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P L A N

O F

ACADEMICAL PREPARATION

F O R T H E

M I N I S T R Y,

I N A

*American*  
*K*

L E T T E R T O A F R I E N D,

Quin & piorum mentibus mysteria,  
Contempta pravis, impiè sapientibus  
Occulta, Dominus luce proferat sua,  
Et sacrosancti fœderis scientiam  
Docebit.

BUCH. Pf. xxv.

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable.

JAMES iii. 27.

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DEAR SIR,

I AM not the son of a prophet, nor was I bred up among the Prophets. I am quite a stranger to what passes within the walls of Colleges and Academies. I was as one born out of due time, and led, under the secret guidance of the Lord, by very unusual steps, to preach the faith which I once laboured to destroy. Since you know all this, how could you think of applying to me for the plan of an academical institution? Yet I confess the design you mentioned to me, in which some of your friends have thoughts of engaging, is so important in my view, that I am willing to come as near to your wishes as I can. I must not pretend to dictate a plan for the business  
B which

which is now in contemplation. But if you will allow me to indulge a sort of reverie, and suppose myself a person of some consequence in Utopia, where I could have the modelling of every thing to my own mind; and that I was about to form an Academy there, for the sole purpose of educating young men for the Ministry of the Gospel—in this way I am willing to offer you my thoughts upon the subject with great simplicity and freedom. And if any of the regulations of my imaginary academy, should be judged applicable to your design, you and your friends will be heartily welcome to them.

I should then, *suppositis supponendis*, in the first place, lay down two or three important maxims, which I would hope never to lose sight of in the conduct of the affair: expecting that, if I should begin without them, I must stumble at the very threshold; and that whenever I should neglect them afterwards, all my care, and labour, and expence would be for that time thrown away.

My first maxim is, That none but He who made the World can make a Minister of the Gospel. If a young man has capacity; culture and application may make him a Scholar, a Philosopher, or an Orator. But a true Minister must have certain principles,  
motives,

motives, feelings, and aims, which no industry or endeavours of men, can either acquire or communicate. They must be given from above, or they cannot be received.

I adopt as a second maxim, That the Holy Scriptures are both comprehensively and exclusively, the grand treasury of all that knowledge which is requisite and sufficient, to make the Minister, the Man of God, thoroughly furnished for every branch of his office. If indeed no other studies were of subordinate importance, in order to a right understanding of the Scriptures, and especially to those who are not only to know for themselves, but are appointed to teach others also; then academical instruction would be needless, and I might supply my young men with every thing at once, by putting the Bible into their hands, and directing them to read it continually with attention and prayer. But my meaning is, that though there is such a concatenation in knowledge, that every branch of science may, by a judicious application, be rendered subservient to a Minister's great design; yet no attainments in philology, philosophy, or in any or all the particulars which constitute the aggregate of what we call *Learning*, can in the least contribute to form a Minister of the Gospel, any farther than he is taught of God to refer them to, and to regulate them by the Scripture as a Standard. On the

contrary, the more a man is furnished with this kind of apparatus, unless the leading truths of Scripture reign and flourish in his heart, he will be but the more qualified to perplex himself, and to mislead his hearers.

My third maxim is an inference from the two former. That the true Gospel Minister who possesses these secondary advantages, though he may know the same things, and acquire his knowledge by the like methods, as other scholars do, yet he must know and possess them in a manner peculiar to himself. His Criticisms, if he be a Critic, will discover something which the greatest skill in grammatical niceties cannot of itself reach. If he be an Orator, he will not speak in the artificial self-applauding language of man's wisdom, but in simplicity and with authority, like one who feels the ground he stands upon, and knows to whom he belongs, and whom he serves. If he mentions a passage of history, it will not be to shew his reading, but to illustrate or prove his point; and it will be evident from his manner of speaking, that though he may have taken the facts from Tacitus or Robertson, his knowledge of the springs of human action, and of the superintendency of a Divine Providence, is derived from the word of God. And so of other instances.

In a word, if a young man was to consult me, how he might be wise and learned  
in



in the usual sense of the words, I might advise him to repair to Oxford or Cambridge, or to twenty other places which I could name. But if I thought him really desirous of becoming wise to win souls, I would invite him to my New College in Utopia.

From these general observations I proceed more directly to my subject. You are then to suppose that I have taken my determination and counted the cost, and am now sitting down to contrive my plan. As a little attention to method may not be amiss, I shall endeavour to range my thoughts under four principal heads, concerning,

1. The place.
2. The tutor.
3. The choice of pupils.
4. The course of education.

I. And first, (as preachers sometimes say) of the first. If the Metropolis of Utopia should be any thing like ours, there are obvious reasons to forbid my fixing upon a spot very near it. I think not nearer than a moderate day's journey. Nor would I wish it much farther distant. Occasional visits to a great city, where there are many considerable Ministers and Christians, should not be rendered impracticable; as they might furnish my young men with opportunities of forming connections and making observations,

that might contribute to their usefulness in future life. But *procul ab urbe* will be my maxim. I should not only fear lest they should be contaminated by the vices which too generally prevail where men live in a throng: if they escaped these, I should still have apprehensions, lest the notice that might be taken of them, and the respect shewn them by well-meaning friends, should imperceptibly seduce them into a spirit of self-importance, give them a turn for dress and company, and spoil that simplicity and dependance, without which I could have little hope of their success. I would wish it may be their grand aim to please the Lord, and under him and for his sake to please their Tutor. They have as yet no business with other people. Their Tutor must be to them, *instar omnium*. Him they must love, reverence and obey, and accurately watch his looks and every intimation of his will. But to secure this point, or even to have a reasonable prospect of attaining it, methinks it seems necessary to say, *Procul, procul ab urbe juvenes!* But the difference between a rural and a town situation is so striking at first view, that I suppose it quite needless to say more upon this head. I therefore proceed,

II. To the choice of my Tutor. Whoever he may be, when I have found him,  
and

and fixed him, I will take the liberty to tell him, that he is called to the most honourable and important office that Man, in the present state of things, is capable of. The skilful and faithful Tutor is not only useful to his pupils, considered as individuals, but he is remotely the instrument of all the blessings and benefits which the Lord is pleased to communicate by their ministry, in the course of their stated and occasional labours to the end of life. On the other hand, the errors and prejudices of an incompetent Tutor, adopted and perpetuated by his disciples, may produce a long progression of evil consequences, which may continue to operate and multiply when he and they are dead and forgotten. For if the streams which are to spread far and wide throughout a land are poisoned in the very source, who can foresee how far the mischief may be diffused. Unless therefore I can procure a proper Tutor, I must give up my design. It is better the youth should remain untaught, than that they should be taught to do wrong.

