

FORTY YEARS'



FAMILIAR LETTERS

OF

JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.

CONSTITUTING, WITH THE NOTES,

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

EDITED BY THE SURVIVING CORRESPONDENT,

JOHN HALL, D.D.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

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## A P P E N D I X .

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No. 1.

P R E S B Y T E R I A L   C H A R G E .

1841.

[It will not, I think, be considered an inappropriate addition to the friendly counsels contained in many of the foregoing Letters, to insert the public CHARGE addressed by their writer to his correspondent, as part of the prescribed services at his Ordination and Instalment. This took place, August 11, 1841, in the First Presbyterian Church of Trenton, the same over which Dr. Alexander was installed, February 11, 1829.]

Invested as you have just been with the most sacred office known among men, you feel it, I doubt not, to be the most solemn hour of life, one to which you will look back with profound interest during all your pilgrimage—perhaps in your dying moments—and certainly from the eternal world. And whether the retrospect be one of joy or grief will depend on the manner in which you shall have fulfilled these vows. If you perform the duties of a gospel-minister with faithfulness, to the end of your course, you will shine as a star in the firmament of glory; but if you turn aside, seduced by sloth, fear, pleasure, literary or professional fame, ambition or lucre, your account will be as dreadful as your privilege is great.

Consider what it is that you have vowed. To be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account;—to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all personal and private duties which become you as a Christian, and a minister of the gospel; as well as in all relative duties, and the public duties of your office; endea-

vouring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation; and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God hath made you a bishop. And, finally, and specially, to discharge the duties of a pastor to this congregation.

These, my brother, are the duties which you have just now recognized as yours; and I am appointed to charge you, yea in God's name, solemnly to charge you to persevere in them. But why need I enlarge upon them? It is not the knowledge of our duties which is most needed, but the heart to perform them. We all know more than we do, and little would be gained if I were to rehearse to you the contents of all the volumes on the pastoral care. These you might know, and yet be a cast-away. But to *do* them is what only the Spirit of God in your heart will ever ensure. There is only one thing which will make you, and keep you a faithful pastor, and that is the new nature in vigorous life; evincing itself in love to Christ, and love to souls. Take heed, therefore, to *thyself*, as well as to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee bishop, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Take heed unto *thyself*, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both *save thyself*, and them that hear thee. Though you are a minister, it does not follow that you are a member of Christ. I am sure I speak your own convictions when I say, that all ministerial activity and success is hollow and deceptive, which does not flow from inward experience of the divine life. Without this, vanity is stamped alike on the tongues of men and of angels—on prophecy, mysteries, and all knowledge, on self-improving alms and martyrdom itself. If you ever really preach Christ Jesus the Lord, it will be because God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shall have shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Have you, my dear brother, beheld that glory? Having the same spirit of faith with Paul, can you say I believed and therefore have I spoken? Does the love of Christ constrain you? Beware of preaching an unknown Saviour. It is He who is to be the theme of all your ministrations. Make sure of an interest in his death; and not only this, but strive to keep the fountain full, rather than to multiply the streams; cultivate the graces of the closet, in order that you may come forth in public and private, fresh from divine communications.

It is, after all, personal piety which makes the able minister. It is a mournful fact that the holiest services may degenerate into a routine, and we may preach and pray with hearts as dead as those of our hearers. Even the measures supposed to indicate

the extremest zeal may be conducted in utter coldness and hypocrisy; and the preacher may come reeking from the heats of fanatical parades, to show in the domestic circle a frivolity and asperity, a sensuality, or a cupidity, at which even his unconverted hearers blush. O watch the fire within doors!

My brother, this is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient; not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Meditate upon these things; GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM.

If these precepts be observed, you will the less need rules as to the details of duty. Love is wiser than rules. Love is wisdom, nay love is power. The particular measures to be adopted as to the communication of divine truth, I leave to your own Christian discretion. Love is inventive and will find out ways. Live in the Word of God; be mighty in the Scriptures; turn what you read into experience; and you will save the souls of those who hear you.

And now—May the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart! *Amen.*

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## No. 2.

### ADDITIONAL LETTERS FROM EUROPE.

1851.

[No more extracts from the correspondence were inserted in Chapter XI., than were sufficient to furnish a general outline of the first European journey, without giving those few months a disproportionate space in the memoir. The following additional selections have been made as not only entertaining in themselves, but eminently characteristic of the observer.]

LONDON, June 9, 1851.

As I am bent on *old* London, I caught at the coachman's saying this morning, that we might see Greenwich Fair. Down the New Road in an omnibus to the *Bengk*, (so is "bank" hight,) thence to Temple Bar in another; thence to London Bridge in a