

# *a community called ...*

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Presiding Elder Series.]

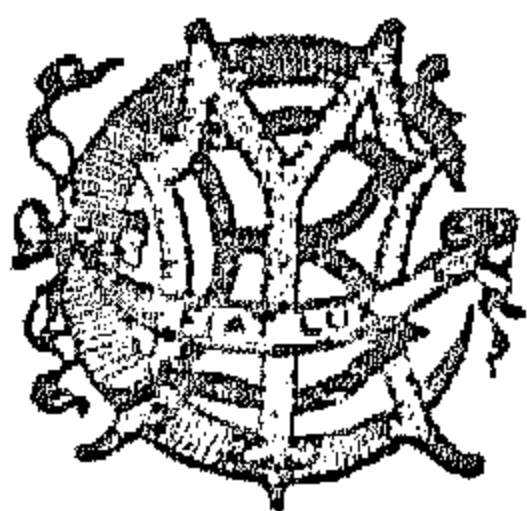
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# HINTS

TO

# YOUNG MINISTERS

BY REV. WILLIAM JONES



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## HINTS TO YOUNG MINISTERS.

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### I. THE MINISTRY—A DIVINE CALLING.

You are separated from the general business of life by being called of God to the work of the ministry. The Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Paul said to Timothy, "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Your ministry, therefore, is not a profession but a divine calling; not a department of life, of your seeking, but of God's appointment. The Church recognizes this call of God, and supplements it with ordination and assignment to certain fields or departments of work. Consider what great confi-

dence God has in his ministers by committing to them so great interests. Make it your ambition to honor your calling. You are intrusted with the weighty responsibility of proclaiming God's terms of salvation to men. To this calling great privileges are conceded—the right of publicly addressing the people in the interests of Christianity, with both time and place set apart for the work. Make it your life-work. Retire from the work when others can take your place and do the work better than you.

## II. PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

1. Know the saving grace of God. Have a clear and scriptural experience in saving grace. Go beyond a theoretic knowledge of the plan of salvation. Know Christ as your Saviour and the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier. Have spiritual life in your soul, in your mind, and in your body. Be a representative of the power of the Gospel to save.

2. Know the word. If you have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education in col-

lege or university, together with the special training of a theological seminary, be grateful for these adjuncts to your work. Do not put them too much in front. They are great helps when kept in their place. Your English Bible (I speak to English-speaking persons) has vastly more salvation than all the classics of the world outside the Bible. Make yourself familiar with the Scriptures. Study the various books of the Bible, both for what each contains and for their relation to other books. Commit Scripture to memory, and be able to repeat it correctly. Do not seek to excel in any thing but in your ministry. Be constantly learning. Eloquence is knowledge well expressed. Learn how to use your knowledge to best advantage. The ministry is a calling worthy of more study and preparation than we give to it. The careless minister should be ashamed of himself and leave the work.

### III. PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

Have clearly in your own mind what you wish to present in the sermon. Guard against

wandering. Our Discipline says, "Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand." In selecting a text, take such portion of Scripture as contains the line of thought you wish to present, avoiding all fragmentary words which have no essential meaning in themselves. "Mary" is a good name, but a poor text. If a text be suggested to your mind, do not therefore conclude that a sermon will be injected when you open your mouth to preach. Prepare carefully before you attempt to preach even from a suggested text. Do not go before your congregation unprepared. You have no claim to a hearing unless you have a message worth hearing. When you belittle the message you dishonor the Master. Take time to prepare—and *prepare*. It is the poor preacher who attempts to preach without preparation. It is study and preparation that make the good preacher.

In your preparation for the pulpit study what style in delivery will be most effective. Preach for effect. Expect effect in every ser-

mon. Do not seek to make yourself professor of *belles-lettres* in the pulpit. You are pleading a cause, the congregation is the jury: seek to carry the jury with you to the conclusion you wish to reach. Any thing and every thing that will hamper you and diminish your effectiveness should be laid aside. You do not go into the pulpit to show the finest style of rhetoric, but to wake up some poor soul slumbering on the brink of hell. Read carefully Scripture lessons and hymns before going into the pulpit, and when reading the Scriptures in public do not accompany the reading with running comments. You cannot improve on the Scriptures with extemporaneous remarks. Learn to read well, giving proper volume of voice; give attention to inflection, expression, and emphasis.