And I seem not easily satisfied on this head. My idea of the person to whom I could cheerfully entrust the care of my Academy, is not of an ordinary size. He seems to be one,

—Qualem nequeo monstrare, ac sentio tantum—



However, since we are upon Utopian ground, where we may imagine as largely as we please, I will attempt to delineate him. And were I to recommend a Tutor to your friends, it should be the man who I thought came the nearest to the character I am about to describe.

For his first essential indispensable qualification, I require, a mind deeply penetrated with a sense of the grace, glory, and efficacy of the Gospel. However learned and able in other respects, he shall not have a single pupil from me, unless I have reason to believe, that his heart is attached to the person of the Redeemer as God-Man; that as a sinner his whole dependance is upon the Redeemer's work of love, his obedience unto death, his intercession and mediatorial fulness. His sentiments must be clear and explicit respecting the depravity of human nature, and the necessity and reality of the agency of the Holy Spirit, to quicken, enlighten, sanctify and seal those who, under his influence, are led to Jesus for Salvation. With respect to the different schemes or systems of Divinity which obtain amongst those who are united in the acknowledgment of the above fundamental truths, I should look for my Tutor amongst those who are called Calvinists; but he must not be of a curious metaphysical disputatious turn, a mere system-monger or party-zealot. I seek  
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for one who, having been himself taught the deep things of God by the Holy Spirit, in a gradual experimental manner; while he is charmed with the beautiful harmony and co-incidence of all the doctrines of Grace, is at the same time aware of the mysterious depths of the divine counsels, and the impossibility of their being fully comprehended by our feeble understandings. Such a man will be patient and temperate in explaining the peculiarities of the Gospel to his pupils, and will wisely adapt himself to their several states, attainments, and capacities. After the example of the Great Teacher, he will consider what they can bear, and aim to lead them forward step by step, in such a manner, that the sentiments he instils into them may be their own, and not taken up merely upon the authority of his *ipse dixit*. He will propose the Scripture to them as a *consistent whole*; and guard them against the extremes into which controversial writers have forced themselves and each other, in support of a favourite hypothesis, so as under a pretence of honouring some parts of the word of God, to overlook, if not to contradict, what is taught with equal clearness in other parts.

I wish my pupils to be well versed in useful Learning, and therefore my Tutor must be a learned man. He must not only be able to teach them whatever is needful for  
 them

them to learn, but should be possessed of such a fund, as that the most forward and most promising among them may feel he has a decided superiority over them in every branch of their studies. Besides an accurate skill in the school classics, he should be well acquainted with books at large, and possessed of a general knowledge of the state of literature and religion, and the memorable events of history in the successive ages of mankind. Particularly, he should be well versed in Ecclesiastical Learning: for though it be true, that the bulk of it is little worth knowing for its own sake, yet a man of genius and wisdom will draw from the whole mass a variety of observations suited to assist young minds in forming a right judgment of human nature, of true religion, of its counterfeits, and of the abuses to which the name of religion is capable of being perverted. And he will likewise be able to select for their use, such authors and subjects as deserve their notice, from the surrounding rubbish in which they are almost buried.

My Tutor should likewise be competently acquainted with the lighter accomplishments, which are usually understood by the term *Belles Lettres*, and a proper judge of them with respect both to their intrinsic and their relative value. Their intrinsic value (to creatures who are passing to Eternity) is not  
great;

great; and a wise man, if he has not been tinged with them in early life, will seldom think it worth his while to attend much to them afterwards. Yet in such an age as ours, it is some disadvantage to a man in public life, if he is quite a stranger to them. To a Tutor they are in a manner necessary. It is farther desirable that he should have a lively imagination, under the direction of a sound judgment and a correct and cultivated taste. Otherwise, how can he assist and form the taste and judgment of his pupils, or direct or criticise their compositions?

Natural Philosophy is not only a noble science, but one which offers the most interesting and profitable relaxations from the weight of severer studies. If the Tutor be not possessed of this, he will lose a thousand opportunities of pointing out to his pupils the signatures of wisdom, power, and goodness, which the wonder-working God has impressed upon every part of the visible creation. But at the same time, he should know where to stop, and what bounds to set to their enquiries. It is not necessary that either he or they should be numbered amongst the first Astronomers or Virtuosi of the age. A life devoted to the service of God and souls, will not afford leisure for this diminutive kind of preheminance. A general knowledge will suffice even in the Tutor. And  
while



while he lectures upon these subjects, he will caution them against spending too much time and thought upon those branches of Philosophy which have but a very remote tendency to qualify them for preaching the Gospel. They are sent into the world and into the academy, not to collect shells and fossils and butterflies, or to surprize each other with feats of Electricity, but to win souls for Christ.

Perhaps I have said enough of my Tutor's knowledge, and may now consider him with regard to his spirit, his methods of communicating what he knows to his pupils, and his manner of living with them as a Father with his children.

He must be *Didacticos*, apt to teach. A man may know much, yet not have a facility of imparting his ideas. It is a talent and a gift of God, and therefore will always be found in some good degree in the person who is called of God to the Tutor's office.

He will consider himself as a Teacher, not only in the Lecture-room, but in all places, and at all times, whether sitting in the house or walking by the way, if any of his pupils are with him. And he will love to have them always about him, so far as their studies, and his own necessary avocations will admit.

Two things he will aim to secure from them, Reverence and Affection, Without  
main-



maintaining a steady authority he can do nothing. And unless they love him every thing will go on heavily. But if the Pupils are properly chosen, such a man as I have described will be both loved and feared. His spiritual and exemplary deportment, his wisdom and abilities will command their respect. His condescension and gentleness, his tenderness for their personal concerns, his assiduity in promoting their comfort, and doing them every friendly office in his power, will engage their love. These happy effects will be farther promoted by their frequent mutual intercourse in prayer, by his expository lectures, and by his public ministry if he be a preacher. Having his eye unto the Lord, and his heart in his work, a blessing from on high shall descend upon him and upon his house.

As human nature is the same in all places, it is probable that the Christians in Utopia may be divided among themselves with respect to rituals and modes of worship, in some such manner as we see and feel amongst us. Now here, as in every thing else, I would have my Tutor a sort of Phœnix, a man of a generous enlarged spirit, a real friend of that liberty wherewith Jesus has made his people free from the shackles and impositions of men. One who uniformly judges and acts upon that grand principle of the New Testament, which is likewise a  
plain

plain and obvious maxim of common sense ; I mean, that the Lord of all, the head of the Church, is the alone Lord and Judge of Conscience. I suppose my Tutor has already taken his side, that he is either in the Establishment (if there be one in Utopia) or of course a dissenter from it. And really as to my scheme I am indifferent which side he has taken ; we shall not have a minute's debate about it, provided he acts consistently with the principles which I have assigned him. But as I myself living in England, am of the Established Church, that you may not suspect me of partiality, I will suppose, and am ready to take it for granted, that he will be found to be a Utopian Dissenter.

