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G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y .

W H E R E I N

The N A T U R E of this Ministry,
the P R O P R I E T Y of employing Men there-
in, the I M P O R T A N C E of it, the Q U A L I F I -
C A T I O N S requisite in a *Gospel Minister*, and
the M E A N S of preserving an *able* and
faithful Ministry, and preventing its be-
ing *corrupted*, are briefly considered.

By JAMES FINLEY, V. D. M.

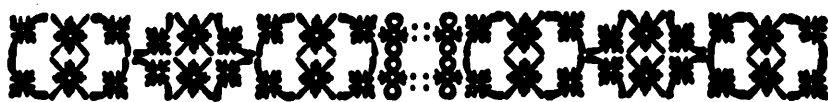
To which are added,

Three A D D R E S S E S on the same
S U B J E C T .



W I L M I N G T O N ,

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

I may perhaps be alledged, that a Piece on the Gospel Ministry would have come with a better Grace from some of my Fathers in this Office, whose greater Experience has taught them Wisdom, and whose Years would have procured Attention to their judicious Sentiments. To which I readily agree. But, altho' such of these as I have conversed with think, that a Piece, wherein this Subject would be particularly, and candidly considered, might be of singular Service, especially in the present Circumstances of the Church: Yet, I find they are so engaged in other weighty Affairs, that they cannot attend to this, at present, how much soever they desire it.

As I apprehended there was a loud Call for such a Piece; and as my Office obliges me to use my best Endeavours for the Good of the Church, I determin'd upon a brief Essay. If a Performance more particular and finished shall appear

appear necessary, I hope some abler Hand will undertake it.

Altho' I am fully convinced, that thorough and frequent Reviews of the Gospel Ministry would greatly tend to discover to those engaged therein both their Duty and Deficiencies, and so would lead to greater Circumspection: And further, tho' I might humbly hope that the following Piece, how far short soever it comes of giving a Compleat View of this Ministry, might, nevertheless, excite some of my Brethren to such Reviews; and that it would not therefore be entirely in vain with regard even to them: Yet the doing Service to Candidates for the Ministry, and likewise to the Laity, has more especially been my Hope, and for this have I studied,

It is too evident, that many who are far from being duly qualified for the Ministry, are, notwithstanding, eager in grasping after it; very likely, from a View of obtaining, not only a Genteel, but, as they may think, an easy Employment; while some others, who might be very Serviceable to the Church, are overly timorous and shy of this Office. An Apprehension, therefore, that the following Piece was not only sound, but in some Measure calculated to give a Check to the Thoughtless Impetuosity of the former, and bring them, in the first Place, to
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seek the Qualifications necessary; and to excite and encourage the latter to venture into the Lord's Harvest: This Apprehension, I say, has considerably induced me to publish this Piece; hoping for God's Blessing upon his own Truth, which alone can make it truly useful.

And as there are too many at this Day who, upon different Accounts, vilify and contemn Ministers in General, and some even the Office itself; and, comparatively, but few of those, who profess otherwise, who rightly improve their Opportunities; an Hope therefore, thro' God's Blessing, of bringing some to more just Ideas of, and a due Regard to this Office, and such as are faithful therein; and a Desire of inducing all to be more careful about improving under such precious Means, have greatly influenced me in this Affair.

As the following Inquiry, viz. Whether a Candidate's Declaration of his own personal Exercise, and Experience in Religion, given in the Way of a Narrative of these, or in Answer to Questions put to him concerning them, should be required by a Judicature as one appointed, warrantable, and useful Mean of forming a Judgment of his experimental Acquaintance with Religion, according to which Judgment they are to admit or reject him; I say, as this Inquiry has been the Matter of much Conver-
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sation, for this Reason some may think strange of my not discussing it in the following Piece : It is therefore needful to observe, that I have purposely avoided this, with some other Matters respecting the Ministry, debated among Protestants, from a Fear of what might prevent that Harmony in the Church which I pray and hope for ; and that I might gain the more serious Attention to the important Points discoursed of. Yet, as I find that many have quite wrong Apprehensions of the Conduct of some Ministers, with regard to the Examination of Candidates ; and suppose that they are against licencing any, but such as they are fully assured have true Piety, and who can tell the Time and Place of their Conversion ; it is, on this Account, needful I should strive to undeceive such, by setting this Matter in a just Light. I therefore observe, that I never knew any such Thing required : But on the contrary, that those who are most intent upon the strict Examination of Candidates, with respect to their religious Experiences, are so far from insisting for a full Assurance of the Conversion of such, that they don't require that even Candidates themselves should have this Assurance of their own Conversion ; much less that they should be able to tell the Time and Place of it.

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But, what is required is, that a Candidate should give such a Declaration of his own personal Exercise and Experience in Religion, as that this, in Conjunction with an orthodox Profession of Christian Doctrines, and a Gospel Conversation, should contain such Things, as do, according to the Scriptures, constitute true Holiness, and indicate a Mind duly affected with divine Things. And they agree, that these Things do, for the present, afford a scriptural Ground for a Judicature charitably to Judge that a Candidate is not barely a nominal Christian, but experimentally acquainted with a Work of saving Grace. And further, that no Profession, or Declaration of Experiences afford sufficient Reason for such a Judgment of Charity, where the Life is bad; nor a regular Life afford sufficient Reason for it, while Persons are Strangers to Christian Experiences.

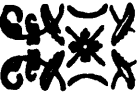
Whatever Vices I have spoken against, I have made Application to no particular Persons or Parties among Protestants, but have left that to God and Men's own Consciences; and pray that the Guilty, whoever they are, may duly consider their Evils, and reform. And as I have not desired to say any Thing with a View to stir up criminal Passions in the Breasts of Men; so, I hope, nothing I have
said

said will have that Effect with such as are labouring to be faithful, or willing to be reformed. As to others, there is no avoiding their Displeasure, but by concealing the Truth, or flattering them. God forbid that I should study their Gratification!

Plainness more than Eligance has been my Study in all I have written. If any shall be displeas'd with either the Matter or Mode of Expression, I hope they will ever find me ready to receive Light; and to confess a Fault, when I am convinc'd of it. As to those, whose malevolent Temper leads them to try to stab the Characters of such as vindicate the Things they dislike; and being afraid of their own Cause, and desirous to give the more fatal Strokes to their Antagonists, meanly skulk in the Dark; I hope God will either deliver me from them, or give me Grace Patiently to bear Reproaches for the Truth's Sake, knowing that it is but for a Moment, that such Men can be troublesome to the Church of Christ, or injurious to me.



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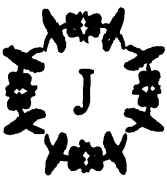


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(a) Isa. ix.



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S E C T I O N I .

Of the NATURE of the Gospel Ministry.

 ESUS CHRIST, who is called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,* (a) being given to be Head over all Things to the Church, (b) and having received Gifts for Men, (c) hath, agreeable to this Authority, appointed Officers from among Men, and furnished them with Qualifications for the Service of the Church; and, in all Ages,

B made

(a) Isa. ix. 6. (b) Eph. i. 22. (c) Psal. lxxviii. 18.

made use of such as his Ministers in carrying on the great Work of Salvation.

Of this Office we are now to speak under the Title of the *Gospel Ministry*.

It is an Office, instituted by the Lord, with a View to form to himself a Church in the World, and to assist his People in their Way to Salvation, by administering the Ordinances of the Gospel among them. This Office is of an holy and spiritual Nature; designed to propagate, and establish a Religion, unto which Mankind are naturally averse; and to militate against their darling Schemes, and beloved Vices: This is the Reason why so many treat it with Disrespect, and even impious Contempt; *Because ye are not of the World, says our Lord, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.* (d) Others, from Education, imbibe strong Prejudices against it; being brought up, from their Infancy, among those whose corrupt Principles lead them to despise Religion altogether: And the inconsistent Conduct of some, who sustain the Sacred Character, affords a plausible Reason to others, not only for despising the Ministers of God, but their very Office itself. On such Accounts is the Ministry,
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(d) John xv. 19.

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loaded with Invectives, called a Trade, and the Occupation of *Hirelings*.

But, although, it justly happens to some, as to the Priests of old, that their vile Conduct makes them *contemptible and base before all the People*; (e) and altho' too many have no better End in View than to gain Honour, or make a Living by this Office, and so justly deserve the Appellation of *Hirelings*; yet, neither the Prejudices of People, on the one Hand, nor the base Conduct of some Ministers, on the other, can afford any just Reason for vilifying it, or those who sustain it with Dignity and good Behaviour.

Nothing is more clear and incontestable, in the sacred Scriptures, than that the Gospel Ministry is of divine Appointment: Hence those Officers are stiled *Ambassadors for Christ*, (f) who, in his Stead, treat with Sinners; and *the Ministry of Reconciliation is said to be given unto them*. (g) They are also called *Workers together with God*, (h) *Angels*, and *Bishops*. (i) Our Lord himself set apart, and authorized the first Gospel Ministers, and ordered them to *go and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*;

(e) Mal. ii. 9. (f) 2 Cor. v. 20. (g) 2 Cor. v. 18.

(h) 2 Cor. vi. 1. (i) 1 Tim. iii. 1. Rev. ii. 1.

Ghost; teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever he had commanded. (k) And this Authority is to be regularly convey'd to others until the End of the World, according to the Directions given in the *New-Testament*. The Apostle *Paul* gives particular Instructions relating to this Affair in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*. The only Scripture I shall mention further, with regard to this, is that in the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, where the Apostle, speaking of Christ's authorizing Men for this Work, tells us, that *he gave some Apostles; and some Prophets; and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers, for the Work of the Ministry; that the Body of Christ might be edified; and the Saints helped on to Perfection. (l)* This Text plainly shews us, that these Church Officers are of different Sorts. Some of them have been more especially employed in revealing new Laws and Doctrines, as a Rule of Faith and Practice, to the Church. These were obliged to give some divine Attestations of their Authority, before Men could be obliged to believe their Doctrines, or give them that Reception due to their extraordinary Character; and to this End they were empowered to

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(k) Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. (l) Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.

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work Miracles. But, since the Cannon of the Scriptures has been closed, there has not been the same Necessity of them. Such therefore who have, from that Time, assumed the Name, proper only to such extraordinary Missionaries, have been no more than false Pretenders; discovered themselves to be wild Enthusiasts, instead of rational Teachers of the Word; and laboured rather, to make Schisms in the Body of Christ, than unite and maintain the Harmony of the Members: Of this Sort there have been some in almost every Age of the Church.

But as my Design in this Essay is not to enquire into the different Orders of Ecclesiastical Officers, or the Limits of their respective Powers; I shall pass on to observe,

That the ordinary Gospel Ministers, of perpetual Standing, are such who are appointed to guide the Church to Salvation, by opening and applying the Rule and Doctrines already delivered in the holy Scriptures. And, as these bring no new Revelations, they need no new Miracle to prove their Call to the Service of the Church. Now not only the Society to which I belong, but, I apprehend, a great Body of the Protestant Church, both in *Europe* and *America*, do conclude, and I think justly, that the
Pastors

Pastors and Teachers, mentioned in the last quoted Text, are (unless we admit Evangelists) the only Gospel Ministers of perpetual Standing, who are authorized to administer all the Ordinances of Christ's House; and, that these are designed, when the Titles of Elder, Bishop, and Angle, are given to Ministers in the *New-Testament*. It is however to such ordinary Church Officers, as are authorized to administer all the Ordinances Christ has appointed in his Church, that this Discourse refers; and such I intend by Minister, and Gospel Minister thro' the Whole.

The Scriptures are given to these for their Directory, in all Things that tend to promote the Salvation of Men. They are not left to follow their own Inventions; their Work is prescribed and limited. We shall consider it, as to its publick and private Nature. The publick consists chiefly in the following Particulars:

First, In Preaching the Word for the Conversion of the Ungodly; and the Establishment, and Comfort of true Believers. To them is committed the *Word and Ministry of Reconciliation*; in the Discharge of which Trust, the greatest Care is, without Doubt, required of them. They are to take *Heed*

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to themselves, and to their Doctrine, that they may save both themselves and those who hear them. (m) It has pleased God, by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe. (n)

Secondly, In vindicating the Truth, and refuting Error; they are to act the Part of Champions for the Faith: To this End, they ought to be able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainsayers. (o) They should study to render themselves approved: In Doctrine, shewing Incorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, sound Speech, that cannot be condemned. (p) They are to be Witnesses for God. (q)

Thirdly, In collecting together Christ's professing Disciples; in forming them into regular worshipping Societies; and receiving their Engagements to be the Lord's. Paul separated the Disciples; (r) and Elders were appointed by the Apostles in the several Churches; to all whom were given particular Directions relative to their Department. Their being thus gathered, and united into distinct Bodies, and thus organized, renders the Care and Burthen of a Pastor more light;

(m) 1 Tim. iv. 16. (n) 1 Cor. i. 21. (o) Tit. i. 9.

(p) Tit. ii. 8. (q) Rev. xi. 3. (r) Acts xix. 9.

light; and advantageously disposes them for each others mutual Assistance.

Fourthly, In administering the Sacraments of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*: The former for their visible Initiation into the Church; to which Purpose the Disciples were instructed to *teach all Nations, baptizing them*. The latter for the Comfort and Support of Believers; and for their Assistance, in keeping up the Remembrance of Christ. In this, the Godly openly acknowledge Christ, and his Cause; and testify their Love to him, and to one another; as well as feed upon, and derive Strength from him by Faith.

Fifthly, In guiding and directing God's People in their worshipping Assemblies; and taking Care that *all Things be done decently, and in Order*: Which is one Reason, doubtless, why they are termed *Overseers* and *Leaders*.

Sixthly, In exercising, in Conjunction with the Elders, their Assistants in Church Government, that Discipline which Christ has appointed; binding over scandalous Impenitents to God's Judgments; and setting the Penitent at Liberty. What they, according to Christ's Will, *bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven*; and *what they loose on Earth*

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Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven, (s) i. e. the Lord will ratify and approve of their Conduct. They are to purge out the old Leaven, by putting away scandalous Professors; to reject Hereticks after proper Admonition; and to rebuke publickly open Offenders, that others also may fear. If they neglect the due Exercise of Discipline, the Church under their Care will be like a City that is broken down, and without Walls.

The Ministerial Work, as to its private Nature, consists,

First, In studying and preparing for publick Duties. Ministers are to study, with the View to shew themselves approved; (1) to give themselves to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, and to meditate on these Things. (u) Their Words should be well ordered who speak for God.

Secondly, In personally conversing with their Hearers, in order to instruct them in doubtful Cases; to bring the Truth with Pungency, and more particular Application to their Consciences; and to know what Effects it may have had upon them. By this Means they are better enabled to judge of their Success, and the

C Measures

(s) Mat. xviii. 18. (1) 2 Tim. ii. 15. (u) 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

Measures most proper to be taken, and the Doctrines and Practices to be insisted upon in publick. The Apostle Paul *taught from House to House.* (v) Ministers are Shepherds, and should be *diligent to know the State of their Flocks, and look well to their Herds.* (w) Church History furnishes us with many Instances of the remarkable Success that has attended the private Labours of God's Servants. Ministers are to give themselves *wholly* to the Work of assisting Men in the Way to Salvation; and to neglect no Means tending thereto. Now, seeing this Method is so likely to be beneficial, it must be very criminal to overlook it; especially in time of Sicknes among their Parishoners; for then the Thoughts of their near Approach to Eternity are most apt to make them attentive to Instruction; and their spiritual Circumstances are often very distressing, and loudly call for such an Interpreter, as, in the Book of Job, is called *one among a Thousand.* (x)

Thirdly, Catechizing, and instructing their Hearers in a sound and approved System of Divinity, is an excellent Way of promoting

(v) Acts xx. 20. (w) Prov. xxvii. 23.

(x) Job xxxiii. 23.

promoting Religion, and what Ministers should by no Means neglect. The Scriptures divide Congregations into him *that catechizeth, and him that is catechized, saying, let him that is taught in the Word, or (as it is in the Original) catechized, communicate unto him that teacheth, or catechizeth, in all good Things.* (y) This Method was much in Use in the earliest Ages of Christianity; and found to be of unspeakable Service. The *Papists*, speaking of the Time of the Reformation, say, that the Protestants gained all the Advantages they then had over them, by being first in this Method of Catechizing. And it is said, That *Julian*, that he might entirely root out Christianity, suppressed all Christian Schools, and Places of Catechizing; which gave Occasion to one of saying, “If he had not been as a Cloud that soon passeth away, it might have been feared that, in a short Time, he would have overthrown all Religion;” for shortly after the Prohibition of this excellent Method, was the whole christian Church overspread with Ignorance: 'Tis Pity that any Ministers should now neglect it when they may carry it on without Fear or Restraint.

These

(y) Gal. vi. 6.

These are the principal Branches of that grand Work of the Ministry. And in these the Messengers of Christ should, doubtless, be engaged;

First, With much Plainness, Freedom, and unaffected Sincerity. Truth needs no Vail; and he who espouseth, and practiseth it, need not be ashamed of the Light; nor use any Slightness, or secret dishonourable Contrivances; for such Policy, being contrary to true Piety, is too subtile to be good; and God would not that his Cause should be promoted in any such Manner. Our Saviour established his holy Religion by no insinuating disingenuous Arts; nor ever accommodated divine Truths to the depraved Taste of Men; nor couched his Ideas in Words and Phrases unintelligible to the Bulk of Hearers; so neither should his Ministers. How noble was the Example of the Apostles, who *renounced the hidden things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by Manifestation of the Truth, commending themselves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God.* (y)

Secondly, They should carry on this sacred Work of theirs with the greatest Solemnity;

(y) 2 Cor. iv. 2.

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lemnity; ever considering its Importance : That they *watch for Souls as they who must render an Account* ; and that, being the Ambassadors of Christ, they are transacting the Affairs of his Kingdom.

Thirdly, They should *Cautiously* attend, lest they mismanage so weighty a Cause : And lest, by reason of the difficult Humours of Men, and Wiles of the Devil, their Labours be frustrated. They had great need to *be wise as Serpents* ; as well as *harmless as Doves* ; for Piety, without Prudence, is too simple to be safe in so intricate a State of Things.

Fourthly, They ought to perform these Branches of their Work *Affectionately*, tenderly caring for the infant Flock of Christ, even as a Nurse cherishes her Children ; (z) doing what they do heartily, as unto the Lord. (a) It is not theirs to act in a domineering Manner, as Masters ; but behave as *Helpers to the Joy of Believers*, and as *Servants for Christ's Sake* ; (b) willing, like him, to wash the Disciples Feet ; to spend, and be spent ; nay, to become all Things to all Men, that by all Means they may save some. (c)

Fifthly,

(z) 1 Thes. ii. 7. (a) Col. iii. 23. (b) 2 Cor. i. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 5. (c) 1 Cor. ix. 22.

