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PREACHED AT

THE ORDINATION
OF THE

Reverend Mr. DAVID BOSTWICK,

AT

JAMAICA, on Long-Island,

October 9th, 1745.

By A. BURR.

To which is added,

AN EXHORTATION

TO

MINISTER and PEOPLE,

By Mr. PEMBERTON.

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A N

Ordination *S E R M O N.*

2 TIM. II. 15.

Study to shew thy self approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

 **T**HE Work of the Gospel Ministry is so weighty and important, the Charge so solemn and awful, the Difficulties that attend the right Discharge of it so many and great, that it might well make one of the Antients call it, *Onus humeris Angelorum formidandum*. *A Work that even an Angel might shrink at.*—Whoever seriously considers the Importance of this Work, the strict Account such must give at the great Day, the Danger and dreadful Consequence of being found unfaithful, will enter upon it with Fear and Trembling.—And such of us as are already engaged in the important Trust, may well cry out with the great Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these Things?*—He had a becoming Sense of the Greatness and Importance of his Work,—the Danger of being found unfaithful; and therefore made it his great Care and Study to approve himself to his great Lord

and Master. What a Sense he had of this important Work, appears (as many other Ways) by these Epistles to *Timothy*, wherein he so often reminds him of the Greatness and Weight of the Charge he had received, — in the most solemn and affectionate Manner exhorts and beseeches him, to approve himself faithful therein. One among the many Exhortations of that Nature we have in the Text.— *Study to shew thy self a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed.*

In the Words we observe,

1. The Character of a Gospel-Minister. *He is a Workman.* The Gospel-Ministry is a Work not a meer Preferment: And those that are duly engaged in it, find it a great and exceeding difficult Work.

2. What should be the Care and Concern of every Gospel-Minister, viz. *to approve himself to God.* 'Tis the great, glorious, heart searching God puts us into the Ministry: With him we have to do; to him we are accountable; unto him therefore we should study to shew our selves approved. It should be a little Thing with us to be judged of Man's Judgment, if we approve our selves to our great Judge.

3. What is the Business of a Gospel-Minister, viz. *to divide the Word of Truth.* They are not to invent new Notions of their own; to publish their own Whims and Imaginations, or the Decrees of POPES and COUNCILS, for the *Faith once delivered to the Saints.* But their Business is to
divide

divide the Word of Truth, to explain and press upon their Hearers the great Truths God has revealed in his Word. — They must teach as becomes the Oracles of God, and out of those sacred Treasures of all divine Truth, divide to every one a Portion in due Season, — for they are *sufficient to make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnish'd for every good Work.*

4. We may observe the great Difficulty of the Ministerial Work. — *Study to shew thy self approved, &c.* i. e. Apply your Mind to this great Business with all possible Pains and Diligence, lest you are found unfaithful. And whoever considers the Nature and vast Importance of this Work, will see the Necessity of our studying with an holy Solitude and Concern to approve our selves to God in it.

TO insist on all that is contained in this copious Text, would lead me into too large a Field of Discourse for the present Occasion. — I shall therefore from them, only,

FIRST, Give the Character of a *Workman that need not be ashamed*, or shew what is required of those that would approve themselves such to God.

SECONDLY, Consider the Importance of our *studying to approve* our selves such.

FIRST Then, I am to give the Character of a *Workman that needeth not be ashamed*; or shew what is required of those that would approve themselves such to God. — And here

1. It supposes they are in some due Measure qualified for their important Trust. 'Tis evident that such Workmen who need not be ashamed, are called by God to their Work. 'Tis plain God calls and puts none into the Ministry, but such as he qualifies for that sacred Character; and none but such will be approved and accepted by him at the last Day. And in order to their being qualified for this important Work,

1. Their Minds must be enriched with uncommon Degrees of Knowledge. — 'Tis their very Character and Business to be Teachers of others. *Their Lips are to preserve Knowledge, that the People may seek the Law at their Mouth.* — They are sent to turn Men from Darkness to Light; — to acquaint them with the Things that belong to their everlasting Peace; — to unfold to them the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God; — to divide the Word of Truth, which supposes they are acquainted with it, and are Scribes instructed for the Kingdom of Heaven, who can bring out of their Treasure Things new and old, according to the various Wants and Exigencies of their People. They are the *Lights of the World*: And to talk of a Minister without Knowledge, is to talk of a Light that neither does nor can shine: And a common Degree of Knowledge can by no Means furnish one for this important Trust. Besides those preparatory Studies of the *Languages, Arts and Sciences*, which are necessary to lead the Way to Divinity; he should be at least well acquainted with what is called *Systematical Divinity*,

Divinity, i. e. with the various Heads and Doctrines of Religion, digested in their proper Order; that he may have in a Readiness to discourse upon, open and explain any Point that he has a Call to and Occasion for. And what is called *polemical* (or controversial) *Divinity*, seems no less necessary; for 'tis a Shame for such as preach the Gospel not to be able to defend it, silence Gainsayers, and stop the Mouths of those that oppose the Truth, and would subvert the Faith of Others: — *Practical* Divinity is what he should be well versed in, and make the great Design of his Ministry to promote: And also *casuistical*, i. e. an Ability to resolve Cases of Conscience, Difficulties, Doubts and Scruples that may arise in the Minds of his Hearers; without this he can't be able to speak a Word in Season, nor right'y divide the Word of Truth. And to the attaining this, no small Pains, Study, diligent Application, with earnest Prayer to God for Assistance, is necessary; and without it none deserve the sacred Character, and 'tis certain without it they will never be approved by God. An ignorant Minister, *in a Word*, is a Scandal to his Profession, — a Plague to the Church, — a Judgment to the People over whom he is set, — and one that will be rejected by God at last, to his utter Shame and Confusion.

