

Cotton Mather

Manuductio ad Ministerium.

DIRECTIONS

FOR A

Candidate

OF THE

MINISTRY

Wherein, FIRST, a Right FOUNDATION is laid for his Future Improvement;

And, THEN,  
RULES are Offered for such a Management of his *Academical & Preparatory* STUDIES;

And thereupon,  
For such a CONDUCT after his APPEARANCE in the World; as may Render him a SKILFUL and USEFUL MINISTER of the G O S P E L.

*Nunquam meum, furante CHRISTO, silebis  
Eloquium; legant, qui volunt; qui nolunt,  
abjiciant. Hieronym.*

BOSTON, Printed for Thomas Hancock, and Sold  
at his Shop in Ann-Street, near the Draw-Bridge.  
1726.

amiss for you, to know what this *Paganism* is; and therefore you may, if you please, bestow a short Reading upon a *Goliath*, or a *Moor*: But be more of a *Christian*, than to look on the *Enchiridion* of the Author last mentioned, as, *Next the Bible, the best Book in the World*. Study no other *Ethics*, but what is in the *Bible*; and consult such Books, as the, *Verus Christianismus* of an *Arndt*, whereby Hundreds of Thousands have been bro't into the Life of GOD.

So much *Ethics* as treats, *De Decoro*, and may instruct you in the, *Rules of Behaviour*, I heartily commend unto you. And yet, even *these* are best learnt by a Wise Observation of what you see passes in the Conversation of Politer People: And by wisely considering how they are indeed all *Embryo'd* in that one Word, MODESTY; which Renders every one his *Due*, and assumes nothing *undue* to ones self: Or, comprized in that one Maxim, *Do and Say nothing that may be justly offensive to the Company*. The Truth is; The most exact and constant *Rules of Behaviour*, will be found *Rules of Christianity*: For which Cause it pleased our Glorious Redeemer more than once to give them. Every *Christian* as far as he keeps to his own *Rules* will be so far a *Gentleman*. And for this Cause, I again advise you to a Careful Study of them.

§. 8. POETRY, whereof we have now even an *Antediluvian Piece* in our Hands, has from the Beginning been in such Request, that I must needs recommend unto you some Acquaintance with it. Though some have had a Soul so *Unmusical*,

*fical*, that they have decried all *Verse*, as being but a meer *Playing* and *Fiddling* upon *Words*; All *Verseifying*, as if it were more *Unnatural* than if we should chuse *Dancing* instead of *Walking*; and *Ryme*, as if it were but a sort of *Morisco Dancing* with *Bells*: Yet I cannot wish you a Soul that shall be wholly *Unpoetical*. An Old *Horace* has left us an *Art of Poetry*, which you may do well to bestow a Perusal on. And besides your *Lyrick Hours*, I wish you may so far understand an *Epic Poem*, that the Beauties of an *Homer* and a *Virgil* may be discerned with you. As to the *Moral Part* of *Homer*, 'tis true, and let me not be counted a *Zoilus* for saying so, that by first exhibiting their *Gods* as no better than *Rogues*, he set open the Flood-gates for a prodigious Inundation of Wickedness to break in upon the Nations, and was one of the *greatest Apostles* the *Devil* ever had in the World. Among the rest that felt the Ill Impressions of this *Universal Corrupter*, (as Men of the best Sentiments have called him,) One was that overgrown Robber, of execrable Memory, whom we celebrate under the Name of *Alexander the Great*; who by his continual Admiring and Studying of his *Iliad*, and by following that false Model of Heroic Virtue set before him in his *Achilles*, became one of the worst of Men, and at length inflated with the Ridiculous Pride of being himself a *Deity*, exposed himself to all the Scorn that could belong unto a *Lunatick*. And hence, notwithstanding the Veneration which this Idol has had, yet *Plato* banishes him out of a *Common-Wealth*, the Welfare whereof he was concerned for. Nevertheless, *Custom* or *Conscience* obliges him to bear Testimonies

