

# The Temple Repaired:

*Restoring Preachers and*  
*Preaching to Christ's CHURCHES*



HERCULES COLLINS (D. 1702)

# THE TEMPLE REPAIRED

*An essay to revive the long-neglected ordinances of exercising the spiritual gift of prophecy for the edification of the churches; and of ordaining ministers duly qualified, with proper directions as to study and preaching, for such as are inclined to the ministry*

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# THE TEMPLE REPAIRED

*“But exhort one another daily.”—Hebrews 3:13*

*“Ye ought to be teachers [of others].”—Hebrews 5:12*

*“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister  
the same one to another.”—1 Peter 4:10*

*“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and  
exhortation, and comfort.”—1 Corinthians 14:3*

*“But covet earnestly the best gifts.”—1 Corinthians 12:31*

*“Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”  
—1 Corinthians 14:1*

*“Would...all the LORD’s people were prophets, and that the LORD  
would put his spirit upon them.”—Numbers 11:29*

## The Dedication

*To the churches of Christ, with all their pastors and teachers, and  
others who have a promising gift for the edifying the church, grace  
and gifts be multiplied upon you through the knowledge of God and  
our Savior Jesus Christ.*

Dearly Beloved,

The substance of the matter contained in this book was delivered at a meeting designed for the promoting spiritual gifts in the churches of Christ, but since that I have seen cause to make some considerable additions to what was then preached. There are three principal things which induced me to publish these my poor labors in this sad and careless day, wherein there is so little provision made in the churches of Christ for a future ministry. The first thing is this: that the churches

which are the schools of Christ may be stirred up to see what spiritual gifts God has given them and put them into their proper exercise. Secondly, that all pastors and teachers would look upon it as their duty to instruct those members who are most capable into the knowledge of gospel mysteries, and (as Paul said to Timothy) commit the same to faithful men, who may be able to teach others also (2Ti 2:2). My third end in making this public is that the members of churches, especially those to whom God has given a good degree of spiritual knowledge, would not always content themselves to be only hearers, but to stir up those gifts in an humble manner, and put them in use for the churches' edification.

And in order to a regular proceeding and managing that work, I have given some few plain directions in this book. And let such seriously consider the Apostle Paul's reproof to the church of the Hebrews, who tells them they had need be taught again the first principles of the oracles of God, even those very persons who for the time ought to have been teachers of others.

Please hear what the late Reverend Dr. Owen<sup>1</sup> says on this passage in his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*:<sup>2</sup>

The apostle does not only say that they had enjoyed such a time and season of instruction as they might have been able to instruct others, but this he declares as their duty: Ye ought to have been teachers of others, that is, public teachers in the church. For this word is not anywhere used [says the doctor] but for a public teacher, preacher, or instructor of disciples in the knowledge of God. And this word *teachers*<sup>3</sup> is the word whereby the writers of the New Testament express *Rabbi*, which was the usual name of the public teachers of the law among the Jews. For the better understanding of this Scripture, we must consider the state and condition of the church in those days. Every church was then a seminary, wherein not only provision was made for the preaching of the gospel in itself, but for the calling, gathering, and teaching of other churches also. When therefore a church was first planted

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<sup>1</sup> **John Owen** (1616-1683) – Congregational theologian; called the “Prince of the Puritans.”

<sup>2</sup> The following quotations are Collins' paraphrase of John Owen's thoughts on Hebrews 5:12-14 from *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

<sup>3</sup> Greek: *didaskaloi* (teachers).

by the ministry of the apostles, it was for a while continued under their immediate care and inspection, and then usually committed by them to the ministry of some evangelist, who instructed the churches more in the mysteries of religion. And in this state did they continue until some were found among themselves to be made overseers and instructors of the rest; and upon their decease, others were to be called and chosen from among themselves to the same work by the church. And this course continued inviolable till the public school at Alexandria, which became a precedent to other places for a mixed learning of philosophy and religion, which after a while corrupted both, and at length the whole church itself. And (he says) out of the churches went those who were made use of ordinarily in the propagation of the gospel. Hence it was that when the church of the Hebrews [in Jerusalem] was persecuted not long after its first planting, the members of it went up and down preaching the Word with great success to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles.

From whence the doctor observes these two things: 1. That “churches are the schools of Christ, wherein His disciples are trained up unto perfection, every one according to the measure appointed for them and their usefulness in the church.” 2. He observes that

It is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to endeavor their hearers’ and members’ increasing in knowledge, until they also are able to instruct others according to their calls and opportunities. Some, it may be, are apt to fear their hearers should know too much.

Many corrupt lusts and affections may prompt them hereunto, which are all resolved into self, with respect to profit and reputation. And this has proceeded so far in the degeneracy of the Church of Rome as to produce the commendation of blind obedience and ignorance as the mother of devotion. And it is well if no others are tainted with the same disease.

Nay, even good men had need to watch against discomposures of mind, when they find some like David, wiser than their teachers in the things of God. Joshua himself was earnest with Moses to forbid Eldad’s and Medad’s prophesying in the camp, out of no good frame, as appears by the reply of Moses, “Enviest

thou for my sake?"; and this occasioned the prayer of the holy man, "Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Num 11:29).<sup>4</sup>

And the doctor closes up all with this saying:

To a faithful minister there is no greater crown or cause of rejoicing than when he can be instrumental to carry any of his hearers unto perfection, as that their gifts and abilities may outstrip his own, especially if they are accompanied with humility and holiness.

Please see further what he says upon the third chapter of the Hebrews and the thirteenth verse, and the tenth chapter and the 24th and 25th verses.

It is the duty of members to exhort, entreat, beseech, and comfort one another. The persons concerned in the exhortation are any of you, any among you, any of your society that is engaged in the same profession with you and are partakers of the same privileges, any of you believing Hebrews. And here the apostle extends his direction to mutual watchfulness, and exhortation unto all, even unto the lowest of the church. This duty of exhortation is incumbent on some by virtue of especial office, and the other by virtue of especial love; and this is that which is mutual among believers, founded in their common interest. There are several duties belonging to this head of exhortation, informing those who are ignorant of the truth. So dealt Aquila and Priscilla with Apollos, etc.

And on the tenth chapter, speaking of the saints exhorting one another: "These duties," he says, "are now generally lost among us, and with them is the glory of the Christian religion departed." And the doctor, to show how he was affected with the decay of these duties, mentions this over and over. "This was the practice of the Christians of old, but is now generally lost, with most of the principles of practical obedience." And again he adds to the same purpose, "This duty is never the more inconsiderable because the practice of it is almost gone out of the world."

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<sup>4</sup> Owen, 85.

Unto this I shall add what another worthy person says upon the same subject:

A church of Christ is not altogether destitute of the means of edification, even before they have chosen and ordained officers among themselves. But by virtue of the church-relation the brethren stand in one towards another, 'tis their privilege to exercise and dispense the Word of God for mutual edification—"as every man [i.e. any one] hath received the gift" (1Pe 4:10-11)—and to minister the same one to another; and, if called by the church, to speak as the oracles of God. And to justify this practice, we have many passages in Scripture: "They that feared the LORD spake often one to another" (Mal 3:16). "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...but exhorting one another" (Heb 10:25). "Ye ought to be teachers" (Heb 5:12). "Ye may all prophesy...that all may learn...Covet to prophesy" (1Co 14:31, 39). "Edify one another" (1Th 5:11). "Exhort one another" (Heb 3:13). "Teaching and admonishing one another" (Col 3:16). "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 1:20). Apollos was no officer, nor Aquila and Priscilla in orders,<sup>5</sup> as the language now is (Act 18:24-26). Many brethren spoke the Word without fear (Phi 1:14).

From these and many other texts of Scripture, 'tis manifest that this primitive practice was not to restrain the means of edification, nor make teaching and instruction peculiar to office, but the privilege of all that God has enabled and providence called to exercise. Nor can the usual objection be of any significance against so many plain Scriptures, that is, that those instances were all extraordinary; for it was the doctrine and practice in the settled and established churches of Christ, and nothing contrary to any divine institution; but the reason and usefulness of it continues fixed and permanent. But though all gifted brethren (duly qualified with ministerial gifts of learning and utterance, called by the providence of God, and appointed by any church and people of God to preach and teach) may lawfully and warrantably do it, yet this liberty does no more make void the use and necessity of settled and standing officers in particular churches than any good man's

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<sup>5</sup> **in orders** – in the position of an ordained clergyman or minister of the church.

care of the poor makes void the office of deacons; for it is not said that any private member must preach *ex dono*,<sup>6</sup> or obtrude themselves without a call, or preach ordinarily, and in a fixed stated way, if he be not chosen and ordained by the church, for the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets, in other words, to the church (1Co 10:15; Rev 1:16; 1Co 5:12). And therefore in this matter we ought to magnify the bountiful care of Almighty God, for the provisions He has made for His churches, in that He would not leave them to the uncertainty of a general obligation, lest there might be some neglect in those administrations, but has instituted and appointed that in His churches there should be settled standing officers, whose stated work, duty, and business is to teach and exhort, take care and feed those particular churches to whom they are made overseers, and to them and among them (*ex officio*<sup>7</sup>) to administer all the ordinances of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

And we join with this good man in blessing God for a stated ministry, and that it is not with us as before the Law, as Dr. Owen says in his book entitled *The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished*:

To me truly it seems evident there was no determinate minister of divine worship before the Law, but the chief men among the servants of God did every one in their own families, with their neighbors adjoining, perform those things which they knew to be required by the light of nature, tradition, or special revelation, instructing their children and servants, as Abraham did, concerning the goodness of God, and concerning sin by the Fall of Adam, the use of sacrificing, and the promised Seed, which was the sum of their religion.<sup>9</sup>

There has been a great controversy in the church whether none but ordained officers may preach, or whether some men who are not ordained officers, who have preaching gifts and graces, and are apt to teach, may ordinarily exercise those gifts in public assemblies, though

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<sup>6</sup> *ex dono* – Latin: from gift.

<sup>7</sup> *ex officio* – Latin: from office.

<sup>8</sup> *A Discourse of the Species, Order and Government of Christian Churches, and the Ordination of Their Ministers* (London: Nath. Hiller, 1701), 62-65.

<sup>9</sup> John Owen, *The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 13, ed. William Gould (1850-1853; repr., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 7.

they be not ordained officers. The latter of these we assert with those three worthy ministers, Mr. John Martin, Mr. Samuel Petto, and Mr. Frederick Woodall, in their answer to two books, the first called, *Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici* (The Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry) by the Provincial Assembly of London; the second *Vindiciæ Ministerii Evangelici* (Vindication of the Evangelical Ministry) by Dr. John Collins of Norwich. And though I earnestly desire my reader to read and consider that book called *The Preacher Sent*, where the whole controversy is handled largely and plainly, yet I think it not amiss just to name those several Scripture arguments they bring to prove that those who are taught of God, and through a gift are apt to teach, ought publicly to exercise it when called by the church.<sup>10</sup>

The *first argument* they bring is from the antecedence<sup>11</sup> of election to ordination. Election ought by gospel order to precede ordination of officers. A knowledge of suitable qualifications is preredquired unto a church's choosing of deacons (Act 6:3). Much more is it necessary to a church's choosing one to a higher office, to take care of and feed their souls. A church cannot in faith elect or choose a man and commit their souls to his charge if they have not grounds to persuade them that he is gifted and qualified as Christ requires officers should be (1Ti 3:1-2). And a little time will not discover these gifts; therefore an ordinary preaching is prerequisite to election. And so if election must go before ordination, then it necessarily follows that some men not ordained may preach. The church chose Stephen and the rest of the deacons first, and afterwards the apostles laid their hands on them with prayer; so that it appears that the church chooses persons before they are ordained to office, and they ought not to choose them before they have a sufficient proof of their abilities, which a short time will not discover.

