle true, that all things shall work together for good, to them that love and fear God. And these afflictions and trials will add to thy spiritual improvement, and thou wilt grow in the root, and thy experience will be much enlarged, and great will be thy comfort and peace. But suppose again, that thou meetest with no opposition of this kind, but the meeting, and every



member in it, are pleased, and cheerfully recommend thee as a minister in unity with them ; then it is needful to consider, that thou hast in some good degree the credit and honour of that meeting reposed in thee, of which thou oughtest for both thy own sake and theirs, to be very circumspect and careful, knowing that if thou shouldst bring any disgrace or shame upon thyself, either in thy ministry or conversation, the meeting that have certified in thy behalf, will likewise suffer with thee, and come under blame for recommending thee as a minister, finding that thou answerest not the character given concerning thee ; and under this state thy return will bring both sorrow and shame to thy friends at home. For avoiding whereof, the next chapter containeth some needful caution and counsel. I conclude this with Paul's advice to Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all-long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do



the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.) This excellent advice, with that in the close of the second chapter, is worthy of our notice and consideration. (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26.)

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## CHAPTER VI.

Cautions against pride and exaltedness, meddling in matters, spreading reports, &c., and a general recommendation of humility and meekness in all things.

I now suppose thee ready to take thy journey, in unity with thy brethren, made manifest by the credentials given thee for that purpose.

Thus leaving thy brethren in the sweet fellowship of the gospel, having their prayers for thy preservation and success; yet not without great fear and weeping, thou settest out, doubting how it may answer; but thou mayest perhaps be well satisfied for a few meetings at thy first setting out in this great humility of mind; but thou must then keep so humble and inward with the Lord in spirit, as to wait daily for the renewings of both wisdom and power from him; and thus will thy mind be



supplied, every meeting, with new life and matter suiting the states of the people thou art amongst ; and this will be to thy comfort and peace, and to their edification.

But if after these fresh supplies that thou daily art favoured with, thou shouldst grow unmindful what thou really art, and begin to think thyself in a better capacity for the work than formerly, and the esteem and favour shewn thee by thy friends begins to swell thy mind above that humble and depending frame; thou wilt find after such a state of mind prevails upon thee, that leanness and barrenness of soul will ensue ; and if thou dost not bethink thyself seasonably to return, but endeavourst in thy own strength and will to save thy credit as a minister, thou wilt lose ground faster than it was gained. Thus some, after they have begun well, and gone on so for some time, having gained some experience, and a form of sound words, but for want of keeping humble and inward in spirit with the Lord, they have insensibly gone from the foundation and spring of living ministry, and depended on memory, former experience, and openings, and not on the inspiration of the



spirit, which is the root of all true ministry, and what proceeds from it is always new and acceptable. I say, such have fallen into repetitions of the same things, without a newness of virtue attending them therein, and so have become formal ministers in the oldness of the letter; and this sort of preaching may take with some, especially those that are unsensible of the virtue of the spirit to reveal unto them the things of the spirit of God. But notwithstanding thou mayest have favour and credit with such as a preacher, and may be by those respected for a little time, and regarded as such; yet the longer that thou goest on in this way, the more thou wilt covet honour and pre-eminence, yea, thou wilt in time be apt to seek the praise of men more than of God, and out of humour, being displeased if thou hast it not. But alas, this is poor work; for by the living in religion thou wilt soon be discovered, and found out to be but an empty, dry, and unfruitful formalist; and they that are alive unto God, will see thee plainly to be such; for the Lord's people, who have a spiritual discerning, cannot be long imposed upon, but they will find out, and



discover the true voice from the false, loving the first, and thee for the sake thereof; but rejecting the last, and the authors thereof, be they whoever they may: therefore all thy contrivance, fore-cast, and skill, used to the utmost advantage in thy own time, will, and strength, will prove but as a broken cistern that can hold no water that will ever afford refreshment to the people of God, but will load and grieve them. To avoid all which, it will be safe to keep in an humble dependence, endeavouring to keep near the Lord, having him always before our eyes, that we may receive daily ability from him, and speak as we feel our minds moved by his divine spirit; and whether it be little or much that we have to say, be thankful that we are favoured with his presence and life in our ministry, not so much regarding what others may say or judge concerning us, as the peace and satisfaction that we inwardly enjoy by the word of life, that life which is the light of men. Thou mayest find thyself as this day drawn forth and greatly enlarged in thy ministry, but to-morrow thou mayest be shut up, barren and poor, having but very little to say,



and that but very brokenly, as with a stammering tongue, which may seem very uneasy to thee so to appear; and under such a condition thou mayest be tempted to go beyond thy commission. This ought always to be watched against, for it is our safest and best way, at all times, to appear just as we feel power and strength in our gifts, endeavouring to keep our minds in patience, be it how it will, knowing that the wind blows where, when, as strong, and weak, as it listeth, (John iii. 8,) and we can neither add or diminish ought from it; but if in the time of weakness we endeavour to hide ourselves by multiplying words, we shall discover still more weakness, and in this state silence will be much more safe than preaching; therefore if thou hast but little to say, say but little; and if thou hast nothing to say, be silent; for although thou mayst be judged as out of thy place in travelling, having nothing to preach, yet if any count this as a fault to be ashamed of, it is to be considered, that this reputed shame (for in reality it is thy credit) will fall more directly upon thyself, in thy undertaking to preach without any authority for so doing;