On this supposition my imagination takes a flight, hastens into the midst of things, and anticipates as present what is yet future. Methinks I see the Tutor indulging his scholars (as at proper seasons he often will) with an hour of free conversation ; and from some question proposed to him concerning the comparative excellence or authority of different forms of Church-government, taking occasion to open his mind to them, something in the following manner :

“ My dear children, you may have observed, that when in the course of our lectures I have been led to touch upon this subject, it has not been my custom to speak in a dogmatical stile. I have sometimes in-

timated

timated to you, that tho' every part of the Levitical worship was of positive divine institution, yet when the people rested and trusted in their external forms, the Lord speaks as abhorring his own appointments. I have told you, upon the Apostle's authority, that the kingdom of God consists not in meats and drinks, in names and forms, but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Amidst the many divisions and subdivisions which obtain in the visible Church, there are in reality but two sorts of people, the children of God, and the children of the world. The former sort though partakers in one life and in one hope, yet living in successive ages, in various countries, under very different modes of government, education and customs, it seems morally impossible that they should all agree as by instinct, in one common mode of social worship. It is indeed said, that there is a plan prescribed in the New-Testament to which all ought to conform as nearly as possible. All parties say this in favour of their own plans; and men eminent for wisdom and holiness are to be found among the advocates for each. But is it not strange, that if the Lord has appointed such a standard, the wisest and best of his people should differ so widely in their views of it, and deviate so far from each other when they attempt to reduce it to practice? Let others

dispute,

dispute, but as for you, my children, and me, let us rather adore the wisdom and goodness of our Lord. He who knew the heart of man, the almost invincible power of local prejudices, and what innumerable circumstances in different periods and places would render it impracticable for his people to tread exactly in the same line, has provided accordingly. The rules and lights he has afforded us respecting the outward administration of his Church, are recorded with such a latitude, that his true worshippers may conscientiously hope they are acceptable to him, though the plans which they believe to be consistent with his revealed will, are far from corresponding with each other. It is sufficient that the apostolical Canons, Let all things be done decently and in order, to edification and in charity, are universally binding; and were these on all sides attended to, smaller differences would be very supportable.

“ I have often pointed out to you the wonderful analogy which the Lord has established in many instances, between his works in the outward creation, and in his kingdom of grace. Perhaps the variety observable in the former may be one instance of this kind. When you see every vegetable arrayed in green exactly of the same shade, or all tulips variegated in the same manner, as if painted from one common pattern, then, and not before,

before,



before; expect to find true believers agreed in their views and practice respecting the modes of Religion.

“ Study therefore the Scriptures; my children, with humble prayer that the Lord may give you such views of these concerns, as may fit you for the stations and services to which his Providence may lead you. See with your own eyes, and judge for yourselves. This is your right. One is your Master even Christ, and you need not, you ought not to call any man Master upon earth. But be content with this. Do not arrogate to yourselves the power of judging for others. Be willing that they should see with their own eyes likewise. The Papists upon the ground of the assumed infallibility of their Church, are at least consistent with themselves in condemning all who differ from them. Protestants confess themselves fallible; yet speak the same peremptory language.

“ As to myself, if I had thought it preferable upon the whole to be a Minister in our Established Church, I might probably have been one. But I trust I am where the Lord would have me be, and I am satisfied. My desire for you is to see you able Ministers of the New Testament. As to the part of the vineyard in which you are to labor, wait simply upon the Lord, and he in good time will point it out to you. If Scripture



and Conscience lead you to prefer the Dissenting line, I shall say, It is well—provided you embrace it with a liberal spirit, and have a better warrant for your choice than merely the example of your Tutor. Should you determine otherwise, I shall still say, It is well, provided I see you disinterested, humble and faithful. Your being educated under my roof is a circumstance not likely to facilitate your admission into the Establishment, but if the Lord in his Providence should open to any of you a door on that side, and incline you to enter, I shall not dissuade you from it, as tho' I thought it sinful. I shall only wish you to attend to that advice which cannot mislead you.—Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path."

Thus far my Tutor.—Or since I am in a supposing humor, if you will give me leave to make one supposition more, that it is possible there may be Methodists and Itinerants in Utopia, as we have in England; he would then perhaps continue his discourse a little longer as follows:

“ Though the pastoral care of a single congregation is the service which the Lord has allotted me, and I have not seen it my duty to engage in any thing which might lead me long or far from the people to whom  
I am

I am related, I am no enemy to itinerant preaching. My Lord and Saviour himself, his apostles and first servants were all Itinerants. And I believe that houses and ships, hills and plains, the side of a river, or the sea-shore, are all fit places for preaching the Gospel, and sufficiently authorized as such by the highest precedents. I cannot therefore censure, much less condemn a practice which the Scripture warrants, and to which I doubt not the Lord has given abundant testimony in our own times, by making the word thus dispensed effectual to the conversion and consolation of many souls. I believe indeed that some persons not duly acquainted with their own hearts, nor with what is requisite to constitute a preacher, have too hastily supposed themselves called to preach the Gospel; when the event has proved that the Lord had neither called them to his service, nor furnished them for it. And I think if it should generally be allowed that young men are proper judges in their own cause, and have a right to commence preachers when or where or how they please, without the advice or approbation of Ministers more experienced than themselves, many inconveniencies may and must follow. I could wish every young man to be so impressed with the force of the Apostle's question, Who is sufficient for these things? that he should rather need invitation and encouragement to

preach, than be disposed to run hastily into the work, as the horse rusheth into the battle. But I must not expect every thing will be managed according to my wish. I have mourned over the miscarriages of some Itinerant preachers, but I have been much comforted by the good conduct and success of others. It is neither my business nor my intention to persuade you to this course, but if when you are properly instructed and qualified for the Ministry, I should see any of you disposed to go forth in the itinerant way, should I be satisfied of your principles and motives, and have reason to hope your zeal was tempered with humility, I know not that I durst refuse my consent. For, as I have often told you the honor of my Lord and Saviour, and the welfare of precious souls are far dearer to me than the detached interests of any party; and if Christ be faithfully and successfully preached, in whatever way and by whatever instruments he is pleased to work, I do rejoice, yea and will rejoice."