Their *second argument* is from gospel commands, and this they establish on [the following passages]: "Exhorting one another" (Heb 10:25). "But exhort one another daily" (Heb 3:13). "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus

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<sup>10</sup> These arguments are extracted from John Martin, Samuel Petto, and Frederick Woodall, *A vindication of The preacher sent, or A Warrant for publick preaching without ordination* (London: Livewell Chapman, 1658), 29-110.

<sup>11</sup> **antecedence** – precedence in time.

Christ” (1Pe 4:10-11). This they call a divine command, and this cannot be meant of giving alms, because it is added, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God”; and this is to be done by everyone who has received the gift.

The *third argument* is from gospel promise. “For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance” (Mat 25:29).

Here is a promise: He that has—that is, if he uses, exercises, and improves what gifts he has—to him shall be given; that is, he shall increase his gifts. His labor shall be followed with a divine blessing, when the talent is taken away from him that hid it. We restrain not these gifts to preaching gifts. It is enough that these are included. Neither do we say that every Christian ought publicly to preach. Many have not the talent of preaching gifts, but whosoever has, it is his duty to improve in an orderly way.<sup>12</sup>

The *fourth argument* is from gospel precedents or examples. The first they urge is from Apollos: “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue...For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was Christ” (Act 18:24-28).

It is not probable that Apollos was an ordained officer, because it is said he knew only the baptism of John, and the baptism of John spoke nothing of the ordination of officers.<sup>13</sup>

Neither is it likely that he had an extraordinary call.

Let him prove it that will assert it. The text speaks not of anything extraordinary. A man may be eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures without extraordinary gifts; and his being instructed by Aquila and Priscilla in the way of the Lord more perfectly strongly argues that he was not extraordinarily gifted.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 62-63.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 68-71.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 71.

Their second Scripture example for gifted men's preaching, though not ordained, is from the preaching of the scattered saints: "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Act 8:1, 4). "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Act 11:21). From [these passages] they observe:

1) That the scattered saints preached publicly: "They...went every where preaching the word" (Act 8:4).

2) That they had divine allowance in this their preaching. It is said, "The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed" (Act 11:21).

3) That these scattered saints who preached were many of them indeed unordained. This may appear from Acts 8:1, 4. The persons who preached are said to be the scattered saints; and who are scattered is declared in verse 1: "There was a great persecution against the church." If we ask the question, Who were all scattered abroad? the answer must be, The church at Jerusalem, and these "went every where preaching." The apostles who were the chief officers were not scattered; for it is said, "They were all scattered abroad...except the apostles."

Their *fifth argument* is taken from gospel rules about prophesying.

All that are prophets may publicly preach is proved from 1 Corinthians 14:29, 31: 'Let the Prophets speak...For ye may all prophesy one by one.' Here is a universal liberty given to all the prophets to exercise their gifts publicly in a settled church. 'If therefore the whole church be come together into one place...But if all prophesy' (vv. 23-24). This prophesying therefore was publicly in a church meeting. And not only some, but all the prophets have a liberty of prophesying: 'For ye may all prophesy one by one' (v. 31). We do not say that *all* has reference to every member of the church of Corinth, as if all the people of the church might prophesy whether they had the gift or not; but 'tis granted only to them who had that gift.<sup>15</sup>

The word *prophesying* is not limited to that which is extraordinary. Some are called in Scripture sense prophets by

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

way of resemblance, who do not foretell things to come. If they have a gift of Scripture interpretation or exposition, they may be called prophets by way of resemblance, as the Scripture in general, and the gospel in special, is called a ‘word of prophecy’ (2Pe 1:19-21), yet a great part of the Scripture does not contain predictions of future events.<sup>16</sup>

Prophecy is said by the apostle to consist in exhortation: ‘He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort’ (1Co 14:3). Now the word *exhortation* signifies a stirring up to duty, and for beseeching, entreating, and comforting.<sup>17</sup> So when the Apostle Paul exhorts the church at Corinth to desire and covet to prophesy, we are not to understand it as an office to the church, as if they might all desire offices; but to covet to prophesy is to desire a gift from God to expound and interpret the Scripture to the church’s edification.<sup>18</sup>

Now our brethren of the Congregational way being so sound in their judgment about this point, it is greatly desired that their principle and practice did better harmonize. For I do not think that three instances of those churches throughout London can be given who have for these last thirty years past made choice of any for pastors but such as have had human learning; and there has been too great a slight put upon such as had it not, though no way inferior in spiritual gifts and graces for the church’s edification; and I am inclined to believe that at this very time churches may be too negligent to call forth those from among themselves who may be as useful as any they can find abroad. Those words of our Savior are found true by daily experience: “No prophet is accepted in his own country” (Luk 4:24).

Oh, that churches and ministers would consider the loud call of necessity to stir them up to this primitive practice! Suppose that God should take away but a few ministers out of some churches in the city of London, where there is but one gift in a church ordinarily in exercise, what a loss might such be at in an eye of reason? Therefore it is greatly desired and would be a very glorious work if all the elders of the churches in every city in England would not only be concerned in their own particular congregations for a future ministry, but that the elders would set apart some time every week for instructing young

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 91.

men, members of churches, inclined to divine studies; and so in the country where two or three churches are not far asunder, that all their elders would agree to meet once a month, or oftener, to hear the gifts that God has given their churches. And that their gifts might be discovered, they ought, first of all, to be put upon prayer, and then to see what gifts they have for opening the Word of God; and this to be done to the end that some may be able to teach others also, when we put off this earthly tabernacle.

But some will be ready to say, God will take care of His churches and give them pastors after His own heart (Jer 3:15). But this is no thanks to the churches who are negligent of their duty in this respect. We argue with a great deal more judgment about the concerns of our bodies. We say it is our duty to trust in God to provide for ourselves and families. That is true; but we do not ordinarily neglect the lawful means conducing to that end. The husbandman hopes for a good crop in summer, but still it is in the use of means. He ought to plough and sow his seed, and not look for a miracle, but do his endeavor, and leave the blessing with God. Thus should we do in the concerns of our souls and the churches of Christ. This work is not designed for those who have no need of this counsel, but for such as have; but yet it may serve as a spur to stir up some more able to give further and better directions in so great a work.

And if anything here mentioned may tend to the profit of any, that God alone may have all the glory is the hearty desire of your sincere brother in the bonds of the gospel,

*Hercules Collins*

# THE TEMPLE REPAIRED

## Introduction

We read in the books of the Kings in several places of the schools of the prophets and the sons of the prophets, who were instructed by those called fathers, or seers, such as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha.<sup>19</sup> It is not probable that they taught them any languages, for there was no need of that, because God's revelations to them were in their own native tongue. Neither could they give them the Holy Spirit, that being God's prerogative alone. But it is very likely the aged prophets did declare their prophecies which they had from Jehovah, and opened and explained the Law to them, and put them upon exercising themselves in holy studies, with a frequent reading the oracles of God and meditating therein day and night, with prayer to the Almighty. And this was done to make them the more fit for prophetic revelation. These sons of the prophets were very many and probably increased by the ministry and miracles of Elijah and Elisha.

From the consideration of these things aforesaid and the little care that churches take for a future ministry, I have been stirred up to cast in my mite into the treasury of divine counsel, hoping it may be of some use to those young persons whose hearts God has inclined to the ministry of the Word. And if my heart do not deceive me, my ends are purely the enlargement and perfection of the kingdom of Christ.

That scripture which I shall lay for the foundation of my discourse is:

*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

—2 Timothy 2:15

The *penman* of this epistle, you see, was the Apostle Paul. He was the writer, but the Spirit the inditer.<sup>20</sup> Paul that was once a great persecutor is now become a great preacher (Gal 1:23). He that once sought the churches' destruction is become a laborer in order to the churches' salvation.

As to the *time* when this epistle was written, it was but a little before Paul's death, who was beheaded under Nero Emperor of Rome; and this I collect from this epistle where he says, “I am now ready to be offered,

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<sup>19</sup> 2Ki 2:3, 5; 6:1; 1Ki 20:35; 1Sa 10:12.

<sup>20</sup> **inditer** – the one directing or dictating what was written.

and the time of my departure is at hand” (2Ti 4:6). And so it is thought to be one of his last epistles.

The *occasion* of this epistle is this. The Apostle having left Timothy at Ephesus to take care of the church there, Timothy with the rest of the elders wept very sore upon Paul’s departure. And Paul supposing that Timothy had heard of his sufferings at Rome, which might prove an additional sorrow to him, thought therefore by this epistle to establish and comfort him both against the apostle’s sufferings and martyrdom approaching, as also against all the pressures and persecutions of the church (1Ti 1:3; Act 20:36-38; 2Ti 1:4).

The *scope* of this epistle is more immediate in reference to Timothy, whom Paul exhorts to courage and constancy in his ministerial office (2Ti 1:6, 13); but it concerns all ministers in their ministerial calling to be faithful and diligent in their work in the worst of times, and with Archippus, to take heed to their ministry which they have received in the Lord, that they fulfil it, and to caution the church against evil men and seducers (Col 4:17).

As for the *coherence*<sup>21</sup> of the text, it seems to have reference immediately to the verse before, where the apostle signifies that there were some in that day that strove “about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2Ti 2:14). Now as if Paul should say to Timothy, That you may be of advantage to your hearers, and delivered from that error of subverting any, but establishing them in the truth, study to show yourself a good workman, approved of God, etc.

By way of *division*: We consider those words to be an exhortation. 1) The duty exhorted unto is study. 2) The end and design of it is that he may approve himself to God and to all good men as a good workman, rightly dividing the Word of truth. And then we have, 3) the advantage that follows it: all such will be delivered from shame, and gain honor and a holy boldness in the faith. For there is a figure in the text, where there is more intended than expressed. The Scripture speaks after the same manner in several places, as where it is said He will not break the bruised reed; that is, He will strengthen the soul under all its temptations.

We shall now raise some *observations* which are expressed and implied in the words.

*Doctrine 1.* That study is an ordinance of God.

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<sup>21</sup> **coherence** – connection or dependence on what precedes or follows.

*Doctrine 2.* That the Scriptures of truth are the foundations of a minister's study.

*Doctrine 3.* Men's great design and end in study should not be to get men's applause by quaint and eloquent speech, but above all to please God and win souls (Isa 53:1; Luk 16:29).

*Doctrine 4.* Those that study so as to approve themselves to God their Master and rightly divide the Word of truth will be delivered from all shame and rather gain themselves honor and holy boldness.

*Doctrine 5.* All persons who will undertake to preach without study are not likely to approve themselves to God their Master, nor rightly divide the Word of truth, but rather expose themselves and the cause of God in their hands to shame and contempt.

Now I shall sum up all into one doctrine.

*Doctrine: That it is the duty of every gospel minister so to study as they may approve themselves to God, and so divide the Word of truth that they may not be ashamed, but rather have the honor that belongs to that calling.*

In speaking to this proposition, I shall use this method: 1) I shall explain the point; 2) lay down one proposition; 3) show who are good workmen; 4) give the reasons why they should so study; 5) improve the doctrine.

## 1. Explanation

When the apostle saith, "Rightly dividing the word of truth," you must know it is a metaphorical expression, a borrowed saying, whether it be from the priest's cutting the sacrifices, so as all had their proper shares;<sup>22</sup> or from the parents dividing the dish amongst several children; or from the carpenter, who divides his timber by a right line. The word imports thus much, that ministers should so divide the Word of truth as to give everyone their due portion. It is prophesied of Christ: "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa 50:4). Everyone must have his portion. You must seek the sinner's conversion, the ignorant man's instruction. The good shepherd will seek that which is lost, raise them that are fallen, and bind up the broken in heart with God's sweet promises, and labor to bring them to the fold that have been driven away, heal and

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, on 2 Timothy 2:15.

strengthen those that are sick (Eze 34:4, 16). Thus, everyone is to have his portion rightly divided to him. In a word, some must be fed with milk, some with strong meat: food for strong men, and milk for babes (Heb 5:12).