Testimonies unto many Points of *Morality*. And it is especially observable, That he commonly propounds *Prayer* to Heaven as a most necessary Preface unto all Important Enterprizes; and when the Action comes on too suddenly for a more extended *Supplication*, he yet will not let it come on without an Ejaculation; and he never speaks of any *Supplication* but he brings in a Gracious Answer to it. I have seen a Travesteering *High-Flyer*, not much to our Dishonour, Scoff at *Homer* for this; as making his Actors to be like those whom the English call *Dissenters*. But then, we are so much led into the Knowledge of *Antiquities*, by reading of this Poet, and into so many Parts of the *Recondite Learning*, that notwithstanding some little *Nods* in him, not a few Acute Pens besides the old Bishop of *Theſſalonica's*, have got a Reputation by regaling us with *Annotations* upon him. Yea, Tho' One can't but smile at the Fancy of *Croese*, who tries with much Ostentation of Erudition, to show, That *Homer* has all along tendered us in a Disguise and Fable, the *History of the Old Testament*, yet many Illustrations of the *ſacred Scriptures*, I find are to be fetched from him; who indeed had probably read what was Extant of them in his Days; Particularly, Our *Eighteenth Psalm* is what he has evidently imitated. *Virgil* too, who so much lived upon him, as well as after him, is unaccountably mad upon his *Fate*, which he makes to be he knows not what himself, but Superiour to *Gods* as well as to *Men*, and thro' his whole Composures he so asserts the Doctrine of this Nonsensical Power, as is plainly inconsistent with all *Virtue*. And what fatal *Mischief* did

Fascinator

*Fascinator* do to the *Roman Empire*, when by Deifying one Great Emperor, he taught the Successors to claim the Adoration of *Gods*, while they were perpetrating the Crimes of *Devils*? I will not be a *Carbilus* upon him; nor will I say any thing, how little the *Married State* owes unto One who writes as if he were a *Woman bater*: Nor what his Blunders are about his poor-spirited and inconsistent *Hero*, for which many have taxed him. Nevertheless, 'tis observed, That the Pagans had no *Rules of Manners*, that were more Laudable and Regular than what are to be found in him. And some have said, It is hardly possible seriously to Read his Works without being more disposed unto Goodness, as well as being agreeably entertained. Be sure, had *Virgil* writ before *Plato*, his Works had not been any of the *Books prohibited*. But then, This Poet also has abundance of Rare *Antiquities* for us: And such Things, as others besides a *Servius*, have imagined that they have instructed and obliged Mankind, by employing all their Days upon. Wherefore if his *Aeneis*, which tho' it were once near twenty times as big as he has left it, yet he has left it unfinished, may not appear so valuable to you, that you may think *Twenty seven Verses* of the Part that is the most finished in it, worth One and Twenty Hundred Pounds and odd Money, yet his *Georgicks*, which he put his last Hand unto, will furnish you with many things far from Despicable. But after all, when I said, I was willing that the *Beauties* of these *Two Poets*, might become Visible to your *Visive Faculty* in Poetry, I did not mean, that you should Judge nothing to be Admittable into an *Epic Poem*, which is not Authoris'd

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rised by their Example ; but I perfectly concur with One who is inexpressibly more capable to be a Judge of such a Matter than I can be ; That it is a *false Critic* who *wish a petulant Air, will insult Reason itself, if it presumes to oppose such Authority:*

I proceed now to say, That if ( under the Guidance of a *Vida* ) you try your young Wings now and then to see what Flights you can make, at least for an *Epigram*, it may a little sharpen your *Sense*, and polish your *Style*, for more important Performances ; For this Purpose you are now even overstock'd with *Patterns*, and ——— *Poemata Passim*. You may, like *Nazianzen*, all your Days, make a little *Recreation* of *Poetry* in the midst of your more painful *Studies*. Nevertheless, I cannot but advise you, *Withhold thy Throat from Thirst*. Be not so fet upon *Poetry*, as to be always poring on the *Passionate* and *Measured* Pages. Let not what should be *Sauce* rather than *Food* for you, Engross all your *Application*. Beware of a *Boundless* and *Sickly* Appetite, for the Reading of the *Poems*, which now the *Rickety* Nation swarms withal : And let not the *Circæan* Cup intoxicate you. But especially preserve the *Chastity* of your Soul from the Dangers you may incur, by a *Conversation* with *Muses* that are no better than *Harlots* : Among which are others besides *Ovid's* *Epistles*, which for their Tendency to excite and foment *Impure Flames*, and cast *Coals* into your *Bosom*, deserve rather to be thrown into the *Fire*, than to be laid before the *Eye* which a *Covenant* should be made withal. Indeed, not merely for the *Impurities* which they convey, but also on some other

