

Stephens Williams
1938



Mr. Pemberton's SERMON

AT

An ORDINATION.

To which is annex'd,

A DISCOURSE

on the same Occasion,

By Mr. Dickinson.



A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
O R D I N A T I O N
of the Reverend

Mr. *Walter Wilmot*

A T

Jamaica on Long-Island.

April 12. 1738.

By E. P E M B E R T O N.

To which is added,
A brief DISCOURSE upon the divine Ap-
pointment of the Gospel Ministry, and the Methods
of it's Conveyance thro' the successive Ages of the
Church; deliver'd upon the same Occasion:
With the C H A R G E given at the Ordination.

By the Rev. Mr. *Jonathan Dickinson.*

Published at the Request of the Hearers.

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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

O R D I N A T I O N

of the Rev.

Mr. *Walter Wilmot.*

COL. I. 7.

*As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear
fellow-Servant, who is for you a
faithful Minister of CHRIST.*



W H E N our blessed Lord had finished the great work of redemption, and was about to make his triumphant ascension into heaven, he appointed his apostles to be the first ministers of his kingdom, to preach the glad tidings of salvation to the perishing sons of

of men. *All power (says he) is given unto me in heaven and in earth : Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

This was not a temporary institution, calculated for the first days of the gospel, nor design'd to expire with the apostolic age, but was appointed for the service of the church in all ages, and intended to continue to the second coming of the Son of Man. Therefore Christ promises *his presence*, not only with the apostles, but with their successors *to the end of the world* : and St. Paul tells us, that the work of the ministry is instituted *for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

And as the Gospel-Ministry was design'd by Christ to be a standing ordinance in the church ; so it is of the highest consequence, that this office be bestowed upon suitable persons. The design of it's institution, the honour of God and the welfare of immortal souls, loudly requires that those who are invested with this important character, be in some measure qualified for the sacred trust, and faithful in the discharge of it. Hence that solemn charge of St. Paul to Timothy, *to commit those things to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others.* And it is the commendation of Epaphras in our text, *that he was a faithful minister of Christ.* This is what I design for the
subject

subject of my present discourse : And I shall proceed in the following method,

First, I shall enquire what is *implied* in this *faithfulness*.

Secondly, Consider what *obligations* the ministers of the gospel are under to be faithful.

First, I am to enquire what is implied in this *faithfulness*. And I shall observe here,

1. It implies, *That they engage in this work from a principle of holy zeal for the glory of God, and an earnest desire to promote the salvation of men.*

Base and selfish ends will corrupt their sacred character, and defile and blemish their most commendable performances. If the Ministers of Christ are under the governing influence of a proud and ambitious spirit, or take upon them that holy calling, only as a trade to support them in ease and plenty, it is greatly to be feared that they will calculate their doctrine for their Interest, and debase the purity of the gospel to suit the taste of a vitious and degenerate age. If religion is in fashion, and a zealous profession is the way to honour and esteem, then they will warmly defend *the faith once delivered to the saints*, and loudly declaim against the prevailing sins of the times ; but on the contrary, if the interest of Christ is under an apparent cloud, and their zeal will expose them to suffering and contempt ; then, they will be in infinite danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and sordidly complying with the fashionable doctrines and manners of the day. Thus their fidelity will be corrupted, the edge of their zeal abated, and their

their sacred character prostituted, to serve the most base and unworthy designs.

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the embassadors of Christ be not under the prevailing influence of sordid and secular views, but be inspired with pure and upright intentions. A tender regard for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, must animate their breasts, and influence every part of their ministerial conduct: This will keep them steady to their duty in times of the greatest difficulty and trial, and preserve them from those dangerous apostacys which wou^d be a reproach to their character, and hinder the success of their ministry: This will engage them to use the most successful methods to promote the kingdom of Christ in the World, and bear them up above all the difficulties and discouragements that attend the faithful discharge of their duty: This will make them willing to *spend and be spent* in their master's service, and think nothing too hard to be endured, nothing too dear to be parted with, if they may fulfil the ministry they have receiv'd, save the souls of their hearers, and advance the kingdom of the great redeemer.

2. Faithfulness implies, *that they be men of good understandings, and have sufficient abilities* to qualify them for the work to which they are appointed.