## **2. God Alone Makes Ministers.**

The second general head is to lay down one proposition, which is this: That it is God alone by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit Who can make men able ministers of the New Testament. This is proved by Christ's words to Paul, Who said unto him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and in those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Act 26:16). And this St. Paul acknowledges when he says Christ "hath made us able ministers of the new testament" (2Co 3:6). And though it be granted that human literature is very useful for a minister, yet it is not essentially necessary; but to have the Spirit of Christ to open the Word of Christ is essentially necessary. For although it is possible to make an exact translation of the Scriptures out of many learned languages and give an exact grammatical construction of the same, yet if this man be void of the Spirit of Christ, he cannot know or understand the mysteries contained in God's Word. Every rational man will acknowledge the truth of that sentence of the Apostle Paul: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1Co 2:11). This puts me in mind of a saying of a worthy minister at a person's ordination above four and twenty years ago: "Though I understood Latin and Greek, philosophy, logic, and rhetoric, etc., yet before conversion I was as ignorant of Christ as a wild ass's colt."

## **3. Who Are Good Workmen?**

A good workman will lay a good foundation for his superstructure. St. Paul says, As a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, which was Christ alone, and no other foundation can anyone lay for the salvation of immortal souls (1Co 3:10-11). All others that build upon anything but Him are foolish builders and build upon the sand; and when the storms arise, the house falls; and great will be the fall of any that fall into hell for want of building upon Christ their foundation (Mat 7:25, 27); for they only are truly wise that build their happiness upon Christ crucified (1Co 2:2). This is that Rock upon which whosoever builds, the gates of hell shall not

prevail against him (Mat 16:18); that is, the rage, malice, and power of the devil's kingdom.

Such are good workmen in the mysteries of the gospel who build a good structure upon this good foundation—that is, “gold, silver, precious stones,” not “wood, hay, [and] stubble” (1Co 3:12). We must take care that we do not build upon this foundation bad works and an evil life and say Christ is our foundation. Neither must we build upon it unsound doctrine, nor stuff our preaching with human art, rhetorical ornaments, philosophical questions or reasons, for that is all wood, hay, and stubble, and must be burnt up; but we must continue to preach the pure, divine, sound, and precious doctrine of the gospel, in a way conformable to the substance of it, and build upon it a good life, which is like gold, silver, and precious stones that will abide the trial.<sup>23</sup>

A good workman in the gospel lays his work well together, or else it wants<sup>24</sup> that profit and beauty that otherwise it would have. Our discourses should hang as it were in a link or chain. Thus it is in all our Savior's sermons and Paul's epistles; there is a wonderful coherence and dependence of one thing upon another. When we name a text, we should not take our farewell of it, as too many do, and not return to it again in our whole discourse; but we should closely follow the scope and design of the Spirit of God in that text, with that order and connection of the parts, that it may look beautiful and prove profitable.

He is a good workman in the things of God that uses proper ways and means to prove a theme or proposition by. A carpenter has his proper tools to do his work with. He does not take a mallet when he wants a chisel, nor a saw when he wants a hammer, but uses such proper tools as will effectually do his work. As for example, suppose your proposition was this: That it is the duty of every man to love and praise God. Now to prove this, we argue as King David did, 1) from our creation. The Lord is our Maker, let us therefore worship and bow down before Him. Because He has made us, we should “enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise” (Psa 95:7; 100:3-4). 2) We ought to love and honor God superlatively, because this was the great end of our creation. God “hath made all things,” saith Solomon, “for himself” (Pro 16:4). The four and twenty elders acknowledge that God is worthy to receive all glory, honor, and power because He created all things (Pro 16:4; Rev 4:11). 3) We not only

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<sup>23</sup> Giovanni Diodati, *Pious and Learned Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, on 1Co 3:12.

<sup>24</sup> wants – lacks.

argue from the Author of our being, and the end of our being, but from the lesser to the greater. As if it be the duty of children to honor their parents, and the duty of subjects to honor their prince, how much more is it the duty of a creature to honor its Creator? Again, if men will bestow any pains and cost to prevent sickness and death on their bodies, how much more should we labor after the salvation of our souls?

We count them good workmen that do their work well, and a great deal too. Indeed, there are some very good workmen that do their work well but do a very little. Others again may speak a great many words in a sermon, who have but little matter. He is most accepted that brings the best bread and a full meal. Some can deliver more matter in half an hour to the profit of their hearers than others can in a whole hour. As some persons do their work so bad as makes some almost sick to see it, so some may preach as to make the hearers sick to hear it. And yet some are so conceited of their own abilities that there is no room for instruction. To be sure this is true: He does the best work and the most work that labors most in his study with a dependence upon God for a blessing.

## 4. Why Study?

We should study to be good workmen because our work is of the highest nature. Men that work among jewels and precious stones ought to be very knowing of their business. A minister's work is a great work, a holy work, a heavenly work. Hence the apostle says, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2Co 2:16). Oh, how great a work is this! What man, what angel is sufficient to preach the gospel as they ought to preach it? You work for the highest end, the glory of God and the good of immortal souls. You are for the beating down of the kingdom of the devil and enlarging and exalting Christ's kingdom. And "he that winneth souls [saith Solomon] is wise" (Pro 11:30); that is, he that draws them to God and to the love of Him sweetly gains and makes a holy conquest of them to Jehovah.<sup>25</sup>

We should study to be good workmen because you will be the better able to give a good account to your Master, an account "with joy, and not with grief" (Heb 13:17), having been faithful watchmen over your flocks. Paul boldly declares it, that he was clear from the blood of all men and had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God (Act

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<sup>25</sup> Diodati, on Pro 11:30.

20:27-28). And it is his counsel to the elders at Ephesus to take heed to themselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. And in so doing, there may be expected an approving of God and a “well done, good and faithful servant...enter...into the joy of thy lord” (Mat 25:23), that is, into everlasting happiness.

## 5. Application

### *a. Information*

By way of information: If it is the duty of gospel ministers to study to divide the Word of God aright, then we fairly and naturally infer that it is their sin that preach and neglect study. You may easily perceive from the pulpit whether the man has worked hard at his study the week before or not. We may say of sermons as some do of pieces of work among men. We say of some work, “There is no labor, there is no effort in it; it is a very slight thing.” But it may be said of others on the contrary, “This is a good piece of work; this is well wrought. Here is labor in this; this is substantial work.” As there are too few industrious laborers, so I fear there are too many loiterers concerned in this glorious employment. The Holy Ghost speaks of some watchmen “sleeping...loving to slumber” (Isa 56:10).

This doctrine refutes the opinion of those that think it unlawful to study to declare God’s mind, and will contemptuously speak against it, as if we were to preach by inspiration, as the prophets and apostles of old did. What can be a better confutation of those men than our text which commands ministers to study to show themselves good workmen and to meditate in God’s Law day and night (2Ti 2:15; Psa 1:2-3)—to meditate in the Law, the revealed Word of God, the rule of life, so as to draw the ground of our faith and the comfort of conscience out of the promises of grace?

### *b. Caution*

This affords us a use of caution. If it be ministers’ duty to study, then be cautioned against idleness in the great things of God and the concerns of immortal souls. The Lord has often reproved idle shepherds. There is so much precious time spent in the world and pleasures thereof that there is a very small remnant of the week left, I fear, by too many, so that they have not sufficient time to improve the

talent God has given them. And what can be expected then but a lean discourse, if not a confused one, when the Sabbath<sup>26</sup> comes?

### c. *Consolation*

This affords a use of consolation. If shame will attend them that are lazy and idle in the things of God, then honor and praise will follow those that are true laborers in the Lord's vineyard. Those "that rule well," and "labour in the word and doctrine," are "counted worthy of double honour," and to be esteemed very highly for their work's sake (1Ti 5:17; 1Th 5:13). Let all faithful laborers rejoice. You shall have peace in your own consciences. You will have praise of the churches, and all saints; and which is best of all, God's approbation at last: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mat 25:23).

### d. *Further helps*

To what I have said, I shall add some further helps by way of direction and instruction to those that are inclined to the ministration of the gospel.

1st. Consider my whole *method* in speaking<sup>27</sup>: 1) to the penman of the epistle; 2) to the time when written; 3) the occasion; 4) the scope. Not that there will be always need upon every subject to take notice of these things, yet upon some subjects there may be need to take notice of some or all of them.

2dly. Consider how your text *coheres and depends upon what goes before it*, but linger no longer upon it than what may make your way plain to the text. Some have spent so much time upon a context, that by the time they came to their text the hour was almost gone, though they did not know whether they should preach in the same place again.

3dly. Make an exact *division*<sup>28</sup> of your text, if your text calls you to it, for that will be profitable in expounding the subject.

4thly. Explain any difficult *terms* but spend not time needlessly in explanation if things are easily understood without it.

5thly. Raise as many *doctrines* as the text will allow and make what good use you can of every one of them, but insist most on the chief scope of the place.

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<sup>26</sup> **Sabbath** – the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. See also *The Lord's Day* by Sam Waldron, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>27</sup> In his handling of 2 Timothy 2:15 above.

<sup>28</sup> **exact division** – accurate outline.

6thly. Your doctrine being laid down, *prove it* from the Word of God by two or three Scriptures at most, because in the mouth of two or three witnesses every truth is established.

After you have proved it, then lay down the *reasons and arguments* of the point why and wherefore it is so.

You see that my third general head is to show *what* a good workman is, but that [answering the “what” question] will not come in the handling of every doctrine.

Some persons lay down some *propositions* just after their doctrine; but whatever is done in that may be done in a use of instruction. But that is at your liberty, whether you will do it in propositions or a use of instruction.

And then, what *use*<sup>29</sup> you make, let it be always natural from the doctrine and draw as many inferences from it as it will bear; for they are generally very divine<sup>30</sup> things. Mark one thing, that all doctrines will not afford the same uses. There is 1) the use of information; 2) caution; 3) trial and examination; 4) refutation; 5) instruction; 6) reprehension;<sup>31</sup> 7) exhortation, with its motives and directions; 8) admiration; 9) consolation. Now you must consider which of all these, or any other uses, will be most naturally handled from your doctrine.

## 6. Additional Directions and Instructions

*Scripture interprets Scripture.*

The Scriptures are the best expositors of themselves. No man or church can explain God’s Word better than it does itself. As for instance, the Psalmist says, “He is a God that judgeth in the earth” (Psa 58:11). Now if you would know what God is, another Scripture tells you that “God is a Spirit” (Joh 4:24). One text says, “Stand in awe, and sin not” (Psa 4:4). If you would know what sin is, another scripture says, “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1Jo 3:4).

*Read the Scriptures.*

Give yourselves to reading, above all, the holy Scriptures. This counsel Paul gave to his son Timothy: “Give attendance to reading”

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<sup>29</sup> **use** – application.

<sup>30</sup> **divine** – excellent; very profitable.

<sup>31</sup> **reprehension** – reproof; censure.

(1Ti 4:13). It is Christ's counsel to the Jews: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Joh 5:39), Who has brought salvation, "of which salvation the prophets of old have enquired and searched diligently" (1Pe 1:10). It was by books that Daniel understood the end of the seventy years captivity in Babylon (Dan 9:2). And always make conscience to pray with Solomon for a wise and understanding heart (1Ki 3:9), to understand the mind and will of God in His Word, and also beg for great humility.

Pride and conceit have overthrown many a young preacher. Two things will make us truly humble: 1) a true knowledge of ourselves, our own foolishness, ignorance, and impotency, with our vileness by nature and act; and 2) a true knowledge of God in His glorious perfections, His wisdom, power, holiness and truth. I remember Luther says in some place [that] three things make a preacher: meditation, temptation, and prayer. A good man told me that he had been ten times upon his knees for one sermon. Sometimes we have sermons easier, and sometimes with more difficulty; but this is our comfort, that we have always a God upon the throne of grace, Who will help us who humbly lie before Him in a time of need.