I think what I have said of the Tutor, and what he has just now said for himself, may suffice to give you an idea of the person I would chuse, and that it is now time to consider

III. The choice of pupils. I would have them all resident with the Tutor, and therefore

fore' their number at one time can be but small; especially as I should wish him to undertake every branch of their education. He might have an assistant to teach the rudiments of the languages, a service that would otherwise take up much of the time which he could better employ, but he must do all the rest himself. I suppose therefore, that ten or at the most twelve pupils will be a sufficient number to be under his care at once. The man I have described would not be mercenary, but the laborer is worthy of his reward. As I shall find him work enough to take up his whole time, his pay ought to be competent and liberal; and as I have supposed myself rich enough to execute my plan in what manner I please, I hope I shall not starve my Tutor, nor put his œconomical talents on the stretch to contrive how to squeeze and save a pittance out of the sum allotted for their board. I would fix the boarding upon equitable and moderate terms, distinct from his salary which should be handsome, and always the same, whether he had one pupil with him, or ten, or twelve. It would be my part to keep the number up, but if I neglect it, he should be no loser; nor ought he to be dependant upon my caprice or negligence, but he should stand upon an easy and settled footing, so as to be free, not only from want, but from anxious



care, that he might be able to attend his business without distraction.

And now my house is ready, where shall I find young men to fill it? I must look around me, and request my friends to look out for me. When I have found two I will send them, and the rest as they offer. Perhaps it would be one of the chief difficulties attending my scheme, to collect ten or twelve youths worthy of such a Tutor.

They must be serious. I mean, they must have an awakened experimental sense of the truth and goodness of the Gospel. This is a point not easily ascertained, especially in young persons. There is often a something that resembles it, which, upon trial, does not prove satisfactory. However, my part will be to look to the Lord for guidance, and then judge as well as I can. But I hope no persuasion or recommendation, no desire of pleasing or obliging a friend, would prevail on me to admit one who I did not verily believe was a subject of the grace of God. Who would undertake to teach a parrot Algebra? Yet this would be as practicable as to make those able and faithful preachers, whom the Lord has not first made Christians?

They must likewise have capacity. It is not necessary that their abilities should be of the first rate, (perhaps but few of such are called) but some tolerable measure of natural

tural



tural abilities capable of being opened and improved by education, seems almost necessary in the person who aims to be a Minister of the Gospel. At least it will be necessary upon my plan, for as my Tutor cannot take many, I must give the preference to such as may both do him credit by their proficiency under his care, and be qualified to profit others when they leave him. .

*Ex quovis ligno Mercurius non fit.*

If the heart be changed and sanctified by grace, a person of the weakest natural understanding will acquire, under divine teaching, all that is necessary to enable him to fill up his station in private life with propriety, to overcome the world, and to make his own calling and election sure. But a preacher must have gifts as well as grace, to be able to divide the word of truth as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. And therefore, though the Lord was once pleased by a dumb ass to rebuke the foolishness of a prophet, I am not forward to acknowledge those as ambassadors sent by him, (however well-meaning they may be) who seem either to have no message to deliver, or no ability to deliver it.

I would likewise be satisfied, as much as possible, concerning the views and motives which make them desirous of devoting themselves to the Ministry. Some desires of

This kind are very frequently found in young converts. When a sense of eternal things is new and lively upon their minds, and they look round upon a world lying in wickedness, they are much affected. The obligations they feel to the Redeemer, a grief that he should be so little known, so little loved, and a compassion for their fellow-sinners, whom they see liable to perish for lack of knowledge, make them often long to be employed, and sometimes constrain them to run before they are sent. But if they are not really designed by the Lord for this service, either their desires towards it gradually subside, and they yield themselves to his appointment in other paths of life: or if they unadvisedly venture upon it, they are seldom either comfortable or useful. They soon feel themselves unequal to the work, or if self-conceit prevents them from feeling it, their hearers are very sensible of it. They often mistake errors for truth. They retail scraps and shreds of sentiments which they pick up from others, and for want of judgment misapply them. Thus hypocrites are encouraged, and those whom the Lord would have comforted are made sad. They think that preaching with power consists in vociferation and distorted attitudes; and that to utter every thing that comes upon their minds, without end or side, (as we say) without any regard to text, context, occasion,

sion, or connection, is to preach extempore. Too often Satan gains open advantage over them, they are puffed up with pride, taken in snares, and perhaps fall into such woful miscarriages as at length ruin their characters, and stop their mouths. It is therefore of great importance to be workers together with the Lord in this business; to chuse those whom he chuses, to bring forward those whom he is preparing, and, if possible, none but these. We cannot indeed know the heart, but we may be wary and circumspect in judging by such lights as we can procure, and we ought to be so. Perhaps after all we may be mistaken in some instances; but if we have done our best, we have done well, and shall not be blameable for such consequences as we could not possibly foresee or prevent. If a candidate for the Academy appears to be of a self-diffident and humble spirit, to have some acquaintance with his own heart, a tolerable capacity, a turn for application, and an unblameable character as to his personal conduct, I shall be disposed to admit him. But I would leave the final decision of his fitness to the Tutor. For which purpose it may be proper that he should be under the Tutor's eye, for a limited time, as a probationer.

IV. The next point I am to consider is, the course of studies they should pursue. Though

Though I am rather inclined to give this up absolutely and without reserve to the Tutor, who, if he answers my description, must be the most proper person to institute a plan for himself, and would have no need of my assistance. But if his humility and his good opinion of me should lead him to desire my advice, he shall have it. I do not mean as to little circumstantial, but I would submit to him in a general and miscellaneous way such hints as may occur to me upon the subject. And I submit them to you beforehand.

A few things may be previously noticed, which, though they do not properly belong to their academical studies, are well worthy of attention.

A Minister is a Soldier of Jesus Christ, and as such, is to expect and endure hardship. It is well to have this in our eye in the education of young men. They are not called to be Gentlemen, but Soldiers; not to live delicately, but to prepare for hardship. They should therefore be advised and accustomed to prefer a plain and frugal manner of life, and to avoid multiplying those wants which luxury and folly would prompt us to multiply almost *ad infinitum*. A propensity to indulgence either in the quantity or quality of food, is a meanness unworthy of a man, still more unsuitable to the character of a Christian, and scandalous in a Minister.



Minister. I am no advocate for a monkish austeriety, or a scrupulous superstitious self-denial, which will almost starve the body to feed the pride of the heart. It is however very desirable to possess in early life, a habit of temperance, a mastery over appetite, and a resolute guard against every thing that has a tendency to blunt the activity of the spirits. And youth is the proper season for gaining this mastery, which, if the golden opportunity be then lost, is seldom thoroughly acquired afterwards.