Under the Law the *Priests lips were to preserve knowledge and the people were commanded to require the Law at their Mouths*; and this is equally necessary for every minister of the gospel, that would not be a disgrace to his profession, and render the offerings of the Lord contemptible: Their
breasts

herasts must be a rich treasure of useful knowledge, that *they may bring forth things new and old.*

They must be acquainted with every part of their duty, that they may be able to speak a word in season, suited to the various exigencies of their people. The apostles indeed, the first ministers of the gospel church, were men of a mean and unpolished education, unacquainted with human learning; but then they were miraculously qualified for their work, by the immediate illuminations of the Spirit: but now we have no extraordinary revelation to expect, nor miraculous infusion to depend upon; and so must seek after a suitable degree of knowledge in the ordinary methods of education, by the blessing of God upon our painful and laborious studies; without this a man may bear the character of a minister, but will certainly want a necessary qualification of his office.

We are sent on this important errand, *to open the eyes of the blind; to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God:* and what heavenly wisdom is required, successfully to manage this glorious design, and save the sinner from the jaws of eternal destruction?

What sacred skill is necessary to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the secure, to exhort the negligent, to strengthen the weak, and to build up the saints in faith & holiness? What prudence and discretion are wanting to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and powerfully to oppose the prevailing errors of the day? A small degree of
B learning

learning is certainly insufficient to answer these great and excellent ends? What then can be expected, but that ignorant teachers will cause their people to err from the way of truth, and lead them into the by-paths of error and delusion. If the blind lead the blind, both are in danger of falling into the Pit of everlasting darkness and destruction.

3. Fidelity requires. *That they keep close to their sacred instructions, and deliver the whole Counsel of God to their People.*

They receive their commission from Christ, and are to go forth in his name & authority; to publish the doctrines he has revealed and the Duties that he has enjoined, with the greatest plainness and evidence, without any mixture of their own inventions. They are to preach *the truth as it is in Jesus*, without any corruption and deceit, and try all their doctrines by the unalterable standard of God's word. This is the tenour of their commission; *Go, disciple all Nations, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.* This is the commandment they have received and are bound inviolably to obey; *If any man speak, let him speak as becomes the Oracles of God,* 1 Pet. 4 11. And when men deliver their own fond imaginations instead of the pure & genuine doctrines of the gospel, and impose upon their hearers the fallible dictates of men, in the room of the unerring counsels of heaven, they betray their sacred trust, debase the purity of the gospel, and open a wide door to the most dangerous errors: This has been the unhappy occasion of those numberless offences and scandals by which the glory of our profession has been stain'd, the peace
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of the christian church disturb'd, and the heritage of the Lord expos'd to the rage of insulting tyrants: This has laid the foundation of that uncharitable heat and fury which has divided the followers of the meek and peaceable *Jesus*, into innumerable sects and opinions, and consumed that peace and charity which is so strictly enjoin'd upon us in the gospel, and made the distinguishing badge of the disciples of Christ.

And as the ministers of Christ, are to keep close to their commission, and make no alteration in the doctrines of the gospel, so they must keep back nothing that is profitable for their people, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

The Scriptures are the magazine from whence they must derive all their supplies, and they contain every thing that is proper to be inculcated upon their hearers; *They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, and thorowly furnish'd unto every good work.* Their great and compassionate design is to instruct an ignorant world in their duty and happiness, to recover a lost world from the depth of misery into which their iniquities have plunged them, and to advance them to that height of happiness & glory which the merits of Christ have purchased for those that by faith receive him. To attain this blessed and desirable end, We must inform our hearers of the guilty and distressed estate of man by nature, having forfeited the favour of God which was our only happiness, lost the divine image which was our distinguishing glory, and become heirs of eternal destruction and misery. We must re-

