

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A RARE OLD BOOK.

About forty years ago a "straggler" passed through Niagara, in Annapolis Co., N. S., and at one of the houses where he had lodged he left a small old book. It had the appearance of having been well worn, the title page was gone, and the covers were tattered. It was in Latin. No one about the house could use it; it was not considered of much value, and was given a few years after to the writer of this. Having at the time made a commencement in the study of Latin, I soon ascertained that the book was a treatise on Theology, comprehensive, sound, easy to read, and very convenient to be carried in one's pocket. I got it nicely bound over, and have it still. I have read it much and with great pleasure and profit.

I have been curious to learn who the author was, but though I have taken some pains to find out, and have shown the book again and again to Doctors and Professors, and compared it with different old theological works in Latin, I have not yet been satisfied on the point. I have shown it to Dr. Weston, and also to Dr. Hovey at the recent Convention at Yarmouth. Each of those gentlemen was satisfied that if he had the book at home he could find out the author's name. This was, however, a condition that put the important question "out of the question."

The work is evidently Presbyterian; and there are indications that the author resided in a town called *Franker*, a town in Holland. From the *Index* at the close I gather that the work is entitled, *Medulla*, or, in English, *Marrow*. (I suppose because of its condensation, importance and pith.)

It is divided into two Books, and these again into chapters and sections, the latter being short, and all numbered, after the manner of the verses in our common Bibles. Scripture proofs are generally quoted at length.

My ancient copy in its new (now old) binding, is four inches and a half long, two inches and threequarters wide, and one inch thick. The print, though fine and close is clear and distinct, and I should judge the book contains about twice as much matter in bulk as the New Testament.

I have translated for the *Messenger* chap. xxxv. Book First, entitled: "*De Ministris ordinariis, et eorum officio in concinnando.*" Or, "Concerning ordinary ministers, and their business in the matter of preaching."

While my main object is to endeavor by this means to ascertain if possible who the author of the work was, and to learn something of his life and labors, the article is I think well worth a careful perusal, not only by ministers, old and young, but also by others. The spare moments I have spent upon it have by no means been lost to myself.

Any person who can tell us through the *Messenger* who the author was, and give us some particulars respecting him, will at least confer a favor upon the writer.

MARGO.

Cold Brook, Cornwallis, Oct. 12.

BOOK FIRST, CHAP. XXXV. OF ORDINARY MINISTERS AND THEIR OFFICE AS IT RESPECTS PREACHING.

1. The ordinary ministry has its whole direction from the will of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and through those mediums which God has appointed in the church for its edification to the end of time.

2. It is designated the ordinary ministry because it is directed by an established order of things, arranged by God himself.

3. But since in its administration it has a firm and fixed rule, viz. the will of God, which was first revealed through the medium of extraordinary ministers, [i.e. divinely inspired prophets and apostles.] it necessarily follows that nothing should be introduced or transacted in the church which is not expressly taught in the Scriptures.

4. The ordinary ministers are therefore dependent upon the extraordinary as their successors: for although with respect to mode and grade (quodam et gradum) the prophets and apostles have no successors, yet with respect to the essentials of the administration, ordinary ministers now perform those functions in the church which the extraordinary ministers formerly performed.

5. The authority of this ministry is usually communicated through the instrumentality of men. For this reason the calling to the ordinary ministry is *mediate*.

6. But this statement is to be understood

with this limitation, That the authority to administer in divine things is communicated directly from God to all such as are properly constituted ministers in the church; but the designation of the parties on whom the office is to be conferred, is the business of the church.

7. But since the church can neither confer the needful qualifications, nor prescribe to the Supreme Ruler upon whom they shall be conferred by him, it follows that such and such only are to be designated to the work of the ministry who have been previously found to possess the requisite gifts. For it is not with these as it was with the prophets and apostles, who were fitted for their work by the very act of being called to it, whatever their previous qualifications had been.

8. Hence those chosen to the work of the ministry are first to be *proved*. 1 Tim. iii. 10. "And let these first be proved and then minister." [S] runs the Latin version quoted. "Explorentur prius, deinde ministrent."

9. The gospel ministry is designed for the direction, extension, and reformation of the church.

10. The minister's immediate work may be divided into two parts. First, He deals with the people on God's behalf, and secondly, with God on behalf of the people.