A propriety in dress should also be consulted. Neatness is commendable; but a student in divinity should keep at a distance from the air and appearance of a Fop. A finical disposition in this article not only occasions a waste of time and expence, but is a token of a trifling turn of mind, and exposes the fine self-admiring youth, to the contempt or pity of the Wise and Good.

Farther, a habit of rising early should be resolutely formed. It redeems much time, and chiefly of those hours which are most favorable to study or devotion. It likewise cuts off the temptation to sitting up late, a hurtful and preposterous custom which many Students unwarily give into, and which they cannot so easily break, when the bad effects of it upon their health, convince them too late of their imprudence.

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Let them be guarded against the snares attending a large acquaintance, and unnecessary visiting. The Tutor will doubtless maintain authority and good discipline in his house, and not suffer any of his pupils to be absent from family worship, nor abroad after a fixed hour, without his express permission, which should not be given but for solid and just reasons. And he cannot be too careful both by advice and vigilance, to prevent them from forming any female connections while under his roof, however honourable the views or deserving the person may be. Love and Courtship are by no means favourable to study, nor indeed to devotion, at a time when their present engagements, and the uncertainty of their prospects in future life, render a settlement by marriage improper if not impracticable.

Much study is weariness to the flesh, and the body and the mind are so nearly connected, that what affects the one will have an influence upon the other. Relaxation and Exercise are therefore necessary at proper seasons, for those who wish to preserve cheerfulness and strength for service, and not to become old and disabled, through lowness of spirits, infirmities and pains, before old age actually overtakes them. Riding is a manly unexceptionable exercise, where it can be conveniently practised. But walking is, I suppose, equally healthful, and requires

quires neither expence nor preparation. That the Students may have an object in view when they go from home, the Tutor will probably point out to them some of the Lord's poor, who live at convenient distances, whom they may visit, and comfort with their sympathy, advice, and prayers, as well as administer to the relief of their necessities, according to their ability. Thus while they are consulting their own health, they may at the same time imitate Him, *who went about doing good*. And in such visits they may meet with many hints from poor believers, concerning the Lord's wisdom and faithfulness in his dealings with them, and of the power of true religion, to confirm what they read upon these subjects, and probably some hints which their books will not supply them with. Farther, if, when they are abroad together, they will attempt such conversation as warmed the hearts of the disciples when walking to Emmaus; and if, when alone, they adopt the pattern of Isaac, who went out into the field to meditate, then all the time they can thus employ may be set down to the account of their studies, for few of their hours can be more profitably improved.

But what, and how, are they to study? The answer to this question depends upon another: What is the object of their studies? It is to make them not merely Scholars,  
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lars, but ministers thoroughly furnished for their office. The particulars I aim at in placing them with my Tutor are such as follow :

1. An orderly, connected, and comprehensive knowledge of the common places and topics of Divinity, considered as a Whole; a System of Truth, of which the Holy Scripture is the sole fountain, treasury, and standard.

2. A competent acquaintance with sacred literature, by which I mean such writings, ancient and modern, as are helpful to explain or elucidate difficulties in Scripture arising from the phraseology, from allusion to customs and events not generally known, and from similar causes, and which therefore cannot be well understood without such assistance.

3. Such a general knowledge of Philosophy, History, and other branches of polite literature, as may increase the stock of their Ideas, afford them just conceptions of the state of things around them, furnish them with a fund for variety, enlargement, and illustration, that they may be able to enliven and diversify their discourses, which, without such a fund, will be soon apt to run in a beaten track, and to contain little more than a repetition  
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of the same leading thoughts, without originality or spirit.

4. An ability to methodize, combine, distinguish, and distribute the ideas thus collected by Study, so as readily to know what is properly adapted to the several subjects to be treated of, and to the several parts of the same subject. When the Pupils are thus far accomplished, then I shall hope,

5. That they will in good time be able to preach extempore. I do not mean without forethought or plan, but without a book, and without the excessive labour of committing their discourses to memory. This ability of speaking to an auditory in a pertinent and collected manner, with freedom and decorum, with fidelity and tendernefs, looking at them instead of looking at a paper, gives a preacher a considerable advantage, and has a peculiar tendency to command and engage the attention. It likewise saves much time, which might be usefully employed in visiting his people. It is undoubtedly a gift of God, but like many other gifts, to be sought not only by prayer, but in the use of means. The first essays will ordinarily be weak and imperfect; but the facility increases till at length a habit is formed, by diligence and perseverance. I should not think my Academy complete, unless my  
Tutor



Tutor was attentive to form his pupils to the character of Public Speakers.

General rules admit of exceptions. I have myself known persons, who, with plain sense, true humility, and a spirit devoted to the Lord and dependant upon him, have, with little or no assistance from men, proved solid, exemplary, and useful Ministers. Such instances convince me, that however expedient learning may be, it is not indispensably necessary for a Minister, especially for one who is to labour in a retired situation, and amongst plain, unlettered hearers. I would not therefore preclude my Tutor from all opportunity of being useful to persons of this description, who would be glad of such helps from him as they might receive in their Mother Tongue, when the time of life, or particular circumstances might render the study of languages and science inconvenient. And in general, as the capacities, dispositions, and prospects of a number of pupils would of course be different, I should leave it to his discretion to conduct them to the same grand ends of service, by such difference of method as he should judge most suitable to each: So as not to discourage or overburden the truly deserving, nor to permit (if it can be prevented) the more studious and successful, to set too high a value upon their superior accomplishments.

ments. For after all it must be owned, and ought to be remembered, that grace and divine wisdom are of unspeakably greater importance, than scholastic attainments without them. We are sure, that though a Man had the knowledge of all mysteries, the gifts of tongues and miracles, and the powers of an Angel, if he has not likewise humility, spirituality, and love, he is in the sight of God, but as sounding brass or a noisy symbol. He may answer the purpose of a church-bell to call a congregation together, but has little prospect of doing them good when they are assembled.