2. A competent Measure of Gifts, is also necessary to qualify a Man to be *a Workman that needeth not be ashamed*. — The Holy Psalmist,
Psal.

Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. speaking of the Exaltation of Christ, says, *He ascended on high, led Captivity Captive, and received Gifts for Men; yea for the Rebellious.* And the Holy Apostle in his Application of it, tells us, that these Gifts were for *the Use of the Ministry, and the Edifying the Body (i. e. the Church) of Christ.* *Eph.* iv. 7, 8, 9. These Gifts by some are unreasonably confined to the Apostolick Age; though, 'tis true, many Gifts were bestowed then, which (because the End and Design of them has ceased) are not continued now; yet as Christ has a standing Ministry in his Church, no doubt, all he calls into it, he furnishes with suitable Gifts for the Discharge of that Trust. — There is a *Spirit of Wisdom* (spoken of, *1 Cor.* xii. 8. *i. e.* an Insight into the Mysteries of our Holy Religion, or an holy Skill to manage the weighty and difficult Work. — There is also the *Gift of Utterance* — a *Parrhesia*, Freedom, Courage and Ability, to speak pertinently on the important Points of Religion. — A *Gift of Prayer*, whereby a Minister is able to lead the Congregation in that solemn Exercise, and offer up to God their Adorations, Confessions, Supplications and Thanksgivings, in a suitable Manner, as their various Occasions call for. — To which I may add an *Aptness to teach*, which the Apostle insists upon, *i. e.* a certain Ability to communicate our Knowledge in a free, plain, and easy Manner to others

These, with others that might be mentioned, seem highly necessary for all Ministers of the Gospel,

Gospel, in all Ages. — And the great Head of the Church is not wanting to furnish such as he calls to his Work, with these necessary Qualifications. “ A Ministry without Gifts (says a very learned and pious Author) is not Christ’s Ministry. ” ’Tis certain such will not be approved by him ; — can’t be *Workmen that need not be ashamed* ; ’tis true, the Gifts of faithful Ministers are very various as to Degree, the Spirit distributes to every one as he pleases ; and we of small Gifts ought not to envy, but bless God on Behalf of those who have greater ; and labour to excel those we can’t equal in other Things, in Humility, Self-denial, Diligence and Faithfulness in our great Work.

3. A Work of Saving Grace on the Heart is necessary, to make one *a Workman that needeth not be ashamed*. This is the crowning Qualification of a faithful Minister, and that without which all other will leave him ashamed. Though he has all Knowledge, and understands all Mysteries ; — though he has the most extraordinary Gifts ; can use all the Force of Persuasion, and Charms of Eloquence in his Preaching ; yet, if he has never felt the Power of Religion in his own Soul, and remains a Stranger to the sanctifying Grace of God’s Spirit, he will be found *as the sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal*.

AND is it likely such will ever answer the great Ends of the Ministry ? Will they do much for the Glory of God, which they have not at Heart ? Will they be duly concerned for the

Souls committed to their Charge, when they never see the Worth of their own? Will they take Pains to awaken Sinners out of that State they rest in themselves; or to recommend Christ to them, when they never saw his Excellency and Glory? And is it probable that God will bless the Labours of those who slight and reject his Son? Be it so that they are made Instruments of turning Sinners from Darkness to Light, and that many are awakned and converted by their Ministry, as no doubt God may and does work by such, yet they themselves will be Cast-a-ways, finally disowned and rejected by God, to their everlasting Shame and Confusion.

I would give no Countenance to that sinful Practice of judging and condemning such Ministers as are sound in the Faith, and of a regular Life and Conversation; yet, I say, graceless Ministers are of all Men upon Earth the most to be pitied. If we are found out of Christ at last, Strangers to him whom we have so often preach'd to others, of all Men we shall be the most miserable; not only the Blood of Souls will cry against us, but our own Sermons, the Warnings, Calls and Invitations we have given to others, will rise up in Judgment against us, and condemn us, because we regarded them not our selves; and be the tormenting Subjects of our everlasting Meditation, in the Regions of Darkness and Dispair. O! let us then *run not as uncertainly, fight not as beating the Air; but keep our Bodies in Subjection; lest that by any Means when we have*
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preach'd to others, we our selves should be Cast-aways. 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. And 'tis necessary, not only that Ministers should have Grace, but abound in it, — excel in Holiness, that they may be Patterns to their Flocks in every Grace and Virtue, if they would approve themselves *Workmen that need not be ashamed.*

4. A Person must have a Call to and a regular Introduction into this sacred Work, to make him a *Workman approved of God.*

THO' he may have all necessary Accomplishments to fit him for the Ministry; yet if he comes not in at the Door, but climbs up *another Way*, he will be esteemed a *Thief and a Robber.* John x. 1. He that will not submit himself to those who are proper Judges of his Qualifications, and is not regularly introduced by the Door of Ordination, in some such, if not in the same Manner, as you will have represented to you this Day; but rushes into the sacred Office of his own Head, under the Pretence of some immediate Call, such an one will not be owned and approved by God; for God owns none but those he calls, and calls none now but in the ordinary Way. But I pass on.