### *Use the analogy of faith.*

Let all you deliver be according to the analogy of faith.<sup>32</sup> Never interpret one text so as to thwart another; abandon all private opinions, though they are never so attractive. Peter says, "No...scripture is of any private interpretation" (2Pe 1:20); that is, no particular scripture differs from the whole, or any part of it. No man, nor no company of men, no church or public officers are to interpret the Scriptures of their own heads, according to their own minds, so as to make their private sense the sense of the Scripture, but to seek the understanding of it from God, Who shows the meaning of the Word by the Word itself, as we said before, the more obscure places being expounded by the more clear. To help you in this, get a book called *The Reconciler of the Bible*.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> **analogy of faith** – using the doctrines of the faith that arise from clearer related Scriptures to interpret a more difficult passage (Rom 12:6).

<sup>33</sup> Joannes Thaddaeus and T. Man., *The Reconciler of the Bible Inlarged: Wherein Above Three Thousand seeming Contradictions throughout the Old and New Testament, are fully and plainly reconciled* (London: 1662).

### *Use plain words.*

Let your speech be plain, as Paul's was, "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1Co 2:4). Use sound words that cannot be condemned (1Ti 1:8). Rhetorical flourishes are like painted glass in a window that makes a great show but darkens the light, as some schoolmasters will flourish letters so much as few know what they are but themselves. To have more rhetoric in a discourse than logic is condemnable. What does it signify to have a dish daintily set off about the brims, if no meat be in it? Be sure you always speak plain to the capacity of the people. Let us never speak words we do not understand ourselves, nor they which hear us. The prophets and apostles generally spoke in the vulgar and common languages which the ordinary people understood. They did not only speak to the understanding of a king upon the throne, but to the understanding of the lowest subject.

### *Beware of needless repetition.*

Watch against vain tautologies, repeating the same thing over and over in other words, unless it be when you are more than ordinarily affected with what you are upon from the movings of God's Spirit, and that is hardly ever burdensome to the hearers. For if the minister be affected, generally the people are affected; and if the minister be dull, generally the people are dull. Tautologies are generally for want of matter to fill up an hour. Therefore, be sure you come well-furnished into the pulpit. You had better leave than lack.<sup>34</sup> If you have not a gift of enlargement upon a head or particular, you must have the more particulars in your discourse. Some persons, if they have less than thirty particulars in their sermons, it is too little for an hour; and then they run into vain repetitions. But others who have a gift of enlargement may preach a good sermon from less than half. Therefore, everyone must preach according to their proper gift given them of God.

### *Do not be too slow or quick with your words.*

Let us not draw<sup>35</sup> our words at too great a length, because it is not only offensive to the ear, but spends much time, and two words may be spoken in the time of one—not but that I will give an allowance to

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<sup>34</sup> **leave than lack** – To have so much material you leave some off is better than having so little you run out of things to say.

<sup>35</sup> **draw** – lengthen.

every man's natural faculty. But 'tis to be feared this is often an affected way of speaking.

We must also take heed of speaking too quickly, for then most hearers cannot follow us, and here we must also allow for a natural infirmity. Perhaps Moses had an infirmity in his speech, yet he was God's minister to one of the greatest monarchs in the world. Therefore, let the hearers rather pity than censure those who have an impediment in their speech. "Who...made man's mouth?" (Exo 4:11). Was it not the Lord? And it has been observed of some who have lacked utterance, that it has been abundantly made up to them [by their possessing] a solid judgment.

*Conduct yourself with propriety.*

Let your conduct and dress in the pulpit be grave and sober. Let us have no indecent behavior nor uncomely garb. It has been lamented by many to see ministers, who are set by God for ensamples to the flock, with their hair and shoulders covered with powder, especially when they enter the pulpit. Surely were the old Puritans alive, it would greatly trouble them. And it has been no small disturbance to the minds of some to hear such as are called "beau<sup>36</sup> preachers." To see an ancient minister gravely enter the pulpit with his gray, hoary, and white head, 'tis his honor and crown of glory, because natural. But to see young or middle-aged men about so solemn a work with their powdered hair, as if they were gray, hoary, and white with age—is not this unseemly, because not natural but artificial? But a worse sight than this is to see aged ministers enter the pulpit with their hair powdered white. Does not this signify that they are not so well satisfied with their hoary head by nature, which God has given them, seeing they seem to delight to do something [which] may exceed nature? Our carriage, habit, and deportment should be such that we may convince the consciences of men that we seek God's glory and their good.

And that this may be the better effected, we must speak so loud as our audience may hear us, or else both the end of preaching and hearing is lost. And to be uneven in our voice, to be sometimes very high and loud and then presently very low, the former part of the sentence may possibly be heard by most or all; but the latter part may not be heard by a sixth part of the people, so that they had almost as good heard nothing, if they cannot hear the whole sentence. How is the

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<sup>36</sup> **beau** – excessively attentive to dress; dandy.

end either of preaching or hearing answered in this? “Lift up thy voice like a trumpet” (Isa 58:1). Christ lifted up His voice and cried in the great day of the feast (Joh 7:37). And “Peter...lifted up his voice,” standing with the eleven (Act 2:14).

And take heed of an affected tone in preaching. Let your voice be natural, or else sound doctrine may be liable to contempt.

*Take sufficient time for study.*

We should get the substance of our sermons, if possible, for the Lord’s Day before Saturday, or else we may be at a loss and have very poor and lean discourses. It has been known by experience that sometimes a whole day has been spent in study and little done, though at other times (blessed be God) when we have been under the gales of the Spirit, we have done more in two hours. It is said of Mr. Charnock<sup>37</sup> that he labored almost all the week in his study and amongst his books, whence he was so well-furnished on the first day.<sup>38</sup> Let the last day of the week be for the better digesting your discourses and treasuring them up in your memory and turning to your best annotators to see what they say upon the proofs of every head, as well as upon the text. And on the Lord’s Day before you preach, either before noon or afternoon, spend one half hour in running over your sermon, either as written in your study, or as it is laid up in your memory, or as in both. In so doing, it will be profitable both to minister and people. You will be ready in your delivery and be delivered from rude and impertinent expressions. This is the happiness which generally attends a good consideration of what we deliver.

*Ask God for utterance.*

Beg of God with St. Paul for utterance, that you may open your “mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19). Do not enter the pulpit with an ignorant, but with a holy boldness. And as for the lack of a holy boldness a man’s abilities are often hid and darkened and too much restricted, so from an ignorant boldness others are too large<sup>39</sup> and deliver many things very offensive to a judicious audience. And if you would have holy boldness, be sure you carry into the pulpit with you a good conscience, for a guilty conscience will

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<sup>37</sup> **Stephen Charnock** (1628-1680) – English Puritan Presbyterian clergyman; born in London; best known for his work *The Existence and Attributes of God*.

<sup>38</sup> **first day** – of the week, the Lord’s Day.

<sup>39</sup> **large** – unprofitably free in speaking.

make a man hold down his head, and weaken holy boldness, and so destroy the life of his preaching. There was the same sacrifice for the priest as for the whole congregation, a young bullock, which implies that God expected more caution and care from them than from others (Lev 4:11-13).

*Be concise.*

Let not your periods<sup>40</sup> be too long. Though some have a good gift of enlargement, yet it is better for the hearers to have short periods than long. It seems in former ages that they had but one period in a whole oration. They had need of a good understanding and a solid head that can carry along the sense of a speech of half an hour before they come to the period. Short periods are better for the minister's memory and the people's memory and understanding.

*Use human testimony wisely.*

Human testimonies are not to be brought to prove divine things, unless they may the better convince the conscience of the hearer.<sup>41</sup> Upon this account Paul urges the testimony of Aratus<sup>42</sup> to prove a divine being: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Act 17:28). Also the saying of Menander,<sup>43</sup> "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1Co 15:33). And Epimenides,<sup>44</sup> even a prophet of their own, said, "The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (Ti 1:12).

*Do not take too much time reviewing past sermons.*

Never continue too long on the repetition of a former sermon. Seven or eight minutes is as much as can be allowed. Repeat so much as may refresh and help the memories of your hearers, and in an orderly way bring them down to where you left them, and there begin afresh. To take up a great part of our time in repetition too often argues the lack of matter and is not ordinarily pleasing to the hearer, especially to them that have a good memory. Here I would be understood of our ordinary and common way of preaching, for I do

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<sup>40</sup> **periods** – sentences.

<sup>41</sup> William Perkins.

<sup>42</sup> **Aratus** (c. 315-240 BC) – Greek didactic poet.

<sup>43</sup> **Menander** (c. 342- c. 290 BC) – Greek dramatist.

<sup>44</sup> **Epimenides** – 7<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century BC Greek seer and philosopher-poet, from Knossos or Phaistos.

grant that it may so fall out sometimes that a man may have a call to repeat more than ordinary, as if the matter be extraordinarily weighty, and some may desire the whole sermon to be preached over again, as the Gentiles did Paul, to preach the same thing the next Sabbath day (Act 13:42).

*Speak on a variety of subjects.*

Entertain your hearers with a variety of subjects, seeing God's Word affords variety. Though in some sense I cannot preach Christ too much, yet if I preach so as to neglect the preaching up of duty, I leave undone a great part of the work committed to my charge. Though it is our duty to preach Christ crucified, the object of a justifying faith, yet this must not be done in the neglect of preaching up other duties, especially the great doctrine of repentance, which was one of the first doctrines John the Baptist preached (Mat 3:8), and one of the first which Christ preached (Mat 4:17), and is the first mentioned of the six principles of the doctrine of Christ in the sixth chapter to the Hebrews (Heb 6:1). Moreover, we find Christ and His apostles preached the doctrine of mortification, and obedience to the commands of God, and all divine virtues, as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance"...patience, knowledge, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity (Gal 5:22-23; 2Pe 1:5-7). This was Paul's comfort in his last days: that he was clear from the blood of all men, for he had not shunned to declare *the whole counsel of God* (Act 20:26-27).

*Remember God alone blesses the sermon.*

If you have much of God's presence in preaching, be not overconfident that that sermon shall do most good. And if you are in a dull frame in preaching, so long as you preach God's Word, do not despair of a good effect. For some have experienced some sermons blest which they thought were lost, and have heard nothing to their comfort of that sermon they expected most from. [God does this] that no flesh might glory in God's presence (1Co 1:29).

*Preach from the heart.*

Let us preach and "prophecy according to the proportion of faith" and knowledge (Rom 12:6). Speak experientially and feelingly. That which comes from the heart is generally carried to the heart. Then it is we preach to edification (1Co 14:12).

And to that end let not your sermons in common be very long. It is better to leave the people longing than loathing. Get your hearts sincerely affected with those things you persuade others to, that your hearers may see that you are in good earnest and that you deliver nothing to the people but what you are willing to practice yourselves and venture your salvation upon.

*Focus on primary doctrine, not controversy.*

Take not hastily other men's opinions without due trial, nor vent your own conceits, but compare them first with the analogy of faith and rules of holiness, the holy Scriptures, which are the proper tests of all opinions and doctrines. Meddle with controversies and doubtful matters as little as may be in public, lest you puzzle your hearers and hinder their edification. Focus on those points that tend to sound belief, sincere love to God, and a holy conversation.<sup>45</sup> And it is good for ministers to have a body of divinity<sup>46</sup> in their heads and hearts, that they may be able to preach in season and out of season. A worthy minister, being called of a sudden to preach without any previous preparation, preached an excellent sermon on the priestly office of Christ, and being thanked by some after he had done for his good discourse, having so little warning, made this answer: "It is good for a minister to have a body of divinity in his head."

*Keep metaphors short and simple.*

If you use any metaphor or similitude, let it be always as short as may be convenient, and so delivered that the matter may be the better explained by it. Thus the Holy Ghost calls Christ a rock because He defends His church against the gates of hell. So He is called a Lamb, that we may the better understand His meekness and usefulness. He is called a Vine and His members branches to show that a believer's life, beauty, strength, growth, and fruitfulness is in Christ the vine, and that without Him they can do nothing.

*Explain the nature of God.*

Whenever God is in a text, whether it be by a pronoun, *he* or *him*, etc., or by a circumlocution or periphrasis, which is the using many words for one, as where it is said, "The Strength of Israel will not lie" (1Sa 15:29): that is, God; or whether it be expressed plainly by the word *Lord*, *God*, *Jah*, *Jehovah*, be sure you give the people some account of

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<sup>45</sup> **conversation** – manner of life.