Fifthly, They ought to be *Diligently* employed, *in Season, and out of Season*: (d) Men soon forget what they hear, and soon lose the Impressions of the Word: They must therefore have *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, here a Little, and there a Little.* (e)

Sixthly, They ought *Patiently* to go through their difficult Work. Many are the Grievances they are called upon to suffer with a becoming Temper: For, as one expresses himself on this Head, "None receive more unworthy Treatment than faithful Ministers; Earth and Hell are up in Arms against them; they are the Song of the Drunkard, the Objects of Lampon: The Prophane, and Infidels sharpen their Tongues as Arrows and shoot out bitter Words: The un sanctified Wit satyrizes their serious Expressions; and the Proud have them in Derision: None are more exposed than they to Misconstruction, to ignorant and malicious Censures, and evil Reports." Wicked Men contrive the most effectual Ways of destroying a good Character. Report, say they, and we will report it; *q. d.* do you tell Lies of him, and we will spread them.

(d) 2 Tim. iv. 2. (e) Isa. xxviii. 10.

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them. Thus it comes to pass, that the Ministers of Christ often lose the Favour of Friends; see their Enemies encrease; and hear all Manner of Evil spoken against them falsely: And besides all this, they often labour in vain, and spend their Strength for Nought; a distressing Case! but patiently waiting on God is a noble Remedy: They ought to *encourage themselves in the Lord*; and with Meekness continue labouring to instruct those that are out of the Way.

Finally, they ought to be *Constant* in their pious Endeavours; having *put their Hand to the Plough, they ought not to look back*; (f) nor *having begun in the Spirit to end in the Flesh.* (g) How absurd, nay, highly irreligious, is the Conduct of those, who at first make a great Shew with their Zeal and Fervency, and when they have gained the Applause of the Populace, are easy and contented; and of those, who use extraordinary Diligence as an Artifice to obtain a Settlement, and, that procured, turn out lazy Drones or covetous Worldlings.

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(f) Luke ix. 62. (g) Gal. iii. 3.



SECTION II.

*Of the PROPRIETY of employing Men in
this Ministry.*

AS in secular Kingdoms, it is proper, that the Officers be such as are best adapted to perform the Services, in such a Manner, as will be most comfortable and beneficial to the Subjects; and will redound most to the Honour and Safety of the Prince; so in the Kingdom of God. The glorious End of his erecting his Kingdom of Grace was, that he might illustrate his Perfections in the Salvation of Sinners of the humane Race. Now, what here follows is designed to shew, that under J E- S U S C H R I S T Men appear most fit to be openly employed in carrying on this Work.

When we speak of the Service of Men as being requisite for promoting the Work of Salvation, and the Glory of God therein, we would not be understood to mean, that Man's eternal Felicity could not be effected without this Service: Doubtless God, who out of nothing created all Things, without the Help of Instruments, can, without their Concurrence, immedi-
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ately fit Sinners for his Service here, and Glory hereafter. And whatever Means he makes use of, the Power, by which they become effectual to the obtaining of their End, is all his own : *Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth ; but God who giveth the Increase.* (b) If many were not turned from Sin and Satan to God, without the Ministry of Men, what Hopes could we entertain of those who are born deaf, or die in Infancy ? Yet seeing God designs to promote the Salvation of Men in a Way most congruous to their Natures ; and, by rational Means, visibly to treat with, and draw Men to himself ; there are several Things that may induce us to think it most proper, that he should make use of Men in this Work. God, Himself, who does all Things in the wisest Manner, and according to the Counsel of his own Will, has determined it by his fixing on Men. And no doubt it was in Kindness to Men that God chose those of their own Species to treat with them, rather than that he should do it immediately : For should he himself address us, as he once did the *Israelites*, we could not stand before such Purity of Holiness, and Excess of Glory : We should

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(b) 1 Cor. iii. 7.

be ready to join with them in saying, *Let Men speak to us, and we will bear, but let not God speak to us, lest we die.* (i) Those soft Words, "*This is my beloved Son --- bear him,*" spoken by a Voice from the excellent Glory, at our Lord's Transfiguration, made the Disciples *sore afraid, and fall on their Faces.*"

Tho' the Angels may very profitably be employ'd in carrying on the Work of Man's Salvation in a secret and invisible Manner, as the Scriptures tell us *they all are* : Yet, they are too splendid and glorious to hold open, frequent, and familiar Converse with the obscure and imperfect Sons of Men. Some of the holiest of meer Men have been ready to faint, and even to shrink into nothing at their Appearance ; which was eminently the Case with the Prophet *Daniel.* (k) Tho' they should always put on some humble Form when they addressed Mortals ; yet, a Consciousness of their Purity and superior Grandure would overawe and confound : But with Men, who *are formed out of the Clay, are of like Passions with ourselves,* and interested in the same Things, we can be familiar, and hear them without Terror. And since they are in
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(i) Exod. xx. 19. (k) Dan. x. 8, 16, 17.

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like miserable Circumstances with those they address; and must give an Account to God for their Conduct, they have the strongest Excitements to Earnestness and Importunity. And if they are duly qualified for their Work they will not fail to be affectionate in their Addresses, and eagerly to prosecute their Work. For such as are duly qualified, have been made sensible of their own wretched and miserable State by Nature; and so can the more clearly and affectingly represent the destructive and odious Nature of Sin, the Corruptions of the Heart, and Man's utter Inability to help himself. They are also in a Way of Recovery themselves, have received Christ by Faith, and attained to a gracious Change of Heart; so that they can sweetly and distinctly represent the Beauties of Immanuel, the Comforts of true Religion, and the Exercises of a gracious Soul; and their renewed Nature will lead them to do these Things cheerfully and diligently. Besides, as Preachers of our own Flesh and Blood are to be saved in the very Way they recommend to us, it is natural to suppose, that their great Concern and Care for themselves, and Importunity with us, would the more readily affect

affect and engage us ; for where there is a common Interest, the Conduct of one has great Influence on that of his Fellows. And, Finally, it is a Matter of great Importance, that, such Clay Vessels being the Instruments, we are not so apt to ascribe the wonderful Effects to them ; but the Excellency of the Power more clearly appears to be of God ; and to him, as is meet, redounds all the Glory.

As the Propriety of employing Men in this Ministry is now evident from what has been observed, let me here subjoin the following necessary Consideration, *viz.* That the Greatness and Multiplicity of Services requisite in the Church ; the Weakness and Insufficiency of most Men to perform them ; together with the many Avocations they are liable to, render it evident, that some, who are more holy, wise and prudent, than others, should be set apart to wait on this Work continually ; and who, as they are to be wholly employed for the Publick, should be supported by it.

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SECTION III.

Of the IMPORTANCE of the Gospel Ministry.

WHAT has been said, relative to the Nature of the Ministerial Office, implies its Importance. But the exceeding Weight of it will more fully appear on considering the following Particulars.

First, The Nature of those Things to which it refers. We may sum them all up in these two, *viz.* The Reconciliation of rebellious Sinners to God; and the Training them up for his Service here, and the Enjoyment of him hereafter. The IMMORTAL SOUL OF MAN, of more Value than Millions of Worlds, is the principal Object of its Attention! Whereas other Offices, of whatever Kind, and however highly accounted of, refer primarily to the outward Man: That to the vast Concerns of Eternity! These to the little Affairs of transitory Time.---Civil and Military Officers are indeed Guardians of the present Life, Liberty and Property; and if through Mismanagement they should Ruin these, 'tis all the
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the Hurt they can do: But the Ministers of Christ are Physicians, Guides, and Shepherds of immortal Spirits; *Eternity* is enstamped on what they do; so that, on their Mismanagement, both Soul and Body are in Danger of being lost for ever and ever.

Secondly, The Engagedness of all spiritual Beings about the Work of Man's Salvation. The glorious Jehovah purposed it; each Person in the glorious Trinity is intent upon its Accomplishment; the holy Angels are zealously interested; and Satan, with all his infernal Legions, armed to counteract it. ---God, the Father, *so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting Life: (k)*---An unspeakable Gift indeed! All the glorious Angels in Heaven, had he given them, would have been infinitely unequal.

The co-equal Son of God was made in Likeness of sinful Flesh; endured Poverty, Hunger, Thirst, Weariness and Persecution; for this, he wept, and groaned, and preached, and prayed, and wrought Miracles; for this, he was betrayed, denied, sweat Blood, hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting, had *his Visage marred more than*

(k) John iii. 16.

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(l) John xiv
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than any Man, and for this he-----died on the accursed Tree: For this, he bursted the Bands of Death; ascended his native Heaven; and now intercedes in our Behalf at God's right Hand.

Intent on this grand Design, the holy Spirit comes; and is to *abide* in the Church for ever, (l) to make Application of what Christ has purchased. He strives with Sinners; *convincing the World of Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment*; (m) and by his Operations are the Means of Grace made effectual, and Sinners qualified for Glory: For, as the Apostle says, *It is not for Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy hath he saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost.* (n)

The good Angels desire to look into the Work of Man's Redemption; and *are all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be Heirs of Salvation.* (o) They sweetly rejoice and exult on the Account of *one Sinner that repenteth.* (p)

The fallen Angels, also, who are violently opposed to every Thing that is good, seem to look upon this as the grand Work
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(l) John xiv. 16. (m) John 16. 8. (n) Tit. iii. 5.
(o) Heb. i. 14. (p) Luke xv. 10.

against which they should direct their hellish Machinations; hence he is said to go about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; and has great Wrath, knowing that he shall continue but a short Time. (q)

Nor are the infernal Legions content to carry on the dreadful Design of ruining Sinners themselves, but spur up the unhal- lowed Sons of Men; who, by their Influ- ence, cease not to pervert the right Ways of the Lord. How important, then, must this Work be, when Heaven and Hell think it worthy of so much Attention?----Surely Ministers, who are called, *Workers together with God*, should spare no Pains.

Thirdly, The happy Effects of this Mini- stry upon those who rightly improve it, and the sad Consequences of misimproving it: Where it has its proper Effects, it promotes a Reformation from Error, Ignorance and Vice, a Regard to God and Religion; and, in short, the everlasting Welfare of Sinners. Ministers are the *Savor of eternal Life* to Numbers. Where their Labours take Place, Satan falls like Lightning; Christ's Kingdom is established; Souls are turned from Sin to Holiness, from Satan to God; they grow in Knowledge, in Love to God and

(q) 1 Pet. v. 8. Rev. xii. 12.

and Men; are filled with Comfort; and are a preparing for Heaven. Thus Ministers become the Instruments of eternal Happiness to Multitudes, who shall be Crowns of their Rejoicing in the Day of the Lord Jesus. On the other Hand, when Men carelessly neglect the Gospel faithfully preached, they become more and more hardened, and die at last with an aggravated Condemnation: It will be more tolerable for the *Heathen* World in the Day of Judgment than for them. The Labours, the Intreaties, the Tears of Ministers, and Christian Friends; and the Repentance of others, shall all testify against them. And, again, when Ministers are loose in their Lives, or negligent in the Discharge of their Office, or corrupt in the Administration of the Truth and Ordinances, the Consequence is equally affecting: For by these are Sinners prejudiced against the Gospel; fixed in their Security; and led on to neglect the Day of Salvation, until they are past Remedy. Those who should have fought the Security and Life of their Souls, become their Betrayers and Murderers; thus both fall into the Pit of *everlasting Perdition*;----distressing Scene!

Fourthly, The sad Condition of those who are destitute of the Means of Grace: But

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once take a View of the *Heathen World*; what gross Darknes *envelopes* them! how does a Disregard to God, nay, how do all Species of Impiety prevail! Surely *they sit in the Region and Shadow of Death*; blindly indulging themselves in every Sin; thoughtless of a future State; and all this, notwithstanding the Pains taken by their Philosophers and Sages for their Reformation. *Where no Vision is, there the People perish.* Take a View also of those who have enjoyed the Gospel, but are now deprived of it; they degenerate more and more; the once celebrated Churches of God become infamous Synagogues of Satan: Witness, the once flourishing Churches of *Asia*, from which the Lord has removed his Candlestick. And I doubt not, but that, were the Gospel removed entirely from us, we should in a few Ages, sink into perfect *Heathenism*.

Fifthly, The affecting Addresses made by the Lord to his faithful Ministers with Regard to their Office; not only by Way of Charge, but encouraging Promises; these, together with the awful Threatenings denounced against the Unfaithful, do all manifest the very great Importance of the Gospel Ministry.

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In the first Place, he addressses them, by Way of Charge, to *take Heed to themselves and Doctrine*; and to *keep that which is committed to them.* (r) How full and solemn is that given to *Timothy* by *St. Paul*? *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing and Kingdom, preach the Word; be instant in Season, and out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Longsuffering and Doctrine. Watch thou in all Things; endure Afflictions; do the Work of an Evangelist; make full Proof of thy Ministry.* (s) They are to let nothing deter them from Faithfulness, and Constancy in this grand Work. *Let the Dead bury their Dead,* said *Jesus,* *but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.* (t) They are not to be terrified nor flinch, tho' threatened with Death itself; for, says our Lord, *Whosoever will save his Life shall lose it.* (u)

II. He heartens them up to their Work by Way of Promise. As it is great, and too difficult for them, Christ promises to be *with them always, even unto the End of the World.* By his Spirit *he will lead them into all Truth*; and comfort them amidst all their Sorrows; hence

(r) 1 Tim. iv. 16.---and vi. 20. (s) 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2---5. (t) Luke ix. 60. (u) Mat. xvi. 25.

hence the Spirit is called the *Comforter*: He causes them to *rejoice in Tribulation*; and *their Joy no Man taketh away from them*. He gives them large Success; blessing their Labours, to the Convincing the World, and Converting of Numbers from the Error of their Ways, to the Service of the true and living God. Christ also is with them by his Providence, to *guard them from all the Power of the Enemy*. As they meet with Tribulations for his Sake, He promises them a *Crown of Glory* hereafter; for they *who turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as Stars for ever and ever*. (v). The Lord will give them a *Crown of Life at that Day*; (w) and the Sinners converted by them shall be the Jewels in their Crown. Christ shall bid them welcome to his heavenly Kingdom, with A WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS! ENTER YE INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD. (x)

III. He pours out awful Threatenings against such as would dare to be unfaithful. Thus the Lord warned *Ezekiel*; saying, *When I say unto the Wicked, O wicked Man thou shalt surely die, if thou dost not speed to warn the Wicked; that wicked Man shall die* in

(v) Daniel xii. 3. (w) 2 Tim. iv. 8. (x) Mat. xxv. 21.

*in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at
thine Hand. (y) Thus our Lord also tell us,
he will cut asunder the evil Servant, and ap-
point him his Portion with the Hypocrites,
where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.
(z) Such shall hear at the last Day that
awful Sentence from Christ's Mouth, I ne-
ver knew you; depart from me ye that work
Iniquity. (a)*

(y) Ezek. xxxiii. 8. (z) Mat. xxiv. 51.
(a) Mat. vii. 23.



SECTION IV.

*Of the QUALIFICATIONS requisite in a Gos-
pel Minister.*

WE have before observed, that Christ's Kingdom vastly differs from those of this World, as to its Nature, its Design; its Spirituality, and exceeding great Importance. Now it is universally supposed, that the Genius and Improvements of any Person, who undertakes an Office, should in a great Measure tally with the Nature of that Business he is to be engaged in; thus it is with respect to the Ministerial Office: They, whose

whose Business it is to be employed in the sacred and momentous Matters of Religion, should, doubtless, have *very singular* Endowments and Qualifications.

As it would be very dangerous to have the Stating of these left to fallen Men, who, according to their different Sentiments and Dispositions, would either insist for more than what they should, or dispense with too small a Share; the Lord himself has therefore fixed a perpetual Standard: And all that he has left to, or enjoyed upon Men, is to transfer, in his Name, and by his Authority, the Power of Officiating, to such as, upon due Trial, shall be found to agree with this divine Rule.

There are, doubtless, different Degrees in the Qualifications of those who may be admitted to this Office. Some pious Men, who do not excel in natural Capacities, may be useful, particularly in Places that have been wanting in the Means of Salvation; and in Times of Ignorance: Yet such ought not to be received, who are not qualified for performing all the Parts of the Ministerial Office to the spiritual Edification of their People, without exposing them to Error, or the Office to Contempt. The Apostle expressly asserts, that they should

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not only be *faithful Men, but able also to teach others.* (a)

The Lord will give Ability, where he has Work to be done; and if he does not, it is an Evidence he calls not for the Person's Service. Hence, those who possess not the necessary Qualifications; and yet grasp at the Office, run without being sent: They are Intruders; and bid fair to be Deceivers of Men.

Whoever are for introducing such into the Ministry, act as absurdly as those who should set up a dead Corps, and expect it should do the Work of a living Person: And those who insist upon further Qualifications than God requires, take upon them the Prerogative of the great Head of the Church, and act as if they were wiser than the all perfect Deity.

According to the sacred Scriptures, these Things are eminently necessary in Gospel Ministers, *viz.* Good Natural Gifts---Saving Grace----Knowledge----Orthodoxy----and a Religious Deportment.

I. By natural Gifts, I mean such Endowments of Nature as, in their Kind, are suited to the Studies and Business peculiar to the aforesaid Office. I call them Gifts,
because

(a) 2 Tim. ii, 2.

because they are freely given by the Lord : Thus he fitted *Bezaleel*, and *Aholiab* for the Work of the Tabernacle ; (b) and *Saul* for the Government of the Kingdom of *Israel*. (c) They are distinguished from the special Graces of God's Spirit, in that good, and bad Men may be alike possessed of them.

Now those Endowments that may answer one Calling may not another. A Man may have a notable Genius for Agriculture, and at the same Time but indifferent for the mercantile Business : Another may make a reputable Figure at the Bar, who yet might have been but a very insufficient and unskillful Practitioner in an Hospital : Thus it is in this Case ; many, who are eminent in other Professions, would make but a very inconsiderable Appearance in the Ministry. The Things that to me appear more especially necessary here, are, PENE- TRATION, MEMORY, UTTERANCE, and PRUDENCE.

The Mysteries of Religion, above all other Things, are the most profound, and require great Depth of Thought, and singular Sagacity to apprehend them. The Attacks made upon them are frequent, and some

(b) Exod. xxxvi. 35. (c) 1 Sam. x. 9.

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some the most subtile; so that they who are not superior to Men of common Capacities cannot sufficiently defend them. And moreover, the Difficulties that occur from the various disagreeing Humours and Circumstances of those among whom they labour, together with the many critical Cases in Discipline, require that they should be Men of *Penetration, full of Eyes*, like the *four living Creatures*, spoken of by St. *John*, in the *Revelations*. (d)

Those who have not a considerable good *Memory* can scarcely arrive at such Attainments in human Literature, and especially in Divinity, as are requisite to the entire and faithful Discharge of this Ministry: They must, in a great Measure, be incapable for composing fully and pertinently on any Subject; and much more, for praying and delivering their Discourses Extempore; (agreeable to the Custom of the most successful Preachers, both antient and modern) whereas they should be able to treasure up, and *bring out of their Treasury Things* both *new and old*. (e)

Readiness of *Utterance* is likewise of special Advantage to the divine Teacher; who is called to use the Tongue, that principal Instrument

(d) Rev. iv. 6. (e) Mat. xiii. 52.

strument of Instruction, both *in Season and out of Season*, and who, upon every Occasion, should acquit himself with Ease and Expedition, like *the Pen of a ready Writer*. St. Paul earnestly desires the *Ephesians* and *Colossians* to pray for him that *Utterance might be given him, that he might open his Mouth boldly, and speak the Mystery of Christ, and make it manifest.* (f) And it is expressly required of a Bishop, *i. e.* a Minister, *that he be apt to teach*; (g) which, doubtless, implies a Capacity of instructing with Readiness, and Perspicuity of Language. Inability, with respect to communicating his Ideas intelligibly, renders him as unfit for this Office as the Want of sufficient Store of Knowledge. I do not here mean that every Minister should be Master of an accurate, or sublime, or florid Stile; so far from this, that I apprehend, he is the most likely to do good, who, tho' he would not be tawdry in the Dress of Sermons, is yet more anxious about being understood by the Weakest, and most Unpolished, than pleasing the Learned and Polite. It is an old and scriptural Observation, that the plainest Preachers have been the most Successful.

