

**A GUIDE-BOOK IN THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649040612

A Guide-Book in the Administration of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church by  
Osmon C. Baker

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**OSMON C. BAKER**

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# GUIDE-BOOK

IN THE

ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISCIPLINE

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church.

BY OSMON C. BAKER, D. D.

REVISED EDITION.

New York:

PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PORTER,

200 NUGBERRY-STREET.

1860.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855,  
BY CARLTON & PHILLIPS,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District  
of New-York.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE design of this little manual is to furnish junior preachers with a brief, plain Guide for the correct discharge of their official duties. We have made no attempt to explain and defend our ecclesiastical system; this has been sufficiently done in several popular works, which are widely spread among our people. Nor have we aimed at endeavouring to impress our rising ministry with a deeper sense of ministerial obligation, and to set forth the moral and religious elements which compose the character of "able ministers of the New Testament." There are already many extensive and able treatises upon these varied topics. But there is a demand, we apprehend, for a practical work which shall

descend to the very minutiae of the pastor's daily duties.

In preparing our manual, we have found ourselves treading in an unbeaten path: no work of this kind has been attempted, if we may except Bishop Hedding's most admirable "Discourse on the Administration of the Discipline." This discourse has created a desire for a more extended work of the same general character. By the extension and division of our work, the young preacher is now often necessarily put immediately in pastoral charge, and is consequently deprived of the counsels and experience of senior preachers, which were formerly enjoyed.

We are not unaware of the difficulty of furnishing a work which shall be generally acceptable, from the different usages which prevail, to some extent, in different parts of the country, and the conflicting opinions of leading men: but it has been our aim to ascertain the general views of the best informed upon the several topics discussed, and to present them in a brief and lucid manner.



We have endeavoured to give particular attention to the several sections relating to Church trials; guarding, on the one hand, against too close an analogy to civil proceedings and mere ecclesiastical technicalities; and, on the other, against a loose and arbitrary mode of procedure. The evils which the Church has suffered from these causes should put every administrator on his guard. But we have found it impossible to express our meaning with clearness and precision without employing legal terms more frequently than we have desired.

This work is not presented as an *official* one; it is simply suggestive and advisory, for which the author is alone responsible. It is not a record of legal decisions by which the administration of the Church is to be governed, but a brief compend, exhibiting rather the *usage* than the *law* of the Church. Most appropriately can we employ the language of our late senior bishop: "I have not the vanity to suppose it is free from errors, but it is an offering of the best light I have on the subject. It

may be proper to say, however, that on most of the points which contain opinions on discipline I have conversed frequently and largely with many of our most enlightened and able ministers, and they agree with these opinions."

For many years past, we have noted down every valuable suggestion which we have heard or read relating to our practical economy; and having modified, written, and rewritten many of them frequently, we are not able now to give the credit which is due for many of these suggestions. At the earnest request of many friends this little manual is given to the public, hoping that it may prove a *vade mecum* to the young minister, and render some aid in the discharge of the duties of the pastorate.

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