for by such an undertaking thou mayest fall unawares into such impertinences that may be a real shame, both to thyself and thy brethren also, who will hereby share deeply with thee, and the principle be reproached for thy folly and forwardness in pretending to inspiration, when thou hast it not; therefore, if at times thou art very poor, and has nothing to say, let not this tempt thee to go beyond thy line; for this poverty and affliction thou art under, may by divine purpose be brought upon thee, to prepare thy mind to speak more feelingly, and with moving language to others under the like distress and barrenness of soul. Thus are the ministers of Christ often, as it may be said, baptized for the dead, viz: they are given to taste of the various and near trials that believers are exercised and proved by, and are likewise made to taste and feel of the infinite mercy of God, in the raising them from death to life, and from the power of Satan and darkness to partake of the joys of immortality and eternal life, brought to light again by the gospel.

And when a minister is thus prepared by spiritual affliction, occasioned by the withdrawing of divine virtue from his mind, and



suffered, as many good men have been, to be buffeted, tempted, tried, and sifted by Satan, feeling faith, hope, and patience almost to fail, yet in this state, by a secret and hidden power, neither seen nor thought of, he is preserved ; though for very anguish he may be ready to cry out in the very bitterness of his soul, Oh ! wretched man that I am, to undertake what I was not called to, and to run e'er I was sent ; my punishment is greater than I can bear. Thus it pleases God to suffer his ministers to be proved, that they may come forth as vessels fit for the refiner.

But then, when this Deliverer is pleased to reveal himself the Beloved of the Soul, oh ! what exceeding joy, what exceeding soul satisfaction then ! Oh ! then a minister can from experience cry out and say, come taste and see that God is good, and worthy to be waited upon. Oh ! come, and I'll tell you what God has done for my soul.

Now this ministry begets faith, and raises the hearers' minds up unto the lively hope of the gospel, the power of life, in the preaching of the word as the oracles of God, and in that ability we receive from him.



Here we find such kind of trials and afflictions by poverty and barrenness, to turn both to ours and the church's good, as we keep the word of God's patience; and though in this state of poverty and weakness, sympathizing friends are very few, and such as will frown and look strange upon us may be many, yet nevertheless, such whose eyes are upon us, some for evil, and some for good, will see that our excellency is in Him that has called us to this work, and not in ourselves; and in due time, as we keep in humility and patience, waiting in our gifts, we shall be drawn forth and enlarged to the satisfaction of them that hear us: the scale may come to be turned, and thou mayest now have more to admire, and speak in thy praise than thou hadst to frown upon thee; for such is the fickleness and uncertainty of many in this respect, that they will turn both with us, and against us, in a short time; so that the more applause we have, the more fearful of ourselves we ought to be; but if we should be exalted in ourselves, by reason that we are admired by common fame, we may, e'er we are aware of



it, bring ourselves into the same condition before described, and all that friendship may be turned into slight and enmity again : it is therefore very safe for us, at all times, to keep humble, and inward with the Lord, waiting in our gifts, that we may truly know when to speak, and what, as likewise when to be silent ; herein we shall grow from one degree of experience to another, the gospel will be purely preached, and the work will prosper in our hands.

Next, be careful of thy conversation ; for it may so happen, that where thou lodgest, either casually or designedly, thou mayest hear of some differences subsisting amongst Friends, and others may likewise expose some vices that some of their meeting may be addicted to, of which they will be pleased thou takest notice ; but to all such kind of discourses thou oughtest to give no heed, but rather with decency shun them, lest they should bias thy mind in thy ministry, and so thou mayest preach by information, more than by inspiration : this will hurt thy service and reputation ; but if after thy service is over, thou meetest with anything of this kind, and canst have



freedom to advise, or be servicaeble in any respect, to set right things which are amiss, endeavour to keep in the way of thy duty with all humility and patience, considering impartially what is said on all sides; then meekly persuade to peace rather than judge amongst them, for it may be dangerous to judge on either side, without a fair hearing, lest thou should give strength to that which thou oughtest not; but if we can in a friendly manner bring contending parties to an agreement, we shall do a good work; and if we have any advice to give to the disorderly and vicious, let it be done in much love and tenderness, rather shewing the evil consequences of such practices, by comparison in other men, (which may show them their folly) than to fall directly upon them. By this way of reproof, Nathan brought David to pass sentence upon himself; and if thou art instrumental to set their folly in a clear light, they may thereby be prevailed on to reform and amend. Thy prudent conduct herein will much increase both thy service, and peace.

Next, be careful not to carry tales and reports from one place to another; for some



have, by such work, made themselves very offensive; and consider, that tale-bearing is forbidden under the law, as of pernicious consequence to the peace of society. How sordid then must it appear in a gospel minister, to be guilty of this folly? Therefore, if thou at any time art informed of ought concerning any Friend, that may injure his character, first enquire, whether such an informer hath given such an one gospel order; and whether if he be called upon to vouch what he has said, he will abide by that report? This will be a means to put a stop to tale-bearing in a good degree: yet for all this, if thou findest a concern to advise with such an one, and to let him know what thou hast heard concerning his or her conduct, minding that prohibition, (Exodus xxiii. 1,) against false reports, this will make it needful, if what thou hast heard be questioned, as to its truth, for thee to make known thy authors, to make out what they have reported; and if it appears on examination false, a stop will be put to it, which otherwise, by the method of, I will tell thee but do thou keep it to thyself, might go far and wide: this conduct will be as a fortress



against all such busy people, who love to scan their neighbour's failings, while they overlook their own ; and thy credit will grow with thy friends, and thy gift will make room for thee, as thou art thus preserved: but if thou shouldst have a pleasure in, and encourage such tattling, thou wilt hurt thy service, and feed that temper in others as well as in thyself, which ought to be slain ; therefore, never hear nor receive any such report, but from such judicious Friends who have laboured in a spirit of love to reclaim such offenders, and want thy aid to strengthen their endeavours already used for the good of such ; which is what in justice, according to gospel doctrine, we owe one to another : this kind of behaviour will answer thy character, and thou wilt have praise for the same.