Nor is *Prudence* less necessary than any
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(f) Eph. vi. 19. Col. iv. 3. (g) 1 Tim. iii. 2.

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of the above mentioned Endowments. By this we are enabled to make Choice of the best Means for obtaining any proposed End, and to apply them in the most proper Manner, and in the fittest Season. By this we foresee Dangers, and by this avoid them; we go through Difficulties with Ease; spend our short and precious Time to the most valuable Purposes; and finish our great Work with Honour, and divine Applause. A Man may be possessed of many other good Properties, even Grace itself; yet if he has but little Prudence, he will, 'tis very probable, but labour in vain; create Difficulties in the Church; and mar the Usefulness of others: Whereas, he who has the necessary Share of it, and in whom it is seasoned with divine Grace, becomes wise as a Serpent for his Master's Work, and, at the same time, harmless as a Dove. How different is this Kind of Prudence from that carnal Policy of worldly wise Men; that truckling Pusillanimity, which they so often couch under the borrowed Name! But this leads me to observe;

II. That the SAVING GRACE OF GOD is so necessary in a Gospel Minister, That none should undertake this Office who is a Stranger to it. 'Tis this alone that sanctifies

tifies the aforementioned Qualities, and inclines us honestly to improve them to the best Purposes, and in the most suitable Manner. Yet I would not be understood as meaning, that any Man's Administrations are rendered invalid by his want of Saving Grace: Were this the Case, the Church would be reduced to very great Difficulties; not being certainly able to determine who may have been gracious, and who not. We ought, doubtless, to look upon the Administration of the Ordinances as valid, when performed by such as are regularly introduced, and continued by the Judicatures of Christ's Church. Such have a Right, in the Eye of the Church, to administer Gospel Ordinances, while they continue to make a good and credible Profession, and are of a Christian Deportment; so that we are not to perplex ourselves with the Enquiry into their real Character in the Sight of God.

But here I foresee an Objection. Some may perhaps alledge, that, though a Man be void of Saving Grace, yet, if the Truths he preaches, and his outward Conduct be the same as those of a regenerate Person, he may, nevertheless, be a very useful Minister, and we may hope for much Good from

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from his Labours ; because the Efficacy of his Administrations flows not from Grace in him, but from the Blessing of God. However, not only this, but any other Objection against what I have asserted, relating to this Article, shall be sufficiently refuted, if we make it appear, That the Saving Grace of God is necessary, *1st*, In order to our being approved of God : *2^{dly}*, To the faithful Performance of the Ministerial Work : And, *3^{dly}*, That it is only to the faithful Discharge of this Office that God has promised his Blessing.

As to the *First*, The Scriptures assure us, that, *without Faith it is impossible to please God. That, the Wrath of God abideth on him who believeth not. (b)* That the *Carnal Mind*, in whomsoever it is, is *Enmity against God. (i)* And that, let a Man have what Gifts and Accomplishments soever, if *he has not Charity, or true Love, he is nothing. (k)* Hence every one, who is destitute of Saving Grace, is a *Child of Wrath ; Condemned ; at Variance with Jehovah ; in League with an Enemy.* Now what Prince would choose an Enemy, or one in Alliance with his Enemy, to lead forth

(b) Heb. xi. 6. John iii. 36. (i) Rom. viii. 7.

(k) 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

forth his Armies to Battle? And should such take upon them to be Leaders of God's People? surely no. Those, of this Character, who dare to intrude themselves into the Ministry, can expect nothing else but to be rejected with Abhorrence at last: Though they had *eaten and drunk in Christ's Presence*, though they had *professed in Christ's Name, and in his Name cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works*; yet, the same Christ assures us that he will in the last Day *profess* unto such that he *never knew them*; (l) *i. e.* never approved of them; no, not while they made the most blazing Profession; and passed among Mankind under the Character of his Ministers, and the Reformers of the World. Against such, was this Sentence of Rebuke thundered out by the Voice of God himself, *What have you to do to declare my Statutes, or that you should take my Covenant in your Mouth?* (m)

Further, they cannot be said to be faithful and approved Ministers; because they have no Right to the Titles given in the Scriptures to such. God calls his Ministers *Stars and Lights*: (n) But how can these
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(l) Luke xiii. 26. Mat. vii. 22, 23. (m) Psal. l. 16.

(n) Mat. v. 14. Rev. i. 20.

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agree to Men in their natural State of Degeneracy, who are said *to be Darknes*? (o) Those are called *Men of God, and Servants of God*; (p) these the *Children and Servants of the wicked One*. (q) Those again are called Messengers, Angels, and Ambassadors: These cannot lay Claim to such Appellations; because they are not sent by the Lord, but run without his Orders. Godly Ministers are called *Ministers of the Spirit*, who have the *Spirit of God upon them*, by whose Aid they *compare spiritual Things with Spiritual*. (r) But how can natural Men be so termed, since they *have not the Spirit of Christ*, but are *Darknes*, and *even the Light which is in them is Darknes*? On the Contrary, the Titles given to ungodly Ministers are such as these, *Wolves, Dum Dogs, Blind Leaders, Thieves, Robbers*, and such like. These Things are sufficient to evince, that, without Saving Grace, no Man can be an approved Minister of God: This Honour belongs only to such as are called of God. But,

Secondly, That Saving Grace is necessary to the faithful Performance of the Ministerial Work is evident from hence: The Bu-
sincis

(v) Eph. v. 8. (p) 1 Tim. v. 11. (q) Mat. xiii. 38.
Rom. vi. 16. (r) 2 Cor. iii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 13.

ness of Ministers is to open up the My-
 steries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and de-
 clare the Things of the Spirit of God ; but
 the Apostle tells us that these Things are
*Foolishness to the natural Man ; and that he
 cannot know them.* (s) He being Darkness,
 is destitute of a renewed Faculty, or super-
 natural Principal to discern them in their
 Genuine Light ; and so is apt either to ac-
 commodate them to his own corrupt Rea-
 soning ; or to look upon them as inconsis-
 tent, weak, and enthusiastick. Now how
 can he be a faithful Teacher of what he
 neither knows nor can know ? Ministers are
 to labour earnestly to promote Holiness ;
 but how can those promote it who are in
 their Hearts averse to it ? An apparent, or
 seeming Earnestness they may have ; but
 all this flows, either from some selfish
 End, and is only affected ; or from a com-
 mon Belief that the Word is true ; or from
 a natural Fervency of Affection ; far diffe-
 rent from that holy Zeal, and hearty En-
 gagedness to be found in all true Lovers
 of Christ ! Ministers are naturally, that is,
 with the very Bent of their Mind *to care for
 the Spiritual State and Salvation of others.*
 (t) But how shall unregenerate Men do
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(s) 1 Cor. ii. 14. (t) Phil. ii. 20. Gal. iv. 19.

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this, who neglect their own? Can it be supposed they will be more careful of others, than they are of themselves? He, who is unfaithful to his own Soul, is not to be trusted with the Souls of other Men.----- How shall an Impenitent faithfully urge to Repentance? How shall one urge to Self-denial, who is under the Power of Self? Is he, on whom the Terrors of God's Law make no suitable Impression, likely by these to persuade others? Christ's Shepherds are to feed his Sheep; but are they fit for this Purpose whom the Scriptures characterize with that disgraceful Appellation, *Wolves*? Ministers are to give every one his Portion in due Season; rightly to divide the Word; to speak a Word in Season to the Weary; and give suitable Directions to the Doubting, and Distressed in Mind; but, how can they do any of these Things without experimental Knowledge and spiritual Wisdom? *A corrupt Tree can never bring forth good Fruit. An evil Man out of the evil Treasure of his Heart must bring forth evil Things.* (u) Should he pick from the Writings of others, wherewithal to serve the Publick; will he not naturally be led to take out only what is agreeable to his own
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(u) Mat. xii. 35.

blinded Notions, and corrupt Dispositions? This we must suppose; unless on Occasion he sees fit to please an Audience of a different and more Religious Taste. Such Persons do more against the Cause of Christ, under their borrowed Colours, and their Sheeps Cloathing, than they could in the open Field, undisguised, in pitched Battle. They may speak well of Religion in general; yet will they, nevertheless, labour, with the utmost Slightness and Craft, to bring true Godliness into Contempt, and its pious Promoters into Disgrace; and strive to set up the Shadow, in Stead of the Substance of Religion. The natural Enmity, that is in all natural Men, will necessarily lead them to act in the foresaid Manner; as the Godly in all Ages have experienced to their Sorrow. Now, can any one, who considers these Things, doubt, whether Saving Grace be necessary, in order to the faithful Discharge of the Ministerial Office?

Again, *Thirdly*, Let us consider, that though the Efficacy of Ministers Labours depend on the Blessing of God, it is to the Truth only he has promised a Blessing; only this, faithfully delivered, and not the Notions of any, how splendid soever, has he
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Well; it may be said, and may not ungodly Men deliver many Truths? There is no Doubt of this; for so has the Devil himself. But may not God crown the Truth delivered by such Men with a Blessing? If he does, we must conclude that it is *very rare*: His ordinary Way of promoting the Salvation of Men, is, doubtless, by the faithful Labours of his pious and honest Servants. Such have many Promises of his *Presence and Blessing*; and that he *will put his Spirit upon them, and his Word into their Mouth*. Many are the Instances in Scripture of Persons truly converted by their Means; and many the Narratives of the great Reformations wrought by them: But where, in all God's holy Book, is there one Promise of a Blessing on the Ministerial Labours of any others? Where is there an Instance of a single Person converted by them? Nay the Apostle mentions this as a standing Criterion, whereby to distinguish faithful from unfaithful Ministers in the General. These may have acquired a great Ease in Utterance, and Freedom of Speech; and may recommend themselves to the Applause of Men by a superior Elegance of Stile,
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and Harmony of Composition; but those have an Almighty Power attending their Eloquence; a Power whereby Men are rationally and agreeably conquered, and won over to the blessed God. (v) It is a glaring Absurdity for any to expect a divine Blessing, who are not faithful and ingenuous both as to the *Matter and Manner* of their Performances; in neither of which, can they succeed without assisting Grace; *without me*, says Christ, *ye can do nothing*: All Sufficiency is of God: They have no Title to his Assistance, while in a State of Nature; no Promise, but the contrary: God has declared he is *against them, and that they shall not profit*. (w)

From the whole that has been said upon these three Particulars, it is evident, that none should undertake the Gospel Ministry while destitute of the Saving Grace of God; and that, if any such do, they have no Reason to expect the Blessing of God on their Labours, but his Frowns.

Were it necessary, I might subjoin the Sentiments of many pious Men, both ancient and modern, who fully agree with what has been said. That this was the Opinion of our famous Reformers, is evident

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(v) 1 Cor. iv. 19. 2 Cor. x. 5. (w) Jer. xxiii. 32.

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from their Writings, and the Articles or Canons of different reformed Churches. The Reader may readily see those of the Churches of *Scotland* and *England* upon this Head. I might also particularly consider some Objections brought against this Doctrine: But, after what I have spoken, there does not appear to me any sufficient Reason for my doing either at present; nor does my intended Brevity permit me. I therefore proceed to observe,

III. That, to natural Parts and Grace, should be added a large Acquaintance with Things; especially Matters of Religion. Reason tells us, that he who is to teach others, should not himself be a Novice: He should apprehend Things Clearly, reason Solidly, and regularly Methodize his Arguments. Any one may easily see, that a little Smattering of human Literature, a superficial Acquaintance with Divinity, and experimental Religion, a Stock of uncouth Phrases, and useless Pedantries; or a Dexterity in amusing the Populace with empty high-sounding Harangues, will not do in a Gospel Minister; much less a prevailing Inclination to play the Plagiary: This is "stealing the Word of the Lord from our Neighbours; 'tis strutting in borrowed Feathers." In order to be an able and useful

useful Minister, guarded against Contempt, one should be thoroughly conversant in whatever is more directly necessary and subservient to the several Branches of the sacred Function; for Instance, the learned Languages, Rhetoric, Logic, History, Philosophy, &c. These are excellent Hand-maids to Divinity. *Moses* made use of the rich Ornaments of the *Egyptians* in furnishing the Tabernacle; so should Ministers make use of these for the Edification of the Church. A thorough Knowledge in Divinity is eminently necessary; because their principal Concern is with it. In whatever else Ministers are deficient, here they ought to be as *Scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, and mighty in the Scriptures*; by which *the Man of God is made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*: (x) By these are they to *make many rich*: These they are to use for *Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness*: (y) Not the senseless Morality of the *Heathens*, so much in Vogue among carnal Teachers, Teachers, who relish both the Matter and Stile of those unsanctified Philosophers more than God's holy Law. A Minister's Mind should be a Treasury of divine Knowledge,

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(x) 2 Tim. iii. 17. (y) 2 Tim. iii. 16.

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to which he should always be adding ; and for this End, *give himself to Reading, Meditation, and Doctrine.* (z) The People are to *enquire the Law at his Mouth*, therefore *his Lips should keep Knowledge.* (a) A Minister of God ignorant in the Things of God is an Absurdity ! What, tho' a Man of little Knowledge appear learned in a Croud, can his superficial View of Things enable him to resolve perplexing Cases of Conscience ? to explain difficult Points of Doctrine ? to defend the Truth against subtile Opponents ? to make intricate Subjects easy to vulgar Apprehensions ? In these Things Ministers must often be engaged. How ridiculous then is it, that Youth should be obliged to spend **WHOLE YEARS** in acquiring the dead Languages, and yet, suffered to hurry into the Ministry upon reading a few Volumes of Divinity, without having half Time allowed them for digesting one compleat Body in a proper Manner ; or even carefully reading it over ; although at the same time, it be the most extensive Study ; and, as has been shewn, most necessary in a Minister of the Gospel. But,

IV. As Men may arrive at a considerable Acquaintance, and some actually have,
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(z) 2 Tim. iv. 13. (a) Mal. ii. 7.

with both Truth and Falsehood, who yet embrace Error instead of the Truth; it is plain that a Man's having a Literal or Historical Knowledge of the Truth is not sufficient; he ought to be a Man of orthodox Sentiments; believing and professing sound Doctrine, in order to his being qualified for instructing others. It is required that he *bold fast the faithful Word, (b)* and preach the Truth as it is in Jesus. They are not the faithful Messengers of the Lord of Hosts, however they speak in his Name, who pervert the Gospel, and promote Error, or deliver their own Fancies instead of the Truth of God. And if a Man does not with all his Heart believe the Truth, he will not faithfully preach it; *we also believe, says the Apostle, and therefore speak. (c)* Three Things tend greatly to promote a Minister's Orthodoxy. *First*, A sanctified Heart, whereby he is inclined to the Truth: *Secondly*, Sound and able Tutors, to assist him in his early Studies, and shew him how, by the Chain of Truth, to escape Intanglement in the Labyrinth of Error: *Thirdly*, A sound Library; in the daily Perusal of which, he keeps a lively Sense of the Instructions he received; and the more he

(b) Tit. i. 9. (c) 2 Cor. iv. 13.

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he reads, prays, meditates, and practises, he becomes the more clear and confirmed. Again,

V. It is requisite, that those, who engage in the Gospel Ministry should be eminently strict, and nobly exemplary in their Department. The Question our Lord put to the Disciples, *What do ye more than others,* (d) is what Ministers especially ought to be able to answer in the Affirmative. They have singular Advantages, and lie under peculiar Obligations to such a Conduct. They should be *Examples to the Flock, and Patterns of good Works.* (e) As the leading Officers of an Army should be more expert in military Exercises, and able to engage others by their Example; so Ministers should be *Examples to the Believers in Word, in Conversation, and in Doctrine:* They should in all Things approve themselves as the Ministers of God, in much Patience, by Pureness, by Knowledge, by Long-suffering, by Kindness, by the Holy Ghost, and by Love unfeigned. (f) And, the current Sense of the Scriptures will allow me to say, that they ought to be much in every Christian Virtue. Their Conversation should

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(d) Mat. v. 47. (e) 1 Pet. v. 3. Tit. ii. 7.

(f) 2 Cor. vi. 4,---6.

not only be inoffensive, but a lively Transcript of the Duties they are to inculcate on others; this will enable them in some Measure to use the Apostles Address, *Those Things which you have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in Me, do.* (g) He, whose Life contradicts his Doctrine, forbids in Practice what he recommends in Words: And, tho' he should preach with the Tongue of Angels, his Words will have little or no Weight, where his Conduct is known; for the ill Example persuades the Hearers, either, that he is an Hypocrite, or does not believe what he says; and, therefore, they will not believe. If wicked Men are all the Week privately contradicting to weak People, what we preach to them on the Sabbath, it much hinders our Work; because we cannot be present to refute them: But it will much more hinder, if our own Actions give our Tongues the Lie; and, "if, (as a certain Author says) " what we build up an Hour or two with " our Mouths, we all the Week after pull " down with our Hands: This is the Way " to make Men look on the Word of God " as an idle Tale, and make Preaching " seem no better than Prating." Many preach

(g) Phil. iv. 9.

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preach very curiously, who, alas! live very carelessly! They look like the Messengers of God in the Pulpit; but out of it, scarcely appear to be Professors of Christianity. The World is evidently governed more by Example than Precept; therefore, if Ministers be erroneous, they cause the People to err; if prophane, they debauch the Morals of the Place they live in; *from them Propbaneness goeth forth into all the Land:* (b) But if they be circumspect, and godly, they bid fair to promote a Reformation wherever they labour. It is said of *Barnabas*, that *he was a good Man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of Faith;* and then it follows, that, *much People were added unto the Lord.* (i) Such at least, put a Restraint on those they converse with; hence, that old Saying is almost universally verified, *like People, like Priest.* Example makes either Virtue or Vice visible; our very Senses are taken with it: It lets us see that a Thing is Practicable; and we are much apter to follow, when, not only, one of our own Species, but a Companion, or perhaps a Guide goes before us. Besides,

A Minister's living contrary to his Instructions, will disqualify him for declaring
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(b) Jer. xxiii. 15. (i) Acts ii. 24.

the whole Counsel of God. 'Tis unreasonable to suppose that one, who lives an unhoiy Life, will honestly reason against, and lay open the Nakedness of his own Conduct. Mercy to himself will prevent his urging the Strictness of Evangelical Holiness; and move him to diminish the Evil of some Things; vindicate others; and wink at many, which an heavenly Temper would lead him to hate, and warmly oppose. To be an useful Minister then, one must not only be found in Doctrine, but regular in Practice. If he would offer Conviction to the Covetous, he should not be a Worldling. He ought to be temperate who urges it on others: He should have his Passions under Subjection; *bridle his Tongue, and be gentle; not apt to strive; but meek instructing Gainsayers; not returning Railing for Railing,* who would rectify others in these Respects. He should carefully imitate the Pattern Christ has given; and strive so to conduct himself, as that he may be able to borrow the Appeal of St. Paul; ye are Witnesses, and God also how holily, justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.

