

(2.) To be ready and willing to *attend unto the especial cases that may be brought unto them*, and not to look on them as unnecessary diversions, whereas a due application unto them is a principal part of their office and duty. To discountenance, to discourage any from seeking relief in perplexities of this nature, to carry it towards them with a seeming moroseness and unconcernedness, is to turn that which is lame out of the way, to push the diseased, and not at all to express the care of Christ towards his flock, Isa. xl. 11. Yea, it is their duty to hearken after them who may be so exercised, to seek them out, and to give them their counsel and direction on all occasions.

(3.) To *bear patiently and tenderly with the weakness*, ignorance, dulness, slowness to believe and receive satisfaction, yea, it may be, impertinencies, in them that are so tempted. These things will abound amongst them, partly from their natural infirmities, many being weak, and perhaps froward, but especially from the nature of their temptations, which are suited to disorder and disquiet their minds, to fill them with perplexed thoughts, and to make them jealous of every thing wherein they are spiritually concerned; and if much patience, meekness, and condescension, be not exercised towards them, they are quickly turned out of the way.

In the discharge of the whole pastoral office, there is not any thing or duty that is of more importance, nor wherein the Lord Jesus Christ is more concerned, nor more eminently suited unto the nature of the office itself, than this is. But whereas it is a work or duty which, because of the reasons mentioned, must be accompanied with the exercise of humility, patience, self-denial, and spiritual wisdom, with experience, with wearisome diversions from other occasions, those who had got of old the conduct of the souls of men into their management turned this whole part of their office and duty into an engine they called "auricular confession;" whereby they wrested the consciences of Christians to the promotion of their own ease, wealth, authority, and oftentimes to worse ends.

7. *A compassionate suffering* with all the members of the church in all their trials and troubles, whether internal or external, belongs unto them in the discharge of their office; nor is there any thing that renders them more like unto Jesus Christ, whom to represent unto the church is their principal duty. The view and consideration, by faith, of the glory of Christ in his compassion with his suffering members, is the principal spring of consolation unto the church in all its distresses. And the same spirit, the same mind herein, ought, according to their measure, to be in all that have the pastoral office committed unto them. So the apostle expresseth it in himself, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" 2 Cor. xi. 29. And unless this compassion and goodness do run through the discharge of their whole office, men cannot be said

to be evangelical shepherds, nor the sheep said in any sense to be their own. For those who pretend unto the pastoral office to live, it may be, in wealth and pleasure, regardless of the sufferings and temptations of their flock, or of the poor of it, or related unto such churches as wherein it is impossible that they should so much as be acquainted with the state of the greatest part of them, is not answerable unto the institution of their office, nor to the design of Christ therein.

8. *Care of the poor and visitation of the sick* are parts of this duty, commonly known, though commonly neglected.

9. *The principal care of the rule of the church* is incumbent on the pastors of it. This is the second general head of the power and duty of this office, whereunto many things in particular do belong. But because I shall treat afterward of the rule of the church by itself distinctly, I shall not here insist upon it.

10. There is a *communion to be observed among all the churches of the same faith and profession in any nation*. Wherein it doth consist, and what is required thereunto, shall be afterward declared. The principal care hereof, unto the edification of the churches, is incumbent on the pastors of them. Whether it be exercised by letters of mutual advice, of congratulation or consolation, or in testimony of communion with those who are called to office in them, or whether it be by convening in synods for consultation of their joint concerns (which things made up a great part of the primitive ecclesiastical polity), their duty it is to attend unto it and to take care of it.

11. That wherewith I shall close these few instances of the pastoral charge and duty is that without which all the rest will neither be useful unto men nor be accepted with the great shepherd, Christ Jesus; and that is, *a humble, holy, exemplary conversation, in all godliness and honesty*. The rules and precepts of the Scripture, the examples of Christ and his apostles, with that of the bishops or pastors of the primitive churches, and the nature of the thing itself, with the religion which we do profess, do undeniably prove this duty to be necessary and indispensable in a gospel ministry. It were an easy thing to fill up a volume with ancient examples unto this purpose, with testimonies of the Scripture and first writers among Christians, with examples of public and private miscarriages herein, with evident demonstration that the ruin of Christian religion in most nations where it hath been professed, and so of the nations themselves, hath proceeded from the ambition, pride, luxury, uncleanness, profaneness, and otherwise vicious conversations, of those who have been called the "clergy." And in daily observation, it is a thing written with the beams of the sun, that whatever else be done in churches, if the pastors of them, or those who are so esteemed, are not exemplary in gospel obedience and holiness, religion will not be carried on and