<sup>46</sup> **body of divinity** – system of theology.

the nature, properties, and attributes of this glorious being, that He is eternal, without beginning and ending, independent, depends on none, but all depend upon Him, immense and infinite, and cannot be limited; omniscient, and knows all; omnipotent, and can do all; immutable in His counsel and purposes; a sovereign and supreme being, Who is accountable to none, but all to Him. This counsel is the rather given because it has been the observation of some that few ministers explain the word *God*, *Lord*, or *Jehovah*, etc., though the word be in their text. It is supposed that it arises from hence: that they take it for granted that everybody almost knows what the meaning of God is because He is very often in our mouths, when indeed nothing is known less than God is known, and yet nothing more necessary to be known than God's nature, perfections, and attributes because [knowing these] works faith and great reverence in [God].

*Explain the meaning of words.*

We are often led in preaching to show the meaning of a word. The Apostle John says to the saints in the Revelation, He has “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev 1:5). The washing there means two things principally: 1) It signifies guiltiness and filthiness, condemnation and pollution, or else what need of washing? 2) Washing signifies justification and sanctification, and imputed and imparted inherent righteousness. Hence the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians: “But ye are washed”; and he tells them after what that means: “Ye are sanctified...ye are justified” (1Co 6:11).

So we are exhorted to “seek...the LORD while he may be found” (Isa 55:6). These words mean: 1) that man has lost his God. 2) It means that though he has lost his God, yet God may be found. 3) It means that no one can help man to his favor but God Himself. 4) It means that God is ordinarily found by those that seek Him in His own way. And thus we are led often to the improvement of the Word of God in showing what such and such words mean.

*Prepare the sermon carefully.*

You that have time, write your sermons in your study, and think it not enough to write your bare heads, but make some enlargement upon every head, with the scripture added that proves it, and yet have your dependence on God for further enlargement in public. We may say in this case, as we are accustomed to speak about salvation, that we ought to live so holily as if we were to be saved by our living, and yet when we have done all, to rely upon Christ and His righteousness;

so we should labor in study as if we should have no immediate assistance in the pulpit, and yet when we have done all, to go about our work depending upon God for further assistance. And it is greatly desired that our ministers would do as the Scotch, the Dutch, and French divines, who hardly ever carry a note into the pulpit with them. The abilities of our ministers [are] no way inferior to those before mentioned and would quickly appear so if they were put into practice and frequently used, as the others do. Mr. Perkins says it was the custom in his day for ministers to use their memories. Indeed, upon some extraordinary occasion, notes may be better permitted than in a man's ordinary ministry.

*Explain human characteristics attributed to God.*

When the Holy Ghost descends to help men's capacities in attributing bodily parts and human affections to God, which are only proper to men, you must open and display the mind of God in it, to take persons off from any mean and low thoughts of God, Who is an infinite spirit. When God is said to have a face, it signifies the manifestation of Himself to angels and men in a way of favor or anger. Eyes being ascribed to Him holds forth His perfect knowledge of persons and things. His hand and arm signify omnipotence; bowels signify His mercy and most ardent affection. When feet are attributed to God, it signifies His omnipresence, together with His strength to crush His enemies. And where the church is called the place of His feet, it is because there He exhibits His grace and glory as if He walked in it.<sup>47</sup> So when sadness, grief of mind, and repentance are ascribed to God (Isa 63:10), it signifies His displeasure. It is man only who can properly be said to repent, who cannot know the result of things; but it cannot appertain to Him Who declares "the end from the beginning" (Isa 46:10). God is said to repent when He does such things as men do when they repent. When men repent, 1) they cease to do what they began to do; and 2) they are ready to deface and destroy what they have done. God is said to repent, not because His mind is changed. When He is said to repent of making Saul king (1Sa 15:35), it is because He meant to remove him from the throne. It is said He repented that He made the world (Gen 6:6), because His purpose was to destroy and deface the present beauty and excellency of it.

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<sup>47</sup> Joh 4:24; Psa 27:8; Psa 11:4; 2Ch 16:9; Exo 15:6; Isa 53:1; Isa 63:12; Isa 63:15; Isa 66:1; Isa 60:13.

### *The order of words*

The order of words in holy Scripture is always to be governed according to the analogy of faith, the scope of the passage, and sense of the words. We are not to stick to the order of words always, for though the Apostle Paul put the word *sanctification* before the word *justification*, yet in order of nature justification is before sanctification. For not allowing this, it has made some run into error, that we are justified because we are sanctified, as if our sanctification procured our justification. Yet we are ever to retain that order of words, and must never part with it, where they are according to the analogy of faith, the scope of the passage, and the sense of the words themselves.

### *The two natures of Christ*

In holy Scripture, you will sometimes find that which properly belongs to one nature in Christ is attributed to another by virtue of the personal union.<sup>48</sup> Hence it is that the church is said to be purchased with the blood of God (Act 20:28), not that God simply considered has blood, for He is a Spirit (Joh 4:24); but it is attributed to God because of the union of the human and divine nature. Moreover, it is said that the Son of Man was “in heaven” (Joh 3:13), when He was discoursing upon earth. Here that which was proper to the Godhead and the divine nature is attributed to the human nature because of the union of the natures. And things of this nature must be explained with all the clearness imaginable because the knowledge of it is so necessary to man’s salvation.

### *Things stated as if already done*

Sometimes things in the sacred record are said to be actually done, which were not actually accomplished until a long time after, as when it is said, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen” (Rev 18:2). The Holy Spirit’s putting this in the present time signifies the certainty of its coming to pass as if it were already done. We are to understand the same of that passage where it is said, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isa 9:6), which was not actually fulfilled till some hundred years after. So we understand the Apostle John when he says he saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God, and they were judged according to their works (Rev 20:12). The Holy Ghost thus speaks to show the certainty of the thing, as we said before.

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<sup>48</sup> **personal union** – the union of the divine and human natures in one person, our Mediator Jesus Christ.

### *Inanimate objects addressed as persons*

Things are often proposed in Scripture as if speaking of persons, when they are not persons spoken of, and the properties of men are ascribed to things without life. Hence the heavens, and earth, and sea, etc., are brought in as hearing and speaking. Here great care must be taken to open and show the mind of God in such places. “Hear, O heavens,” says the prophet Isaiah, “and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken” (Isa 1:2; Hos 2:21). Mr. Caryl, upon this passage, says the Holy Ghost so speaks to show that men were wicked above all reason, and therefore God appeals to the creature void of sense against them; not that there is any reason in wickedness, but thus we say concerning all excess. Yea, God tells them that the very unreasonable creature, the ox and ass, outdid them. Those creatures take notice of, regard, and submit themselves to their masters and benefactors; but that was more than Israel did, whom God had nourished and brought up. So it is said, “The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled” (Psa 77:16), where He speaks of the Red Sea’s being divided, as if He had said, “They have experienced You, and felt Your power.” Hence it is said, “Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together” (Psa 98:8-9). These things are ascribed to inanimate creatures to stir up men to a desire after the coming of the Lord. So it is said, “The moon shall be confounded [or blush], and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion” (Isa 24:23). This intimates the light of divine grace in the church, as if He had said, “The glory of the sun and moon will be nothing if compared with the glory of Zion, and Him that rules in Zion.” So again, “The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isa 55:12), which signifies the spiritual joy in the kingdom of Christ.

### *The prophets and apostles are authoritative.*

We must always account the sayings of the prophets and apostles to be equally authentic with whatever Christ spoke Himself, and to have the same authority over men’s consciences as those things had over the church when God spoke to Moses mouth to mouth, except where the Apostle Paul says, “But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment” (1Co 7:6). And these sayings of the holy prophets and apostles ought to be so esteemed because they “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2Pe 1:21). And hence it is that Christ says he that hears His apostles and ministers hears Him, and he that despises them despises Him (Luk 10:16). And why is this, but because they spoke

by the Spirit of Christ. It is said that the old world that was drowned was disobedient to the Spirit of Christ which preached unto them (1Pe 3:18-20). But that is no other way to be understood than by their rejection of the doctrine of Noah, which he preached by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ. Therefore we must always account that the sayings of the prophets and apostles have the same authority as if Christ spoke to us directly.

*Look for explanation in the text.*

Sometimes things are spoken in the Scripture more darkly at first, which are afterwards in the same sentence manifestly explained, as where it is said, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isa 51:1). The words following explain the former: "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you." So Paul says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom 7:18). No good thing dwelling in me is explained by those words: "in my flesh." So when it is said, "God hath given them the spirit of slumber" (Rom 11:8), it is afterwards explained by not having eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

*Be clear.*

Let all your discourses be like Elihu's, who said that his lips should "utter knowledge clearly" (Job 33:3). Paul tells us he had rather speak five words in the church with his understanding, than his voice "might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue...Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air"...Who can say Amen to what I speak? If they understand it not, I shall be unto him to whom I speak a barbarian (1Co 14:19, 9, 16). Though this be spoken by Paul in reference to the interpretation of unknown tongues, yet it will hold here, because he that speaks unintelligibly in his own tongue, it is as if he spoke Hebrew and Greek to one that could never read. We must not deliver any sentence cloudily and darkly, as too many do, which partly arises from the weakness of men's abilities, and sometimes from pretending to speak in a lofty style that they may be the more admired and therefore darken counsel with "words without knowledge" (Job 38:2). As it is no sign of poor gifts and abilities when a person can bring down the knowledge of the deepest things in divinity to the understanding of the lowest capacity, so it is no argument of extraordinary abilities when a sentence that is plain and easy in its own nature shall be delivered cloudily and darkly. And seeing

that the uttering of things plainly is a gift from God, we ought to lie at the throne of grace for it.

### *Interpreting allegories*

Sometimes in the sacred Scriptures one thing is said when another thing is to be understood, otherwise than the literal interpretation shows. This the Apostle Paul calls an allegory. “He who was of the bondwoman [Hagar] was born after the flesh; but he [who was] of the freewoman was by promise. Which things [he says] are an allegory” (Gal 4:22-24). Then he tells us what the spiritual meaning is, for these are the two covenants. These two, Ishmael and Isaac, signify the two covenants: the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace, Isaac and Ishmael representing all converted and unconverted persons. The book of Solomon’s Song is generally allegorical and must be understood otherwise than as literally expressed; for the sweet communication between Christ and His church is set down in those expressions proper between husband and wife.

### *Emphatic expressions*

Those words in holy writ that are emphatical are to be emphatically expressed, with that earnest and intent manner of speaking as the nature of the thing calls for, or else the glory, profit, and affection in that word will be lost. When it is said, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (Joh 3:16), the emphasis lies in the word *so*, and if you repeat this word *so* twice or thrice with an emphasis and suitable affection, it may raise the affections of your hearers to great advantage. I think Mr. Charnock somewhere speaks to this purpose. Oh, this little word *so*, yet this ineffable *so*, this admirable *so*, this unparalleled *so*. And when it is said, “And God, even our own God, shall bless us” (Psa 67:6). And, “For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it” (Isa 48:11). Here the words “our own God” and “even for mine own sake” must be expressed emphatically, and with a raised affection.<sup>49</sup> Again, where the Holy Ghost lays down any word with an accent, we must so express it in our teaching, or else the design of that passage is not answered, as where it is said, “Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?” (Rom 11:35). Good old Mr. Row near thirty years ago says upon this passage thus: “The accent lies in this word *first*.” “Who hath *first* given to him?” Here you must lift up your voice and plainly accent the word that the people may

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<sup>49</sup> **affection** – passion; emotion.

the better know the sense. Who has first given to God? No man can give first to God to oblige Him to man, but God gives to man first to oblige the creature to his Creator. Hence it follows: “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom 11:36).