We have a Catalogue of the Qualifications requisite in those who undertake the Gospel

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pel Ministry in the first Epistle to *Timothy*, and third Chapter; and another in the first Chapter of *Titus*; which, as they shed great Light on this Subject, ought to be diligently perused, and seriously considered, by every one in this Office, or who has it in View.

To what has been said on the Qualifications requisite in Gospel Ministers, we would finally add, That in order to any Person's having a Right to exercise the Ministerial Office, it is requisite, in ordinary Cases, that he be *regularly invested, and set apart thereto by regular Gospel Ministers*. For as the Qualifications of those, who may engage in it, are fixed by the Spirit of Christ, some others should judge, whether the Person, willing to accept of the Office, be so qualified, or not. This must be allowed, unless Self-conceitedness be set up, as the fittest Standard. Nor are there any, (excepting enthusiastical Sectaries) who would plead for a Person's being his own Judge in this Matter: Even these frequently find themselves obliged to restrain some of their whimsical Intruders. There is no Toleration given in the Scriptures for any to run into the Ministry at Pleasure. As for the Prophets and Apostles, those extraordinary

ordinary Missionaries, they gave sufficient Evidence of their being immediately sent of God : And yet, even some of them had a regular Investiture by Men, as *Aaron*, *Elisba*, and *Paul*. Under the Law, the Priests, the ordinary Church Officers, were regularly set apart ; as appears particularly from *Exodus*, Chap. xxviii. 29 : And, under the New-Testament, we find, that ordinary Ministers were set apart to this Office either by the Apostles and Evangelists, (so *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordained Elders in every Church) (*k*) or by a Convention of Ministers, called the PRESBYTERY : Thus was *Timothy* ordained. (*l*) And, after the Apostles Days, this was the common Way in the Primative Church of ordaining Ministers, viz. by the PRESBYTERY ; as Ecclesiastical History assures us. And altho' the Lord allows the People a Choice of their stated Pastors ; yet we are no where informed of his authorizing them to invest Persons in this Office. Deacons, though far lower, were not to be set apart by the People but the Ministers. They are the most proper Judges of the Qualifications of others for this Purpose ; and better fitted for

(*k*) Acts xiv. 23. (*l*) 1 Tim. iv. 14.

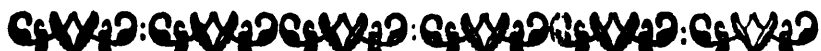
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for conveying the Authority from the Lord to them.

Upon the Whole, I must conclude, that, if any exercise the Ministry, without being approved of, and regularly set apart by others in the Office, they ought either to give a sufficient Evidence of an immediate Call from God; (which, I suppose, it would be hard to do, as such Commissions are long Since apparently withdrawn) or, in an ordinary State of Things, be treated as Enthusiasts and Intruders; who are most likely to be Deceivers of Men. How far gifted Men may intermeddle with the Gospel Ministry, without a regular Investiture, in some extraordinary Circumstances of the Church, is what I do not pretend to say; nor is it necessary to say much about this, as we do not now see such Circumstances.

All that I would further add here is, that, as the Mode of setting Men apart to this Ministry, mentioned in the Scriptures, was by Fasting, Prayer, and Imposition of Hands, so it is what the Church may not warrantably depart from: Fasting, and Prayer, Reason itself tells us, are very proper for so solemn and important a Work. And the Imposition of Hands was used under the Old, as well as New-Testament, in
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the Investiture of Men in sacred Offices. Under the New, the Use of it seems to be so constant, that the Expression to lay Hands on a Man, without any other Words, signifies to ordain one to the Ministry: *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man*, says the Apostle. The Disuse of a Mode, so evidently scriptural, would diminish from the Solemnity of Ordination, and be likely to create Scruples in Men's Minds against such as have excellent Qualifications for this Office.



SECTION V.

Of the MEANS of preserving an able and faithful Ministry, and preventing its being corrupted.

HAVING in the four precedeing Sections considered the Nature, Propriety, and Importance of the Gospel Ministry; and the Qualifications requisite in those who are employed therein; it appeared proper to add this Fifth, respecting the *Means of its Preservation*. My Design is to take Notice of only a few Things, which
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to me appear most conducive to this End; and some of these I shall but very briefly touch at. And,

First, As an able and faithful Ministry is one of the inestimable Gifts the Lord confers on his Church; as he has the Endowments requisite for his Ministers all in his own Power, and metes them out, how, to whom, and when he pleases; *we should therefore be excited to much Earnestness and Importunity with him in Prayer.* We should implore him for the Effusion of his Spirit, that hereby many may be qualified, and enclined to undertake this arduous and difficult Work. And it affords great Encouragement, that Christ himself has directed us to this very Mean, saying, *Pray, ye the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest.* (a) Again,

Secondly, In order to perpetuate an able and faithful Ministry in the Church, *Men should readily encourage, and take great Care of Schools and Seminaries of Learning.* These are *Nurseries* wherein Youths are trained up for the Service of the State, as well as the Church; and both acknowledge themselves beholden to these Seminaries, under God, for the Accomplishments of their Officers.---

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(a) Luke x. 2.

ficers.----Those Nations which are destitute of such a noble Mean of Cultivation, do, and cannot but wear the Appearance of a *wild and barren Wilderness*. We ought therefore readily to contribute towards the Support and Encouragement of such Institutions; and be careful to obtain Men of Piety, Skill, and Activity to be Overseers and Tutors. By the pious Instructions of such Men, Pupils will become acquainted with Divinity; and by their circumspect Walk will probably be engaged in the Practice of Religion and Virtue; while they are making desirable Progress in the several Branches of human Literature: Whereas, corrupt Tutors would be likely to instil pernicious Principles into the Minds of their Scholars, and debauch their Manners by their ill Example.

Thirdly, I apprehend that the *encouraging and assisting of such Youths, as have hopeful Appearances of true Piety, and a good Genius*; but are unable to support themselves at Learning, is a very probable Mean of supplying the Church with an able and faithful Ministry. Many, who have good natural Abilities, and Grace too, are but poor in the World; and many, who have been supported by charitable Contributions, have

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Can we therefore once think we are losers, by parting with a little of our carnal Things, in order to help forward those who are likely to be Instruments of turning Sinners to Christ, and enriching them with spiritual Blessings? But,

Fourthly, In order to preserve such a Ministry, *great Care should be taken in the Admission of Candidates,* that none be introduced, but such as afford sufficient Evidence of their having all the necessary Endowments. And as, in my Apprehension, this is a Matter of great Importance, I shall take the Liberty to expatiate more freely upon it. I cannot but think, that to bring Men into this Office without sufficient Evidence of their having all the necessary Endowments, is a Conduct that is *Unwarrantable, can answer no valuable Ends, but is likely to be pernicious to the Church and Ministry both.*

It is *unwarrantable,* having no Support from the Scriptures, or Reason, but being contrary to both. Ministers hereby act, as if they had an original, absolute, and lordly Power; whereas such a Power belongs to Christ alone, as Head of the Church and
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Lord of the Harvest. The Power given to them is only delegated and ministerial. They are to act as Servants and Stewards of the manifold Grace of God. It is required of them that they be found faithful in observing their Master's Orders in all their Ministrations; and doubtless they should in committing the Ministry to *faithfull Men, who shall be able to teach others also*; as their Commission directs. (b) Civil and military Officers expose themselves to the Displeasure of their Prince by exceeding their Commission; as well as by their Deficiencies: And can Ministers of the Gospel expect any Thing but Frowns from the God of Heaven, for admitting such as don't afford sufficient Evidences of their having the Qualifications he requires in his Ambassadors.----Besides, *No valuable Ends can be answered by bringing unqualified Men into the Ministry.* We may by this Means, its true, increase the Number of Votes, in order to overbear Antagonists; gain Livings to our Friends; and have Vacancies in the Church fill'd by these, in the Stead of Men we dislike. But are these Ends fit to be avowed by the Servants of Jesus Christ? surely no! Their Concern should,

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(b) 2 Tim. ii. 2.

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doubtless, be to have the Church supplied with such as bid fair for propagating the Redeemer's Interest in the World, and for being Ornaments to their Profession. But are unqualified Persons; are those who are dissolute, conceited, and vain, at all likely to answer these Ends? Or do those for whom we must put Charity on the Rack, before we can entertain Hopes of their being truly pious; do they, I say, bid fair for being faithful in their Office, or upright in their private Walk? Do they bid fair for preaching the self-denying Doctrines of the Gospel, for reaching the Consciences of Men, discovering their ruined State by Nature, razing the sandy Foundation of their false Hopes, and unhinging them from their own Righteousness? for speaking a Word in Season to weary Souls, comforting those that mourn after a godly Sort, giving proper Directions to the Perplexed, clearly displaying the Method of Salvation by free Grace, impartially exercising Discipline on Offenders, and honestly testifying against the Evils of the Times? No, no! They have no true Inclination to; but would rather declaim against such a Course. And yet this is the very Course the Scriptures have pointed out to every Gospel Minister.

nister. But instead of observing this; if they touch at the Doctrines respecting Man's Fall, Guilt, Impotency, eternal Damnation, Conviction of Sin by the Spirit of God, Conversion, Sanctifying Grace, Justification by Faith alone,----is there not great Reason to fear that they (as is too customary) will give but a very gentle Touch, and so alter the Phraseology, that the Doctrines will be little, or not at all observed; while they'll dwell upon meer moral Subjects and social Duties. But tho' they may amuse and captivate the unthinking Crowd by such smooth Doctrines, a Reformation in the Church was never promoted by such a Method, nor ever will. And have we any Reason to hope that their Practice will be much better than their Doctrines? or rather is there not too much Reason to fear such a Behaviour as will dishonour their Function, and be a Stumbling-block to others? Ministers of this Sort have often turned out, some Drunkards, others Lewd, others worldly wise Men; who, for the Sake of worldly Gain, have neglected their Office, and often shifted from one Denomination to another; many Instances of which, even this infant Church has seen. It therefore appears plain, that instead of their answering

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swering any valuable End in the Ministry, they are most likely to be unprofitable; or rather hurtful to the Souls of Men, and a Disgrace to their Office. The Force then of all I have been saying is, that Ministers should carefully avoid having any Hand in the introducing of such Men. They are liable to Deception its true; and after all the Care they can take may be imposed upon in some Cases: But this, instead of vindicating their Negligence, is an Argument to greater Strictness; especially in the Cases wherein they are most liable to be deceived. For if there is Danger of being imposed upon after the greatest Precaution, the less Care they take, they must be the more liable to this Imposition. But when they conscientiously use all suitable Means to have their Way cleared; if they should, notwithstanding, be deceived, they are free of that Guilt that lies at their Door who neglect proper Means of obtaining Light, and so through criminal Ignorance are brought to countenance the Unworthy. Ministers should therefore examine very carefully. The divine Precept requires, that they should commit the Ministry to Men of Ability and Fidelity. Now it is a known Maxim, that a Precept enjoyning the doing any Duty,
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does enjoyn the Use of all Means proper for doing it right.-----With regard to the Matters to be enquired into I need only say, that if it be allowed, that before we bring any Man into the Ministry we should be satisfied as to his having all the necessary Endowments, which I suppose will be granted; it is then a native Consequence, that our Enquiries should respect all these. To alledge the Contrary, is, in my Opinion, to contradict common Sense. Ministers ought not therefore precipitantly to usher Men into this Office, since there are so many Things urging to Caution. They should observe St. Paul's Admonition to *Timothy*, to lay Hands suddenly on no Man. The Meaning of which (as most agree) is, that he should not ordain any hastily, upon their having a fair Shew at first, and nothing appearing to contradict it; but, that he should wait, search, and try further, observing for a Rule not to ordain any without having Evidence sufficient to afford a scriptural and rational Satisfaction with regard to their Fitness. Again,

Fifthly, As the ministerial Office, how grand soever it be, does not raise Men above the Reach of Discipline, nor ever
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was designed to screen them from Admonitions and Rebukes; so *these tend greatly to maintain Purity among, and prevent the Defection of Ministers*: And their sharing so deeply with others in the Depravity and Corruption of human Nature makes these quite necessary. Their Brethren in Office are doubtless their proper Judges; not only because they are their Equals, and best acquainted with the Affairs that concern them; but likewise because they are authorized; the Charge of the Church in general, and of the Ministry in particular is committed to them; so that if they suffer their House to be defiled, the Guilt lies at their own Door, and the apparent Dignity of their Office is stained by their own Negligence. Nothing therefore should engage them to indulge their Brethren in their Impieties, nor deter them from dealing faithfully and impartially with them; not the Fear of weakening a Party, irritating Brethren, and making them Enemies; nor any other Consideration. For if they tolerate or wink at the Faults and Extravagances of one another; if they appear backward to search thoroughly into Matters of Complaint or Faine; if they conceal or labour to blacken and brow-beat Evidences; such

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Conduct

Conduct can be no Honour to their Function, but will rather bring themselves into Contempt, mar their Usefulness in the Ministry, prevent their dealing faithfully with, and censuring the Faults of their Hearers, and wound the Consciences of the Godly.

The End of the ESSAY.



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T O T H E

Three following ADDRESSES.

T H E first of the following Addresses, which is by way of a Letter to a Clergyman, appears plainly to have been primarily directed to a Clergyman of the Church of England: But I cannot inform the Reader who the Author certainly was: Nor do I think it is of so much Importance to know by whom this, or yet the Father's Address to his Sons, intending the Ministry, was done, as that either of them should be suppressed or despised for want of the Author's Name; since they appear sound and pacifick. As they both refer to the Gospel Ministry, and,

in

*in my Opinion, are very needful at this Day;
I therefore thought it proper to make them more
publick by subjoining them to the precedeing
Essay. And,*

*As the Benefit of the Laity was a principal
End of my writing upon the Gospel Ministry;
on this Account I thought it highly reasonable
to remind them of, and urge them to their Du-
ty respecting this Ministry; which I have ac-
cordingly done in the third Address.*



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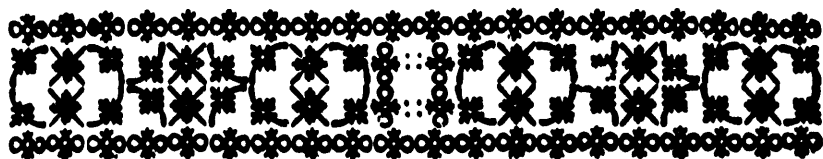
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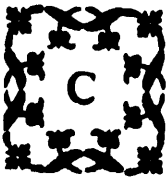


A N

A D D R E S S

To a MINISTER.

Reverend and dear SIR,

URIOSITY may excite you just to give the following Pages a cursory View; but permit me to ask for a serious Moment, when your Thoughts are composed, and you are in no Danger of an Interruption: Then sit down, and read what is here humbly presented to you, give every Article its due Consideration, and may it, through a divine Blessing, prove a happy Opportunity, and be made effectual to answer the great Ends for which it is intended.

You are by Profession a MINISTER
 ----- a LEADER of the People----- a
 SHEPHERD in *Israel*----- a sacred Character

rafter indeed! ---an honourable Employment! Yet venerable as it is, how many are deplorably insensible of the great Importance of their *Trust*, are acted by *mercenary Principles*, are ignorant of the most *interesting Subjects* of Christianity, and are *regardless* of the *Souls* committed to their Care! As this is the Case with too many who are engaged in the sacred Office; and as the Consequences are inexpressibly melancholy both to themselves and the People they preach to, so give me Leave to address YOU, SIR, upon the Subject of your MINISTRY. I would do it with the highest Respect to your *Character*, with all Decency and Humility, with an undissembled Regard for your best Interest, and therefore with all Christian Freedom and Faithfulness.--- (a) Thus hoping your Mind is

(a) I hope you will not think me busy and impertinent in this Address. I was moved to it not only from the above Consideration, but from a View of God's awakening many of our Reverend Brethren; their unwearied Diligence in the Service of Souls; the Hopes I have that the Glory is returning to that Church, which so much signalized itself at the Time of the Reformation; and the Desires I have (though in every Respect unworthy) of being an Instrument of furthering the Work of God, and of bringing many of your sacred Function to the saving

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is prepared to attend with Candour and Seriousness to the few Hints that may drop from my feeble, though friendly Pen, I take the Liberty to ask you the following weighty and momentous Questions.

What is the Message you carry to your People? Many will be ready to receive it without inquiring whether it is agreeable to the Word of God or not, because it comes from YOU. This then should engage you to inquire

saving Knowledge of the Gospel, that they may go forth, win Souls to the Redeemer, and spread the Knowledge and Power of Religion through our happy Land. If any indecent or ungarded Expression is found in this feeble Attempt, I hope the Candour of my Reverend Reader will pass it over, and not permit him to look upon it as designed to irritate. No: I would be far from throwing a Reflection to raise a criminal Passion; I would rather, Sir, lie at your Feet, and, in the Posture of an humble Suppliant, intreat, than revile. Confident I am, that I shall not displease you, if you are faithful to the Trust you are charged with. And perhaps this Paper may fall into the Hands of many, who will approve an Attempt (however ill executed) to stir up those of our Brethren, who may need it, to a serious Concern about the Importance of their Office. However it may be, I offer it to a fair and candid Examination. Reason will, I apprehend, show you the Propriety and Importance of every Head of Inquiry, and throughly convince you that I am no Enthusiast; and I assure you that I am no Methodist.

inquire of what Kind it is, and stir you up to take the most diligent Care that it be in every Respect suitable to the Gospel of Christ, and to the Circumstances of those amongst whom you labour. --- What DOCTRINES have you been preaching? The generally despised, but *Soul-quickning Truths* (*b*) of the adorable JESUS, or the natural pleasing, but destructive Errors of Infidelity? --- Have you been representing the (*c*) FALL, with its inconceivably awful Consequences in the Ruin of the whole human Race? --- Have you been opening the Glories of the EVERLASTING COVENANT, and exhibiting the great MYSTERY of REDEMPTION? --- Have you been displaying the Excellencies of our EMMANUEL, and propagating, what the deluded World calls, the (*d*) *foolish and absurd Doctrine* of the CROSS? (*e*) Have you been feeding your *immortal Hearers* with pure *Gospel Provision*, and satisfying their Souls with the BREAD of LIFE, or starving them with *empty DE-*
CLA-

(*b*) These Truths no Clergyman can be a Stranger to, as they are not only contained in the Articles of the Church, but run through the whole Service, and are the grand Basis upon which it stands.

(*c*) Rom. v. 12. and Article ix. (*d*) 1 Cor. i. 18.

(*e*) Articles ii. xi. xv. &c.