2^{dly}, 'Tis required of such as would approve themselves to God, *Workmen that need not be ashamed*, that they undertake and prosecute their great Work with right Views and Ends. — The great Design of the Institution of a Gospel-Ministry, was the Glory of God in the Salvation of perishing Sinners; and this should be our

avowed End and Aim in entering on that sacred Trust. Here all our Care, Pains and Labour should center. A sincere Intention to glorify God, in promoting the Weal of immortal Souls, is most necessary to make a Workman that will not be ashamed. — How much soever we may do in the sacred Office, how abundant soever we be in Zeal and Labours, yet if we are governed by mean, mercenary and selfish Views, it will mar all, and render our Services an *Abomination in the Sight of the Lord*. Such as engage and act in the Ministry as a Trade to live by, make the sacred Character a Cloak of Covetousness, *teach for Hire, and divine for Money*; such as are influenced by vile Ambition, seeking the Preheminence over their Brethren, and lording it over God's Heritage; or through vain-glorious Pride, are hunting after popular Applause, seeking to please Men and not God; or preach Christ from Envy and Strife, and not sincerely; do vilely prostitute the sacred Office, and will be found greatly ashamed at the last Day. We have to do with a jealous, heart searching God, and if we hope for his Acceptance, we must in Singleness of Heart approve our selves to him; according to that Apostolick Charge, *Feed the Flock of God which is among you, taking the Oversight thereof, not by Constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind.* 1 Pet. v. 2. O! let those of us who are engaged in, and such as are entering on, this important Work, take heed what Views we have; we must shortly pass

pass through the fiery Trial, and have them discovered before the great Assembly of the last Day.

3. Great Diligence in and unwearied Application to our great Work, is necessary to render us *Workmen that need not be ashamed*. Whoever considers the Nature, Importance and Difficulty of the Ministerial Employment, will easily see the Necessity of this. — An ignorant, thoughtless Multitude, are ready to imagine it to be a very easy and light Service ; to be a Minister, they think, is only to live free from Work, a delicate, easy and pleasant Life ; but little know what they say, or whereof they affirm. — Such as are best acquainted with the vast Difficulty, and awful Danger of that solemn Trust, have found it to be a painful laborious Life, filled up with distressing Fear and Concern, Difficulties, Temptations and Trials ; which makes them often cry out with the Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these Things ?* And they would sink and faint under the heavy Burden, were they not supported by the *Powers of the World to come*. — Some, 'tis true, that bear, but by no Means deserve, the sacred Character, have found it to be a Bed of Ease to sleep away their Time upon, in a careless, thoughtless Manner, living in Delicacy and Pleasure ; but such are *dead while they live*, Workmen that need be ashamed, and can expect nothing but the *Doom of the slothful Servant*. 'Tis certain a very weighty Charge is devolved on the Ministers of Christ ; and they can never discharge it as they ought

ought without great Application, Diligence and Painfulness : their Work is so large, extensive and difficult, that they will find sufficient to employ their Heads, Hearts and Hands. — Here I may hint a few Things.

1. They should be diligent in their private Studies.— Without this they will never answer the great Ends of their Ministry. I have observed the Necessity of having our Minds furnish'd with Knowledge before we enter upon this Work ; but whatever Stock Persons may have when they engage in it, if they continually spend upon it, and do not by Reading, Meditation and Prayer add thereto, they will find it waste and dwindle away, and be as useles as a *Talent in a Napkin*. By this Means, some that have made a pretty good Appearance at first, have afterwards, by their Sloth and Idleness, rendered themselves and their Ministry contemptible. And we in this Country especially, who have generally so small a Stock of Knowledge when we enter into the Ministry, have Need of continual Application to our Studies for the Increase of it, as far as the other important Duties of our Function will admit ; that we may have in our Treasure *Things new and old* : And this we should do with constant Application to Heaven, for a Blessing on our Studies ; being sensible, that those who *lack Wisdom must ask it of God*. There is a large Field open for our Study ; but if we would approve our selves *Workmen that need not be ashamed*, we must especially apply our selves
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to those Treasures of all divine Knowledge, the Holy Oracles of God. These should be the Subject of our most delightful Study, and daily Meditation : *For they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnish'd unto all good Works.* 2 Tim. iii. 17, 18. These are an inexhaustible Subject for study ; the Angels are still prying into the sacred Mysteries they contain ; and we, short-sighted Mortals, should never think we know enough of them. Every Minister that would not be ashamed, should make Conscience of diligently reading the sacred Scriptures with two Views : — *First, With a critical View ;* in order to get a right Understanding of them, that he may be able to explain and open them to his Hearers, to reconcile seeming Contradictions, and clear up the Difficulties that arise from many Places, and defend the Truths contained in them. — *Secondly, In a Way of Devotion, with a View to get them impress'd on his own Heart, that he may feel the Power of those Truths he preaches to others, and recommend them from an inward Sense of their divine Truth, Importance and Excellency :* This is so necessary, so exceeding profitable to Ministers, that I would urge it on my own Soul, and recommend it to my Brethren to abound in it ; especially frequently to read in this Way, the three *Epistles* of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, where the Duty of a Minister is so fully explained, and so solemnly enforced.