11. His most essential work is that of the preaching of the Word which has been of perpetual use in the church.

12. It is his business to declare the will of God as that will is revealed in the Scriptures, for the edification of the people assembled to hear. 1 Tim. i. 5. "Now the end of the commandment, (paragelias) announcement, annunciationis) is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

13. But as a series desire to edify the church is especially required it follows that a preacher cannot be properly fitted for his work unless he "give himself to the seeking of the law of the Lord, that he may know it and do it, and that he may be able to teach Israel statutes and judgments." Ezek. vii. 10. For he who teaches another is bound to teach himself at the same time, and also beforehand. Rom. ii. 21. otherwise he cannot be prepared to edify the church.

14. This duty is to be performed not only in a general way, for all in common, but particularly with respect to individuals of every age and order; as of the old and the young, servant, and those whose business it is to teach others. Titus ii. and iii.—2 Peter i. 12, &c. 1 Thos. ii. 11. "I exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you," and not only publicly, but also privately. Acts xx. 20, "publicly and from house to house."

15. This design of edifying his hearers he should have ever before him, and sedulously avoid being turned aside to vain jangling, 1 Tim. i. 6, or "striving about words to no profit," or to useless controversies and speculations of science falsely so called. 1 Tim. vi. 20, but he should let it be seen that he "holds fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine," &c., "which cannot be condemned." Titus ii. 8.

16. Now, since for this purpose the Will of God as exhibited in the Scriptures is to be set forth before the people, it follows clearly that he who does not have "his senses exercised in the Word of God" he yond what is to be expected of common believers, is not properly qualified for his work. Like Apollus, he should be "mighty in the Scriptures," Acts xviii. 24. It will not do to trust to the notes and commentaries of others.

17. In order that the Will of God may be advantageously set forth for edification, the two following things must be attended to: 1. A declaration of what is contained in the text; and, 2. an application of the same must be made to the hearts and consciences of those present, according as the case and condition of each may seem to require. 1 Tim. vi. 17. "Charge those who are rich in this world, &c."

18. They impose upon their hearers and clearly forget themselves who first read a text as a foundation of their discourse, and then say a great deal about their text, and the context but deduce nothing from it.

19. In expounding a passage of Scripture, the truth should first be unfolded, and then its use exhibited. The former is doctrinal, the latter experimental and practical preaching. 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

20. Those who invert this order or confound these two parts, do not study to aid the memories of their hearers, and in no

small degree hinder their profiting. Because not being able to retain the divisions of the discourse they cannot so remember them as to repeat them in the families afterwards, an exercise essential to the obtaining of all the advantages which should accrue to the church from preaching.

21. A doctrine is a theological axiom, expressed either in the exact words of Scripture or flowing directly therefrom by plain inference.

22. The doctrine is first to be properly investigated; then treated of, (tractari, handled.)

23. The investigation is to be by logical analysis, aided by rhetoric and grammar.

24. Analysis depends principally upon a careful observation of the scope and design of the passage, and the manner in which that design is reached; according to the laws of Logic.

25. For the confirmation of this should be added an explanation of all those things that are dubious in the analysis, but manifestly such matters as are clear in themselves, neither require nor admit of a labored explanation.

26. The treatment of a doctrine consists in part in adducing proofs in case any thing may be called in question by the hearers, (for it is idle elaborately to prove what no one thinks of doubting,) and in part by illustrating what has been proved.

27. Proofs ought to be drawn from such Scripture testimonies as are lucid and direct to the point, arguments from reason being added, when the subject admits of it. And in all this the character and capacities of the audience are to be consulted.

28. A wide field is afforded for illustrations: they may be drawn from almost every source; but chiefly from *similitude* and *contrast*. [An excellent hint for all who are engaged in the business of teaching. Translator.]

29. As soon as the doctrine is sufficiently "treated," it should be used, and in this part of the work, unless some special reason should call for a contrary course, the greatest earnestness should be exhibited. Because this is the end and object of the doctrine, and should be the aim of the preacher, namely, the edification and benefit of the hearers.

30. They therefore greatly err who confine themselves to an exposition of the truth, simply to the neglect of application and use; in which true religion and therefore happiness consist; and such do little or nothing for the advantage of their hearers.