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CLAMATIONS, and fine eloquent HARANGUES upon some MORAL VIRTUE? (f) Have you, in fine, been preaching to *Sinners* and to *Saints*, been endeavouring to *divide the Word* (g) *aright*, and to give to every one his *Portion in due Season*?---I would beg Leave to suggest to you the following Examination:----- “ Come, my Soul, let me enter “ upon a most necessary and important “ Scrutiny. I have professed myself a MI- “ NISTER of CHRIST these many “ Years, but have I ever inquired into the “ MESSAGE I have carried to the “ People? Have I carefully considered “ the DOCTRINES I have preach’d? “ Have I ever yet seriously asked the Que- “ stion, whether it is TRUTH or Er- “ ror I am sounding from the PUL- “ PIT? Have I not been contented with “ a mere *Round of Preaching*, and never “ been concerned to inquire what I have “ entertained my Congregation with? And “ if so, is it not Time to awake out of my “ Security, and *examine* into that, upon “ which so much depends? What, what “ are the PRINCIPLES I have been
L “ inculcating?

(f) Article xiii. (g) 2 Tim. ii. 15.

“ inculcating? the (b) FOUNDATI-
 “ ON I have been laying, and the SU-
 “ PERSTRUCTURE I have been
 “ building upon it? Inquire, inquire my
 “ Soul, before the returning Sabbath, lest
 “ I should be at best *famishing*, instead of
 “ feeding, those that hear me.---Again,

What Ends have you had in View in your
 MINISTRY? What was it that pre-
 vailed upon you to enter into *holy Orders*?
 Was you really moved by the HOLY
 GHOST (i) to take upon you the so-
 lemn Charge, and undertake the CURE
 of SOULS? or was it a Desire of PO-
 PULAR APPLAUSE, a Thirst for
 HONOUR, or a Hope of WORLD-
 LY GAIN? Did you think it an easy
 Way of getting a SUBSISTANCE,
 of *providing* for a *Family*, and of living
 with *Reputation*? Have these been your
 great *Springs of Action*, or have you had
 the *Glory* of GOD, the *Honour* of
 CHRIST, and the *Salvation* of immortal
Souls in View? Has this been all your
 AIM,

(b) 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11, 12.——(i) The first Ques-
 tion in the Ordination of Deacons. A Question
 which you have already answered. God grant you
 may not have trifled with him in so solemn an Af-
 fair, in declaring the Holy Ghost moved you, when
 some worldly Prospect was the Motive!——

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AIM, and is it for this you desire to *live to preach* the everlasting Gospel? Have you been concerned to attend to the various important *Parts* of your *Ministry*? As you are set for the DEFENCE (*k*) of the *Gospel*, have you endeavoured to vindicate, and maintain, and set in a proper Light, its glorious DOCTRINES? Have you laboured after the CONVERSION of *Sinners*? Have you administered COMFORT to *God's People*? Have you *preach'd the Gospel to the Poor*, (*l*) attempted to *bind up the Broken-hearted, proclaimed Deliverance to the Captives, and the acceptable Year of the Lord*? Have you done this from the *Pulpit*? Has it been the End you have been aiming at in private Conversation? Have you *visited* your Flock, the Poor as well as the Rich, the Afflicted, the Dying? Of what Kind have your Visits been, and with what Views? To gratify a sensual Appetite, to spend an Hour in unprofitable Discourse, or to reprove, (*m*) exhort, comfort, as you saw Occasion?---These, Sir, are important Heads of Inquiry.---Again,

In what Manner have you attended to the great Ends of your Ministry? How has it been, and how is it still with you in the *Pulpit*?

(*k*) Phil. i. 17. (*l*) Isa. lxi. 1. (*m*) 2 Tim. iv. 2.

Pulpit? Have you been lifting up your Voice like a Trumpet, and have you addressed all Sorts of Sinners, represented to them the dreadful Condition they are in, warned them of approaching Judgments, pressed them to seek after an Interest in the REDEEMER, expostulated with, and besought them, with all the Tenderness and Affection of a *Minister of CHRIST*, to attend to the Things that belong to their Peace, before they are for ever hid from their Eyes? Or have you gone through the Work of the Day in a cold, lifeless Manner, esteeming it rather a Burthen than a Pleasure, and having little Concern upon your Mind for the Souls of those that heard you? How has it been with you in the Study? Have you there made Conscience of solemn Prayer? Have you carried your People daily to the Throne of Grace, wrestled with GOD for them, wept over Sinners, and committed them to the infinite Compassion of the GREAT SHEPHERD? Have you been importunate with GOD for Strength to enable you to go on in your Work with growing Pleasure---for Direction, in the Choice of suitable Subjects---for the divine Presence with you in your publick Work---for Wisdom to conduct your Conversation

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Conversation aright---for *Courage* and *Faithfulness*---for a lively *Zeal*---for a growing *Love* to CHRIST and Souls---and, in fine, for a glorious and divine *Power* to accompany the whole of your Labours, that they may be made effectual to the Salvation of every one who hears you?---How is it in *Conversation*? Have you been recommending CHRIST, his Gospel, and his Service, with Affection to those around you? Have you been ready, according to your Character, to begin and encourage the most important Subjects of Conversation? Have you been willing to remove Doubts, to strengthen the Weak, to satisfy Inquirers, and to attend to the Requests of those who have desired your Advice and Instruction? In fine, Have you been lively, serious, and warm for your *Master's Glory*, been concerned to spread the Knowledge of his Gospel, and to advance his Kingdom and Interest wherever you was called?---Let me go farther, dear Sir, and ask you----

What has been your Example? (n)---Have you

(n) Permit me to put you in mind of the 6th Question in the Ordination of Deacons, and of your Answer; in which you solemnly promise to frame and fashion your Life according to the Doctrine of Christ, that

you been concerned to live in the Discharge of those *Duties* to which you have exhorted your People? Have you guarded against those *Sins*, of which you have warned them, and from which you have endeavoured to dissuade them? Have you been sober in your Behaviour, moderate in the Use of your Enjoyments, and regular, uniform, and heavenly in your Conversation? Upon the Whole, has it been your great Concern to walk in the Steps of our dearest LORD, to have the same *Temper* that was in him, and in the whole of your Conduct to show the CHRISTIAN and the MINISTER?---These, Sir, are *Questions* peculiarly suited to your Work and Character; *Questions* which I am persuaded you must acknowledge the great Importance of, and the Reasonableness, Necessity, and Advantages of seriously attending to. How happy should I be, could I persuade you to enter your Study, and in the most solemn Manner, and as under the all-seeing Eye of God, take them one by one, and put closely to your own Soul! (o)

Thus that so you may be a wholesome Example of the Flock of Christ; and you promise the same, as to your Family too.

(o) They are all Questions built upon, and what may

Thus I have Faithfulness, to important Branches and the Manner tend to it. What you duly to conform to a diligent study you are called should not want you up to the in so delightful, tant an Employment Scriptures to be make no Doubt convinced, that human Invention; and does in your Regard, placed you in the INTEREST of others? you, melt you, I can but attempt open your Eyes

may be justly extraordinary relating to Deacons brought yourself up to attend to; there Propriety of my presence and of the real Liberty of Soul herein.

Thus I have endeavoured, with all Faithfulness, to point out some of the important Branches of your *ministerial Work*, and the Manner in which you should attend to it. What shall I now say to press you duly to consider it, and to excite you to a diligent Discharge of those Duties you are called to? Methinks, Sir, you should not want the least Argument to stir you up to the greatest Activity and Zeal in so delightful, so honourable, so important an Employment. You believe the Scriptures to be the Word of GOD, I make no Doubt. You must therefore be convinced, that Religion is no Farce, no human Invention, but a divine Institution; and does it not therefore require all your Regard, especially as Providence has placed you in the Character of a TEACHER of others? Fain, fain would I move you, melt you, convince and quicken you! I can but attempt it, it is GOD who must open your Eyes, and fasten the Conviction upon

may be justly extracted from the Ordination Service relating to Deacons and Priests, and which you have brought yourself under the most solemn Engagements to attend to; therefore you must be convinced of the Propriety of my putting them to you in this Address, and of the real Love and Concern I have for your Soul herein.

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upon your Mind. In Hopes of this I would chearfully cast in my Mite, and offer to your Consideration the following Things; accompanying them with an hearty Prayer, that they may answer some saving Purpose to your Soul; and earnestly intreating that you would not stop here, and read no farther, but view the whole, carefully examine every Hint as to its Truth and Importance, and weigh all in the Balance of Reason and Scripture.

The first Thing I would mention is, *your People have IMMORTAL SOULS.* And have you no Tenderneſs for them? Can you look upon them with as little Regard as you do upon your *Horse* or your *Dog*? Are they not tending to Eternity as quick as the Wings of Time can carry them, and can you neglect them? Are they not directing their Course towards the *heavenly World*, or the dark Regions of *Hell*, and is it indifferent to you to which it is they are moving? What, be altogether unaffected with ſuch a Thought! Are ſome of them Swearers, others Drunkards; are ſome breaking the Sabbath, and others running into all Manner of Exceſs of Riot, and will you, can you ſee all this, and ſit as an unconcerned Spectator? Have you
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no Zeal for your ſee the Snare laid and hurried by dark Habitations: prevent it, or find Breſt for them? of their Danger, awake? Will your *nity is near*, lead bottomleſs Pit, and of the SECON not try to win the Glories of Immor the Love, the aim OF GOD? Will I muſt purſue ſo there any, nay, Congregation, v hurrying on to ev will you not try to Will you not beſ of GOD? Will CHRST's Stea GOD? (p) Will Riches of his G the great EMM ſings of a Salva to move and en and new Obedi

no Zeal for your MASTER? Can you see the Snare laid, SOULS entangled, and hurried by the great Adversary to his dark Habitations, and not endeavour to prevent it, or find the least Pity in your Breast for them? Will you not warn them of their Danger, call loudly upon them to awake? Will you not tell them that *Eternity is near*, lead them to the Mouth of the bottomless Pit, and shew them the Terrors of the SECOND DEATH? Will you not try to win them, to allure them by the Glories of Immortality, or melt them by the Love, the amazing Love of the SON OF GOD? What (for I cannot leave off, I must pursue so important a Subject) are there any, nay, are there many of your Congregation, who are absolutely stupid, hurrying on to everlasting Destruction, and will you not try to rouse and awaken them? Will you not beseech them by the *Mercies* of GOD? Will you not intreat them in CHRIST'S Stead to be reconciled unto GOD? (p) Will you not exhibit all the Riches of his Grace, all the Glories of the great EMMANUEL, and all the Blessings of a Salvation so dearly purchased, to move and engage them to Repentance and new Obedience? Was one of your

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(p) 2 Cor. v. 20.

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brute Domesticks to be in a languishing Condition, your tender Heart would feel some Pity for the poor Animal: And can you sit still and see precious SOULS perishing, SOULS of more Worth than all the World, shall they sink in endless Ruin, and you not drop one single Tear? What, their MINISTER not take one step to lead them to CHRIST, to escape the Wrath to come, sure it cannot be!---But if negligent as to the Means to awaken them, sure you cannot take those Means that tend to harden them! You cannot be a Companion with them in DRUNKENNESS, and revel with them in their Scenes of criminal Pleasure: You cannot sit with them in publick View at the CARD-TABLE, or lead a DANCE at a Ball or an Assembly! Is it possible! You, Sir, well know how the Matter stands. Consider, consider your People have SOULS. And further----

Remember, *these SOULS are in the Course of divine Providence committed to your CARE*---you have professedly taken the Charge, the Oversight of them, and brought yourself under Engagements to inspect their Conduct, and to do all you can to lead them into the Knowledge of the Gospel, to promote their spiritual Advantage, to

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walk (*q*) before them in all the Duties of the Christian Life, to encourage them in their Pursuits of a better World, to pity and sympathize with them under all their Difficulties, to bear them upon your Heart, and to seek not *theirs* but *them*. (*r*)---G O D, by his Pr vidence in opening a Way for your coming amongst this People, has called you to all this Work. How then will you fulfil your *Engagements*, how perform your *Promises*, how answer your *Character*, if you are negligent?---Do you discharge that *Trust* G O D has committed to you? So many precious S O U L S; some to rouse, to awaken, others to encourage, and comfort; some to call in, others to build up; sure, 'tis an important Charge! So many to be taught and instructed! and instead of attending to your Duty, are you at Places of Diversion, squandering your Time in Company, and drinking towards the Bounds of Excess? are you taken up in useless Friendships and unprofitable Visits, or trifling away Life in Ease and Sloth, doing nothing? Instead of talking to them of J E S U S and Salvation, and recommending the great Duties of Self-Examination, Mortification, Meditation, &c. are you amusing them with empty
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(*q*) 1 Pet. v. 3. (*r*) 2 Cor. xii. 14.

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Speculations? Instead of calling them in-
to a serious Inquiry into the Foundation
of their Hopes of eternal Life, are you
bolstering them up with the Expectations
of Heaven, and lulling them into a pleas-
ing but *dangerous Security*? Instead of che-
rishing their *Convictions*, and encouraging
them in their small Beginnings, are you
endeavouring to *darken* these *Dawnings of
Grace*, to *laugh* them out of all Religion,
and to discourage them in the Pursuits of
Salvation?---They have committed their
SOULS to your CARE. Precious as
they are, they have trusted YOU with
them, look to YOU for Instruction, and
from YOU expect all suitable Direction
and Assistance in their Way to a better
World. See what Confidence they have
reposed in YOU, and should not this
make YOU diligent? Can YOU be un-
faithful? What, they lodged so great a
Trust with YOU, and YOU so care-
less! The greater their Dependence upon
YOU, the more should you be concern-
ed to seek their everlasting Good, and
direct them in the Way to Happiness.
But,

Lastly, *Consider the Certainty and Solemnity
of a Day of ACCOUNTS.* That
you expect to be called before the JUDGE
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of all the Earth, to be tried, examined, and lodged in a World of Joy or Sorrow, I would not call in Question. If you believe not, if you expect not these Things, or if you think Religion a vain and trifling Thing, why are you a MINISTER? why appear in that sacred Character? why preach and pray? Do you never think upon the awful DAY, when you must give an *Account* of your STEWARDSHIP, when your *Congregation* will appear either as swift *Witnesses* against you, or testify to your *Faithfulness*? Do you never consider the *Impartiality* of the JUDGE, the *Strictness* of the *Trial*, with the certain and most important *Consequences*? JESUS, who will be the JUDGE, knows all you have done. He has all your Negligence, your Carelessness, your Unfaithfulness, &c. wrote down in his Book: All the *Principles* and *Springs* from whence you have acted, all your *Ends* and *Views* are minutely noticed by him.---Think, my dear Sir, think upon the Day, how solemn! The vast, the numerous Assembly gathered, and you hear your NAME called upon; YOU summoned to stand forth, give an *Account*, and receive your *Sentence*! Critical Moment, Moment big with Importance indeed! Now, what Pleasure

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sure to have the *Approbation* of the JUDGE, to see a *Smile* upon his Countenance, and to hear him saying, Come, thou faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in declaring my Gospel, and promoting my Cause, come *enter thou into the Joy of thy LORD!* (s) How great the Happiness, to have many to appear as your *Joy and Crown of rejoicing in that DAY!*---But to see the JUDGE with an awful Frown, and to hear his Voice, more terrible than Thunder, saying, Thou *slothful and unprofitable Servant*, thou hast had the Care of SOULS, but hast been negligent, and not attended to thy important Charge; thou hast suffered them to go on from one Act of Rebellion to another, and to perish for ever, without warning them of the Danger, and pressing them to flee from it; (t) *depart therefore, thou cursed Creature, into everlasting FIRE, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Worldly Gain was all thy View: POPULARITY was all thy Ambition: These thou hast had, and now SORROW, distressing SORROW shall fill thy SOUL, and thy NAME, however applauded by Fellow-Mortals, shall rot for ever.*-----Painful Thought! To have the Weight of so many SOULS lying upon you, SOULS you have

(s) Matt. xxv. 21. (t) Matt. xxv. 41.

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have neglected! Methinks I hear one upbraiding your Negligence, and saying, Had it not been for YOU, I perhaps had not perished. I trusted YOU with my SOUL, but you never corrected my Prophaneness; you never pressed me to seek after Salvation; you led me into Sin, and kept me in destructive Ignorance!--Hark, another lifting up his sorrowful Head, and saying, I was under Convictions, and upon the Inquiry what I should do to be saved, but YOU discouraged me in my Pursuits of Heaven; YOU told me all would be well if I attended but on *Sundays* at Church: Thus, through your Influence, I sunk into a Lethargy, took up with the Form, and stopt short of the Power of Religion, and now am ruin'd for ever!-----DISTRESSING SCENE! To have one after another rise up, and thus upbraid you! To have their Blood required at your Hands! Every Reflection will wound your Soul, and pierce you through with inexpressible everlasting Sorrows.

Thus, my dear Reverend Reader, I have endeavoured to drop a few Hints; Hints of the greatest Importance, as they relate to the Peace of your own Soul, the Success of your Ministry, and the Manner of your last Appearance. I hope you will take kindly

ly this little Attempt. 'Tis your Master's Cause I am pleading. 'Tis your own Comfort I am seeking, as well as that of your People. Do not be curious in inquiring about the Author: He wants no Praise: And hopes he is regardless of all the Reproach that may be cast upon him. If his Name stands but recorded in the Annals of Eternity, and he can be instrumental in promoting his REDEEMER's Interest, 'tis all he desires.

Before he takes his Leave, he would recommend to your serious and attentive Perusal the following Texts of Scripture. May you read them often, and may GOD open to you their Importance, and enable you to walk under the daily View and Influence of them. So prays,

*Reverend and dear Sir,
Your most Affectionate
Friend and Servant,*

PHILANTHROPOS.

Isa. ix. 14, 15, 16. Chap. lvi. 10, 11, 12. Jer. vi. 13, 14, 15. Chap. xiv. 13, 14, 15. Chap. xxiii. 13—39. Ezekiel, iii. 17—21. Chap. xiii. 2—16. Chap. xxii. 25, 26, 28. Chap. xxxiii. 1—16. Chap. xxxiv. 1—10. Hof. iv. 6—10. Micah, iii. 5—7, 11. Mal. i. 6—13. Chap. ii. 1—9. John, xxi. 15—17. Rom. i. 16, 17. 1 Cor. ix. 16—23. Gal. i. 7—9. 1 Thess. i. 5. 1 Thess. ii. 3—12. 1 Tim. iv. 12—16. 2 Tim. iv. 1—5.



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*An EXTRACT from a FATHER'S
ADDRESS to his SONS, intending
the MINISTRY.*

My very dear Sons,

A DESIRE OF YOUR HAPPINESS, both in Time and Eternity, engaged my serious Attention from the Hour you appeared on the Stage of Life. The Instructions I have given you in Spiritual Things, and the Care I have taken for your temporal Support, have all proceeded from this *Desire*. This also induced me to think of giving you a *liberal Education*: For I knew it would tend to enlarge the Judgment, and pave the Way to an useful and genteel Way of Living.