But to return to my *professed* Students, and,

I. As to the study of Theology. How far it may be expedient to adopt some system or body of Divinity as a text or ground whereon to proceed, I am not quite determined; and which of these learned Summaries is the best, I shall not attempt to decide till I have read them all. My Tutor will have more of this knowledge; I shall therefore refer the choice, if it be necessary to choose one, to him. Calvin, Turretin, Witsius, and Ridgeley, are those with which I have formerly been most acquainted. But indeed of these, at present I can remember little more than that I have read them, or the greatest part of them. I recollect just  
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enough to say, that though I approve and admire them all, I have at the same time my particular objections to them all, as to this use of them. The Bible is my body of Divinity, and were I a tutor myself, I believe I should prefer the epistles of St. Paul as a summary, to any human systems I have seen, especially his epistles to the Romans, Galatians, the Hebrews, and Timothy. There are few uninspired writings, however excellent in the main, but bear some marks of the infirmities, attachments, and prepossessions, which in a greater or less degree are inseparable from the present state of human nature. I would have my pupils draw their knowledge as immediately from the fountain-head as possible. I care not how extensive and various their reading of good authors may be under their Tutor's eye; the more so the better. He will improve the differences they will find among learned and spiritual men, into an argument to engage them to study the Scripture more closely, and to bring every debated sentiment to be tried and finally determined by that unerring standard. He will teach them to collect the detached portions of truth wherever they meet with them; to borrow from all, but to give themselves up implicitly to the dictates of none. For I know no author who is worthy the honour  
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of being followed absolutely and without reserve.

I am told (for I know nothing of Academies but from hear-say) that it is customary for pupils to write after the Tutor, who reads his lecture. If I should adopt this custom I would not confine myself to it. Such written lectures, if well executed, must be good patterns to form the students to closeness in method and stile. But I should likewise wish the Tutor to give them unpremeditated lectures. Great Masters of music (it is said) frequently feel an impetus in extempore playing, which enables them to execute off hand such strains as they wish to repeat, but cannot; their taste assuring them that they are superior in kind, to what they can ordinarily attain when they study and compose by rule. Thus a Tutor who thoroughly understands his subject, and speaks from the fulness of his heart, will, now and then at least, feel a happy moment when he will seem to possess new powers. His thoughts and expressions at such a time will have a peculiar precision and force, and will possibly illuminate and affect his hearers more than his regular and written lectures. When he has done speaking let the pupils retire and commit to writing what they can recollect of such discourses, keeping to his method but using their own expressions. These exercises would engage their atten-



tion, employ their invention and ingenuity, accustom them to consider the same subjects in different lights, and contribute to make the knowledge they derive from him, more their own, than by being always confined to transcribe line by line what was read to them.

I would not have the pupils put upon the needless and hurtful attempt of proving first principles. May not a man read lectures upon optics without previously proving the existence of the sun? My Tutor will not coldly lay before his students the arguments pro and con, and then leave them to decide as evidence to them appears, whether there be a God, or whether the Scriptures be of divine inspiration, or not. So likewise with respect to the different sentiments on the primary points of Scripture, as whether the Saviour be man, or angel, or God manifest in the flesh; or concerning the different acceptations of the words Depravity, Guilt, Faith, Grace, Atonement and the like—he will speak with a becoming confidence and certainty on which side the truth lies. He will indeed furnish them with solid confutations of error, from scripture and experience, but he will take care to let them know that these things are already settled; and proposed to *them*, not as candidates for their good opinion, but as truths which demand and deserve their attention. My Tutor will not dogma-

dogmatize, and expect them to adopt his opinions without any better reason than because they are his. He will endeavour to throw every light he is master of upon the subject, but at the same time he will speak as a Teacher, not as an Enquirer. As one who speaks that which he has known, and testifies that which he has seen. He will not attempt to fill their head with a detail of all the cavils which pride and sophistry have started against the truths of God; nor so far flatter his pupils, as to suppose them competent judges when they have weighed and compared the several argumentations. But he will rather warn them of their natural biases to the erroneous side, and guard them against the arts of those, who with fair words and fine speeches beguile the unprincipled and unwary. A Tutor is a guide, and if worthy of his office, must be able to say, without hesitation, This is the way, walk ye in it. Should he be seduced by the specious sounds of candour and freedom of enquiry to take the opposite method, and think it his duty to puzzle his scholars with all the waking-dreams, objections and evasions by which men reputed wise have opposed the simplicity of the faith once delivered to the Saints, I should fear they would be more likely to turn out sceptics than ministers of the Gospel.

Nor should he, with my consent, lay down a scheme of what is commonly called Natural Religion, as a *substratum* whereon to build a Religion of Divine Revelation. It is needful that he should give his pupils a just idea of the Religion of fallen Nature, but he will remind them that the few valuable sentiments occasionally found in the writings of the heathen Philosophers and Moralists were not their own. They are all represented as having travelled for their knowledge, and all in the same route, into Phœnicia or Egypt, into the neighbourhood of the only people who at that time were favoured with the oracles of God: and may therefore be justly supposed to have derived the detached particles of truth they acquired, from that people; either by immediate converse with them, or from their inspired books; especially from the time they were translated into the Greek language. He will point out to them the strong probability that Epictetus and the latter Philosophers were equally, or more indebted, to the Christians and the New-Testament. With respect to the sceptical moralists and reasoners of modern times, the proof will be still clearer and stronger, that their best notions are borrowed from the religion they attempt to depreciate. My Tutor in order to satisfy them how far the powers of unassisted fallen nature can proceed in the investigation of religious

ligious and moral truths, will set before them the progress which has actually been made in this way by the Negroes in Africa or the American Indians. With such a picture of natural religion in their view, I should hope they would be led most cordially to praise God for the inestimable gift of his Holy Word, without the help of which, the boasted light of nature is darkness that may be felt.

In *my* academy I would have no formal disputations upon points of divinity. If it be necessary to sharpen or exercise their wits by disputing, to which under proper regulations I should not object, there are topics in abundance at hand. Let them dispute, if they please, for or against the motion of the earth. Let them determine whether Cæsar or Pompey was the better man: or, in what respects Cato, who chose to die rather than venture to look Cæsar in the face, discovered more fortitude or true greatness of mind, than the slave who elopes from his master for fear of the lash. Let them contend whether learning has upon the whole been productive of most good, or of most mischief, to mankind. My Tutor can supply them with a thousand questions of this kind. But to set a young man to put his ingenuity to the stretch, either to maintain a gross error, or to oppose a known and important truth, is in my view not only dangerous,



gerous, but little less than a species of profaneness. What must the holy angels, who with humble admiration contemplate the wisdom and glory of God displayed in the Gospel, what must they think of the arrogance of sinful worms, who presume so far to trifle with the doctrines and mysteries he has revealed, as to degrade them into subjects for school exercise, and logical prize-fighting? Can it be possible to maintain a spirit of reverence and dependance amidst the noise of such malapert discussions? And if the youth to whom the wrong side of the question is committed, should by superior address nonplus and silence his antagonist; my heart would be in pain for him, lest he should from that moment be prejudiced against the truth which he had insulted with success; and think it really indefensible, because the other was not able to defend it.