Moreover

Moreover we must take Pains to prepare for our publick Ministrations ; we should not serve God with that which cost us nought, but bring *beaten Oil into the Sanctuary*. I cannot think it proper, or what we can answer to God and our own Conciences, to rush into the Pulpit without any Forethought or Preparation what to say, under a Pretence of immediate Assistance. God has given us no Encouragement to expect his Assistance this Way, it would be a Cloak for Idleness ; and I wish many don't make it so. — Faithful Ministers, no doubt, have and ought to depend on God, for the Assistance of his Spirit in this Part of their Work ; but then 'tis in a Way of Duty and Diligence. And when they are called on any emergent Occasion, or are justly hinder'd from making Preparation, they may chearfully venture in the Strength of the Lord, hoping for special Help to carry them through ; but when we have Time and Opportunity, we ought to take Pains in preparing a Message from God to our People. Not that Ministers should be confined to their Notes, or may not speak without them, if God has given them a Gift for it ; which may be of great Service both to Minister and People. But then such should study much and get their Subjects well digested, especially those of us who are but young in the Ministry ought to do so.

2. There is great Pains and Diligence required in our publick Ministrations. Ministers are often sent to a *stiff-neck'd and rebellious People,*
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who need Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept. The greater Part of our Sermons are lost upon most of our Hearers, they will either not hear, or not regard ; the Tempter often picks up the Seed as fast as it is sown, or the World choaks it before it brings forth Fruit ; and we must sow it again ; this to Sense seems like Labour in vain, but we must not be discouraged nor faint : We must still follow them with our Instructions, Re-proofs, Admonitions, Warnings and Invitations, be *instant in Season and out of Season.* — The Holy Ordinances of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, must be administred in their Season ; and here great Care and Diligence is required, in preparing Persons for them, and keeping away such as are not qualified.

3. There is also Diligence and Pains required in our private Methods of Application to our People. — Alas ! how many under the Gospel are so ignorant, that they need to be instructed in the *first Principles* of the Oracles of God ? And not only ignorant, but dull and slow of Apprehension about divine Things ; and what Pains and Patience must be used with such ? How many to be reprov'd and admonish'd ? How many to be directed and comforted ? Which is to be done in our own Studies, when they visit us, which we should encourage and invite them to do on such Accounts : — And also 'tis to be done from House to House, as our Circumstances will allow, and the State of our Flock does require. 'Tis certain, that much of our Work,

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and not the least difficult Part of it, lies out of the Pulpit ; and if we do not take Pains in private Methods of Application to our People, we shall be ashamed another Day. — We should always keep in our Minds, that solemn affectionate Charge of the *Apostle to Timothy*. — *I charge thee therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his appearing and his Kingdom : Preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. If we hope for the Acceptance of our Judge, we must give *Diligence to fulfil the Ministry we have received*. Idleness is a great Sin in any, but vastly aggravated in a Minister, who has so much and such important Business on his Hands. How great will be the Shame and Confusion of such, when they hear that awful Reprimand from their Judge ; *Thou slothful Servant*.

4. Wisdom and Discretion in the Management of the important Trust, is necessary to make a *Workman that needeth not be ashamed*. — Whoever duly considers the many Difficulties that attend the right Discharge of the Gospel-Ministry, will easily see the Necessity of this ; for want of it, often Ministers of very excellent Accomplishments other Respects, are rendered in a great Measure useless. When Christ commissioned his Disciples to go forth and preach the Gospel, he recommended to them the *Wisdom of the Serpent*, as well as the *Innocency of the Dove*.

Wisdom

Wisdom is profitable to direct, says the Wise Man, *Eccles. x. 10.* And surely no Men upon Earth need it more than the Ministers of the Gospel. Alas! what Mischief has been done in the Church of Christ, by many of the sacred Character, for want of it. — We need look no further back than the late Days of God's glorious Grace, to see the sad Consequences of Ministers being without it. What Reason have many of us to lament that we had no more heavenly Wisdom and Skill to manage in that important Season? How much has the Cause of our blessed Master suffered, through our Unskilfulness and Folly? What sad Confusions have been introduced into the Church of Christ, by some who have had a *Zeal for God* (we may bear them Record) though *not according to Knowledge*. They have by their imprudent Zeal, kindled such a Fire as has burnt up their own Works, and set the City of God in Flames. O! that we had, had in that Season, a greater Sense of our own Weakness, and made more ardent Application to Heaven, for Wisdom to direct. — The Enjoyment and Exercise of this spiritual Skill, is, as one expresses it, “The Life and Grace of the Ministry.” What Need have we of Wisdom to direct, to the Choice of such Subjects as are suited to the State and Circumstances of our Flock! One Sermon in Season is likely to do more Good, than many equally valuable that are ill-timed. And what Skill is required to adapt our selves to the various Capacities of our Hearers, and speak a Word in

Season to every one, according to their different States, Circumstances, Trials, Temptations, Tempers and Dispositions! How to divide the Word aright so as to arouse the Secure, comfort the Disconsolate, and succour the Tempted, detect the Self-deceiver, and direct the convinced Soul aright; requires great Prudence and Sagacity. And if we do not reach the Hearts and Consciences of our Hearers, and divide to every one a Portion according to their various Cases, we do little to the Purpose. General Harangues on Subjects, though beautifully composed and fluently delivered; though they may tickle the Ear and please the Fancy, will not answer the great Ends of the Ministry. There should be the most close and particular Application to Saints and Sinners; — 'tis the Life and Soul of Preaching. Wisdom is also profitable to direct in the Composition and Delivery of our Sermons; our Method should be clear and distinct; our Style plain, easy and natural, though not low and flat: our Delivery grave, serious and affectionate, as becomes the Importance of our Work. And how great Need is there of Wisdom in our private Applications to our Hearers! The Humours, Inclinations, Tempers and Dispositions of People are so various, that there is no small Difficulty in this Thing. To suit our Reproofs, Exhortations and Instructions to People, according to their Tempers and Cases; what Prudence and Discretion is needful? — And 'tis no less requisite in the Government of the Church. In short, a
Minister