To know what Improvement you would make of your Learning, could only belong to God: To prevent your abusing it, if possible, was my Duty. For this End I have often warned and directed you, as yourselves know; and for this End I have left you this *Memorial* of my Care, that, I being dead, it might speak to you. You
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will find it is only a brief *Epitome* of the Conversation I have often had with you in private. As you are yet but very young, I have not hitherto expected you could fully weigh the Force of my Arguments. But were the Case otherwise, I suppose this Repetition, instead of being hurtful, may afford you some Assistance, especially when you shall come to chuse a particular Calling. You have here my *last Address* to you; read, and consider it, as containing the Sentiments of an *affectionate Father, when verging on a vast Eternity.*

As you have often discovered an Inclination to the Gospel Ministry; which appears to increase, as you advance in your Age; I shall therefore, in the following Particulars, give you my Sentiments and Advice respecting your Duty in this Affair: And do desire and expect your serious Attention. And,

I. *Let me warn you against being peremptory in resolving to undertake this Office.* You are not your own; but belong to God: He is your *Sovereign and Master*; you are his *Dependants and Servants*; and your Talents should be all exercised according to his Pleasure. It becomes you therefore to wait upon him; and if he, by his Providence,

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dence, shall counteract your Determinations, be resigned; chearfully submit to his Will; and readily embrace any Employment to which he shall call you; for he acts not without *wise Ends*, which, tho' you see not at first, you may afterwards.

II. I advise, that before you undertake this Ministry, you carefully inquire how you are qualified. Reason will tell you, that no Man should engage in what he is disqualified for: He should not in Things of a secular Nature; much less in the Ministry, which refers to the Soul, and the great Concerns of Eternity. As I suppose you have such a Degree of natural and acquired Accomplishments, as would be accepted by a Judicature of Christ; I therefore pass over these; and, at present, shall only consider *true Piety*. I have heard you acknowledge, that this was necessary in Gospel Ministers: But, you ought to have some Clearness that you have this Piety, before you undertake their Office. Search therefore strictly into your Case; and diligently attend to what I shall offer to your Assistance. And here,

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a certain Truth, that, *if you know nothing of your having such Exercises, as are common to God's People, you ought to conclude you have no true Piety.* For, as one must be conscious of the Thoughts, and Exercises of his own Mind; and cannot but retain a Sense of those with which he has been often and deeply impressed; so, it must be granted, that true Believers retain an affecting Sense of their solemn Thoughts and deep Exercises in religious Matters. All true Believers have affecting Exercises of Mind in Repentance for Sin, in believing and delighting in the Lord and his Ways: And, can you once suppose, they can truly repent of Sin, and be insensible of their Grief and Sorrow for, and Hatred of it? Can they ardently love God, breath after Communion with him, and Conformity to his Will, as they do, and yet perceive nothing of these Emotions of Soul? Can they have a new Knowledge, new Affections, and, in short, be new Creatures, and know nothing of these Things? *Be born again, and yet born blind! Gross Absurdity!* They will not only perceive these Things; but the Impressions of them can never be *erased* from their Minds. Yet we must own, that
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many are true Believers, who have great Doubts; not whether they have such Views and Exercifes as resemble those of God's People; but, whether theirs are of the same Nature with those of the Godly, and essentially different from the Attainments of Hypocrites. Nor can they clearly determine this, without the Assistance of God's Spirit; for, it is he that *beareth Witness with their Spirit that they are the Children of God.* (a) Therefore, while they solemnly search and try their Case, they earnestly *implore his Aid.* If you had received *counterfeit Coin*, in the Place of *pure Gold*, you would be sensible of your having it, and observe it appeared like Gold. But, if a Suspicion of its being counterfeit took Place in your Minds, you would then endeavour to have it tried, that you might find out the Certainty: Such is the Case of doubting Christians. But if you had no Money, or, only an handful of *Dung*, you could never imagine you had Gold: So unless you are clear, you have such Spiritual Exercifes, as, at least, nearly resemble those common to God's People, never imagine you are truly pious; else, you will surely deceive yourselves; and an *Error* here, may
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(a) Rom. viii. 16.

be the Occasion of your *everlasting Perdition*.

Having given you this Caution; I beseech you to be *impartial* in the Tryal of yourselves. Search not with the View to find something to support you in the Belief that your State is *right*; but, be willing to know how it is *in Reality*. If it be *wrong*, your knowing this would probably make you more earnest in seeking a Remedy; whereas, a groundless Opinion of its *Safety*, would tend to lull you in a careless Security, until past Relief. But if it be *right*; your finding satisfactory Evidences of this, would, doubtless, afford an *inexpressible Pleasure*. I intreat you also, to be *solemn* in your Examinations. Retire by yourselves, to prevent Interruption from any Amusement; and then, try to have your Minds *impressed* with a Sense of the Importance of your spiritual, and eternal Concerns. Be *importunate with God* for his Assistance; join with the Psalmist, saying, *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts; and see if there be any wicked Way in me; and lead me in the Way everlasting.* (b) I also beg you would be *frequent* in your Inquiries: Slackness
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(b) Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

here, can only flow from carnal Security: And, rest, O rest not in *Generals*; but inquire *thoroughly* into your Case. And especially, query yourselves strictly on the following Particulars, *viz.*

First, Your Knowledge of Sin, and Disposition of Mind respecting it. You are taught to own, that all are in a guilty and lost Condition by Nature; and that to save such, Jesus Christ became *a great Physician*. Many content themselves with a general Assent to these Things: But, you never have *in Earnest* applied to Christ, unless you have first had such a View of your *wretched Case* as has deeply affected you; and brought you, with *solemn Anxiety*, to seek Salvation. For, as Christ tells us, *the Whole, i. e.* those who think they are so, *have no Need of the Physician*; they will not apply to him; *but the Sick*: So, all that ever truly came to Christ, have been *anxiously labouring* under the *felt Burden* of Sin. A Sense of their Guilt and Pollution, has urged them to *flee for Refuge, to lay hold upon the Hope set before them*. Consider also, what is your *abiding Sense of Sin*; what Views of your *Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, Carnality of Affections*; are you so sensible of these,
that

that they afford Matter of constant Grief and Trouble to you? Do you hate Sin for its own Sake; and are anxious in seeking sanctifying Grace? Do you guard against all Sins, secret, as well as open? The Scriptures assure us that all the Godly are thus exercised: How are you?

Secondly, What Views you have of your own Strength and Righteousness. Do you plainly See, that without Christ strengthening you, you can do nothing that is truly Good? that you are *not sufficient even to think a good Thought*; and therefore breath after the quickening Influences of God's Spirit? Do you esteem the best you have done, or can do, as *filthy Rags*, that cannot atone for Sin, nor endure the Severity of God's Judgment; and therefore would tremble at the Thought of *being found in your own Righteousness*? Is this your Case?

Thirdly, What your Apprehensions and Dispositions are with regard to divine Things. Do you love the blessed God for his own Excellencies; and so earnestly pant after the Enjoyment of him; that neither Honours, Profits, nor Pleasurers can satisfy you; nor Ordinances give you Contentment, without the Manifestation of his Love and Grace to you? Have you had such

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such affecting Discoveries of the Way of Salvation by Grace, as quite *charmed your Souls*; and filled you with *Wonder*? Is Christ Jesus the *Pearl of great Price* in your Esteem; and, to you, *the chiefest among ten Thousand*? (c) Is his Righteousness the great *Foundation* of your Hope; and do you look for the Acceptance of your Persons and Services thro' him alone? Have you had such a *favoury Relish, and Taste* of divine Things, that they have with strong *Force*, and powerful *Energy* penetrated into the very *Center* of your Hearts; and there been so deeply fixed and rooted, that your Souls have been moulded according to them, and brought with inexpressible Pleasure to chuse an holy and heavenly Life? Do you chuse and delight in *Sobriety, Patience, Meekness, Mercy, Truth, Justice*, and the like Branches of the Christian Temper and Conduct? Do you so *delight in the Law of God after the inward Man*, that you make it your *Study all the Day*; and strive to be in every Thing conformable to this blessed Rule? Thus, the Scriptures speak of Believers *tasting that the Lord is gracious*; (d) of their having *the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ*;

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(c) Cant. v. 10. (d) 1 Pet. ii. 3.

Christ; and being changed into the same Image; (e) of their having the Law of God written in their Hearts; rejoicing in his Word; and esteeming all his Precepts, concerning all Things, to be right; and hating every false Way. (f) What is your Case?

*Fourthly, Is the Glory of God your principal End; and do the Things that most to promote this lie nearest your Hearts? Would you be willing to part with even Life itself for the Honour and Interest of the Redeemer? A Christian Spirit would lead you to this; and if you are not disposed to part with all Things, at Christ's Call, you cannot be his Disciples. (g) As you incline to the Gospel Ministry; can you say, that *filthy Lucre* is not the Ground of your desiring it; nor yet *Worldly Honour*; but that the Advancement of God's Glory, and the Salvation of immortal Souls are your principal Aim? Is this your Case? Upon the Whole, if you have other necessary Endowments, and are experimentally acquainted with these several Particulars, instead of dissuading you from the Ministry, I would,*

III. Entreat you to undertake it. But if your Case be such in Reality, I doubt not but

(e) 2 Cor. iv. 6; and iii. 18. (f) Jer. xxxi. 33. Psal. 117. 162, 128. (g) Luke xiv. 26.

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but you are ready, at Times, to shrink back and say with *Moses*, *Lord send by the Hand of him whom thou wilt send.* (b) Views of the Greatness, and Difficulty of the Work; a Sense of your own Sinfulness and Insufficiency; and the Doubts you, perhaps, at Times, have about your spiritual Estate, are likely to bring you to this. It is often the Case of God's Servants; and hence while others are *too forward*, they must be *forced* into God's *Harvest*, as the Words in *Mat.* ix. 38. translated, *that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest*, signify: I, therefore, beseech you not to decline this Work, if the Church be willing to receive you. And let me tell you, that as it is very sinful to run without a Call from God; so it is dangerous to draw back, when he has so far qualified you for, and cleared up your Way to this Office. He can easily baffle you in other Enterprizes, and send more Difficulties in your Way than you could meet with in the faithful Discharge of the Ministry. Remember what befel *Jonah*, for declining to go to *Niniveh*, when God called him. The glorifying of God should be your great Study; and all your Endeavours should center here: For this End were you
made;

(b) *Exod.* iv. 13.

made ; for this you are preserved ; and for this favoured with some valuable Endowments : And you may be assisted in judging of the Way you should take to glorify him in by the Talents he has given you, and the Door that, by his Providence, is opened for you. Consider further, that the Gospel Ministry is the *best Way*, in which you can serve God and your Generation, if you are but competently qualified. It is the *grandest Office* in which any of our degenerate Race is employed. It is a *pleasant Work*, all centering in *Christ*, all tending to *Heaven*. It has a *noble Issue*, the Glory of God, Salvation of lost Sinners, and the eternal Felicity of faithful Labourers ; for *they who turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever*. There is a *good Master* to serve ; who will support you in his Work ; and *never leave, nor forsake you*. And there is a *loud Call* for Labourers ; Multitudes are anxious after, and ready to perish for some to break the *Bread of Life*. Let these Considerations sink deep into your Hearts. And may God direct you to what is Duty.

IV. Upon the Supposition of your Undertaking the Ministry, I shall give you a few Directions relative to your Department therein ;

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therein; which I beseech you strictly to observe. And,

First, Be much in the Study of Divinity. The Apostle's Direction to *Timothy* was, *Study to shew thyself approved. Ordinarily,* we can neither be qualified for, nor suitably acquit ourselves in the Ministry without much Study. We should seek to find out acceptable Words, that are upright, even Words of Truth. (i) It is shocking to speak Nonsense or Non-truths in the Name of the Lord. But, whatever you read in a cursery Way, be very careful in the Choice of the Authors you shall more frequently peruse: For, as the Food you digest is incorporated with, and becomes a Part of the Body; so, the Authors you delight in, affect the Mind, and form the Sentiments. You are anxious to have the most wholesome Food; but should be more anxious to have the soundest Authors, especially on Divinity, your grand Study. Therefore, in the Choice of a Library, be careful to have the Approbation of the Pious and Judicious.

Secondly, Study Men as well as Books. ()* Make yourselves acquainted with the Poor and Mean, as well as with the Wise, Noble and

(*) The proper Study of Mankind is Man.—POPE.
(i) Eccl. xii. 10.

and Rich ; with one Denomination and Order of Men, as well as with another ; for your Concern is with all ; and the greater your Knowledge of Mankind is, you are the better qualified for doing them Service : For being acquainted with their various Turns of Mind, and the different Springs of their Conduct, you can the better judge of the properest Means for convincing them of their Evils, and gaining them to God. *This Study* is also a noble Mean to free you from various pernicious Prejudices, which others, thro' Ignorance, are kept under.

Thirdly, Guard against the Society of ungodly and vain Men, especially those of a sophistical Turn of Mind ; for they will try, to their utmost, to divert you from strict Godliness ; their Words will eat as doth a Canker ; and their Example infect you by little and little : So that by these Men, you would be likely to lose your Reputation, have your Usefulness marred, and be hurt in your spiritual Concerns. Let therefore Men of approved Integrity, Sobriety, and Judgment, be your Companions and Counsellors. He that walketh with wise Men shall be wise ; but, a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed. (k)

Fourthly,

(k) Prov. xiii. 20.

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Fourthly, Seek to have much of the Life of Religion; to retain the Relish of divine Things on your Souls. This will tend greatly to your Comfort, as well as Usefulness. To have this Frame of Mind, you must guard against all Sins, and even the Appearance of Evil; against being free with a vain World, and fashioning yourselves according to the Lusts thereof. You must also be frequent in the Exercise of Religious Duties; especially in living by Faith on Christ, who is our Righteousness and Strength. In such a Course does the Lord grant quickening and comforting Grace to his People: Hence, they who wait upon him, shall renew their Strength; they shall mount up with Wings as Eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. (l)

Fifthly, Strive for the Mortification of your Corruptions. If these shall have the Ascendency over you, you will be voluntary Slaves to the worst of Masters; and that, while you are urging others to cast off their Chains. The only Way of obtaining the Mastery over them is, by walking in the Spirit, it is thus ye shall not fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh. (m) Carefully guard against priding yourselves in your Attainments, Gifts, Graces, or Labours;

(l) Isa. xl. 31. (m) Gal. v. 16.

bours; lest God be provoked to *blast* you and them. Let what befel *Uzziab, Herod*, and many others for this Sin, be a Warning to you.

Sixtly, I entreat you would *strive to act as the faithful Servants of God, in whatever Duty you engage in*. Let it be your first Care to know that the particular Cause you undertake be really Duty: If it is not, how diligent soever you are in promoting it, you are not doing the Service of God. But, if it is, then beware of knowing any Man *after the Flesh*: Let neither the Pleasure, nor Displeasure of Friends or Enemies; let neither the *kindest Offers*, nor the *severest Threatenings* cause you to flinch back, or deviate, in the least, from Duty; else you are not as the Servants of Christ; and *what will you do in the End thereof?* But further, You ought to use no Means to promote even a good Cause but what are honest and honourable. If they are not honest, you are then *doing Evil that Good may come*; committing a Sin the more effectually to perform a Duty. And *will you speak, or act wickedly for a holy God!* this he abhors! (n) Or if you make use of Sly, underhand, and sneaking Methods; these shew you are
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(n) Job xiii. 7.

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ashamed of your Undertaking; whereas, a good Cause is honourable, and should be openly, and undauntedly maintained. Too many, when they suppose their Cause is good, and find they cannot promote it by fair Means, are apt to make use of the contrary; and to act, as if they thought the Goodness of their Design would vindicate the Badness of the Means, which is *popish, unmanly, and unchristian!* Finally, If you would act as the faithful Servants of God, you should be *anxious for the Success of your Labours*: For, if you are contented with barely doing the Business of your Office, without finding it answers the End, you Discover a mercenary Spirit; and shew, that your Master's Cause is not *really at Heart*. You should not be easy without seeing Sinners converted and turned to God, and Saints established and comforted by your Labours.

Seventhly, Strive to your utmost, to live in Love and Peace with your Brethren in the Ministry. You should not be easily offended at them; nor do what might prevent or hurt their Usefulness. You are joint *Labourers in the Lord's Vineyard*; and Unanimity amongst you is quite necessary for promoting your Master's Work. And, Beware

of being the guilty Cause of Divisions in the Church : Study to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, (o) knowing that every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to Desolation; and that to bite and devour one another, is the Way to be consumed one of another. (p) But,

V. Upon the Supposition that you are Strangers to the spiritual Exercises before mentioned, I must dissuade you from adventuring on so important a Work as the Ministry is; tho' there should appear no outward Impediment in your Way. For, if you have not an experimental Acquaintance with these Exercises, which are common to all God's People, you are not the faithful Servants of God; and therefore essentially disqualified for this Work. If you should undertake a Work of Importance for a Man without his Approbation; and without Skill requisite to perform it, what could you expect but his high Displeasure in the Issue? And, will God, think you, approve of your thrusting yourselves into the Ministry, without your having his Grace to fit you for, or his Call to authorize you in this Service? You cannot think God is ever at a Loss to promote the Work he designs to accomplish

(o) Eph. iv. 3. (p) Mat. xii. 25. Gal. v. 15.

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plish in his Church; since he can qualify, and send forth as many as he pleases: But, if he has not endowed you with his Grace, you may justly esteem it an Evidence, that he desires not your Service in that Way; and why should you intrude yourselves, as tho' he could not do without you, how unfit soever? This would be *presumptuous*; and *too daring*, indeed! And, what Apologies can you offer for resolving to undertake this Work, while Strangers to true Piety?

First, If you should say, 'that, as your Design in fixing on the Gospel Ministry was, that your spiritual Welfare might be promoted, judging this Calling would tend to prevent your falling into Vice, and be a noble Mean of fitting you for Heaven; you, therefore, hope the Goodness of your Intention will be a Vindication of your Conduct.' I answer, that this Design is very laudable; and did I think the Mean proper, I would discover the Disposition of a *Tyrant*, instead of the Affection of a *Father*, by trying to dissuade you. But, the Mean you propose is *improper*, since those who are destitute of true Piety, are, by the Word of God, debarred from the Gospel Ministry; and therefore your engaging in this Work, must be a going
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out of the Way of Duty, and so a very indirect Course for promoting your spiritual Welfare. I may further say, that instead of being more *fitted for Heaven*, ungodly Ministers, often, become more *hardened* and *settled on their Lees*. They are very liable to Self-Deception: For, as they are better acquainted with the holy Scriptures than Thousands; are exercised in holy Duties; serve at God's Altar; reprove other Mens Faults; and preach up Holiness both of Heart and Life. As they, mostly, are free of the *licentious Extravagances* of prophane Sinners; and are neither so vain in their Conduct, as some are; nor neglect the Duties of Religion as many do; therefore, they are apt to think their Case *safe*; tho' their Office itself obliges them to this more strict Conduct, even from secular Motives. In short, they have so many *splendid Stones*, that appear like the Christians *Jewels*, that with the Pharisees of old, they can't be persuaded they are blind also. Hence, in Times of Reformation, but few of such Clergymen have ever been brought to countenance God's Work; or to be persuaded they were wrong. How few of the *Jewish* Priests or Rabbies believed on Christ? How few of the *Popish* Clergy joined with the Protestant

stant Reformers? They were whole in their own Eyes and needed not the Physician. Besides; ungodly Ministers, either turn out *Prophane*, and are a Disgrace to their Function; or, are meer *Pretenders*, acting a Scene of Hypocrisy, and counterfeiting that Holiness to which they have no Heart-Love, in order to act in Character. So that what should be as their Meat and Drink, becomes a Kind of Slavery to them: *Unhappy Case!* Or,

Secondly, If you should say “that you see
 “the Errors and Mistakes of others so
 “clearly, and are so well resolved against them,
 “that you hope to do better than they, and
 “be useful in the Church; and therefore
 “are encouraged to undertake the Mi-
 “nistry from this Prospect of Things.”
 I answer; that some who have turned out quite prophane, have, not only, supposed they were very sound, and well fixed in their Resolutions against Vice; but have been esteemed hopeful, even by the Judicious. Besides; how sound and guarded soever you be; it cannot be supposed, you can be truly faithful, while void of saving Faith. A *faithless faithful Minister* I cannot conceive of! The most promising Genius, sweet natural Temper, and best Instructions
 from

from Men, can not bring you to such just Apprehensions of, and such a real Regard to divine Things, as you ought to have, in order to be faithful. If it were not so; where would the *Mystery of Godliness* be? or, what Necessity would there be of the *regenerating Influences of God's Spirit* in order to bring us to the true Knowledge and Love of God? Or, would there be such a Difference between the Godly and Ungodly, as that they would be *contrary*, the one to the other; as the Scriptures assert they are? Moreover, you should think that your Standing is not in yourselves, but in God, and that your counteracting his Will, is a backward Way to obtain his Assistance.