In the course of thy travels thou wilt have frequent opportunities with friends at their meetings of discipline, in which meetings there may happen sometimes warm debates, which may, if thou art not very careful and reserved, be a snare to thee in thy conduct, and thou mayest be too easily provoked to speak on one side or the other, before thou



dost rightly know and understand the matter. Now, although I would have us be very careful and cautious, how we meddle at such times, and in such meetings, yet I would, that we should exercise both our ears and understandings, waiting in our gifts; perhaps we may have a service in reconciling matters in debate; and if thou findest it thy place to speak, be upon the enquiry to find yet more clearly the right thing that is contended for, and let thy words be delivered with great deference and regard to both parties, with that decent condescension, submission and sweetness, that is becoming thy age and experience to treat thy friends with.

If thou shouldst likewise observe a difference in the management of their affairs, respecting their discipline in common, from what it is in the meeting whereof thou art a member, and from this mayest judge thyself able to shew them a better method, which method by custom is become familiar to thee, and if thou art forward to dictate, by endeavouring to persuade them to alter their method of ordering matters, thou mayest be looked



upon as a busy meddler in what concerns thee not. But if in private conversation some better notions of management respecting the making such meetings more serviceable, to answer the good end proposed by them for the benefit of society, can be cultivated in the minds of those concerned, and so propagated by degrees, it might be of great use; but hasty revolutions and changes in forms of discipline are of dangerous consequence, and ought never to be attempted, but upon considerations well digested; for it may offend some, and unsettle others, by raising debates for and against, which may cause great heats if they be stiff on both sides, as it may likely so fall out, to the breach of unity, and lessening brotherly love and charity one to another.

I have observed, that where a monthly or quarterly meeting have continued in the method recommended to them by some worthy elders who are now gone, and left this practice as it were a legacy to them, some have been very much opinionated thereof, in honour to the founders of the method they may be in; and we not knowing the reason inducing such worthy elders to this or that



way of management, ought to be very tender in judging about things of this nature ; and it may not be so material, whether things may be done this or that way, for the good of the whole, so they be done in charity and love ; therefore let us in our travels take care not hastily to meddle and dip into these affairs, and so do more hurt than good.

Now as to thy private conduct in all places where thou art with thy friends : be very modest and thankful for such entertainment as may be given thee ; and though it may be but (in thy esteem) poor and mean, yet as thou hast it from a sincere, loving, hearty and honest mind, according to the ability of the giver, be content, thankful and cheerful with it ; remembering who said, " He that gives a cup of cold water to a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall have a prophet's reward." And guard against speaking disrespectfully in any other place of that entertainment, (though mean) for that may be very offensive, and give great uneasiness, being a hurt to thyself more than thou mayest be aware of ; but in these matters behave as becomes thy place and service.



And in thy conversation, whether in public, or more privately with those of a different sex; be strictly careful to avoid too great familiarities, and every thing which, though innocent in itself, may give any just occasion of offence to such who may be watching over thy conduct, either with a good or evil eye; that so thou mayest not only be preserved from evil, but likewise from every appearance thereof; and by a prudent and inoffensive behaviour adorn the gospel of God our Saviour, and be an example to the believers, not only in word and doctrine in public, but likewise in private, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.

And if thou art unmarried, carefully guard against either making or receiving any proposals to alter thy condition hastily, and without being well advised, and seeing thy way clear therein; but finish thy journey first, let the other rest till that is over, so wilt thou avoid the risk of any reproach that might fall upon thee for any misbehaviour in that matter.

Take what care thou canst, according to thy ability, not to make the gospel chargeable o thy friends, in going from one place to



another, neither be difficult to please in such cases, but always shew thyself easy and contented with such entertainment as can be had; some tempers, though straight handed enough themselves, are yet difficult to please, and apt to find fault, giving by such conduct uneasiness to their friends; but as we have no views of reward from our hearers, nor ought to desire any other than a little supply for the present occasion, of what is needful to eat and drink, for which, let us be thankfully contented, and not shew any uneasiness, if what is set before us don't so well suit our present wants, but consider the ability of the Friends where we are, who may exceed their common way of living considerably, the better to accommodate us: a discontented and murmuring spirit hath done hurt, and given occasion for some to say, that the design of such in going abroad was to eat and drink, more than to preach the gospel; a reflection, I hope, every Friend in his travel will take care to avoid, and take all occasions to prevent; not forgetting, that all the malice the world and the devil have vented against the true ministry amongst us, could never fix the odium upon us justly, of



being mercenary, that is, such who ever looked for gifts, or sought after rewards ; a leprosy affecting all the hireling teachers in the world, of what kind soever.