### *A part for the whole*

Sometimes the Scripture mentions but the part of a person or thing when it intends the whole, as where the apostle exhorts the Romans to present their bodies a living sacrifice, etc. (Rom 12:1). Though he mentions but the body, yet he intends the whole man, consisting of soul and body. Where the wise man speaks of the wicked, that “their feet run to evil” (Pro 1:16), by this the whole life and conversation is intended.

On the contrary, the whole of a man or thing is often mentioned when it intends but a part; as where Christ said to the thief on the cross, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luk 23:43). He mentions the whole man, soul and body, but he intended no more than the soul. When it is said that Adam was taken out of the dust—“Out of it wast thou taken,” saith God (Gen 3:19)—that was only the body, for God breathed his soul into him. When it is said, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen 3:19), it is not meant of the soul, for it cannot die, but only the body which was taken from the dust.

All is put for many, as, “All hold John as a prophet” (Mat 21:26), that is, many. None is put for a very few, as, “No man repented him of his wickedness” (Jer 8:6). And everlasting is put for a long time, as where the Aaronic priesthood is called an everlasting priesthood, which was to continue no longer than the coming of the Messiah.

### *The cause for the effect*

The Holy Ghost sometimes puts the cause of a thing for the effect; as, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num 32:23); that is, the punishment due to them. The cause here, sin, is put for the effect, punishment. Contrary to this, sometimes the effect is put for the cause, as when it was said to Rebecca, “Two nations are in thy womb” (Gen 25:23); that is, the fathers of two nations, Esau the father of the Idumaeans and Jacob the father of the Israelites. Again, the subject is sometimes put for the adjunct,<sup>50</sup> or that which belongs thereto, as where it is said, “This cup is the new testament in my blood” (1Co

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<sup>50</sup> **adjunct** – something related or connected to the primary subject.

11:25). Here the cup, the subject, is put for the wine in it, which signified the blood of Christ, called “the blood of the covenant.” On the contrary, sometimes the adjunct, or that which belongs to anything, is put for the subject, as Jacob is said to swear “by the fear of his father Isaac” (Gen 31:53), that is, by God Whom Isaac swore by.

### *Interpreting threatenings*

Where God’s threatenings are sometimes absolutely denounced, yet they are to be conditionally interpreted with a reservation of repentance, as in the case of Jonah to Nineveh. He proclaims His threatenings absolutely, saying, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jon 3:4), not mentioning any condition at all. However, this must be understood conditionally, because the event signified as much; for upon their repentance the threatening was made void. This is further strengthened by the saying of the prophet Jeremiah, who said, “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” (Jer 18:7-8).

### *Hyperboles*

The Holy Ghost, to exalt and set forth the grace of God in the most ample manner, makes use of that figure which some call an hyperbole.<sup>51</sup> No man had more of these than Paul. To encourage the suffering church of Corinth, he tells them that their light afflictions, which were but for a moment, did work for them “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:17). Here (says Mr. Leigh in his *Annotations on the New Testament*) is hyperbole upon hyperbole. One would have thought it enough if he had said an “eternal weight of glory,” but he adds, “a far more.” What can be more than eternal glory? But he does not stop here but goes on with “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” This shows the great transport of the apostle’s mind when he was thinking and speaking of the objects of the invisible world. So when he writes to Timothy, admiring the free grace of God in making a persecutor a preacher, he tells him that the grace of God “was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1Ti 1:14). It was exceeding abundant, as if he should say it was overfull, redundant, more than enough, superabundant; and this was manifested

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<sup>51</sup> **hyperbole** – form of speech that uses extravagance or exaggeration to make a point.

in faith and love, that such a one as I who hated Him and persecuted Him in His church should believe in Him and love Him. This may well be called unaccountable love; for He came into the world to save me, one of the chiefest of sinners. Now when such things as these are mentioned in public, they ought to be done with such suitable affection as the nature of the thing requires.

### *Extraordinary vs. ordinary prophecy*

When the Apostle Paul speaks of prophecy seven or eight times in one chapter, and exhorts the church of Corinth to desire and covet to prophesy, and tells them they may all prophesy one by one (1Co 14:1, 31, 39), we are not to understand it of extraordinary prophecy in a strict and proper sense, as the foretelling of things to come, as did Isaiah and Jeremiah, etc. Neither are we to understand it as an office to the church, but as a gift from God to interpret and expound the holy Scriptures; for it is not probable that the apostle would exhort the whole church to be officers. Moreover, the word *prophecy* is not limited to a foretelling of things. Prophecy is said by the apostle to consist in exhortation (1Co 14:3), which signifies a stirring up to duty, and sometimes in the New Testament for beseeching, entreating, comforting. Some are called in Scripture-sense prophets by way of resemblance, as the Scripture in general, and the gospel in particular, is called a “word of prophecy” (2Pe 1:19), yet a great part of it does not intend future events. Therefore, those who have a gift of Scripture interpretation may be so called by way of resemblance, though they cannot foretell things to come.

### *Raising doctrines from a passage*

We may raise as many doctrines from a scripture as it will truly bear; and all doctrines and inferences that are natural from any text are the purest divinity.<sup>52</sup> This was the way of the Scotch divines,<sup>53</sup> as you may see in their printed books. Let me give you an example from the first chapter to the Colossians, verse 12. The words are these: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet<sup>54</sup> to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” From these words, I collect seven or eight observations. The first doctrine is taken from the subject: “made us meet.”

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<sup>52</sup> **divinity** – theology.

<sup>53</sup> **divines** – ministers; theologians.

<sup>54</sup> **meet** – fit; suitable; qualified.

*Doctrine 1.* That it is matter of wonder that such are made meet for glory! Who are made meet for glory? I, once a persecutor, and you Colossians, who once served other gods, that God should make us meet for heaven is a wonder.

The second thing I collect is from the state of man by nature.

*Doctrine 2.* Man by nature is altogether unmeet for heaven. If man had been meet, the Spirit would not have said He “hath made us meet.”

Thirdly, from man’s impotency, I observe:

*Doctrine 3.* No man can make himself meet for the eternal inheritance; if any could, it would not have been said God did it.

Fourthly, from the efficient,<sup>55</sup> author, and worker of this meetness, I note:

*Doctrine 4.* That it is God alone can make men meet for an eternal inheritance.

Fifthly, I observe from the place or name.

*Doctrine 5.* That there is an inheritance prepared for the people of God.

Sixthly, From the act: “made...meet.”

*Doctrine 6.* That none shall enjoy heavenly bliss but those who are first made meet for it.

Seventhly, from the adjunct: “saints in light.”

*Doctrine 7.* That the souls of believers in their separate state from their bodies are in an inheritance in light.

Eighthly, from the duty and obligation of the subject to the object, I note:

*Doctrine 8.* That it is the duty of all who are made meet for heaven to give thanks to the Father. Mark one thing: though it be said that we should give thanks to the Father, yet that does not exclude the Son or the Holy Ghost, but it is to the Father as the fountain of grace, to the Son as the procurer of grace, to the Holy Spirit as the applier of grace.

Every doctrine is to be handled according as it will bear; some afford more matter, others not so much, and proper uses are to be made upon each doctrine.

### *Some recommended books*

I would recommend some few books to the consideration especially of those inclined to the ministry:

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<sup>55</sup> **efficient** – agent; cause.

Pool's,<sup>56</sup> the Dutch,<sup>57</sup> and Diodati's<sup>58</sup> *Annotations*, Caryl<sup>59</sup> on Job, Mr. Charnock's<sup>60</sup> two volumes, Mr. Perkin's<sup>61</sup> *Works*, Roberts's<sup>62</sup> *Key*, Leigh's<sup>63</sup> *Body of Divinity*, Wilson's<sup>64</sup> *Dictionary*, Mr. Burroughs's<sup>65</sup> *Works*, Dr. Sibbes's<sup>66</sup> *Works*, Dr. Reynolds's<sup>67</sup> *Works*, Dr. Preston's<sup>68</sup> *Works*, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Ames's<sup>69</sup> *Marrow of Divinity*, Grosse's<sup>70</sup> *Fiery Pillar of Heavenly Truth*, Dr. Owen<sup>71</sup> on the Trinity, Bates's<sup>72</sup> *Harmony*, Coles<sup>73</sup> on *Sovereignty*; books of the Scotch divines, Durham<sup>74</sup> on the Canticles, Ten Commandments, Revelation, Isaiah 53, and of scandal; Dickson<sup>75</sup> on the Psalms, Matthew, and I think on the epistles; Hutcheson<sup>76</sup> on the minor prophets, and John's Gospel, etc.;

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<sup>56</sup> **Matthew Poole** (1624-1679) – English Nonconformist theologian and biblical commentator.

<sup>57</sup> *The Dutch Annotations Upon the Whole Bible* by **Theodore Haak** (1605-1690) – German Calvinist scholar.

<sup>58</sup> **Giovanni (John) Diodati** (1576-1649) – Swiss professor and pastor.

<sup>59</sup> **Joseph Caryl** (1602-1673) – English Puritan preacher; born in London.

<sup>60</sup> **Stephen Charnock** (1628-1680) – English Presbyterian Puritan pastor; author of *The Existence and Attributes of God*.

<sup>61</sup> **William Perkins** (1558-1602) – Puritan preacher and theologian educated at Cambridge and sometimes called the “Father of Puritanism”; his works are being reprinted by Reformation Heritage Books.

<sup>62</sup> **Francis Roberts** (1609-1675) – Puritan pastor; author of *Clavis Bibliorum, the Key of the Bible*.

<sup>63</sup> **Edward Leigh** (1602-1671) – Puritan pastor; author of *A Systeme or Body of Divinity*.

<sup>64</sup> **Thomas Wilson** (1563-1622) – Puritan pastor and author of *A Christian Dictionarie*.

<sup>65</sup> **Jeremiah Burroughs** (1599-1646) – English Congregationalist and well-known Puritan preacher.

<sup>66</sup> **Richard Sibbes** (1577-1635) – Anglican Puritan theologian.

<sup>67</sup> **Edward Reynolds** (1599-1676) – Anglican bishop of Norwich and author.

<sup>68</sup> **John Preston** (1587-1628) – Anglican minister and master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

<sup>69</sup> **William Ames** (1576-1633) – English Puritan minister and philosopher.

<sup>70</sup> **Alexander Grosse** (c. 1596-1654) – English Puritan pastor.

<sup>71</sup> **John Owen** (1616-1683) – English Nonconformist church leader and theologian.

<sup>72</sup> **William Bates** (1625-1699) – English Presbyterian minister; author of *Harmony of the Divine Attributes*.

<sup>73</sup> **Elisha Coles** (c. 1608-1688) – English college servant and official in the University of Oxford; known as the author of *A Practical Discourse of God's Sovereignty: with other Material Points deriving thence*.

<sup>74</sup> **James Durham** (1622-1658) – Scottish pastor and author.

<sup>75</sup> **David Dickson** (1583-1663) – Scottish Presbyterian pastor and author.

<sup>76</sup> **George Hutcheson** (d. 1678) – Scottish Presbyterian preacher and author.

Calvin's *Institutes*, Ursinus's <sup>77</sup> Catechism, Burgess's <sup>78</sup> *Works*, Ainsworth<sup>79</sup> on the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Canticles, Erasmus<sup>80</sup> on the New Testament, Tomb's *Works*, Dr. Willet's<sup>81</sup> *Works*, Bishop Usher's <sup>82</sup> *Body of Divinity*, Newman's *Concordance*, Roberts's <sup>83</sup> *Mystery and Marrow of the Bible*, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened*, Dr. Du Veil's <sup>84</sup> *Literal Explanation of the Acts*, Clark's *Examples*, Plutarch's <sup>85</sup> *Morals*, Seneca's <sup>86</sup> *Morals*, Pliny's <sup>87</sup> *Natural History*, Eusebius, <sup>88</sup> Josephus, <sup>89</sup> Heylin's <sup>90</sup> *Cosmography*, Boyle's <sup>91</sup> *Style of Scripture*, Blundeville's<sup>92</sup> *Logic*, Smith's and Delaune's *Rhetoric*. And those who are not skilled in the Latin tongue, for the understanding of words, make use of Mr. Cole's<sup>93</sup> Latin and English dictionaries. What books you buy, get the best tables<sup>94</sup> to them you can, which may be used in some respects as a commonplace book; <sup>95</sup> and a good commonplace book of a man's own making will be necessary in a study.