Accounts

Accounts, the *Powers of Darkness* have a *Library* among us, whereof the *Poets* have been the most *Numerous* as well as the most *Venemous* Authors. Most of the *Modern Plays*, as well as the *Romances* and *Novels* and *Fictions*, which are a sort of *Poems*, do belong to the *Catalogue* of this cursed *Library*. The *Plays*, I say, in which there are so many *Passages*, that have a Tendency to overthrow all *Piety*, that one whose Name is *Bedford*, has extracted near *Seven Thousand* Instances of them, from the *Plays* chiefly of but *Five Years* preceeding ; and says awfully upon them, *They are National Sins, and therefore call for National Plagues ; And if GOD should enter into Judgment all the Blood in the Nation would not be able to atone for them*. How much do I wish that such *Pestilences*, and indeed all those worse than *Egyptian Toads*, [ the *Spawns* of a *Butler*, & a *Brown*, and a *Ward*, and a *Company whose Name is Legion* ! ] might never crawl into your *Chamber* ! The *unclean Spirits* that come like *Frogs* out of the *Mouth* of the *Dragon*, and of the *Beast* ; which go forth unto the young *People of the Earth*, and expose them to be dealt withal as the *Enemies* of *GOD*, in the *Battle of the Great Day of the Almighty*. As for those wretched *Scribbles* of *Madmen*, My Son, *Touch them not, Taste them not, Handle them not* : Thou wilt perish in the using of them. They are, *The Dragons whose Contagious Breath Peoples the dark Retreats of Death*. To much better Purpose will an *Excellent* but an *Envied Blackmore* feast you, than those *Vile Rapsodies* ( of that *Vinum Daemonum* ) which you will find always leave a *Taint* upon your *Mind*, and among other ill Effects, will sensibly indispose you

to converse with the *Holy Oracles* of GOD your SAVIOUR.

But there is, what I may rather call a *Parentbesse*, than a *Digression*, which this may be not altogether an Improper Place for the introducing of.

[ There has been a deal of a do about a STYLE; So much, that I must offer you my Sentiments upon it. There is a *Way of Writing*, wherein the Author endeavours, that the Reader may have *something to the Purpose* in every Paragraph. There is not only a *Vigour* sensible in every Sentence, but the Paragraph is embellished with *Profitable References*, even to something beyond what is *directly spoken*. Formal and Painful *Quotations* are not studied; yet all that could be learnt from them is insinuated. The Writer pretends not unto *Reading*, yet he could not have writ as he does if he had not *Read* very much in his Time; and his Comlosures are not only a *Cloth of Gold*, but also stuck with as many *Jewels*, as the Gown of a Russian Ambassador. This *Way of Writing* has been decried by many, and is at this Day more than ever so, for the same Reason, that in the old Story, the *Grapes* were decried, *That they were not Ripe*. A Lazy, Ignorant, Conceited Sett of Authors, would persuade the whole Tribe, to lay aside that *Way of Writing*, for the same Reason that one would have persuaded his Brethren to part with the Encumbrance of their *Bushy Tails*. But however *Fashion* and *Humour* may prevail, they must not think that the Club at their *Coffee-House* is, *All the World*; but there will always be those, who will in this Case be governed by *Indisputable Reason*; And who will think that the  
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real Excellency of a Book will never ly in *saying of little*; That the less one has for his Money in a Book, 'tis really the more Valuable for it; and that the less one is instructed in a Book, and the more of Superfluous *Margin*, and Superficial *Harrangue*, and the less of *Substantial Matter* one has in it, the more tis to be accounted of. And if a more *Massy Way of Writing* be never so much disgusted at This Day, a *Better Gust* will come on, as will some other Thing, *quæ jam Cecidere*. In the mean time, Nothing appears to me more Impertinent and Ridiculous than the *Modern Way*, [ I cannot say, *Rule*; For they have *None!* ] of *Criticising*. The Blades that set up for *Criticks*, I know not who constituted or commission'd 'em! — they appear to me, for the most part as *Contemptible*, as they are a *Supercilious* Generation. For indeed no Two of them have the same *Style*; and they are as intollerably Cross-grain'd and severe in their Censures upon one another, as they are upon the rest of Mankind. But while each of them, conceitedly enough, sets up for the *Standard of Perfection*, we are entirely at a Loss which *Fire* to follow. Nor can you easily find any one thing wherein they agree for their *Style*, except perhaps a perpetual Care to give us *Jeune* and *Empty Pages*, without such *Touches of Erudition* (to speak in the *Style* of an Ingenious Traveller) as may make the Discourses less *Tedious*, and more *Enriching*, to the Mind of him that peruses them. There is much Talk of a *Florid Style*, obtaining among the Pens, that are most in *Vogue*; but how often would it puzzle one, even with the best Glasses to find the *Floures!* And if they were to be *Chastized*