Dear brethren, let us maintain in our conduct that noble way we have ever walked in, that as we have freely received our ministry from God by his spirit, freely to give to the people ; for a free ministry will stand, and be continued in the church to the latest posterity ; but the hirelings will be rejected more and more, and come to nought by degrees.

Next, where thou comest, inquire if there are any sick, either in body or mind, amongst them, and wait to know thy place and freedom in thy gift to visit such ; but, in all such visits, let thy words be few and weighty, for if thou shouldst give way thyself to much discourse, or indulge it in those thou visitest, it may hurt thy service to them, and render it void ; therefore regard the weight of thy gift to open thy understanding, that whether thou mayest be opened in some short exhortations, or by way of prayer, what thou hast may be from thy gift, not then doubting but thou mayest be instrumental of good to them thou



so visitest : but some apprehend, that when they are with the sick, in either body or mind, that they must be preaching, praying, or discoursing, perhaps beyond due bounds, which sometimes have proved rather a burden and grief to the afflicted than a comfort.

And if thou observest in any a slackness, or an undue liberty taken, not so agreeable to their profession, unto whom thou findest thy mind engaged to speak by way of advice or caution, let it be done in the spirit of meekness and love, that if possible thou mayest reach the witness in their minds, that what thou sayest is right. Thus having discharged the duty as a minister, both in a public and private capacity, (that is) I mean in the assemblies and private families where thy lot has fallen, thou wilt return with great joy and consolation, finding the words of the royal prophet fulfilled, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psal. cxxvi. 6.)



## CHAPTER VII.

Advice to ministers in the state of young men, wherein self-conceit of themselves, and too low estimation of others, may be apt to raise the mind above the low and humble state wherein its safety only is.

I SHALL now consider our young minister as grown to a considerable degree of knowledge and experience in the work, and in part to the state of a young man that is strong, in whom the word dwells more plentifully; and thy reputation as a minister growing with thy gift, thou mayest now be looked upon in thy own meeting as a member of some weight, to whom thy brethren pay a considerable regard; in which state new trials and temptations may arise, and thou mayest be in as much danger (in sundry particulars) if not more, to miss thy way, than when less looked upon, both by thyself and others. Now thy friends may apply to thee for advice and counsel under their difficulties, and if thou shouldst happen to mistake, and advise wrong, thou wilt be blamed, and the hurt sustained by following thy counsel will be laid upon thee as an excuse to themselves; thus, if such an one had



not advised me to it, I should not have done it; and this may bring some uneasiness upon thee, very hard to bear without resentment, and endeavouring to vindicate thy advice given as suitable at that time, laying the blame (if any) on the mismanagement of the person advised. Sometimes a small spark of contention thus kindled, hath risen to a flame: to avoid which, be very cautious in giving advice in difficult cases, without very good grounds; for what thou sayest, and advise the parties to consult those of greater experience and judgment, to excuse thy meddling therein; so wilt thou be free from blame on all hands; but yet I would not have thee peremptorily to refuse hearing the complaints of persons under trouble, that may really want advice and help; but when thou hast heard, consider if their trouble doth arise from any misunderstanding on any account, and whether some way can't be found out for their relief, by mediation and persuasion of persons not concerned in the matters under dispute. Thus mayest thou be instrumental in making peace without dipping into the matter, which is the chief cause of complaint, and this will add to thy credit as a useful member in the body.



Next, thou mayest now appear with more assurance and boldness in thy ministry, which boldness, if not duly tempered with modesty, humility, wisdom and meekness, may render thee unpleasant to the ears of them that hear thee, and more especially, if thy doctrine should savour more of the man than it did in time past, when thou appeared in the innocency and infancy of the ministry : and this conduct may raise up sundry of the meeting to watch over thee, with a view to have something to lay hold of to thy prejudice, yet intending (at least pretending) thy good, to instruct thee better, and humble thee ; and then if thou dost mistake or misplace any Scripture, or drop any thing that may not seem safe to be stood by in thy preaching, it may be handed about (if thou art high and uneasy at reproof) from one to another privately, until it comes to thy knowledge, and thou mayest then find it hard to live under it (more especially) if thou art of a vindictive and high spirit, not able to bear contradiction and reproof, as becomes a minister of Christ ; it will therefore be prudent to consider thy natural temper and disposition of mind, endeavouring



to keep thyself under subjection to the mortifying power of the cross, that thy doctrine may be adorned with meekness, and also seasoned with gospel salt : in this state judicious friends will love, and vindicate thy service ; but if thou givest way to thy own spirit, and in the heat thereof attemptest to minister, and vindicate thyself over the heads of thy offended friends, this will render thy doctrine unpleasant to the ear, and bring thee under more disgrace ; and finding thyself under a slight, and in some degree of contempt with and among thy brethren, take care that thou dost not unawares (in the heat and height of thy own spirit, which is not able to bear evil report) begin to chide, and think to threaten them into a better temper, by blaming their conduct in thy preaching as directly as the case will bear. Assure thyself, that this conduct and behaviour will be a direct way to turn all their hearts against thee as one man. Thus, instead of gaining on them, and removing the cause of offence, it will be more established, and grow much more difficult to remove for the future, being thus fixed by thy imprudent conduct. Some I have in my time