Thirdly, Should you plead “that as your
 “ Studies have been adapted to the Mini-
 “ stry, your declining it now would be
 “ much to your Disadvantage; especially,
 “ as you cannot well be supported through
 “ Studies requisite to a different Profession;
 “ and that, therefore, Necessity Urges you
 “ to undertake this Office.” I answer; that,
 whatever you follow, *Acquaintance with Di-*
vinity is a valuable Attainment; and may be
 of singular Use to you, especially, in your
 spiritual Concerns; so that, you are not to
 esteem your Studies in Divinity as *lost La-*
bour,

bour, tho' you decline the Ministry. Besides; there are various Callings to which you may turn yourselves, with, perhaps, no great Inconveniency; and Callings both honest, and more to your temporal Advantage than the Ministry in general is: Such as, the Practice of Physick, Merchandizing, &c. in which, several Branches of your Learning are quite necessary. And though some Difficulties should occur in the Way to these Callings, yet, 'tis better to encounter them, than to engage in what you are more disqualified for.

Finally, Should you plead, "that you are urged to undertake this Office, by many, both clergy and Laity; and cannot withstand their *Importunity*; since, you look on the Call of good People, especially of Ministers, to be God's Call." My Reply to this is; that if they urge you, without their having competent Satisfaction of your being truly pious, as well as otherwise qualified, they have no Warrant from God, but the contrary: And how can we esteem that God's Call, that contradicts his revealed Will? Suppose you had received as ample Authority to administer all Gospel Ordinances as the Church could give you: Should God *accept* you even while officiating;

ing; and demand of you, saying, "What
 " have you to do to declare my Statutes,
 " and act as my Messengers, since you are
 " Strangers to evangelical Holiness, the dis-
 " tinguishing Ornament of all my faithful
 " Ambassadors, and so not approved by me?"
 Do you think you could, with any Face,
 reply, saying, " Lord we were urged hereto,
 " and authorized by thy Ministers." Or,
 would this avail you any more, than *Adam's*
 Apology for eating the forbidden Fruit a-
 vailed him? *The Woman*, said he, *whom thou*
gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree,
and I did eat. You ought not to regard the
 Opinion of the *Best*, any further than it
 agrees with God's Word. Upon the
 Whole; If you regard the *divine Authority*,
 which debars you from this Office: If you
 pity *poor blind Souls*, that you are very un-
 fit to guide, being blind also: If you would
 not be a *Burden* instead of a *Service* to the
 Church of God; which requires faithful
 Men for Pastors: If your *own Happiness*
 lies near your Heart; and you would not
 add to your aggravated Crimes, that of
ruining Souls: If you regard the *solemn Ac-*
count you must give of your *Stewardship*;
 and the aggravated Condemnation ungodly
 Ministers will meet with at the last Day:
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If these Considerations have *Weight* with you; and great Weight they should have; then, desist, until you are otherwise qualified. Think, O think seriously of your present dangerous State; think, until you are deeply affected with it: Cry mightily to God for divine Influences. Seek to close with Christ, as he is offered in the Gospel. Admit him into your Hearts; who, before, had only the Notion of him in your Heads. Rest not, until you obtain pardoning and sanctifying Grace. If you then shall come to preach Christ, you will preach him, and the *Riches of his Grace experimentally and affectionately*. Which may God, of his free Mercy, grant, through Jesus Christ.

As the Remainder of this Address did not refer to the Gospel Ministry, I thought it would be improper to insert it here.

The End of the EXTRACT.

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An ADDRESS to the LAITY.

IT is not fitting, Brethren, in this Performance to pass you over in Silence; since it is for you especially that Ministers are designed. From among you they are taken; to you sent; and for you they labour. *Your Servants they are for Jesus's Sake:*
 (a) And to you *the Savour of Life or Death.* (b)

Some of you, likely, on considering the *Dignity, Usefulness, and Heavenliness* of this Office, are earnestly desirous to have your Sons or Friends employed herein. I am far from thinking such a Desire culpable, when it is upon the Supposition of their being competently qualified for the Work; but if otherwise, it must be *very sinful and base*. And to press them forward, while it is most likely that they are destitute of some principal Qualification, is yet *worse*.

I. Therefore let me caution you against being very urgent in this Matter, without great Clearness as to their Fitness.

Perhaps

(a) 1 Cor. iii. 22. (b) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

Perhaps you will say, “ that they are esteemed to have a competent Degree of all necessary Endowments, except true Piety ;” with regard to which, you own, they are suspicious. *A Pity truly*, since this is a Qualification of the utmost Importance, especially in a Minister of the Gospel. But if you say, “ that you look upon this Office as a probable Mean of obtaining the Grace of God, and therefore think it right to use your utmost Endeavours to have them introduced ;” this would be strange reasoning indeed ! The Force of it being plainly this, that you think it right to use your utmost Endeavours for bringing them into an Office which, thro’ the Want of an important Qualification, they cannot faithfully perform ; and, the unfaithful Discharge of which is the likely Way to procure eternal Ruin to themselves and others : And this you will do, on a *bare Supposition* of their being afterwards prepared for it, having no Certainty that ever they will. Could you think that such Conduct as this would be *rational* in Things of a temporal Nature ? You likewise suppose that the Ministry, which God debars them from, while un sanctified, they may safely use as a Mean of their Conversion ; *i. e.*
they

they may hope for God's Favour and Assistance while going out of his Way, and contradicting his Will. Therefore if those you would have brought into the Ministry are intent upon it themselves, let the Officers of the Church determine whether they shall be admitted or not, and lay aside your Anxiety. And since these Officers are under *solemn Obligations* to be faithful, if they should even reject your Friends, it is your Duty to acquiesce, unless there are plain *Appearances* of Partiality; I say *plain Appearances*; because from the *high Thoughts* we are too apt to have of our Friends, we are ready to suspect Partiality, barely upon their being rejected. Nor ought you only to acquiesce, but to desire and pray that these Officers may be so faithful, that a Regard to you will never engage them more easily to admit your Sons or Friends into the Ministry, which would indeed be base Partiality.

II. I advise you to be *very cautious in the Choice of a Minister for your stated Pastor*. I do not dissuade you from Ministers, because they are of this or that Side, or Party in the same Church; no, I only warn you to avoid such, of whatever Side, or Party they be, as are not likely to answer the End of the Ministry to you, but rather
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to be hurtful. Think not, that in this Warning I am going out of my Sphere; since I have the Prophets and Apostles for Examples: These often warned the People of the Danger of such Leaders; yea none was more particular herein than Christ himself; he not only warned his Hearers against *false Prophets*, but gave them Marks by which they should know them.

But some may say, that “since Ministers
“have been tried, approved of, and recom-
“mended to them by Men more learned
“and judicious, and as conscientious as
“themselves, they will therefore be more
“safe in the Choice these make than in
“their own.” This is indeed a short Way
of removing all Difficulties that might occur in such a Case; and doubtless may, sometimes, happen quite well. But, when we see those, who are esteemed as learned, judicious, and conscientious Men, bringing into the Ministry, and recommending to others, some who shew themselves very unworthy of the Office, which not seldom happens, it seems to be a Reason sufficient to guard us against acting implicitly in a Matter so *interesting and momentous*. *Presbyterians* in particular, as well as some other Denominations of Christians, not only *may*,
but

but are *required* to chuse their own Ministers ; and wou'd justly think it hard to be denied this Privilege, when they have an Opportunity of suiting themselves in one out of several Candidates supposed to be offered to them. Why then, should they *themselves give up a Privilege*, which they wou'd not suffer to be taken from them by *Force* ? To me it seems almost as reasonable, that I should yield, with the *Papists*, to receive, without Hesitation, whatever *Doctrines* the Church enjoyns, 'as, that I should agree chearfully to receive whatever *spiritual Guide* it may think proper to recommend, or appoint for me. But my intended Brevity will not allow me to insist. The Scriptures, and Reason both, do undoubtedly allow you to chuse your spiritual Guides ; and a rational Choice you cannot make, without inquiring into, and obtaining Satisfaction with regard to their Fitness. A few Considerations will evince that you ought to be very cautious herein. And,

First, Consider the important Consequences of the Ministry with regard to yourselves : Of these I have already spoken, and shall only now add, that such *affecting Consequences* should engage you to act with, at least, as great Caution as you would do
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in temporal Affairs that *nearly concern you*. Were you in Danger by *Enemies*, you would not chuse a *Lazy sleepy Drone* for a Watchman, lest, thro' his Negligence, your Enemies should surprize and destroy you. Your spiritual Enemies are numerous, subtile, and malicious: Ministers are your spiritual Watchmen; but if they are incapable, or negligent they have little more than the Name. The Scripture stiles them *dumb Dogs that cannot bark*; and represents them as *lazy, and loving to slumber*; (c) either not observing the Danger, or not giving proper Warning. If your natural Life is threatened by a dangerous Disease, you are anxious to obtain the Aid of the most Skilful Physician, and dread an *empiric* as much as the Disease itself: Your Souls Diseases are most Dangerous. Ministers are spiritual Physicians; but if they are unskilful, and unfaithful, they may be the Instruments of your *eternal Death*! If you are afraid of *missing the Way*, when it is made *intricate and perplexed* by Means of numberless by Paths, and crossing Roads, you desire an *honest Guide*, who is himself well acquainted in the Parts, and has often traveled the same Journey. Now Counterfeit

(c) Isa. lvi. 10.

feit Graces, Self-Flattery, Satan's Temptations, and the Deceitfulness of a depraved Heart, and blind Mind, make the *Road to Heaven* intricate: Ministers are stiled, and appointed to be *Guides*: They need, therefore, to be themselves exercised unto Godliness: But if they are not, they are properly stiled *blind Leaders*, and cannot miss falling into the dreadful Ditch of eternal Misery, together with all those who blindly follow their Example. An unfaithful Minister will be likely, thro' his Carelessness, to suffer you quietly to sleep on in your *carnal Security*; or will buoy you up, when beginning to awake, with such a false Hope, as will be *torn* from you by the *King of Terrors*, and leave you to sink in *endless Despair*. He will be likely to corrupt your Minds and Manners by his soothing Doctrine, and ill Example; or, else, be a Burden instead of a Relief to you, by untender, oppressive, and unjust Proceedings. Ought you not then to be very careful in your Choice?

If we consider further the *Education*, the apparent *Temper and Conduct* of too many of the Students and Clergy thro' the *British* Dominions, where we are most concerned, together with the *strong Propensity* that
many

many have to be Ministers in the Church, and the too *great Laxness* used in the Admission of Candidates, we cannot but think there must be many unfaithful Ministers, and consequently that People should be very cautious in their Choice.

Great Care should, doubtless, be taken of any, but especially of those who are designed for so great and eminent an Employment as that of the Gospel Ministry. It was happy for *Timothy*, that in his Minority he had excellent Tutors; and it was his honourable Character, that, *from a Child, he had known the holy Scriptures, (d)* and so was early qualified for Service in the Church. But, when we observe the little Care that is taken by many Parents and Tutors, even of those who are designed for the Ministry, and the unchristian Licence that is allowed them, we cannot, in an ordinary Way, expect to see much of the Religion of the *blessed Jesus* in their Deportment. One, *when a Child, should be trained up in the Way he should go, it we would have him, when old, not to depart from it: (e)* But, if a *Child is left to himself, he will, by his irregular Conduct, bring his Tutors to*

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Shame.

(d) 2 Tim. iii. 15. (e) Prov. xxii. 6.

Shame. (f) The Impiety of Ministers, as well as of others, has often had its Foundation laid in careless Education in their Childhood and Youth. The *dissolute Lives* of too many Youths designed for the Ministry has likewise a dark Aspect on the Church of Christ; nor can we expect they will be truly faithful in this Office without plain Evidences of their being thoroughly reformed. Unedifying, trifling, nay loose Conversation, and such as borders on profane; an *Affectation of modern Politeness* that laughs at conscientious Strictness, and the Fear of God, that sneers at the very Names of Holiness, Grace, and Faith, and burlesques Conversion, Regeneration, and solemn Devotion; a light, a frothy, and foppish Carriage, an Air of Wantonness, and absolute Unconcernedness, are some of the *Characteristics* of too many Students intending the Ministry. They form their Taste by Novels and Play Books, rather than by the sacred Scriptures, which they comparatively neglect. Vain Company is their Choice: Cards and Dice, Dancing, merry Frolicks, Drinking largely, and Fighting, if provoked, are but the *innocent Amusements* of their spare Hours, till Pride, Ostentation, or party

(f) Prov. xxix. 15.

ty Zeal, or their Friends, push them on to exercise their *boasted* Talents in the Ministry. From such as these, the Church can rationally expect no valuable Service, unless divine Grace work a *mighty Change* in them, as has sometimes been the happy Case, even after a Course of Learning, with a View to the sacred Office. But instead of affording Evidences of such a Change, the Case of Numbers is too evidently the reverse: For, tho' a Desire of obtaining a more easy Admission, with a Conviction that there should be, at least, a *seeming Consistency* between their *Character and Practices*, cannot but induce them to make some Reformation; yet this is often nothing more, than the laying aside their more *openly vicious Practices*, committing some *Forms of Devotion* to Memory, learning to *censure* certain Doctrines and Modes of Worship, *declaiming* against, and *sneering* at those as *Enthusiasts and Hypocrites*, who discover much Strictness and Seriousness in Conversation. In these and such like Things, does their Reformation consist, without any hopeful Evidences of true Conversion to God. A Reformation this, that scarcely deserves the *Name*; and is no ways sufficient to recommend them to the Service of the Church
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in the Ministry. Now, as no Office is more contrary to a corrupt Nature than this, nor more *laborious*, if it is rightly discharged; and as no Men are more exposed to the *Hatred*, and *Contempt* of the World, than faithful Ministers, it may seem Strange to some that such as we have been describing should desire this Calling. Some are even apt to imagine that they must be excited hereto by the good Spirit of God. *A groundless Surmise indeed*; which seems to flow from an Ignorance of what we are next to observe, *viz.* That there is a strong Inclination in Men to Offices that are esteemed sacred. For it is indisputable, that many, of a very vicious Temper and Conduct, have, in all Ages, been very eager to engage in the Ministry, more especially in Times of Backsliding and Decay of Religion. Yea, in all Nations, Men have ever been very fond of Religious Offices. Even among the Heathens, Multitudes of both Sexes ministred in their Temples: Kings and Emperors have gloried in the Title of Arch-Priest. The sacred Pages inform us, that the Jews were so *fond of Phropheying*, that their *false and lying Prophets* were often *far more numerous* than the *true*. In some Nations
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of Christendom, at this Day, there are *many* under an ecclesiastical Character; and approved by the civil Government too, whose Maintenance is so scanty, that they are obliged either to *labour* or *beg* for a Support. And with regard to the *British Dominions*; altho' they contain Numbers of Ministers, who are both *learned* and *pious*, and who, we doubt not, undertook the Office from a Desire of promoting the *Mediator's Kingdom*; and would persevere therein thro' the greatest *Poverty* and *Persecution*: Yet, a *small* Acquaintance with the Capacities, the Doctrines, and Conduct of the Clergy thro' these Dominions, cannot fail to convince the Judicious, that many of them are *very unfit* for the Office. But the Hope of a *rich Benefice* tempts the *Covetous*; the Design of making it an easy and careless Life,---the *Indolent* and *Lazy*; and the general *Respect* and *Deference* that is paid to the Clergy, allure the *proud* into this Office. Thus the *Ambitious*, the *Slothful*, and the *Worldling*, all grasp at the Gospel Ministry, because they can pervert it to subserve the Lust of the Flesh,---and of the Eye, and the Pride of Life.

But, tho' *painted Hypocrites* may, and no doubt, at Times, do deceive even Ministers

nisters who are *pious* and *strict*, and so get into the Office; yet, if *due Care* were taken in the Admission of Candidates, it would seem, that Persons of the aforesaid *dissolute* Character would never *presume* to offer themselves to Tryal for the Ministry; or that, if they did, they would be rejected. But we plainly see such are admitted; and from their Credentials we learn, that they are judged *well qualified* to preach the everlasting Gospel; and therefore are *strongly* recommended to the Church. And to what can this be attributed, but partly to the *lax Methods* of Admission used by even some pious Ministers, and the *unconscientious Procedure* of ungodly Ones, who are willing to dispence with the best Rules, in order to *favour* those who are *Brethren* in Sentiments, Disposition, and Practice? But, as we suppose it will be allowed, that Ordination by Men cannot *alter* the Dispositions of such; so, unless God shall *graciously change their Hearts*, we can expect nothing else from them, but what we see common with too many Clergymen at this Day, *viz.* That they will lay aside, or, at most, but *lightly* touch on the *Doctrines of Grace*; that the Strain of their Discourses will be *legal*, having in them little of Christ, who is the
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Substance of the Gospel; that their Life will be *scarcely moral*: They will *relax* the Reins of Discipline, and *croud* Persons of *all Stamps* into the Church; while they will *brow-beat* such as from Conscience complain of their Conduct.

Upon the Whole it appears, you need to be *very cautious* in the Choice of a Minister for your stated Pastor. Particularly, you should endeavour to obtain Satisfaction as to his *Abilities* for the Ministry; and whether he is *suitable* for you; lest you get a *Novice* instead of an *able* Minister of the New Testament. You should observe his Fruits; for by these you shall know him. (g) Therefore take strict Notice of his Doctrine; whether it be of a *legal* or *evangelical* Strain; whether he aims at the *Heart*, or is only *intent* on *pleasing the Ear*; whether it tends to excite the Soul to *Activity* in Religion, or to lull it in Security; and finally, whether it tends to *bumble* you, or nourishes Pride and Conceit of Self-Sufficiency. To hear only a few *selected* Discourses, is not enough for this Purpose. You should also mark his Practice, and see whether it be a Transcript of his Doctrinal Instructions, and Exhortations; whether his

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(g) Mat. vii. 20.

Conversation be strict, uniform, and aiming at Edification; and this, not by Fits, but habitually, on every proper Occasion; so that he appear to be an upright and conscientious Man. But after all; since you may be imposed upon, be the more earnest in seeking to the Lord for faithful Ministers, who will naturally care for your Good, and feed you with Knowledge, and Understanding.