31. It is not always necessary to discuss at one time all the doctrines that may be deduced from a passage, nor to inculcate all the uses that it may subserve, but those are to be selected which the exigencies of time and place and persons may demand: those especially most calculated to excite or confirm the vigor of religious affection and practice.

32. They do therefore greatly err who ramble hither and thither in order to display their volubility; very often perverting the Scriptures by such a course, and twisting out of the text what was never in it, and rashly uttering whatever comes uppermost, more to the subversion than to the edification of the audience, especially the more weak and ignorant among them.

33. The doctrine and the practical application, should be, as much as possible, so arranged that the connection between the two may be manifest, and so that the one will naturally suggest the other. Since the mind cannot without serious inconvenience embrace at once things which have no apparent and manifest connection; nor does anything more materially assist the memory than the principle of association. (ordo deductionis.)

34. The proper application (usus) of a sermon is a deduction from the doctrine discussed, exhibiting its utility, its excellency, and its object.

35. How the inference is necessarily involved in the doctrine is to be shown, if this be at all obscure, and proofs and illustrations brought forward as the prudence of the speaker, or the exigencies of the audience may suggest.

36. The advantages of the preached word, have respect to the enlightening of the understanding and the direction of the christian walk. 2 Tim. iii. 10.

37. The understanding of men is to be enlightened by information and reformation.

38. Information is the proof of some truth.

39. Reformation the refutation of error.

40. But although all religious truth is on suitable occasions to be taught, all errors are not to be at all times refuted. For instance, ancient heresies, long dead and buried, are not to be dragged up in order to be refuted, nor are outrageous blasphemies to be incautiously repeated. It would be injurious and exceedingly disagreeable for such to be gravely uttered, explained, and refuted.

41, 42, 43. The practical application of the subject should consist in particular directions for a course of holy living, and particular cautions against the many modes of going astray.

44. When the subject has been properly unfolded the application should follow at once, and the two may be often very profitably intermingled, so intimate is their connection.

45. To apply the doctrines of the gospel to their direct aim and use, is to seize upon some general truth and to direct it with such precision and pungency that it may penetrate the very souls of the hearers, and move all the pious emotions of their hearts.

46. Appeals should here be made that will pierce to the very quick, verifying the expression of Paul: "The word of the Lord—is a sharp two edged sword, which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow." Preaching therefore should not be cold and lifeless, but so earnest and efficacious that even an unbeliever coming into the assembly may be deeply moved by it, and pierced as it were by the hearing of the Word and give glory to God. 1 Cor. xiv. 25; "and so the hidden things of his heart are made manifest and falling down on his face he will worship God and report that God is among you of a truth."

47. The cases of the oppressed in mind must be remembered, and consolation administered; of the wandering also, that they may be reclaimed, and those who are growing careless must be aroused by exhortations earnestly delivered.

48. Comfort is to be administered to the distressed by the application of such arguments as are suited to remove or at least to alleviate their grief.

49. It will be well in administering consolation to the afflicted to offer such remarks as are calculated to relieve and confirm tender and oppressed consciences, which are wont to need such a favor, a point which a faithful minister will by no means overlook, and he will suggest such occupations for mind and body, and offer such refutations of the arguments of the enemy, as shall tend to comfort and confirm a pious and anxious mind.

50. Exhortation is the application of the subject in such a way as shall tend to call forth into action some christian grace, or to strengthen and quicken those which are in exercise, and to direct them to their proper practical ends.

51. In exhorting men to the practice of piety it will be very beneficial to exhibit the means which are adapted to quicken religious emotions, and especially with reference to that particular work to which they are exhorted; passages of Scripture, and Scripture examples to the point, should be brought forward, or arguments which have a manifest foundation in the Sacred Word.

52. Admonition is the application of the subject to the correction of some particular fault.

53. In admonition, or when we are dissuading men from any particular vices, assistance is to be sought from such passages as are especially levelled against the sins alluded to.