known, from so small a beginning as is before described, grow (in bitterness and envy, occasioned by spiritual pride, and self-conceit) to such a head, as have in time rendered them (who in their beginning were esteemed as ministers) altogether useless, and they have degenerated by degrees so far, as to become enemies to the Society, and have left it under great prejudices, in bitterness doing all and whatsoever their degenerate minds might dictate to them, to render the Society contemptible, and its principles odious; which is a dreadful thing to happen to any one that hath ever had a part of this divine ministry; it is therefore highly needful for us, to learn to know ourselves, and to keep in it daily, and not to forget and lose the sense of the imperfections and defects in the natural constitution of our own minds; and if we find ourselves of an imperious, insulting, proud temper, by nature, let us mind, that pride goes before destruction, and a haughty (unforgiving) spirit before a fall; uneasy at affronts, and not able to endure evil reports to be cast upon us, without using endeavours to vindicate our honour at all events, not considering what our



great master suffered for us, to bring us to the knowledge of himself. I say, if we by nature are so inclined as above, how carefully ought we to keep a watch against that weak part we see in ourselves, praying with sincerity that our minds may be daily improved by a divine cultivation through the spirit, that that great change may be known upon us, spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah xi. 6.) This is that disposition and subjection of mind that we ought to wait daily to be kept under by the spirit, viz., if we by nature are like the wolf, leopard, or lion, at any time, and that nature appears in us, this by the meek spirit of Jesus ought to be always kept under subjection and government; for though we may have known our natural tempers subdued in a great degree, at our first setting out in the ministry, by the cross and power of Christ, yet if there be not a daily abiding under that power, our natural inclinations and tempers may prevail again to our hurt, and the blessed



effect of that subjection to the spirit, spoken of by the prophet, we shall not experience, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah xi. 9.) It is therefore needful to watch daily against every thing in ourselves that will hurt our service, and render our ministry unprofitable, by letting in any resentment or heart-burning against any Friend, for a real or supposed affront, that may have been put upon us by them; considering, that nothing can hurt us that is either said or reported, though with ever so ill a design against us, if we are in our places, and innocent of the things reported. I say, such things can't be hurtful to us, unless we make them so to ourselves by undue resentment, being influenced thereby to preach and entertain an assembly with our private resentment, endeavouring to revenge this supposed injustice done us, in this public manner; not considering the force of our Saviour's caution in this case, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way;



first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.) The sum of which, to our purpose is this, that we undertake not the work of the ministry under the influence of any resentment, or private pique in our minds against any brother, but that the sole motive and influence of our ministry ought to be our love to God, and the souls of men; and by divine inspiration to labour therein with diligence and sincerity to promote faith in the earth, by stirring up their minds to live a pious and godly life: and as our standing and labour is in this love, we need not fear but our service will be both honourable and acceptable where we live: and in this temper of mind we shall be capable to receive instruction (and not think ourselves above it, which is a very dangerous state) and if reproof should be given us in a wrong mind we being in a right one, may reap good by what is not so intended for us. In this temper of mind we shall see our water turned into wine, and all our bitters made sweet to us; and as before observed, all things will work together for our good, because our standing is in the love and fear of God, and



in it we labour by inspiration, as ambassadors of Christ, to make full proof of our ministry for the convincing of gainsayers, that they may be reconciled unto God, and to build up the believers in that most holy faith, the fruit whereof is righteousness and godly living.

But if thou art of a meek, modest and bashful temper, that is, backward, not willing to put thyself forward, but by a mean and low esteem that thou entertainest of thy own gift and service thou puttest more value on every body's performance than thy own, this will (if not tempered with a degree of ardency to do thy day's work in the day time) do thee much hurt, and very much hinder thy improvement and growth in thy gift ; for which reason, it is really needful to have a good value for the gift received, (mark for the gift, not for ourselves) but then this good liking that we have of our gifts and services, ought to be tempered with judgment and modesty, otherwise it may lead to self-conceit and imprudence, which are bad ingredients in the minds of preachers, and will be apt to render them both contemptible and troublesome in their conduct.



But some are always repining, and thinking meanly of their gifts and services, which is a wrong mind ; and where it prevails, will do hurt and hinder our improvement and growth : we ought to consider, that every gift of God is good, and ought to be regarded as such, and he or she that hath the smallest and least degree of a gift in the ministry, as they wait in it, and mind to keep to it, and neither on the one hand go before it, nor on the other neglect it, but carefully mind the openings of it, and follow its leadings, they will in due time, by experience, find an enlargement both of matter and spiritual understanding, which will give them great encouragement to go on, and command respect from others. I have known sundry such become able ministers, and of very great service in the church ; and I have known others, as well as myself, that have begun very poor, and seemed contemptible and mean in the eyes of their Friends, nay, have been advised to desist, as not being called to that work, nor qualified for such service, which is very wounding, and discouraging ; in which time some kind sympathizing Aquilla or Priscilla have been concerned to



heal the wound; by instructing more perfectly in the way of the ministry, by giving proper advice and encouragement to go on in the work, under the government of the divine spirit, with a meek and humble conduct; advising on the one hand not to take too much notice of what others may say in dispraise of thy service, but endeavouring to remove their objections by a prudent behaviour; nor on the other, too much regarding what may be said in commendation thereof; for without exercising judgment, the former may cast down too much, and the latter may exalt the mind above its place.