Having been so long on the first article, I must endeavour to be more brief on those which follow.

II. By sacred literature I chiefly mean Philology, Criticism, and Antiquities, so far as they are employed in the illustration of Scripture. In these studies, if there be a proper application in the pupils, little more will be needful on the Tutor's part, than to put suitable books into their hands, to superintend their progress, and to obviate difficulties

ties they may meet with. I would wish them not only to read the Scriptures in the Hebrew and Greek originals, but to be tolerably masters of the construction in both languages. This attainment is certainly not necessary to a Minister; but they who apply themselves to the study of divinity in early life, will have time enough to acquire it, and the acquisition will be well worth their labor. If not necessary it will be found very expedient and useful, and when the difficulties of the first entrance and rudiments are surmounted will be very pleasant. The Tutor will then enliven their study, and facilitate their advance, by reading a chapter with them in each Testament daily or frequently, intermingling critical or expository strictures as he goes along. And he will probably furnish those students who have taste with Dr. Lowth's *Prælectiones de Poësi Hebræa*, which will enable them to judge of the stile and idiom of the Hebrew Bible, and particularly of the stile and beauties of the Hebrew poetry. Blackwall's *sacred Classics* may be added for the Greek.

Since the learned have of late years condescended to lay open the way to the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, by publishing Lexicons, Grammars and other helps in the English tongue, the knowledge of the Latin is less needful to a bible student than it was formerly. But as there are many valuable  
books

books in Latin and not yet translated, I must wish our pupils so far acquainted with the Latin language as to be able to read good authors in it. But as they are not to preach in Latin, an accurate skill is hardly worth their attempting, unless they have had a classical school education before they come to the Academy. The mind is incapable of too many acquisitions, life is short, and more important business awaits them, in subserviency to which every thing else must be conducted.

Books of Criticism and on Scripture-Antiquities are at hand in plenty. It will be impossible to read them all. The selection belongs not to me, but to the Tutor. The *Synopsis Criticorum*, Godwin and Jennings, will perhaps be of the number he will chuse. A good ecclesiastical history seems to be still a *Desideratum*. A mass of materials, so far as it goes, is already prepared in the *Magdeburg Centuriators*, which affords a striking monument of the compilers patience, but it would likewise require some patience in the reader who should undertake to go through it. Mosheim is perhaps the best book we have upon the subject, if the reader knows so much of himself and of the work of grace, as to prevent him from being misled by him, when treating on subjects which he does not appear to have rightly understood. But as to facts, I believe he is in general worthy of credit.

credit. Bingham's Antiquities may deserve inspection, if it be only to shew how soon and how generally the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel was corrupted by those who professed it. Dupin and Dr. Cave's *Historia Literaria Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum* are still more valuable, but the characters of the writers and their strong prepossessions in favour of antiquity should be known, and allowed for.

III. Much time cannot be allowed in our academy for the pursuit of polite literature. But an entrance may be made, and a relish for it acquired under the direction and restraint of the Tutor, which may provide the students with a profitable amusement for leisure hours in future life, for in this knowledge they may advance from year to year. A perusal of such books as Rollin on the Belles Lettres, Bossuet's Universal History, Denham and Ray on the Creation, and a few of our best Poets, may suffice while they are students. Other books will occasionally come in their way, for the Tutor should have a well-chosen library for the accommodation of his pupils; but he will guard them against spending too much time in this line of reading. For though it has its subordinate advantages, it may, if too much indulged, divert them from the main point. And they should be taught to refer every thing they  
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read to the principles of scripture, to the knowledge of the heart of man, and the works, the ways, the wisdom and providence of God. Otherwise reading will only tend to make them wise in their own conceit. I make short work with this article, and hasten to consider,

IV. What may be helpful (by the divine blessing) to enable the pupils to communicate the fruits of their knowledge to advantage in the public ministry, that they may appear workmen that need not be ashamed. For this, as I have formerly intimated their chief and immediate dependance must be on the Lord. He alone can give them a mouth and wisdom for his service; and without the unction from on high, the study of divinity and every thing relative to it, will be but like learning the art of navigation on shore, which is very different from the knowledge necessary to the mariner, who is actually called to traverse the ocean. But dependance upon the Lord should be no discouragement to the use of means.

I would have my students good logicians. The logic of the schools is in a great measure a cramp, forced, and formal affair, and may possibly have made almost as many pedants and sophists as good reasoners. But Dr. Watts has furnished us with a system of logic in a more intelligible and amiable form,  
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and divested it of the solemn impertinencies with which it was encumbered. As the rules of grammar are themselves drawn from the language they are designed to regulate, so good logic is no more than the result of observations upon the powers of the human mind: and thus we see that many people of plain sense are passable logicians, though they never saw a book upon the subject, and perhaps do not understand the meaning of the term. But they may be much assisted in the habits of thinking, judging and reasoning, and in disposing their thoughts in an advantageous method, by rules judiciously formed and arranged. In this view I judge Dr. Watts's logic, with his subsequent treatise on the improvement of the mind, to be very valuable. And together with the more scientific parts of the subject, he will provide my pupils with a great variety of hints for their conduct, and for distinguishing the principles and conduct of others. These books should be frequently read, and closely studied, and will afford the Tutor an extensive scope for their instruction. Unless a man can conceive and define his subject clearly, distinguish and enumerate the several parts, and knows how to cast them into a convenient order and dependence, he cannot be a masterly preacher. And though a good understanding may supersede the necessity of

logical

logical rules, it will likewise derive advantage from them.

I have not so much to say in favor of another branch of artificial assistance, though much stress has been sometimes laid upon it. We must not however quite omit it; for an academic will be expected to know that the learned have thought proper to give Greek names to certain forms and figures of speech, in the use of which the common people, without being aware of their skill in rhetoric, are little less expert than the learned themselves. When he can repeat these hard names, with their etymologies and significations, rhetoric can do but little more for him. The rules it professes to teach are in general needless to those who have genius, and useless to those who have none. If a youth has not a turn for eloquence, stuffing his head with the names of tropes and figures will not give it him. To know the names of the tools in an artificer's shop is one thing, but to have skill to use them as a workman is something very different. Here the Tutor will use his discretion, for if any of his pupils are not likely to be orators, he will take care that, if he can prevent it, they shall not be pedants; or value themselves on retailing a list of technical terms, of which they know neither the use nor the application. At the best, too much attention to artificial rules will make but an artificial orator, and rather  
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qualify the student to set off himself than his subject. The grand characteristic of the Gospel orator is simplicity. Many years have passed since I read De Fenelon's treatise on Pulpit Eloquence, but I hope my Tutor will put it into the hands of his pupils. It remains to enquire,

V. How the pupils are to be assisted and directed that they may be able to preach *extempore*. An ability which I suppose to be ordinarily attainable by all, who are called of God to preach the Gospel, if they will diligently apply themselves to attain it, in the use of proper means. I do not expect they will succeed in this way to my wish, without prayer, study, effort, and practice. For as I have already hinted, I mean something more by it than speaking at random.