Minister can never approve himself a Workman to God without it. O! that we had a greater Sense of our Need of this divine Wisdom; that we might apply our selves to him *who gives liberally and upbraids not.*

5. We must be animated with a Zeal for God and the Good of Souls, to make us *Workmen that need not be ashamed.*

Such as go on in their great Work, in a cold, careless and indifferent Manner, as though they were little or nothing concerned about the success of their Labours, are like to do little good to the Souls of Men; and when they come to see at the last Day, what everlasting Affair they have been trifling about, they will be dreadfully ashamed. Surely, if we have any due Sense of the Glory of God, and the invaluable Worth of immortal Souls, we shall feel a sacred Warmth, an holy Ardor of Soul in the Discharge of our important Trust, on which so much depends. This will cause us with the tenderest Pity and Concern to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God; — to pluck them's Brands out of everlasting Burnings; — to compel them to come in by all the solemn Terrors and kind Invitations of God's Word. This will excite us to labour and strive, by warning and teaching every Man, *to present every Man perfect in Christ.* Col. i. 28, 29. And it is most necessary to animate us under, and carry us through, the various Difficulties and Discouragements we shall meet with in our Work. If we are animated with a true Zeal for
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the Honour of our great Lord and Master, we shall not think it hard to spend and be spent for him ; nor count our Lives dear, if we may but fulfill the Ministry we have received, and finish our Course with Joy. We shall not thro' Fear, Favour or Affection, shun declaring the whole Counsel of God, and so keep our selves free from the Blood of all Men. " Ministers without this (as one expresses it) are like Stars in a Winter Night, that give a little Light, but convey no Heat or Warmth to the Beholders." 'Tis certain, without it they will never be such Workmen as God will approve.

6. Those that would approve themselves to God in their great Work, must be constantly looking to, and depending upon him for Assistance and Success therein. — Such as go forth in their own Strength, will return empty and ashamed. If we have any just Sense of our selves and the Greatness of our Work, we must see that we are altogether insufficient for these Things ; that we can neither save our selves nor those that hear us. We are but earthen Vessels, though entrusted with a divine Treasure. All our Accomplishments for our Work come from Christ ; 'tis he qualifies Men for, and puts them into the Ministry, and to him we must look both for the Continuance and Increase of those Qualifications : And 'tis certain we depend entirely upon him for Success in our Labours. *Tho' Paul plant, and Apollos water, 'tis God that giveth the Increase.* 1 Cor. 3. Tho' we had the Tongues of Men and
Angels,

Angels, and the Zeal of a Seraph, we could never turn one Sinner from Darkness to Light: If left to our selves we should be but as the sounding Brass and tinkling Cymbal. As therefore we hope for Success and Approbation in our great Work, we must go forth in the Grace and Strength of Christ. 2 *Tim.* ii. 1. And be daily waiting at the Throne of Grace, on him to whom all Power is given for needed Supplies of Grace and Strength, and that our Labours may be crowned with Success. Ministers should be much in Prayer; they have much to do with God in a Way of Devotion: And such as do little in this Duty, and that in a cold, careless Manner, will one Day be ashamed.

7. Such *Workmen as need not be ashamed*, are faithful to their sacred Trust.

'Tis required in *Stewards*, says the Apostle, *that a Man be found faithful.* 1 *Cor.* iv. 2. As there is no Trust of greater Importance, than that which is devolved on them, so none can be under greater Obligations to Fidelity. We must be faithful in keeping close to our sacred Instructions, teaching our People the Truth as it is in Jesus; — without any Mixture of our own Inventions, *not corrupting the Word of God, nor handling it deceitfully*; which has often been done by Men of the sacred Character, to the Dishonour of God and the Ruin of many Souls. Our Business is, to teach our People what Christ has commanded, and to this we are confined by our Commission, and of this we are to keep back
nothing

nothing that may be profitable to them, but declare the *whole Counsel of God*. Fidelity will oblige us to a strict Impartiality in all our Administrations, according to the solemn Charge of the Apostle; *not preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality.* 1 Tim. v. 21. But *warning every Man and teaching every Man, that we may present every Man perfect in Christ.* And unless we do so, we may expect to be ashamed when we appear before our Judge.

8. Such as desire to approve themselves to God in their great Work, must recommend Religion by an holy Life and Conversation.