How safe therefore is it to keep in our gifts, under the power and influence of divine love, which will take all things in good part, whether it be praise or dispraise, and not be moved by either out of our place. Thus will malice be overcome by love, and we shall receive advantage, even from them that intend us none; being likewise guarded against that poison which flattery and commendation carries with it to weak minds, for some can't bear to be commended, even when they deserve it, without receiving hurt by it, taking



that honour to themselves which is only due to their gifts: and being disgusted if they have not commendation and praise, supposing themselves injured without it, and rather than not have it, they will seem by a kind of enquiry, to beg it, and endeavour by either finding fault with or commending their service, to draw praise from others. Whoever fall into this practice, shew great weakness; and it is a plain indication, such are not in the simplicity of the gospel; for whoever abide in that, seek not themselves nor their own honour, but the chief thing they have in view is the honour of God, and the good of all men, that their ministry may bring honour to him that has called us to glory and virtue.

There are yet some things further to be remarked, relating to our conduct in our own families, meetings, and neighbourhood, both in a religious and civil capacity, which shall be the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Miscellaneous advices as to marriage, trade, and an unblameable conduct.

WE will consider our minister now as one inclining to marriage, and to settle and have a family, with business and trade in the world; in which state of life there are many dangers and snares, which we ought to guard against, and carefully mind our conduct therein ; and that I may be the more intelligible, I shall treat on the whole under these four heads following.

1st. Respecting thy courtship and marriage, if yet unmarried.

2d. Thy conduct in thy own family.

3d. Thy conduct amongst thy neighbours in trade, commerce, &c.

4th. Thy conduct in thy own meeting, both as a minister and elder.

*First*, then, in thy courtship or being courted, well consider the object of thy affections, let not thy mind out after what he or she hath, but rather regard what they are, and how qualified both in nature and religion : a



good natural temper in both sexes being much preferable to wealth, and more especially when it is cultivated and made better by religion.

Now this being a matter of great consequence, requires a serious thought, and close examination in our minds, that we may not be deceived by any false gloss, report, or appearance : but thou shouldst narrowly examine the moving cause of thy inclinations, that so thou mayest with safety and caution begin thy suit, or accept such an offer, if a virgin. Thus, when thy mind is fixed, and thou art resolved to proceed, begin where thou oughtest, and be a good example, by first advising with such as may be thy true and hearty friends, before thou makest any offer, or receivest one, so as to join in with any proposal on that account, and if they agree with thee, this will add to thy satisfaction ; but if by reasons and good arguments they endeavour to dissuade thee, be not above advice in this (or any other affair) but give ear to good counsel ; but if no objection arises, then apply thyself for consent to parents or guardians, before any proposal is made to the object of



thy choice ; and having thus paved thy way, thy work will be much easier afterward ; then proceed deliberately, that thou mayest give no just cause of offence in thy conduct, but that thy marriage may be completed with a good reputation both to thy own and Friends' satisfaction, and this will add to thy credit as a minister : but when this is over and thou art married, thou must expect new exercises, under which thy faith and patience may be closely proved.

*Secondly.* Therefore look well to thy conduct in thy own family, that thou mayest keep all things sweet and honourable therein: many are the temptations we are in danger to receive hurt by, such as aspiring too high in our living, aiming to have all other matters suiting thereto, viz., our furniture for our houses, clothes, &c., which if above our ability to support, will bring upon us a train of inconveniences, not easily to be surmounted. And such who are of low circumstances, who have travelled in the ministry, or may travel, seeing so many various ways of living, may receive hurt, if they do not carefully consider their own circumstances and ability ; such



should not mind high things, but being subject to their own low estate, should content themselves to live and appear according as they can afford, not endeavouring to live above their ability, because they will come as near in imitation as they can to such who are above them; but rather let our income be the rule and government of our expenses in living; for if our expense go beyond our income, we shall soon be hurt; but if within, we are safe: and although this parsimonious way of living may, by such as know not our estate, be blamed, and we may be esteemed too near, and close, yet as we take care to keep a conscience justly void of offence both towards God and men, we are safe so far. And those who are favoured with better circumstances in this world, should not live in pride and exaltation, but walk in humility and godly fear, and let their moderation in eating and drinking, in furniture, and apparel, and in all other respects, be known unto all men; and what superfluity they have, above what may be sufficient for themselves and families, to bestow in doing good to all, but especially to the household of faith; and by



thus using the blessings of providence, they will be as lights in the world, or as a city set upon a hill, whose glory will not be hid, but will shine forth to the praise of our great Master, and they at last be entitled to the blessed sentence or invitation of those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the prisoner, which is, enter into the joy of thy Lord, to dwell in his presence for ever.

