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Thos
McCulloch
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DEAR BROTHER,—

Your work is most honorable, and involves the highest responsibility. You have not chosen Christ, but He has chosen you, that, in His name, you may bear His message of mercy to guilty and perishing sinners, and pray them, in His stead, to be reconciled to God. Your labors and your motives should accord with your designation.

To proclaim, with earnestness and godly sincerity, the glad tidings of salvation, diffusing correct and enlarged views of the great principles of divine truth, giving a prominent place to those distinguishing doctrines, which alone constitute the foundation of Christian activity and comfort, will be your chief employment. Labor, in this, to arouse the conscience and impress the heart, rather than to please the taste, or gratify the predilections of your hearers,—to leave profitable recollections of your labors, rather than favorable impressions of yourself, personally. Your aim must not be, merely to fulfil an appointment, and then to pass to other scenes of labor, satisfied that your duty to the Church has been discharged. You are an ambassador of Christ, and must feel an interest in the success of your work, for your Master's sake. Many have gone forth, with large expectations, and have met disappointment, from forgetfulness of their high commission, and their solemn responsibilities.

While unfolding the great principles of religious truth, you will not fail to enforce their bearing upon the activities and enjoyments of Christian life; commingling practical direction, with that doctrinal teaching, without which your work will be but partially accomplished.

The times in which we live present peculiar claims upon the faithfulness of the messenger of the Cross. Truths, heretofore regarded as essential, are, too frequently, deemed unwarrantably stern. Purity in order, and firmness of Christian conduct, heretofore considered as characteristics of a prosperous Church, are beginning to be esteemed over-strictness. This tendency to smooth things in the teachings of the sanctuary, and accommodation of doctrine and order to the feelings and wishes of men, will demand from you, as far as they come within the range of your duty, uncompromising, yet affectionate, firmness in the prosecution of your work. To "increase the nation," these courses are often adopted; but, ultimately, they react, both upon the Missionary and the Church of which he is the accredited agent. Let it not be said of you, that you have increased the nation, at the expense of its joy. Fear of man, desire for human applause, and dread of the scripturally disturbing influence of faithful expositions of divine truth, have led to unfaithfulness to Christ. Be it your study to avoid a snare, which has been dishonoring to the Saviour and ruinous to the souls of men.

In the course of your labors, family visitation, it is expected, will occupy a portion of your time. In this, you will find ample scope for the discharge of the duty of teaching from house to house, a duty so important to the interests of the Redeemer's cause. Personal and family religion, careful training of children, sanctification of the Sabbath, and other similar subjects, will demand your earnest attention. In enforcing such duties, with affectionate earnestness, you will require to consider, carefully, the peculiar circumstances of each family, that instruction and admonition may be both suitable and well timed. Such visitations, prudently conducted, will deepen those impressions of Sabbath exercises, which, otherwise, might be lost. Seek the advice and presence of an Elder, where these can be obtained.

Careful attention to the sick and afflicted will, also, form a part of your work; together with those steps for the benefit of the young, which the particular circumstances of the locality, may authorize you to take; and it is trusted, that you will exemplify diligence, in prudently originating and promoting those plans, which may present a reasonable prospect of permanence and success.

The interests of a Mission station, left to general superintendance, are not apt to meet the watchful and prompt attention, which, by the divine blessing, ensures prosperity. Hence the necessity of organization, and the appointment of a Committee of Management, forming a channel of communication with the Courts of the Church. Where circumstances warrant, you will suggest the propriety and benefit of such an arrangement, affording all requisite direction and advice; but carefully avoiding all unnecessary interference,—aiding but not controlling.

Such occasions will afford valuable opportunities of communicating information regarding the order of the Church, and you will not fail to improve them, when offered. You will, thus, prepare the way for that thorough organization, which properly belongs to the Presbytery, under whose superintendance you may be laboring.

Besides this, where there is good prospect of edification, it may be well to recommend, that during the intervals of Missionary visits, the public worship of God be maintained. The requisite details will, of course, be left to your own discretion and prudence, as they may be required to vary, according to the situation and circumstances of the locality.

In your intercourse with the people among whom you may labor, it is expected, that you will maintain such a position, and set such an example, as will confirm your public teachings. Inattention to this important point creates a bad impression, both of the Preacher and his message, and there are few things which so readily weaken the hands of a Missionary, and frustrate the object of Sabbath services, as abandonment, in private, of the dignity and sacredness of that office, which is assumed in public. The same remark holds true of the neglect of private duties, the performance of which, a people have been led to expect. A godly walk and conversation is a necessary and powerful element in the success of the Missionary of the Cross.