#### IV. THE MINISTER IN THE PULPIT.

Make the introduction to your sermon brief and clear.

Do not burden your sermons with irrelevant matter. Do not substitute a multitude of



words for thought. Leave out what does not belong to the subject. Learn to express yourself in clear and tersely formed sentences. Show your unbounded confidence in the truth you preach to others. In preaching sink every other consideration out of sight before the greatest of all objects—the winning some one to Christ. Preach to win, not applause, but souls. Not only win to Christ, but build up in Christ.

Begin your services at the time appointed. Stop before you have wearied the people. It is not so important you should finish your sermon as it is that you do not tire your congregation with prolixity. Make truth so clear and impressive that the people shall think of the truth rather than of the speaker. Build every sermon around some great truth which shall be more impressively fixed in the mind than any other thought of the sermon. Avoid all objectionable manner in the pulpit. Bad manners damage usefulness. Give no occasion for just criticism by refined persons who may be in your congregation. Ask some kind and



trusted friend to point out your defects in manner and matter. A young minister once asked an aged minister "How much is to be ascribed to manner?" The latter said three fourths. In preaching avoid caustic words. Show the people what they may be, rather than what they are not. Make duty and privilege more prominent than faults and failings. As to truth, be bold; to persons, kind.

In preaching, when you mean yourself, say "I," and not "We." Personally you are not a plurality. When statesmen in their carefully prepared orations and our highest executive officers in the government use the first person singular, it is in bad taste for a minister to use the plural.

In preaching avoid stating objections to religion with a view to answering them. Your answers will not be remembered as readily as the objections will be. By the practice of arguing against infidelity more skepticism is planted from the pulpit than is uprooted. Christianity does not need defending so much as it needs diffusing. It has the right of way.

in this world. Christian apologetics are very properly taught in schools of theology, but are quite out of place in the pulpit.

Do not ask permission to preach the whole Gospel. Preach an aggressive Gospel, rather than a defensive Gospel. In your congregation there may be many persons hungry for the bread of life; do not entertain them by repeating old and oft-answered objections to religion.

If you have a skeptical hearer in your congregation, be fair with him. Talk with him in private where he can talk back. If he is fixed in his infidelity, do not waste ammunition by firing at him from the pulpit. Christian experience is an unanswerable argument against infidelity.

Seek to instruct and impress the people with gospel truth rather than to please them. Christianity has a higher mission than pleasing men. Paul says, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Your work is not to level down the Church to the plane of the world, but level up the world to the plane of divine truth.

In preaching funeral sermons be careful what you say of the dead, lest in trying to please the friends you say what is not true. What could not truthfully be said of a person while living should not be said of that person when dead. Remember you have Christian truth to conserve as well as friends to comfort. Do not give any one false hopes, even on funeral occasions. Do not allow funeral sermons to contradict the doctrines you preach in your regular services.

#### V. THE MINISTER OUT OF THE PULPIT.

Be the Christian gentleman every-where. Be friendly to all and flatterer to none. Friendship is shown in deeds, flattery in words. Too great familiarity breeds contempt. Be cheerful, social, kind; respect your manhood, and honor your calling and your religion. Do not forget that out of the pulpit is not out of the ministry.

Never make the faults of others subject of conversation; not only from the harm it may do them, but from the harm it will do you.

Make pastoral visiting a means of grace to the people and a blessing to your own soul. Supplement your preaching with edifying conversation in the families of your charge. As a minister, make pastoral visits; as a citizen, make social visits; but every-where be the gospel minister.

In visiting the sick be brief, cheerful, and religious. Do not talk sickness to sick persons.

Give careful attention to children, make them feel that in you they have a friend. They can soon be helpful to you in your ministry. They are lambs in the flock of the great Shepherd.

Teach parents to keep the lambs with "the flock of God," and do not drive them off, or keep them off, with the hope that after twenty years they can be won back again. Keeping is better than capturing. After twenty they will not all come back. Christian childhood belongs to the Church—a rich inheritance. Make the most of it.