Next, if thou hast children, endeavour to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in a plain, exemplary dress, suiting thy ability, discouraging in them every thing, both in their dress and discourse, that appears inconsistent with that plainness which a minister's children ought to appear in, that they may be exemplary to others, endeavouring early to inculcate in their minds such principles of religion and truth, as frequently are held forth in the holy scriptures, which, as soon as they are capable to read, accustom them too, and endeavour to make them take pleasure therein, by explaining such portions thereof as may suit their capacities, that as they advance in age, they may in knowledge: and this is the method to train up a child in



the way that he should walk. But education, I say education, though with the strictest care and tenderness administered, will not answer what some expect from it, as to the grounding of youth in true religion and saving faith; for nothing short of the work of grace in the heart, the new birth, and the washing of regeneration by the word, can make a sound and right Christian, and a true minister; we do not come to these attainments, by a natural inheritance of birth-right from our parents, but by a spiritual relation; for we must be born again, before we can see the kingdom of God: and the explaining and opening these divine truths to them, as they are capable to receive and understand the same, will be the best part of their education, and may stand for a witness of our care against their folly, when we are gone; for which cause it behooves us, that we encourage in them every appearance of virtue, and discourage every vice which human nature is liable to: add to this, a religious care over thy servants next to thy children, that they may, by thy good advice and example in thy family, be improved in virtue; and be a good example both to thy



family, and others also, in diligently attending religious meetings, with as many of them as thou canst with conveniency take with thee ; thus wilt thou be exemplary to the rest of the meeting.

It may be thy lot to be exposed to sufferings for the testimony of a good conscience for the truth, which thou oughtest to be very careful to maintain for thy own peace, standing faithful therein, not at all doubting that a blessing will attend thee, if thou art upright. And if thou art imprisoned for the same, this may prove a close trial both to thee and thy wife ; and for this reason, if she is uneasy, and hath not faith and courage to stand such a shock, give her all the encouragement thou art capable of, lest through weakness she be prevailed upon, by any indirect compliance with thy adversary, to make the matter up, which will be a hurt to thy ministry, and an evil example to thy brethren ; both which ought with a prudent and due care to be guarded against.

Add to this, thy charitable disposition in contributing to the poor, and other public services in the Society, with thy brethren ; in



which thou oughtest to be as good an example as thy ability will admit, being rather above than under, endeavouring to save it another way in thy expenses; for although we encourage charity and a public spirit by words to others, yet if we do not confirm them by our example, they will be of little force. And though I have recommended a close and parsimonious way of living, prudently conducted, yet I would have thee, in thy ministrings to the poor, appear generous and noble, thy ability considered; and this will add authority to thy gift.

But perhaps the world may frown upon thee, and thou mayest find things run cross; this may much hinder thy generosity in charity, and by this thy mind may be much distressed; and unless thou art very careful in keeping thy heart close to thy gift, being inward with the Lord, praying that thy faith and patience fail not, thou wilt meet with some discouragement; but if thou remainest faithful, thou wilt find this will prepare and fit thy mind to speak more feelingly to others in the like state, although it is very hard to behave under such trials as becomes a minister, without a close



attending on our gifts in meekness and fear. Let us therefore consider, that such trials are by the kindness of providence sometimes suffered to come upon us for our good, (to prepare us to speak to others with a better effect) and to prove our faith and patience, as it is written, “Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver : I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” (Isa. xlviii. 10.) This distress may wear off, and things in a short time may assume another face : then beware of being exalted ; for as affliction and poverty, without faith and patience, can’t be borne without receiving hurt ; so prosperity, without humility in a steady attention upon God in our gifts, will have the like effect upon us. This brings me to the third head, relating to thy conduct amongst thy neighbours in trade and commerce.

Trade is sometimes very dangerous, and apt to deceive the mind, by influencing it with hopes of more gain, to launch out beyond our strength and capacity ; I therefore, as one that hath a little trodden in this path, have ever found it most safe, to bound my extent in trade by my stock, and as that in-



creased, the other might with much more safety. Thus I carefully avoided going beyond my strength, which would render it impossible for me to keep my word and promise in payments; for I saw this brought me under such a necessity, that I could not buy, neither sell so well, but sometimes must raise money (by selling at a low rate, under the market) or else hurt my credit in payments: I therefore took this method: whensoever I contracted for a parcel of goods, first to consider what pay I could make before I made an agreement, and then bought as cheap as I could, for such credit as we could agree upon; and when it so happened, (as sometimes it did) that I found, without borrowing I could not pay as I promised, (which is the life of trade) then a little before the day came, I went and told my dealer how it was with me, yet nevertheless, if necessity called for the money, I would provide it by the time, but hoping by such a day I could make payment of my own strength, if he could stay so long. And by this conduct, I found a readiness in all my dealers to favour me as desired, if no great necessity did prevent it. And thus by de-



grees I increased both my stock and trade, proceeding in it both with repute and honour; and on this account I became more taken notice of, and my company by some more desired, which I soon found would grow upon me to my hurt, if a stop were not put to it; and above all, I found it very dangerous to meddle with strong liquors of any kind, but in a very moderate way, especially drams, which have been very hurtful to the health of several. I thus endeavoured to steer my course as inoffensively as I could in trade and commerce, by keeping my word and promise in payments, which added much to my credit. I now proceed to the last head.

*Lastly.* In thy own meeting be a good example to attend in season, at the hour appointed, both on first and week days, with as many of thy family as can be spared; and when there, do not attempt either to preach or pray without some degree of divine love, begot by the spirit, to inspire thee to it; for by the word of life we must be qualified, before we can either preach or pray to advantage. Some think, through a mistaken judgment, that they must be doing something every



meeting, (like the preachers of the letter, who must either be singing, preaching or praying all the time) and by such a conduct they lose their interest and place in the hearts of Friends by too long and too frequent appearing in both preaching and prayer: for the avoiding of which, keep close to thy gift, intently waiting to know thy place, both when to speak and when to be silent; and when thou speakest, begin under a sense of divine influence, whether it be in preaching or praying; and without it, do not either preach or pray; for silent meetings, though a wonder to the carnal and wordly professors, are of great advantage to the truly spiritually minded; and as thou beginnest with the spirit, keep to it in thy going on, and conclude in it, and this will preserve thee from tiring thy brethren, and causing them to wish for thy silence: and thus as thou beginnest and goest on, in the openings of divine life, thy service as a minister in thy own meeting will be always new and living; thus wilt thou engage the attention of thy hearers to what thou hast to declare, all which will tend to the improvement of thyself, and edification of thy brethren.