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<sup>77</sup> **Zacharias Ursinus** (1534-1583) – German Reformed theologian; author and interpreter of the Heidelberg Catechism.

<sup>78</sup> **Anthony Burgess** (1600-1663) – English Puritan pastor.

<sup>79</sup> **Henry Ainsworth** (1571-1622) – English Nonconformist clergyman and scholar.

<sup>80</sup> **Desiderius Erasmus** (1466-1536) – Dutch philosopher and Catholic theologian.

<sup>81</sup> **Andrew Willet** (1562-1621) – English Anglican clergyman.

<sup>82</sup> **James Ussher** (1581-1656) – Irish archbishop and scholar.

<sup>83</sup> **Francis Roberts** (1609-1675) – English Puritan clergyman, author, and librarian.

<sup>84</sup> **Charles-Marie de Veil** (1630-1685) – converted Jew who ministered as a Catholic, Anglican, and then as a Baptist.

<sup>85</sup> **Plutarch** (c. 46-c. 119) – Greek Middle Platonist philosopher and historian.

<sup>86</sup> **Seneca** (c. 4 BC-AD 65) – Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, and dramatist.

<sup>87</sup> **Pliny** (23-79) – Roman author, naturalist, and natural philosopher.

<sup>88</sup> **Eusebius of Caesarea** (c. 260-339) – Greek Christian historian, exegete, and bishop.

<sup>89</sup> **Josephus** (c. 37-c. 100) – Romano-Jewish historian and military leader.

<sup>90</sup> **Peter Heylin** (1599-1662) – English preacher and author.

<sup>91</sup> **Robert Boyle** (1627-1691) – Anglo-Irish philosopher and writer.

<sup>92</sup> **Thomas Blundeville** (c. 1522-c. 1606) – English humanist writer and mathematician.

<sup>93</sup> **Elisha Coles** (c. 1640-1680) – English lexicographer and stenographer.

<sup>94</sup> **tables** – indexes; tables of contents; synopses.

<sup>95</sup> **commonplace book** – Dating back at least to the time of the Greek philosophers, students were encouraged to compile a “commonplace book” throughout their lifetime. The book served as a personal collection of quotations, allusions, or illustrations to aid them in writing and public speaking.

## 7. An Additional Word to the Churches

### *a. The necessity of a gospel ministry*

Let the *necessity of a gospel ministry* lie with weight upon your hearts. That there is such a necessity appears from a special institution of God, Who is said to have set or constituted teachers in His church (1Co 12:28; Eph 4:11; Mat 9:38; Jer 3:15; Col 4:17; Act 20:28) and has given them to her as a part of her dowry. These are sent forth by the Lord of the harvest, Who alone gives pastors to the church. The ministry is received of the Lord, and it is the Holy Ghost that makes them overseers. Now that which God has instituted and appointed in His church ought to be accounted necessary, and therefore a gospel ministry ought to be so esteemed.

### *b. Titles given to ministers in Scripture*

The *titles given to ministers* signify services of absolute necessity, which the Scripture calls by many names, but not intending any preeminence in office. They are called *elders* to signify their gravity, decent and reverend behavior; at other times *bishops*, *overseers*, *watchmen*, because their work is to take the oversight of the church and watch for their souls (Act 20:28; Heb 13:17). They are also called *pastors*, because they are to feed the flock with the words of eternal life (Jer 3:15). Also they are called *stewards* of the mysteries of God (1Co 4:1). Sometimes they are called *angels*, *ambassadors*, persons sent from God to publish peace (Rev 1:20; 2Co 5:20). Moreover, they are called *planters* and *builders* (1Co 3:7-9). All these metaphorical expressions signify services of absolute necessity. Therefore, let every church look to it that such officers be continued in the church.

### *c. Necessary ordinances*

There are *necessary ordinances* to be administered in the church of Christ till the end of the world; therefore, ministers are necessary. They are to proclaim remission of sins in Christ's name, to press the doctrine of repentance from dead works and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They are to bring good tidings to the meek, turning men from darkness to light, speaking a word in season to the weary, edifying the body of Christ and perfecting the saints, nourishing men in the words of faith. The word of reconciliation is committed to them (Act 13:38; Heb 6:1-2; Rom 10:15; Act 26:18; Isa 50:4; Eph 4:11-12; 2Co 5:20), the administration of baptism, and the Lord's Supper. All these are

necessary in the church, and therefore all churches ought to imitate the apostles, who took a special care for a standing ministry in the church; hence they took care to ordain elders in every church. So Paul exhorted Timothy to commit the things he had heard of him to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also. And Paul tells Titus, “Left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest...ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Ti 1:5).

Shall (as one says) the Babylonians have their Chaldeans,<sup>1</sup> the Persians their magi,<sup>2</sup> the Indians their Brachmanni,<sup>3</sup> the Gauls their Druidae,<sup>4</sup> the Romans their pontifices,<sup>5</sup> augurs,<sup>6</sup> and flamines,<sup>7</sup> persons separated to uphold a false worship; and shall not the church of God have their ministers to uphold a true worship?<sup>8</sup>

#### *d. The need for spiritual knowledge in pastors*

Let the churches be cautioned for the honor of God, the glory of the cause in their hands, and the good of their own souls, against calling to office an ignorant, unlearned, unexperienced person. “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth” (Mal 2:7). Pastors are to feed the people “with knowledge and understanding” (Jer 3:15). Paul tells the Ephesians when they come to read his writings they should understand his “knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Eph 3:4). When the blind lead the blind, they both fall into a ditch (Mat 15:14). It was Jeroboam’s sin to make some “of the lowest of the people” priests (1Ki 12:31). But when I say beware of calling unlearned men, I mean such unlearned as Peter speaks of, who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2Pe 3:16). Peter did not mean, by unlearned men, men who lacked human learning; for then, as one says, he must of necessity condemn himself. For he was a man, in

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<sup>1</sup> **Chaldeans** – priests educated in the classical Babylonian literature, especially in traditions of astronomy and astrology.

<sup>2</sup> **magi** – priests in Zoroastrianism and the earlier religions of the western Iranians.

<sup>3</sup> **Brachmanni** – probably refers to Brahmins, who were Hindu priests.

<sup>4</sup> **Druidae** [druids] – religious leaders and members of the high-ranking class in ancient Celtic cultures.

<sup>5</sup> **pontifices** – priests in ancient Rome.

<sup>6</sup> **augurs** – religious officials in ancient Rome who observed natural signs, especially the behavior of birds, interpreting these as an indication of divine approval or disapproval of a proposed action.

<sup>7</sup> **flamines** – priests of the ancient Roman religion who were assigned to one of eighteen deities.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Reynolds, *The Pastoral Office, Opened in a Visitation-Sermon Preached at Ipswich, October 10, 1662* (London, 1663), 18.

the sense of the great council, that lacked this learning (Act 4:13), so that he must lie under that blame which he lays upon others. But to be learned in Peter's sense was to be taught of God as the truth is in Jesus, and by the Spirit to understand the deep things of God (Eph 4:20-21; 1Co 2:10), and through a saving knowledge of Christ to be well established, in opposition to those unstable ones he speaks of.

They must be men zealous for the glory of God, sensible of the interest of souls, exemplary to the flock, able to speak experimentally<sup>9</sup> of the ways of God, of the devices of Satan, and the deceit of lust, and the consequences and results of temptations, and to understand the consolations of the Holy Spirit. [A pastor must be] a person of such able gifts as that he may be apt to teach and speak a word in season, to show a man his uprightness, to convince gainsayers, and to use sound speech which cannot be condemned (1Ti 3:2; Isa 50:4; Job 33:23; Ti 1:11; 2:8). Thus his teaching is to be divine teaching.

The Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles in the day of Pentecost to fit them for this glorious work. That unction and divine anointing which may make a person a true believer may not be sufficient to make him a minister. The Holy Ghost is called "the promise of the Father" (Act 1:4-8), not only as to make persons believers, but to make them ministers by a divine power from on high, that they may be the better able to be witnesses for Christ and serve His church. It is not enough to have the Thummim of integrity, but we must also have the Urim of knowledge.

#### *e. Qualifications to the pastoral office*

This leads me to a word of exhortation, that all the churches may take great care to choose pastors after God's own heart. And here I shall explain the qualifications belonging to that office, mentioned by Paul to Timothy and Titus.

He must be *blameless* (1Ti 3:2; Ti 1:6), not absolutely without sin, for that is proper alone to the triumphant church; but he must be such a one as has no notable blemish or scandalous offence in his life, lest his ministerial work should lack success; for it is necessary that he who requires innocence in others should have it in himself. Who will give credit to that man whose doctrine and life do not harmonize?

He must be "*the husband of one wife*" (1Ti 3:2; Ti 1:6), because chastity is very commendable in an elder. It is not absolutely necessary

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<sup>9</sup> **experimentally** – experientially.

that he should be a married man, but supposing him so, he must be the husband of one wife. The meaning of the apostle is: he must not be a lover of polygamy, that is, to have more wives than one at a time, as many of the Jews and heathen of the eastern nations; for this is contrary to the institution of marriage. This also includes such who had put away their wives for very slight things and taken others, which the Jews often did from the hardness of their hearts, though utterly forbidden by Christ, except in the case of adultery.

*“Vigilant” and Watchful* (1Ti 3:2). He is to be one that diligently attends his flock, being prudent and circumspect, that will not be long absent from them, nor sluggish when with them, lest the foxes take the sheep before the shepherd be aware.

*“Of good behavior”* (1Ti 3:2). That is, he must be of a comely and decent behavior in countenance, walk, and speech; not a proud person that despises others, nor one that is morose, who cannot accommodate himself to others; moderate in all his actions, as opposed to distemper and giddiness.

*“Given to hospitality”* (1Ti 3:2); a lover of it (Ti 1:8). It is not enough that he be kind at home, but he must express his love to strangers, especially ministers who may be in distress, and all others where need is. He ought to be an example in all offices of kindness and charity; and that this qualification may not be useless, it is the duty of all churches (if able) so to furnish their ministers, as it may be answered.<sup>10</sup>

*“Apt to teach”* (1Ti 3:2). To this end he must be first well furnished with the knowledge of the mysteries of God himself, and then ready to communicate to others the knowledge he received from God. His teaching must not be Jewish fables and high swelling philosophy of this world, but those things that make truly godly.

*“Not given to wine”* (1Ti 3:3). He must be a temperate<sup>11</sup> person, not one that loves to sit by the wine morning and evening, day by day, though he may not drink to the loss of his reason. He must be one that sets himself an example of mortification to sensual delights.

*“No striker”* (Ti 1:7). He is to be one that uses no violence, one that abhors strife and contention; no quarreler, one that cannot by reason of passion keep his hands off from those that provoke him.

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<sup>10</sup> **to furnish...answered** – to support them generously so they can practice hospitality.

<sup>11</sup> **temperate** – moderate in the indulgence of the appetites and passions.

*“Not greedy of filthy lucre”* (1Ti 3:3) but detesting all unjust and sordid ways of heaping up riches; not one that professes godliness for gain’s sake, or that loves money with an inordinate love. He must not be liable to a just suspicion of undertaking his charge from a principle of covetousness but should desire the office for the sake of Christ and the good of the souls of men.

*“Not a brawler”* (1Ti 3:3) but one of a quiet, peaceable disposition.

*“Patient”* (1Ti 3:3). He should be one that is very ready sometimes to depart from his own right of profit and honor in the church and world for peace’s sake; not apt to be angry, but peaceable.

*“Not covetous”* (1Ti 3:3): not a lover of silver. The Archbishop of Mentz<sup>12</sup> is a terrible example of covetousness, who in derision called the poor people mice, and allowing them in a time of scarcity to perish like mice with hunger, by the just judgment of God was invaded by mice and, flying to his tower on the River Rhine for shelter, was pursued by them and devoured.