tized for it, it would be with much what as much of Justice, as *Ferom* was, for being a *Ciceronian*. After all, Every Man will have his own *Style*, which will distinguish him as much as his *Gate*: And if you can attain to that which I have newly described, but always writing so as to give an *Easy Conveyance* unto your *Idea's*, I would not have you by any *Scourging* be driven out of your *Gate*, but if you must confess a *Fault* in it, make a *Confession* like that of the *Lad*, unto his *Father* while he was beating him for his *Versifying*.

However, since every Man will have his own *Style*, I would pray, that we may learn to treat one another with mutual *Civilities*, and *Condescensions*, and handsomely *indulge* one another in this, as *Gentlemen* do in other *Matters*.

I wonder what ails People, that they can't let *Cicero* write in the *Style* of *Cicero*, and *Seneca* write in the (much other!) *Style* of *Seneca*; and own that *Bob* may please in their *several Ways*. — But I will freely tell you; what has made me consider the *Humourists* that set up for *Criticks* upon *Style*, as the most *Unregardable Set* of *Mortals* in the *World*, is This! Far more *Illustrious Criticks* than any of those to whom I am now bidding *Defiance*, and no less Men than your *Erasmus's*, and your *Grotius's*, have taxed the *Greek Style* of the *New Testament*, with I know not what *Solacisms* and *Barbarisms*; And, how many *learned Folks* have *Obsequiously* run away with the *Notion*! Whereas 'tis an *Ignorant* and an *Insolent Whimsy*; which they have been guilty of. It may be (and particularly by an *Ingenious Blackwal*, it has been) *Demonstrated*, That the *Gentlemen* are  
mistaken

mistaken in every one of their pretended *Instances*; All the *Unquestionable Classicks*, may be brought in, to convince them of their *Mistakes*. Those *Glorious Oracles* are as *pure Greek* as ever was written in the *World*; and so *Correct*, so *Noble*, so *Sublime* is their *Style*, that never any thing under the *Cope* of *Heaven*, but the *Old Testament*, has equal'd it.]

§. 9. What we call *NATURAL PHILOSOPHY*, is what I must encourage you to spend much more *Time* in the *Study* of.

Do it, with continual *Contemplations* and agreeable *Acknowledgements* of the *Infinite GOD*, whose *Perfections* are so display'd in His *Works* before you, that from them, you cannot but be perpetually ravished into the *Acclamations* of, *How Great is His Goodness and His Beauty!*

Do it, with a *Design* to be led into those *Views* wherewith you will in *Ways* most *Worthy* of a *Man* effectually *Show yourself a Man*, and may with *Unutterable Satisfaction* answer the main *END* of your *Being*, which is, To *Glorify GOD*; and therein also *Discharge* the *Office* of a *Priest* for the *Creation*; which, how sweet a, *Token for Good*, must it be unto you!

When I said, *Natural Philosophy*, you may be sure, I did not mean, the *Peripatetic*: For I heartily subscribe to the *Censure* of *Christianus Thomassius* upon it; *Omne Tempus pro Perdito judicandum, quod in Physicam Peripateticorum impenditur; ita inepta et stulta ibi sunt Omnia*. It is indeed amazing to see the *Fate* of the *Writings* which go under the *Name* of *Aristotle*. First falling into the hands of  
those