Next add to this a prudent conduct in meetings of business or discipline, and watch against thy own spirit and passions, and by no means let them arise under colour of zeal for the cause, that thou mayest not lust after power and rule. In some, such a mind prevails, that they are not easy without they can rule and over-rule their brethren : but if thou keepest thy place in thy gift, thou wilt take thy friends along with thee, that you may go hand in hand in the work, carefully guarding against all selfish and private views, from resentment taken against a brother or sister for any supposed offence, either against thyself or any of thy friends ; the falling into any little mistake of this kind, will have a train of other inconveniences to attend it, such as making parties, and falling into divisions, one party against another, and opposing one the other, to the great hurt of the Society : but let us with diligence watch against, and discourage both in ourselves, and also among the brethren, every appearance of both party taking and party making, and in all our views and endeavours sincerely labour to promote unity and peace ; for it rarely happens but when



such ruptures fall out in monthly or quarterly meetings, but the strong and zealous sticklers on either side receive much hurt by taking offence, which in a more particular manner hurts ministers, and makes their work much more difficult, if it does not wholly lay waste and set their service aside ; therefore they, in an especial manner, ought to be mediators, by endeavouring to bring both parties to an agreement, if possible. But I do not mean by this, that the authority of the discipline should be broke in upon by unruly and disorderly spirits, who are unwilling to submit to the rules and wholesome doctrines of the Society: and where discipline is managed with a bias of opinion towards this or that party, or any one aims to shew favour against truth and justice, in this or that case, a minister ought to exert himself, impartially aiming at the just and right thing, without respect to either person or party ; for no other kind of conduct will bear the light ; but this will stand the test, and the more it is examined, it will appear the brighter ; therefore the wisdom of our discipline appears in its moderation, and justness in its proceedings, by admitting of



appeals to re-examine all cases, from the lowest to our last resort of judgment ; which is provided as a remedy against hasty and rash judging, without duly examining into the truth and equity of what they give judgment in.

I have enlarged, as some may apprehend, too much on some heads in this treatise, which is swelled under my pen more than I expected ; but I could not express my experience intelligibly to my own understanding in fewer words, for which reason I hope my readers will cast a favourable eye upon it, not being a work designed for critics, or such who are bringing all they read within the narrow bounds of their carnal reasoning, and their natural comprehension, and will not admit what is not agreeable to their thoughts, to be any other than fiction and enthusiastic whim.—I shall now close thus. That if we who are concerned as ministers, conduct ourselves as is before advised, we shall come up pretty near to the pattern the holy apostle has given us in 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. “ Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed : but in all things (or in



every condition of life) approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and behold we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

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#### A SHORT VIEW OF THAT GREAT AND SOLEMN DUTY OF PRAYER

WHEN we pray in the public assemblies, or in private families of the Lord's people, we ought carefully to guard against all impertinence of expression, and indecency of sounds or deportment ; to prevent all which, consider



well the frame of thy heart, that thou art in a meek and quiet disposition, being calm in thy mind ; this will keep thee, that the heat of thy own spirit, in a mistaken blind zeal, hurry thee not too fast, without a right understanding of the ability received by the spirit of prayer ; for the same spirit which assisteth us in the ministry, will likewise in prayer ; without the help of which, we can perform neither as we ought. But I have observed some, by a transport of zeal (rather passion) go into a flow of words, without a right understanding either of their own spirits or of the spirit of prayer, but in a confused manner directing their matter to the people in a way of preaching, and to the Almighty in a way of prayer, and then returning again to the people, which hath made it very tiresome, and could serve no other end than to expose the parties concerned to pity or contempt, and bring reproach on the principle they profess. Such conduct plainly demonstrates, that there is want of both the spirit and understanding, so essential to the performance of this solemn duty.

Our blessed Saviour in Matthew vi. having



first set the false and fictitious prayer in a true light, teaches his disciples their duty herein, verse 9, saying, "After this manner therefore pray ye;" and then lays down that most beautiful and comprehensive form of prayer, so plain, that I have not met with any to equal it. But with how little thought, consideration or seriousness, is it frequently repeated by sundry that use it? I am fearful it is little better in many, than taking the Lord's name in vain. It therefore ought to be seriously considered by all, that in using that, or any other prayer, they are in some degree qualified by the spirit so to do, whether it be in public or in private; for public prayer, in its nature, is adapted to beseech the Divine majesty to confirm by his word the various branches of doctrine that may have been before delivered, and so strengthen that faith begot by the gospel preached, and to increase vigour in the pure mind stirred up in the hearers, by the inspiration of the divine word. The royal psalmist prayed the Lord, Psal. li. 15, saying, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." And when our lips are thus opened, this is the



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right qualification to true prayer ; and it will edify and comfort the hearers who are ' alive to God, so that the right-minded will all say amen.

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