III. *Receive and treat such Ministers, as act in Character, as the Servants and Ambassadors of God.* Hear what Christ says to his Disciples on this Head. *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me.* (b) He looks on the Treatment given to his Ministers, as given to himself. They must be *very* unreasonable, who own that God gives *peculiar* Qualifications to his Ministers; requires them to give themselves *wholly* to the Work of reconciling Men to himself, and assisting them in the Way to Glory; and yet suppose, that he leaves Mankind at *Liberty* to treat them as they Please, and will take little Account of their Conduct towards them. The Scriptures assure us, that the Disregard paid them has brought Judgments on Families,

(b) Mat. x. 40. Luke x. 16.

milies, Cities, and Nations. I would not ask *Indulgence* to the *Unworthy*; but so long as Ministers behave properly, endeavouring *carefully* to perform the Duties they owe you, tho' in Weakness, you are obliged to receive and treat them in a Way becoming their exalted Character; which requires,

First, That you honour and esteem them; not barely as Gentlemen, but as *Ministers and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, and entertain them, and their Ministrations accordingly; and esteem them very highly in Love for their Work's Sake. (i) The Elders, that rule well, should be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine. (k)

Secondly, It requires, that you be aware of rashly harbouring Prejudices against them, and taking up evil Reports. Some indeed are backward, and even afraid of appearing against a Minister, were he ever so vicious; as if they were sway'd by the vulgar popish Notion, that such, as do, expose themselves to the Judgments of God. This Shiness has bad Effects; for hereby evil Men are suffered to continue in the Ministry, to the Disgrace of the Office, and the Hurt of precious Souls. But, on the

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(i) 1 Thes. v. 13. (k) 1 Tim. v. 17.

other Hand, some are *too ready* to entertain Surmises, and countenance evil Reports of them, without sufficient Grounds. This is base, when it respects only our Neighbour in common; but much worse, when it respects Ministers of the Gospel; for it tends to mar our profiting under them, and hinders our assisting them: The Contagion will spread to the Hurt of others; and, at last, to the sinking of their Spirits, and discouraging them in their Work. *Against an Elder*, therefore, we should not receive an Accusation, but before two or three Witnesses. (1) We should exercise that Charity towards him we would to others, and spread a Mantle of Love over those Weaknesses we perceive in him, when we see he is labouring to be faithful for God.

Thirdly, If you would receive and treat Ministers as you ought, you should allow them to treat you with all *Plainness and Faithfulness*. Quarrel not with them because they honestly and plainly, tho' as you may sometimes think roughly, warn the *Secure*, and detect the *Self-deceived*. Could you desire them to *perjure themselves*, and ruin their *own Souls*, and yours *too*, by excessive Lenity? Would it not be better to

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(1) 1 Tim. v. 19.

risk your Displeasure, by endeavouring to save you from Ruin by plain Dealing? If they should gratify your carnal Desire, and prophesy *smooth Things*, lulling you asleep in your Sins, you might then, indeed, dream away your Life in Security, unattentive to your *eternal Concerns*: But oh! *what would you do in the End thereof?* (m) Such *Curtisy* will at last appear, not only, *Treachery*, but the most inhumane *Cruelty* to themselves and you; whilst it is a Violation of their Ties to Almighty God. You ought therefore to love faithful Dealing, and Ministers for using it; and acting so as to convince you, that *they seek not yours but you*; to receive their Reproofs, Instructions, and Admonitions with Love; and the more plain and faithful they are, to regard them the more.

Fourthly, If you would treat them as Gospel Ministers, you ought *cheerfully to submit to the Exercise of Church-Discipline by them*. Altho' they have no Right to *lord it over God's Heritage*, and exercise a *Spiritual Tyranny* over Men's Consciences, by arbitrary Impositions; yet, as Officers of Christ, they are empowered to maintain a proper Decorum in his House, by putting
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(m) Jer. v. 31.

in Execution the Rules of Discipline he has appointed. *What they thus bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and what they thus loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.* (n) God will ratify their scriptural Proceedings; and those who resist, resist the *Ordinance of God.* Hearken then to the Apostle's Exhortations, *To obey them who have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your Souls, as they who must give Account.* (o) And to know them who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. (p) If any of you, by your Offences, expose yourselves to the Censure of the Church; you ought *readily* to make such Acknowledgements as the Nature of your Crimes demands, and not imagine that Church Officers are for gratifying a *morose Humour*, by peremptorily requiring your Compliance. Honest Ministers do often with *Grief* of Heart use the Rod of Discipline towards Offenders. And were you *rightly* sensible of the Grief with which they do it, it might be hoped you would rather be displeas'd with yourselves, for laying such a *Burthen* upon them, than grumble at their supposed Severity.

Fifthly, If you would receive and treat Ministers agreeable to their Character, you should

(n) Mat. xviii. 18. (o) Heb. xiii. 17. (p) 1 Thes. v. 12.

should be very careful to improve under them. They come in God's Name, and carry his Message. The very Design of their Office is to promote your *eternal Welfare*. You ought therefore *diligently* to attend on their Ministry. The Man that Wisdom stiles *blessed*, is he that beareth her, watching daily at her Gates, waiting at the Posts of her Doors. (q) How can Men expect Benefit by the Means of Salvation, while they neglect them, by either Staying at home, or spending in *idle Visits* the Time they should employ in publick Worship? But don't think that your Attendance is *all* that is required. Remember our Lord commands you to *take heed how you hear*. (r) See then that you hear with *Knowledge, Faith, Love,* and *particular Application to yourselves*. Seek the Law at the Mouths of your Ministers. Receive the Truth from them, *not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth the Word of God*. (s) Consult with them about your spiritual Affairs. Ask their Direction; and that they may give it with *Judgment*, you ought to be free in opening your Case, as far as Prudence will admit. How can they otherwise give Directions suitable to your Case? Be much in *Self-Examination*; comparing

(q) Prov. viii. 34. (r) Luke viii. 18. (s) 1 Thes. ii. 13.

paring yourselves with the Word of God, in order to know whether you have the Truth of Grace, or are only building on the Sand, and contenting yourselves with a *Name to live*, while you are *spiritually dead*. Oh! see that you *neglect* not *so great Salvation*; since, if you do, you cannot escape; but your Case at last must be more *intolerable* than that of *Tyre*, and *Sidon*, *Sodom*, and *Gomorrab*. Consider that Men must answer for the Neglect of the Sermons they *might* have heard, as well as for the *Misimprovement* of those they did hear. A *dreadful Doom* is denounced against those Cities which would not receive, nor hear the Disciples of Christ; (t) as well as against those who had seen his mighty Works, but repented not. (u) Woe to careless impenitent Sinners, when the *painful Labours*, *Watchings*, *Fastings*, *Prayers*, *Intreaties*, and *Tears* of Ministers shall witness against them in the *great Day of God's Wrath*! You that are Strangers to God may *shift* the Matter a while, put his Word far from you, and make yourselves easy, *doting* upon the Honours, *grasping* at the Profits of this Life, and *indulging* yourselves in the Pleasures of Sense; *quite satisfied* with the Applause of *dying*
Mor-

(t) Mark vi. 11. (u) Mat. xi. 20---25.

Mortals ! but think, O think seriously ! what will become of you, when your Heart-Strings shall break, and your Eyes shall be closed in Death, and you shall take an everlasting Farewel of all these glittering Vanities. Oh ! what---when you hear the Sound of the last Trumpet, and the Voice of the Son of God, calling you out of your Graves ! When you see the Heavens rending, Christ with his glorious Retinue appearing ; the Throne set, and you placed before him whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire ; (v) and from whose Face the Earth and the Heavens shall flee away ! (w) When you feel the Earth quaking under you, and ready to open its Jaws to swallow you up ! or how would you bear to hear that awful, but just, Sentence pronounced by that Judge, from whose Bar there is no Appeal, depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. (x) Doubtless, your stout Hearts would fail, your Knees smite against each other, and you would gnash your Teeth with bitter Anguish, and Vexation of Spirit. The Scriptures assure you, that such Things are acoming ; and if you believe the Declaration of a faithful God, must you not think it is high time to awake out

(v) Rev. i. 14. (w) Rev. xx. 11. (x) Mat. 25.

out of Sleep? Awake then out of your *Letbargy*: Hearken, while it is yet called *TO-DAY*, for *the Night cometh wherein no Man can Work*. Oh! improve the *fair Opportunities of Life, Health, and Gospel Ordinances!* The Seasons wherein Conscience is *urging* upon you the Importance of Spiritual Things; and Ministers of the Gospel *pleading* with you, Sermon after Sermon, to *be reconciled to God*; while the Lord *himself*, not only by his Word, but likewise by his Providences and Spirit, is *intreating* you; all the Faithful in Christ Jesus praying for you; and joining with the Spirit, saying, Come and take of the Waters of Life freely: And while Jesus, who shed his *precious Blood to wash us from our Sins*, in order to encourage you, is saying, *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. These are *precious Seasons*, but they will *soon* be over. They are *flying apace*: The Door of Mercy will e'er long be shut: And if you shall be shut out, there will *remain no more Sacrifice for Sin*; but a certain *fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation!* Stop, then, your Course, ye *prophane Sinners?* Give up with your *ungodly Practices*, though as dear as a right Hand, right Eye, or Foot; for you will buy them *too dear*, by parting with
Heaven,

Heaven, and sinking down to eternal Torments. Let the *Vain* become *solemn*, and the *Careless earnest* Inquirers *what they shall do to be saved*. Let *worldly-wise Men* drop their eager Pursuit of Wealth, which perishes with the using, and seek the true and lasting Treasures of Grace and Glory. In fine, Let unconverted Sinners of all Ranks awake; Oh! consider your Ways, and be wise; Give the most earnest Heed to a preached Gospel: Improve the flying Moments. Apply to a *crucified Redeemer*: Cry *mightily* to God; and give him no Rest, until you obtain good Grounds to hope that you are accepted thro' his Son.

And you, who have Reason to believe that you are Christians *indeed*, see that you make it your Concern to grow up under the Ministry, as *fed Calves of the Stall*. Frequently enquire, what Progress you are making in the *divine Life*. Walk *circumspectly*; and manifest the *Sincerity* of your Hearts by the *Holiness* of your Lives. You have the Scriptures for a Directory, and the Example of Christ for a Pattern of your Obedience; and *he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*.

(y) Let your Light so shine before Men, that
 T they

(y) 1 John ii. 6.

they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. The Night of Sin and Sorrow is far spent; the Day of Glory is near you; walk therefore as Children of the Light, and Expectants of Heaven.

Sixthly, If you would treat Gospel Ministers as you ought, you should take care to afford them a sufficient Maintenance. Your Duty on this Head is well expressed by the Reverend Mr. DAVIS, late President of the College of *New-Jersey*, in a Sermon preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. *John Todd*. “ A covetous and rapacious
 “ Disposition, says he, in a Minister of Je-
 “ sus, whose *Kingdom is not of this World*,
 “ is peculiarly unbecoming and *odious*: Nor
 “ are his People obliged to gratify his *in-*
 “ *tiabile* Greediness after Riches, or to heap
 “ upon him the *superfluous* Luxuries of Life.
 “ But he has a Right to a competent Main-
 “ tenance for himself and Family, from
 “ those who enjoy his Labours-----Mini-
 “ sters are under the Obligations common
 “ to all, to provide for themselves and their
 “ House-hold; and if they neglect it, *they*
 “ *have denied the Faith, and are worse than*
 “ *Infidels*----They generally sustain the ten-
 “ der Names of *Husband* and *Father*; and
 “ they

“ they are not hardened against the affecti-
“ onate Anxieties of those Relations. Na-
“ ture and Religion oblige them to Educate
“ their *Children*, and to raise them above
“ the Hardships and Temptations of ex-
“ treme Poverty. They are but Mortals ;
“ nay, they belong to a languishing, dying
“ Fraternity ; who, if they are *industrious*
“ and *indefatigable* in the Labours of their
“ Function, are not seldom *immaturely pres-*
“ *sed* into the Grave under the Burden of
“ them. And I may appeal to such of you,
“ as know any thing of the Tenderness
“ of *parental* or *conjugal* Affection, what a-
“ cute *Anxieties* must distress their Minds,
“ to *leave* their dear Relicts, and tender
“ *Offspring*, helpless, and forlorn to the
“ wide World, to all the Extremities of
“ *remediless abject* Poverty. Ministers must
“ also be *Lovers of Hospitality*, according
“ to the apostolic Character of a *Bishop* ;
“ and afford a generous and kind *Entertain-*
“ *ment* to Friends, and Strangers that visit
“ them---But how, my Brethren, can they
“ be capable of these Things, but by the
“ generous *Contributions* of their People ?
“ They *cannot* take the *usual and necessary*
“ *Measures* to provide for themselves, with-
“ out disqualifying themselves, for the Ex-
“ ercise

“ exercise of their Office, and neglecting your
 “ Souls. All their *Abilities* are *sacred* to
 “ God and his Church: And the *Time*
 “ and *Strength* which you employ in tem-
 “ poral Pursuits, they are obliged to lay out
 “ in *hard* Studies for your Good, or in
 “ *painful* Labours for their Ministry in a
 “ more publick Manner. And if you
 “ suffer them to be *disturbed* in their Pre-
 “ parations by distracting secular Cares and
 “ Incumbrances, their Discourses will una-
 “ voidably be *indigested*, *shallow*, and *inju-*
 “ *dicious*, and less adapted to your Edifica-
 “ tion; and consequently the *Disadvantage* in
 “ the Issue will fall upon yourselves---Be-
 “ sides; their *Education*, Studies, and *Em-*
 “ *ployment* have given their Minds such a
 “ Turn to other Things, that they are not
 “ *capable* of managing their worldly Affairs
 “ with the *same Dexterity* with those that
 “ have always been *habituated* to them.
 “ Since then, my Brethren, for *your Sakes*,
 “ they deny themselves the Advantage of
 “ secular Pursuits, it is highly reasonable
 “ you should make a *sufficient Provision* for
 “ them. Nay, this is a Matter of *Justice*
 “ and *natural Equity*, so the *Apostle* has
 “ stated it. *Who goeth a Warfare at any*
 “ *Time at his own Charges? Who planteth a*
 “ *Vineyard*

“ *Vineyard and eateth not of the Fruit there-*
 “ *of? Or, who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not*
 “ *of the Milk of the Flock? Whence it is e-*
 “ *vident, that a Minister has as good a*
 “ *Right to a Maintenance from his People,*
 “ *as a Soldier to Wages from his King, for*
 “ *whom he fights; or the Keeper of a*
 “ *Vineyard to eat of the Fruit of it; or a*
 “ *Shepherd to the Milk of his Flock. And*
 “ *if they are denied this Right, they are*
 “ *more hardly used than Oxen, according to*
 “ *the Law of Moses; for there we have*
 “ *this Prohibition, thou shalt not muzzle the*
 “ *Mouth of the Ox, which treadeth out the*
 “ *Corn; which, the Apostle informs us, was*
 “ *not given for the Sake of Oxen, (z) but to*
 “ *teach this Moral, which I am now incul-*
 “ *cating. This is also a Minister’s Right,*
 “ *according to the Law of Retaliation, or*
 “ *the Rule of Proportion; for if we have*
 “ *sown unto you spiritual Things, saith the*
 “ *Apostle, is it a GREAT THING, as some*
 “ *narrow Souls may account it, if we reap*
 “ *your carnal Things? Nay, this Duty you*
 “ *are obliged to perform by the Authority*
 “ *of God himself; and therefore to incul-*
 “ *cate it, is not to make an avaricious De-*
 “ *mand upon you, in our own Names; but to*
 “ *instruct*

(z) 1 Cor. ix. 9.

“ instruct you in a Matter you should make
 “ Conscience of: For as, according to the
 “ Law of Moses, *they who ministred about*
 “ *holy Things, lived of the Things of the Tem-*
 “ *ple; and they who waited at the Altar were*
 “ *Partakers with the Altar, in the Offerings*
 “ *of the People; even so saith St. Paul,*
 “ *bath the Lord himself ordained, that they*
 “ *who preach the Gospel should live of the Gos-*
 “ *pel: (a) And no Wonder; for the Work-*
 “ *man is wortby of his Meat; and the La-*
 “ *bourer of his Reward. (b) You are there-*
 “ *fore, my Brethren, to look upon your-*
 “ *selves as bound by REASON, by GRATI-*
 “ *TUDE, by NATURAL EQUITY, and JU-*
 “ *STICE, and by the exprefs AUTHORITY*
 “ *of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to make a*
 “ *competent Provision for your Minister of*
 “ *the good Things of this Life; that he*
 “ *may attend upon the Lord without Distraction,*
 “ *and give himself wholly to the great Work*
 “ *of the Ministry among you. And in so*
 “ *doing, you are not to think you are per-*
 “ *forming a Work of Supererogation, or a*
 “ *Matter of Generosity, or giving Alms*
 “ *to a Beggar; but, that you are discharg-*
 “ *ing a Duty binding upon your Conscience to-*
 “ *wards*

(a) 1. Cor. ix. 14. (b) Mat. x. 10.

“wards him that labours among you in the
“Lord.”

I need scarcely subjoin to what has already been said, that it argues a very mean, and unchristian Disposition, when People look upon it as a Burthen to support their Ministers. They think they are *quite clear*, when they have given no Promise to do it; or when the civil Law will not *oblige* them; and seem *well pleased*, because they can attend upon the Ordinances, and *serve God with what costs them Nothing*.

IV. Be frequent and importunate in Prayer to God, that he would Graciously countenance Gospel Ministers and their Labours. Consider how difficult and important their Work is; how much you are interested in it; and how vain and insignificant their best Labours will be, without a divine Blessing upon them. Let these Considerations excite you to pray that they may be *amply furnished* with all needed Gifts and Graces; that they may be *faithful* in their Office, and *wise to win Souls*; that they may be *upright* in their private Walk, giving no *just Cause of Offence* to any; and that the Lord would *pour out his Spirit from on high*; put *Life* into his Ministers, and Ordinances, for the
Con-

Conversion of Sinners, and the *Joy and Edification* of Saints. And when you Address our Lord and Master, remember, Oh! remember me in Particular; and pray that he would forgive my *Imperfections* in the Ministry, my *Imperfections* in this Performance respecting the Ministry, and *all my Iniquities*; that he would *hold me by the Hand*, and *strengthen* me for serving him *faithfully*; and that rather than I should become a *publick Disgrace* to his Cause, my Name may be *blotted out* of the Annals of Time, and I be *numbered with the Dead*. Pray also, that when I shall have finished my *wearry Pilgrimage*, I may obtain a Place in the *New Jerusalem* above, where I may behold our GLORIOUS REDEEMER, altho' at the *Feet of his Saints*.

F I N I S.

☞ The AUTHOR desires that, in Page 65, Lines seventh and eighth, instead of these Words, [*Their Brethren in Office are doubtless their proper Judges,*] the following may be read, viz. *Whatever Objections some offer against Lay-men's sitting as Judges of the Doctrines of Ministers, all must acknowledge that Ministers themselves are proper Judges of their Brethren in Office, and ought to take strict Cognizance of both their Doctrine and Practice.*