54. In all these particulars such a method is to be carefully pursued as shall preclude all appearance of the display of human wisdom or learning, or any mixture of carnal emotions; but, on the contrary, the demonstration of the Spirit should throughout be manifest. 1 Cor. i. 17, and chap. ii. 4, 13. "Not with excellency of speech lest the cross of Christ should be rendered of no effect." "Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth." Because the Word of the Spirit is the Word of Life, which is to be preached for godly edification which is by faith: so all that is said or done which is not in harmony with that word, is as empty and useless as "hay, wood and stubble."

55. Nor should mere human testimonies, of whatever kind, nor historical facts, known only to the learned, be intermingled with spiritual arguments and facts, except in the most sparing manner, and when the reason for their introduction is clear and obvious, and the necessity and benefit urgent; nor should passages from the learned languages, unintelligible to the common people, be quoted.

56. The simple purity perfection and majesty of the Word of God, is marred when a mixture of mere human arguments and expressions are introduced as necessary to give the Scriptures force, and a stum-

bling flock is thus placed in the way of the hearers, who becoming accustomed to the gaudy flowers of human rhetoric, are in danger of contracting a fastidious taste, that will make the simple duties and truths of the gospel ineffectual, so that "they will not suffer sound doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 3.

57. The example of the Apostle Paul (who quoted a few short sentences of the heathen poets, without mentioning their names, in addressing such as were well acquainted with those writings and who believed in them, and who did so very rarely and by the way, for the purpose of convincing them by their own arguments,) this example I say, will not prove either the necessity or the utility of a frequent, and studied introduction of such things, the authors being lauded, and their names cited with almost as much reverence as those of the prophets or apostles, as is sometimes done; for christians should desire to hear only Christ, and not to have human authorities obtruded upon them, for the sake of an exhibition of learning.

58. Nor should there be a long and unnecessary preamble, from subjects foreign to the text nor any of the devices of mere oratory, nor should rambling digressions be indulged in. Such things savor of human wisdom, waste the time, and exclude matter that is really edifying.

59. But should an exordium be required let it be directly to the point, and its proper place is at the opening of the text, or at the application.

60. The sermon and every thing connected with it, ought to be spiritual, flowing from the inmost soul of the speaker, and indicative of a man deeply versed in the Scriptures and in all the exercises of piety. For he who would persuade others must first persuade himself and receive the truth deeply into his own conscience; he must be imbued with zeal, charity, kindness, liberality, humility, gravity and authority.

61. The delivery of the sermon should be natural, easy, clear and distinct, so as to be readily understood, and suited to the subject, that the affections of the hearers may be moved.

62. A delivery, which directly violates these rules is one that is headlong and rapid, which confuses the ear and makes no distinct impression.

63. Such kind of address, or mode of delivery, or gesticulation as would be ridiculous in the senate, in the court room, or any place of grave public business, should be looked upon as still more unsuitable for the pulpit.

64. The efficacy of the Holy Spirit is more clearly manifested in simplicity of speech than in elegance of style. Hence, Paul styles himself *rude in speech*. 2 Cor. xi. 6. But should a man possess a natural talent for oratory let him use it, but with genuine simplicity and sincerity.

65. Just in proportion as affectation is discovered, does power and efficiency diminish.

66. In a word, nothing is to be allowed which will not tend to spiritual edification, and nothing omitted which will insure the accomplishment of that end.

67. Connected with the sermon should be prayer, both at the commencement and at the close.

68. In the first prayer those particular subjects should be mentioned to which the preaching of the word more immediately refers, as our poverty, our unworthiness, our duties, together with the gracious promises of God, so that the minds of all present may be excited to seek and to do the will of God, humbly and faithfully.

69. In the concluding prayer thanksgiving should be always offered, and the principal heads of the discourse should be turned into petitions.

IN MEMORIAM.

DEACON JOSEPH COUCHER.

of Melvern Square, Wilnot, obtained evidently "a good hope through grace," and united with the Baptist Church where he resided, about 43 years ago. He was a strictly moral and upright man, an affectionate husband and father, and a devout Christian. Prayer was constantly maintained by him in the family, and his seat was regularly filled in the place of public worship. In the devotional exercises he readily took an active part.

By the choice of his brethren he was appointed to the Deacon's office. The duties of this he faithfully discharged till infirmities, resulting from disease, put it out of his power.

Our justly esteemed and beloved brother has left a bereaved widow and seven children. Of these it was his delightful privilege to see six professing faith, and