This is a Matter of so great Importance, so essential to the Character of a faithful Minister, on which the Success of our Labours does so much depend, that it cannot be thought of too seriously by us. The Church of Christ has suffered more by the careless, wicked and scandalous Lives of the Clergy, than by her most open and avowed Enemies: Nothing perhaps has done more towards hardening Men in Sin and Infidelity, bringing a Reproach on the Ways of God, and rendering the sacred Office contemptible, than this. A Minister who appears grave, serious and heavenly-minded out of the Pulpit, and has his Conversation seasoned with Grace, so that it is profitable to the Hearers, commands Respect from his People, and will be heard with Reverence and Attention; it gives him a great Advantage to have a Testimony in the Breasts of his Hearers, that he really believes the Things
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he preaches to them. — But a proud, ambitious, self-seeking, worldly, vain Minister, is the Reproach of his Profession ; and all his Offerings, 'tis probable, will be despised ; with how much Zeal soever he may preach down Sin, and preach up Holiness, he will be considered only as acting a Part ; and what he says will be regarded by his Hearers, as much as it is by himself. If we desire to answer the great Ends of our Ministry, and approve our selves to God ; we must *study to be an Example to the Flock in all Things, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.* 1 Tim. iv. 12. In particular.

Our Conversation should be without Covetousness. 'Tis enjoined upon us *not to be greedy of filthy Lucre, but given to Hospitality.* 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3. 'Twill be to no Purpose for us to preach against that Soul destroying Sin, the Love of the World, which so universally prevails ; if it appears by our Conversation, that we are pursuing it with Greediness and Anxiety our selves. I know we may be accused of this by an ungrateful People without Reason. 'Tis a common Cry, Ministers love the World as much as other People : 'Twill be well for us, if another Day, it don't appear there was too much Occasion for this general Reproach. But our Concern is to approve our selves to God, and indeed to the Consciences of Men too, that we may cut off an Occasion from those that desire it, to reproach us in this Matter. — Ministers should set loose by the World, live above it ; they should have

liberal Hearts, and devise liberal Things. — And they should not be entangled in the Affairs of this Life ; but as much as may be keep themselves free from worldly Cares and Incumbrances. That they may give themselves to Reading, Exhortation and Doctrine, — be wholly in those Things, that their profiting may appear unto all. — And if People did but see, how much 'tis their Interest as well as indispensable Duty, they would cheerfully give their Ministers so liberal a Maintenance, that they might in these Respects adorn their sacred Character. — Moreover their Conversation should be without Offence. Much Prudence and Discretion is requisite for Ministers to conduct themselves, so as to give no Offence to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God ; that the Ministry be not blamed. How to become all Things to all, and yet be unfaithful to none, is a difficult Point, and calls for the Wisdom which is from above. — Our Conversation should be grave ; we should live and act as those who have an abiding Sense of the great and important Things of Religion. — Again, it should be edifying, and such as will minister Grace to the Hearers. Our Lips should preserve divine Knowledge, and spread a Savour of it where ever we go. 'Tis indeed difficult to introduce religious Conversation in many Sorts of Company ; but it might be done much oftner than it is, were it not our Fault. — We should watch the *Mollia Tempora fandi* ; the happy Season in which we may have a free Access to our Hearers ; and for this End

we should carefully improve their Visits to us, as well as ours to them. — But I must hasten very briefly in the second Place.

SECONDLY, To consider the Importance of studying to approve our selves to God, *Workmen that need not be ashamed.* — And here,

1. We should study for it, because it is a difficult Thing thus to approve our selves to God. — What has already been said of a Workman that needeth not be ashamed, may convince every considerate Person, that it is no light and easy Matter to be such. — There is vast Difficulty in the right Discharge of our sacred Trust, and awful Danger of our being found unfaithful and ashamed : And if we do not study, labour and take Pains in this weighty Business, we can't hope for the Acceptance of our Judge.

2. The Glory of God, and the Welfare of immortal Souls, are concerned in our approving our selves such Workmen. This, as we have heard, is the great End and Design of our Ministry ; the answering of which should be the Business and Care of our Lives. And if we have any due Concern for the Glory of God, or becoming Sense of the invaluable Worth of immortal Souls, we shall see the Necessity of giving our selves wholly to these Things, of studying, labouring and striving to approve our selves faithful in our great Work ; on the Success of which, so much and so important Things depend : For we must be either a *Savour of Life unto Life, or Death unto Death* to our People. Surely then we

should take heed to our selves and to our Ministry, that we may not only save our selves, but those that hear us.

3. Our Peace and Comfort here, depend upon our approving our selves such Workmen. — What a wretched uncomfortable Life must these Ministers live, who feel a guilty Conscience continually upbraiding and accusing them, for being deceitful, slothful and negligent in the Work of the Lord ; who know that they are neither approved to God nor to their own Consciences ! — This, methinks, added to the other Difficulties of their Work, is enough to render it insupportable. Surely they must be Strangers to any solid Comfort, who carry in their Breasts, such an unfailing Spring of Torment and Woe, — which is a sad Presage of that unutterable Horror and endless Dispair, which awaits such in the other World. But on the contrary, what Soul-satisfying Peace, must those feel, who *have this for their rejoicing, the Testimony of their own Conscience, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, with Zeal and Fidelity, they have laboured to act in their great Work !* What a divine Support this is, under the Reproaches of an ungrateful World, and the many Discouragements and Difficulties we may expect to meet with in the Discharge of our Duty ! A Consciousness that we have approved our selves faithful to God, will be a Source of such sacred Peace and Pleasure, as the World can neither give nor take away. O ! let us then study to shew our selves approved to God.