A well-known observation of Lord Bacon is much to my present purpose. It is to this effect; That Reading makes a full man, Writing an exact man, and Speaking a ready man. The approved extempore preacher must have a fund of knowledge collected from various reading; and it would not be improper to read some books, with the immediate design of comparing his style and manner with approved models. It might be wished, that the best Divines were always the best writers; but the style of many of them is quaint, involved, and obscure. Some  
books



books that are well written have little else to recommend them, yet may be useful for this purpose; and the periodical writings of Addison and Johnson, abound with judicious observations on men and manners, besides being specimens of easy and elegant composition. Among writers in Divinity I would recommend Dr. Watts and Dr. Wither Spoon, as good models. By perusing such authors with attention, I hope the Pupils will acquire a taste for good writing, and be judges of a good style. Perspicuity, closeness, energy, and ease, are the chief properties of such a style. On the contrary, a style that is either obscure, redundant, heavy or affected, cannot be a good one. But I cannot advise them to copy the late Mr. Hervey. His dress, though it fits *him*, and he does not look amiss in it, is rather too gaudy and ornamented for a Divine. He had a fine imagination, an elegant taste, and shews much precision and judgment in his choice of words: but though his luxuriant manner of writing has many of the excellencies both of good poetry and good prose, it is in reality neither the one nor the other. An injudicious imitation of him, has spoiled some persons for writers, who, if they could have been content with a plain and natural mode of expression, might have succeeded tolerably well.

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The pupil likewise must write as well as read, and he should write frequently. Let him fill one common-place book after another, with extracts from good authors; this method, while it tends to fix the passages or their import in his mind, will also lead him to make such observations respecting the order and construction and force of words, as will not so readily occur to his notice by reading only. Then let him try his own hand, and accustom himself to write his thoughts, sometimes in notes and observations on the books he reads, sometimes in the form of essays or sermons. He will do well likewise to cultivate a correspondence with a few select friends; for epistolary writing seems nearest to that easiness of manner, which a public speaker should aim at.

I would not have his first attempts to speak publicly be in the preaching way, or even upon spiritual subjects. It might probably abate the reverence due to Divine Truth, to employ it in efforts of ingenuity. Suppose the Tutor should read to them a passage of history, and require them to repeat the relation to him the next day, in their own manner. He would then remark to them if they had omitted any essential part, or used improper expressions. Or they might be put upon making speeches or declamations on such occasions or incidents, as

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he should propose. By degrees such of them as are judged to be truly spiritual and humble might begin to speak upon a text of Scripture, in the presence of the Tutor and Pupils ; and I should hope this might, in due time, become a part of the morning or evening devotions in the family. But let them be especially cautioned not to trifle with holy things, nor profane the great subjects of Scripture, by making them mere exhibitions, and trials of skill.

Thus by combining much reading and writing with their attempts to speak, and all under the direction of a judicious Tutor, I shall have a cheerful hope, that the pupils will gradually attain a readiness and propriety of speech ; and when actually sent out to preach, will approve themselves scribes well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom, qualified to bring forth from the treasury of their knowledge and experience, things new and old for the edification of their hearers.

And now I may draw towards a close. There are some branches of science, or what is so called, on which I lay but little stress. I have no great opinion of Metaphysical Studies. For Pneumatology and Ethics I would confine my pupils to the Bible. The researches of wise men in this way, which have not been governed by the word of God, have produced little but uncertainty, futi-

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ty, or falsehood. My Tutor will, I hope, think it sufficient to shew the pupils how successfully these wise and learned reasoners reciprocally refute each other's Hypothesis. And if he informs them more in detail of the extravagancies which have been started concerning the nature and foundation of moral virtue; or of the dreams of Philosophers, some of whom would exclude *matter*, and others would exclude *mind* out of the Universe; he will inform them likewise, that he does not thereby mean properly to add to their stock of knowledge (for we should in reality have been full as wise if these subtleties had never been heard of) but only to guard them against being led into the mazes of error and folly, by depending too much on the reveries of Philosophers.

After this delineation of my plan, it will be needless to inform you, that I do not propose my Academy to be a spiritual Hot-bed in which the Pupils shall be raised, and ripened into teachers, almost immediately upon their admission. I have allowed for a few excepted cases, but in general it is my design, that their education shall be comprehensive and exact. I would have them learn before they undertake to teach; and their sufficiency to be evidenced by a better testimonial than their own good opinion of themselves. A scribe well instructed, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,



an able Minister of the New Testament, are scriptural expressions, intimating what ought to be the qualifications of those who undertake the office of a preacher or pastor. The Apostle expressly forbids a Novice to be employed in these services. And though in the present day this caution is very much disregarded by persons who undoubtedly mean well, yet I believe the neglect of scriptural rules (which are not arbitrary but founded in a perfect knowledge of human Nature) will always produce great inconveniencies. I shall think a young man of tolerable abilities makes a very good improvement of his time, if the Tutor finds him fit for actual service, after three or four years close attention to his studies.

But what have I done?—In compliance with your request, I have been led to give such an undisguised view of my sentiments on this interesting subject, that though I feel myself a cordial friend to all sides and parties who hold the head, and agree in the grand principles of our common faith; I fear, lest some of every party will be displeas'd with me. I rely on your friendship and your knowledge of me to bear witness for me, that I would not willingly offend or grieve a single person. And you can likewise testify, that I did not set myself to work—that I was much surprized when you propos'd it to me; and that you have reason  
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to believe my regard for you, and for the design you informed me of, were the only motives of my venturing upon the task you assigned me.

I have by no means exhausted the subject, though I hope I have not omitted any thing that very materially relates to it. If I was really in Utopia, and to carry my plan into execution, other regulations would probably occur, which have at present escaped me.

— res, ætas, usus,  
Semper aliquid apportent novi.

What I have written I submit to the candor of you and your friends: adding my prayers, that the Great Head of the Church, the Fountain of Grace, and Author of Salvation, may direct your deliberations, and bless you with wisdom, unanimity, and success, in whatever you may attempt for the honour of his name, and the good of souls.

I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend and Servant,

O M I C R O N.

*May 14, 1782.*

F I N I S.