*“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection”* (1Ti 3:4), who are willing to be under the yoke. Let him be one who has given experiment by the rule of his own family, the lesser, that he is capable to govern the church, which is the greater.

*“Not a novice”* (1Ti 3:6), not a young plant or scholar in Christ’s school, lacking experience of God himself, and [of] the wiles of Satan. This is not meant of one young in years, but faith. Timothy was young in years when he was ordained elder of the church at Ephesus, but not young in grace. A person young in point of years may have more knowledge and experience than some gray-headed Christians. No person that is raw and green and not well established in religion should be admitted to this honor, lest this great dignity tempt him to pride and so bring the same upon him as fell upon Satan.

*“He must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”* (1Ti 3:7). He must be of good report among them who are without the pale of the church because the glory of God is much concerned in the reputation of such persons, that they may not be reproached for their former infamous life, and so cause him to fall into some temptation, either of revenge and hatred, undue anger, or passion, or else to make him cowardly and bashful in the

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<sup>12</sup> **Hatto II** (died 18 January 970) – archbishop of Mainz from 968 to 970; the story may be a legend.

discharge of his duty, and so remove that holy boldness necessary to his function.

Paul to Titus speaks of one qualification more: He must not be *self-willed* (Ti 1:7), stubborn, confident, one that pleases himself in his own mind, and will have his own way, right or wrong, come what will.

*f. Ask God to send more laborers.*

Let the churches be exhorted to go to the Lord of the harvest to *beseech Him that He would send more laborers* into His harvest (Mat 9:37-38). What abundance of able ministers has God removed out of this city these last thirty years? And it is well if the churches can say that their places are all filled up. Pray hard that God would send Joshuas and Elishas in the room of those Moseses and Elijahs which He has removed.

*g. Respect your pastors.*

Give that honor and respect to your ministers and pastors that God allows. God accounts it an honorable position (Heb 5:4). If honor is to be given to a king, who is a protector of the body, shall they be denied it that watch for men's souls? It is the apostle's counsel to the church at Thessalonica to "know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly...for their work's sake" (1Th 5:12-13). "Let the elders," says Paul, "that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1Ti 5:17). So, he says, "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves" (Heb 13:17): not that they are "lords over God's heritage" (1Pe 5:3), to be ruled in a lordly way, and by force and rigor, seeing they are a voluntary people, and to be governed with their own consent.

*h. Pray for your pastors.*

Bless God for those faithful ministers He has given you. Take heed you do not sin them away and the gospel together. Provoke not God to send a famine of the Word (Amo 8:11-12) and remove the gospel from England and London, as He did from Jerusalem (Mat 21:43) and the churches in Asia and Africa. Even there where the gospel did once gloriously shine, those very places are overspread with heathenism and Islam. Pray that the Word may have free course and may run and be glorified in the sinner's conversion and saint's perfection (2Th 3:1-2). God has promised to take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh; but, He says, for these things I will be sought unto by the house

of Israel (Eze 36:26-27), the church of God. And if we find the womb of conversion much shut up, it is good for the church to set apart a day of humiliation upon that account and to pray that a door of faith may be opened (Act 14:27). Some can speak by experience that God has owned this practice. Beg for greater degrees of His Holy Spirit to be poured upon your ministers, that God would give them a double portion, that they may every way answer their honorable titles, who are called “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mat 5:13-16).

*i. The importance of ordination*

Be exhorted ever more to maintain and not lose that blessed ordinance of ordination and calling those to office who are fit for it. Some have been probationers<sup>13</sup> all their days; and it is matter of lamentation that some churches have employed persons in preaching and administering ordinances ten or twenty years, though fitly qualified, and yet never called them to office. And though in my epistle I have proved the lawfulness, yea, and the necessity of preaching in ordinary before ordination, yet I did never intend by that to destroy a gospel ordinance, that is, a solemn ordination to office. Though it is most true that the Holy Ghost makes men overseers of the church, and that gifts and graces are from Christ (which is his internal call); yet he ought to have an external call by the church, to ordain him to office. The inward call enables him to act in that station; the outward call enables him to act regularly.<sup>14</sup> Though a gospel minister has authority and right, being qualified by Christ, to act, yet he does not have a full formal authority to act in a church, except as by them called and ordained unto it. We ought to have a zeal for all the commands of God. Why should we not be as careful in this matter as the apostles who ordained elders in every church? (Act 14:23). And Paul exhorts Titus to “ordain elders in every city” (Ti 1:5). We see by this it was the apostles’ judgment and great care that every church have an elder. This is as much the Word of God and to be practiced as there is occasion as baptism and the Lord’s Supper. And therefore this looks severely upon all those churches who live year after year without a pastor, which is the great reason of the scattering of the flock.

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<sup>13</sup> **probationers** – serving a probationary or trial period in ministry.

<sup>14</sup> **regularly** – according to rule; regulated by the direction of God’s Word.

### *j. Imposition of hands*

Ever retain and never part with that rite and ceremony in *ordination of imposition of hands*, with prayer, on the person ordained (1Ti 4:14). Some think that the ceremony of laying on of hands may be omitted. Sometimes we must be tied to example in the least gesture, though not prescribed, and yet men presume to dispense in a circumstance expressly prescribed. Timothy was ordained by laying on of hands and enjoined by Paul to lay hands on others in their ordination. This has been the ordinary way of the ordination of ministers in the church of God. Thus were the seven deacons in the church at Jerusalem ordained (Act 6:6). Of Paul and Barnabas it is said, "When they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" to preach, being called of God to that work (Act 13:3). 'Tis a saying of Dr. Seaman: "When I consider," he says, "how uniform and accurate the apostles were in observing [imposition of hands] in the matter of ordination, and that we have no instance or example of their ordaining otherwise...I judge it sinful for any who desire the office of a minister to refuse it, and scandalous in any church willfully to throw it aside."<sup>15</sup> And though imposition of hands is not mentioned in the 14th chapter of the Acts, where it is said they ordained them elders in every city, yet we ought to conclude they were ordained by laying on of hands, because we find in other places of Scripture it was the common practice of the apostles and churches in ordination of ministers and deacons. Please mark: Those Scriptures which speak more generally and indefinitely of any matter are always to be governed by those that speak of the same thing more definitely, particularly, plainly, and fully, as when Christ in Luke 6:20 saith, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." This indefinite word *poor* is not to be understood of all poor, because there are some poor who are very wicked; therefore it is to be understood by a text more ample, full, and plain, as Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." So in Luke 6:21: "Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled," this is to be governed and understood according to Matthew 5:6: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." So in like manner, where imposition of hands is not mentioned in ordination, as Acts 14:23, it is to be governed by those Scriptures which speak of the same

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<sup>15</sup> Lazarus Seaman, *The ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ Proved to be ΠΑΡΑΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ, Or, A Vindication of the Judgement of the Reformed Churches, and Protestant Divines, From misrepresentations Concerning Ordination, and Laying on of hands* (London: John Rothwell, 1647), 67.

thing in a more ample, full, and plain manner (Act 6:6; 13:3; 1Ti 4:14; 5:22). In all these passages imposition of hands is mentioned in ordination of elders and deacons.

Moreover, persons were set apart to ecclesiastical service and had office power conferred upon them under the Old Testament by the ceremony of laying on of hands. For it is expressly said by God to Moses that he should lay his hands on Joshua (Num 27:18), and that the children of Israel should lay their hands upon the Levites as they stood before the tabernacle of the congregation (Num 8:9-10). And to suppose that the apostles did practice this ceremony without God's approbation would make them guilty of will-worship. But whereas it is objected that, because extraordinary things do not follow that practice, as in the apostles' time, therefore that practice is ceased, I answer, by this way of arguing we shall lose most of the great ordinances of the gospel. What! Because we cannot shake the place in prayer as Peter did, does prayer cease? Because the Holy Ghost does not come down while we are preaching upon our hearers in a miraculous manner, as it did upon Cornelius and his household while Peter preached, is it therefore made void? Moreover, baptism must cease too, because it is not miraculously confirmed as it was at Christ's baptism, when the Holy Ghost came down upon Him in the shape of a dove, and a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mat 3:17). If it be said those must remain because commanded, though such extraordinary things do not follow, then from the same argument, laying on of hands must continue, unless you suppose the apostles guilty of will-worship, as we said before.

This rite and ceremony of imposition of hands conveys the following: 1) A dedication and devoting the person to the office of a pastor and sacred employment; 2) To let them know that the hand of God is with them in all that they do in His name, and by His authority, to guide, strengthen, and protect them; 3) And imploring the gifts, blessing, protection, and custody of the Holy Spirit upon them in a most plentiful manner, as being to take charge of the souls of others.

*k. Take care of your pastors' physical needs.*

Finally, be exhorted that as your ministers take care of your souls, you would *take care of their bodies and families*. The same shepherd that watches over the flock is clothed and fed by the flock. They are bound to take care of your souls, which is the greater. You ought to take care of their bodies, which is the lesser.

God has made it your duty by a divine command. “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1Co 9:14). God’s commands are not to be disputed but obeyed. You would have your pastors obey God’s command in feeding your souls, and will you not have respect to God’s command in feeding their bodies? Must he be obliged to obey Christ for the flock’s sake, and shall not the flock make conscience to obey Christ for the shepherd’s sake? Levi was to have a tenth part under the Law of what the people had, not that I say that law remains now in force, though the equitableness of it may.

Consider it is the honor of churches to provide for their ministers. Yea, it is an honor to your Lord and Master and the cause which you own. We are exhorted to honor God with our substance, and God has added this promise: “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty” (Pro 3:9-10), not that it is expected where it is not to be had. No, there the minister must be free himself to help the needy, if he be able. But where God has blessed any with the things of this world, it is their duty to give him part of their temporals, who gives them of his spirituals. This is the way to thrive in soul and body. Where the people kept back their tithes, God tells them that they robbed Him; and to encourage them in their duty, He promises to open the windows of heaven, and to pour out a blessing, that there should not be room enough to receive it (Mal 3:8-11). And though this law has ceased as we said before, yet the morality and equity of it will never cease. And so the blessing may be expected as persons are found in their duty; and it is observed that those are the most thriving and flourishing churches in city and country that make conscience to provide honorably for their ministers.

See how the apostle argues this point: No man goes to war on his own charge, but the nation’s; and he that plants a vineyard would think it very hard if he did not eat the fruit of it (1Co 9:7-14). And that shepherd that feeds and looks after his flock expects from them wool to clothe him, and meat to feed him. Has God taken care of the unreasonable creature, that the ox should not be muzzled when he treadeth out the corn (Deu 25:4)? How much more should they be provided for who tread out the corn and break the bread of eternal life? Shall the plowman plough in hope, and the thresher be partaker of his hope, and shall not he that ministers about the holy things live of the things of the temple, and they that attend on the altar partake of the altar? If therefore we minister to you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal?

Moreover, you know not what temptations a man and his family, his wife and children, may be under in the neglect of your duty. It may cause the children to have hard thoughts of the ways and people of God and set them against the truth if great care be not taken. Lay them not under temptation by allowing them to run into debt. That will be no honor to you, nor comfort to him. It is the most dishonorable thing in the world to let ministers run into debt. Because of this the gospel may lack that success that otherwise it might have. It takes men of tender consciences off from that holy boldness which they ought to have in pressing moral duties. Perhaps he may have abilities to get the things of the world as well as others, and so might lay up for his children; but his hands being bound, and his time taken up in better things, it is a pity the children of ministers should be slighted, when their father lays out his time and strength for the good of the congregation.

Thus I have thought it fitting to stir you up by putting you in remembrance of those duties you are obliged unto as you are the churches of Christ. Let this counsel be accepted from him who, if his heart deceive him not, desires, if called thereunto, that he may be willing to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the churches' faith (Phi 2:17). For if Christ laid down His life for us who were enemies (1Jo 3:16), surely we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, especially when it has a tendency to strengthen their faith, and help them forward to heaven.