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4. The joyful Acceptance such will meet with from their Judge, and the glorious Reward that will be bestowed upon them, should excite us to approve our selves such Workmen. — *We watch for Souls as those that must give an Account.* And if we have thus approved our selves to God, however we may have often laboured in vain, and spent our Strength for Nought; how much soever we have been hated and reviled by unthinking Sinners, for telling them the Truth; we shall appear before our Judge with exceeding Joy, and receive *a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.* This we should bear on our Minds, to support us under, and animate us in the Discharge of our difficult Work. *Blessed is that Servant, whom when his Lord comes, he shall find so doing, — and who shall be received with a Well done, good and faithful Servant.*

5. The dreadful Consequence of being found unfaithful, should awaken us to a solemn Concern to approve our selves such Workmen. — We must give a strict and impartial Account of our selves and the Ministry we have received; — how we have fulfilled it; — what Pains and Diligence we have used in it; — what we have done with the Souls committed to our Trust. And if we are found to have acted carelessly and deceitfully in the Lord's Work, preach'd our selves and not Christ, seeking to please Men and not the Lord, or suffered the Souls of our People to perish, for want of plain, seasonable and faithful Warning; how sad and awful will our Account
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be! What Amazement and Confusion will overwhelm unfaithful Ministers, when they appear before their Judge, with the Blood of lost Souls crying against them for Vengeance! Of all Men they will be the most wretched; the forest Damnation surely awaits such in another World. We should therefore *study to shew our selves Workmen that need not be ashamed.*

I M P R O V E M E N T.

1. We learn the Greatness and Importance of the Ministerial Work, and with what serious Consideration, Sollicitude and Concern Persons should enter upon it. How weighty, how solemn the Charge of those, to whom immortal Souls are committed! 'Tis no light nor easy Thing, to be an *Ambassador* of the LORD OF HOSTS, and come in his Name to a perishing World. How important and solemn are the Messages we bring! How much depends on the Success of our Work! We are to be the *Savour* of *Life* or *Death* to our Hearers. O! what Knowledge and Wisdom, — what Painfulness and Diligence, — what Zeal for God, and Compassion for perishing Souls should there be, to discharge this important Work aright! What Difficulties and Trials, Temptations and Heart-sinking Discouragements, do those meet with who are engaged in it! How strict and impartial will their Account be at the last Day! And is this a Work to be entered upon in a careless, thoughtless Manner? No sure, but with Fear and deep Concern of Soul.

Soul. 'Tis true, *he that desires the Office of a Bishop, desires a good Work*; 'tis a noble Employment; but he also desires a weighty and most difficult Work; for let him read what follows, *A Bishop must be blameless, &c.* — He must be wise, learned, diligent, faithful, zealous, apt to teach, holy, exemplary, &c. Let such then as are designing to enter on the Work of the Ministry, seriously consider how great and solemn it is: Don't let them dream of a Life of Ease, Indolence and Pleasure, but let upon it that it will be full of Labour and Care. Take heed that you be not induced hereto by any mean and sordid Views; you had better be the Off-scouring of all Flesh, than to preach to gain the vain Applause of your fellow Worms; you had better beg your Bread all your Days, than to enter upon it as a Trade to live by; however they may live, 'twill be dreadful dying for such, and more dreadful appearing before their Judge. O! be much in Prayer to God, with diligent Application to your Studies, that you may be prepared for this great Work before you enter upon it.

2. Let this Discourse in all Humility be address'd to those of the *sacred Order*, who are here present.

As it hath pleased you, my Reverend Fathers, and dear Brethren, to appoint the unworthiest of your Number to speak on this Occasion, you will suffer a Word of Exhortation, to stir up his own Heart and yours in this great Work to
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which we are called. We have now brought fresh to our Minds, the solemn Transactions of that Day, when we gave our selves up to the Lord in the sacred Service of the Ministry; how solemn and sacred were the Vows, how awful the Bonds by which we bound our selves to the Lord! And how have we fulfilled the Ministry we then received? What have we done with that sacred Treasure, *the everlasting Gospel*, committed to our Trust? Have we with a becoming Ardour and Zeal, publish'd the glad Tydings thereof to a guilty World? Have we besought Sinners with an holy Earnestness and Importunity, to be reconciled to God? Have we been instant in Season and out of Season, — been willing to spend and be spent for Christ? Have we had a becoming Sense of the everlasting Importance of those Things, we have been treating with Sinners about? And have we plead with them, as having a Sense of the transcendant Excellency of that Saviour we preach, and the invaluable Worth of Souls committed to our Care? Have we, *knowing the Terrors of the Lord*, persuaded and warned Sinners, and *tasting that he is gracious*, invited them to come to him for Life? Are we Workmen that need not be ashamed? Have we experienced the Power of those Truths in our own Souls, that we have so often recommended to others? How great will be our Misery! how awful our Destruction! if we at last should be found Strangers to that Saviour we have so often preach'd to others. A Minister of Christ found
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an Enemy to him, everlastingly disowned and rejected by him under the Doom of the slothful Servant, with the Blood of Souls crying against him, how awful, how tremendous the Thought! with what Confusion shall we stand before our Judge, when our own Sermons will rise up in Judgment against us and condemn us. O! what an *Emphasis* will it add to our Horror and Dispair in the Regions of Darkness, to have our own Consciences preaching over those awful Terrors we have denounced against others, but never duly minded our selves. If after we have preach'd to others we our selves should be Cast-aways, of all Men we shall be the most wretched and forlorn: It never entered into the Heart of any to conceive the unutterable Anguish and Distress such will feel, who sink not only under the Weight of their own Sins, but the Guilt of other Souls crying against them.

Is it not enough to make our Flesh tremble, and our Hearts fail us for Fear of these Things? Are we sure we shall not be of this wretched Number? Have we not done the Work of the Lord slothfully and deceitfully? Have we not trified with the precious Blood of Christ, and all the Glories of his Gospel! Have we not too often, alas! spoken to Sinners with cold Hearts and frozen Lips, about Things of everlasting Moment and Consequence to them? And is there no Danger we shall be found among the slothful Servants at last, and receive the dreadful Doom of such? Pardon this Language, that flows more from a

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Jealously over my own Heart, than a Fear of you. And suffer me to intreat you, my Reverend Fathers, to beseech you, my dear Brethren, and warn my own Soul, to take heed to our selves and the Ministry we have received of the Lord to fulfill it. Never was there a Day, perhaps, in which Ministers were more loudly call'd to Zeal, Activity and Diligence, than now. — 'Tis no less lamentable to be thought on, than true in Fact, that vital Piety and Godliness is languishing and dying away. *Iniquity abounds, and the Love of many waxes cold.* How much Profaneness and Security among Sinners! Coldness and Deadness among the Children of God! How is the Life and Power of Godliness ridiculed and bantered by many, slighted and disregarded by most? What woful Apostasies from hopeful Beginnings? What Stumbling-Blocks laid before Sinners by the scandalous Lives of Professors, the careless uneven Walk of Saints? And can we be unmoved and unaffected at these Things? Shall we suffer the Cause of our Master to die under our Hands, for want of Zeal and Fervour in our great Work? Can we with Coldness and Indifferency behold the glorious Gospel despis'd and undervalued, and Sinners rushing headlong to Ruin and Destruction? Where is our Zeal for the Lord of Hosts? Where are our Bowels of Pity and Compassion for perishing Souls? And what Account shall we give to our great Judge, if we stand as unconvinced Spectators of the growing Security, and mournful Apostacy of
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this Day? O! let us arouse our Souls to an holy Zeal and Fervency in fulfilling the Ministry we have received, and what our *Hands find to do* in this great Work, let us *do it with our Might*: Studying to *shew* our selves approved to God — *Workmen that need not be ashamed.*

3. I would address this Discourse to my *dear Brother*, who is now to be set apart to the sacred Service of the Ministry. We bless God, who has inclined your Heart to this important and difficult Work, and we trust, in some due Measure, qualified you therefor. 'Tis our Heart's Desire and Prayer to God, that you may come to this People in *the Fullness of the Blessings of the Gospel of Peace*; that you may *turn many to Righteousness*, and at last *shine as the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.* We therefore desire you may enter upon it with a deep Sense of the Greatness of this Charge, of the Worth of Souls that are now to be committed to you, and the strict Account you must give to your Judge. No Charge more awful can be committed to mortal Man than that you are now to receive, before God, Angels and this Assembly: No Bonds more solemn and sacred, than those you are bringing your self under to God and your People: No Work more difficult and important than that you are engaging in. O! what Grace, what Wisdom, what Zeal, what Courage, Pains, Diligence, Self-denial are required of such as would approve themselves to God herein. Every Soul that is now to be committed to your Charge,

is more Worth than the whole World, and will be demanded of you at the last Day. Does not your Heart tremble and move out of it's Place, and are you not ready to say, woe is me I am undone, I am a Man of unclean Lips ! But tho' it be a great and most weighty, 'tis also a most glorious and excellent Work you are engaging in. *He that desires the Office of a Bishop, desires a good Work.* Undertake it therefore with a willing Mind, in the Strength of the Lord, relying on that most gracious Promise, — *lo ! I am with you alway, even to the End of the World.* Enter upon this Charge with a single Eye to God's Glory, a fervent Love to precious Souls, and a deep Sense of the Nature and everlasting Importance of it. Study, my Brother, to approve your self to God ; 'tis the great, glorious, heart-searching God, that puts you into the Ministry ; with him you have to do, and to him you will be accountable another Day. Be diligent, painful, zealous and faithful in the Discharge of your important Trust : You will find Work enough, and that of the last Importance to take up your Time and Thoughts. — Labour to increase and improve the Gifts God has bestowed upon you ; give your self to Reading, Study, Meditation and Prayer ; be wholly in these Things, that your Profiting may appear to all. Don't think much to take Pains for so excellent a Master as you serve, and for Souls for whom he shed his precious Blood. The everlasting Gospel of God's Grace is now to be committed to your Trust ; O!
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don't trifle with that invaluable Treasure ; but publish the great Salvation therein revealed to perishing Sinners, with a becoming Zeal and Ardour of Soul. Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, persuade and warn Sinners, in the Bowels of Jesus, and with the tenderest Compassion for Souls, beseech them to be reconciled to God. Warn every Man, teach every Man, that, if possible, you may *present every Man perfect in Christ*. Difficulties, Trials and Discouragements await you in this Work, but let none of these Things move you, if so be you may finish your *Course with Joy, and the Ministry you have received of the Lord*. Think often of the solemn Vows you are now about to take upon you, in the Presence of God, Angels and Men ; and never indulge low and trifling Thoughts of what now appears to you of such sacred and everlasting Importance. Think often of the Greatness of your Work, the strict and impartial Account you must give another Day, the Danger and awful Consequence of being found unfaithful. *Continue faithful until Death, and the Lord shall give you a Crown of Life that fadeth not away* : To whom be all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Praise, for ever and ever. *Amen*.