present unto them the universal depravation and disorder, which has invaded the nature of man since the first grand apostacy, by which we are disqualified for the service of God, the bounteous author of our beings, and are become the slaves of Satan, our bitter and malicious adversary. We must unfold unto them the astonishing wonders of redeeming love, in which all the perfections of the Deity appear in the most beautiful harmony, and shine forth in their unclouded lustre and glory. The Lord Jesus Christ must be preached unto them as an almighty and compassionate Saviour, who was chosen and appointed by the Father to be the only mediator between God and man, and who pass thro' a state of obedience, sufferings and death, that he might purchase compleat and eternal redemption for his people. We must explain the perfections of his nature, the value of his merits, the power of his grace, the prevalence of his intercession, and the extent of his authority and government. We must declare unto them the nature and necessity of faith, by which we apply the merits of Christ to our own souls, and secure a title to the mighty purchase of his invaluable blood. We must insist upon the inability of man, by any power of nature, to comply with the terms of the Gospel, and assert the indispensable necessity of the regenerating influences of the spirit, to qualify us for the performance of any duty, to the divine approbation and acceptance. The great duties of the gospel we must inculcate with frequency and importunity, and zealously contend that the disciples of Christ must *be careful to maintain good works*. The important duties of piety to God, of justice and charity to men, of sobriety
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and temperance with respect to our selves, must be the frequent theme of our discourse.

But these we are to preach unto our hearers, not with the air of a pagan moralist, but with the spirit and temper of a christian minister, who is to declare *the truth as it is in Jesus*. They are to be insisted upon as injoin'd by the authority of Christ our lord and master, to be performed by the assistance of his Grace, and which only will be accepted by God when perfum'd with the incense of his merits. In fine, To induce our hearers to a compliance with the gracious demands, and acceptance of the inestimable Blessings of the gospel, we must treat them not as insensible machines and irrational bruits; but we must address them in a way suited to their rational powers, and endeavour to inform their understanding, to awaken their conscience, and draw them to their duty, by the cords of a man and the bands of love. To this end, we must brandish the terrors of God's wrath, to alarm the secure and impenitent; and display the wonders of his Love, to encourage the weary and heavy laden sinners: We must uncover the mouth of the bottomless pit, and give them an affecting view of the amazing agonies & torments which are prepared for the generation of the wicked: We must set before them the excellencies & glories of the heavenly world, and describe those ineffable joys & pleasures which are reserv'd for the faithful servants of Christ. Thus we shall evidence our Fidelity to Christ, and be able to say with the great Doctor of the Gentiles, *I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shun'd to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.*

4. Fidelity implies, *That we use unwearied industry and diligence in the management of our weighty Trust.*

It is a laborious employment we are engaged in, that will not allow us to indulge our carnal ease, and give way to a slothful and indolent spirit. A faithful minister must preach the word in season and out of season, reprove the wicked, stir up the negligent, comfort the disconsolate, strengthen the weak, and reduce the erroneous, both in his publick discourses and private applications to his people. He must administer the sacraments of the new testament to the qualified subjects of those sacred misteries. He must exercise an holy discipline in the church of Christ, that the ordinances of the Gospel may not be profaned by the ignorant and scandalous.

And now, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* What unwearied application and diligence is required, faithfully to discharge this sacred trust? What mighty difficulties have we to conquer? What frequent discouragements to break thro'? A corrupt heart, a subtle devil, and a deceitful world, are in sworn confederacy to distress and oppose us: And is not this enough to awaken us out of our sloth, and excite us to unfainting industry in the Business of our Calling? In what awful and pathetic terms does St. Paul charge his beloved Timothy, (2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.) *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead, at his appearing and kingdom: Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine: And again; Give attendance to reading, to exhortation; meditate upon these things; give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all,* 1 Tim. 4. 13.

5. Fidelity requires, *That we adorn our character by an unspotted and exemplary Conversation.*

A minister that is immoral in his life, is the grossest scandal to his profession, and takes the most effectual method to harden the prophane, to stumble the weak, and offend the godly. Tho' they preach with the zeal of a flaming seraph, and represent the duties of religion in their native excellency and beauty, and recommend the practice of them to their hearers with the most powerful and perswasive arguments ; yet if their conversations are stained with any defiling sin, it will render their most excellent discourses abominable to God, and contemptible to the People. Tho' they are possest of superior degrees of knowlege, and can discourse divine things with the eloquence of an angel, yet without holiness they are as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal. But it is not enough that the ministers of Christ be free from gross and defiling blemishes ; but the power of godliness, and the beauty of holiness, must shine forth in their lives and conversations. They must *be in all things an example and a pattern of good works.* They must teach their people how to practice those duties they inculcate upon them by their own strict and holy behaviour : Those vertues and graces they recommend unto others, must be lively exemplified in their own conduct. This is a most noble and attracting method of instruction, by which we shall be ornaments to our character, and command the esteem and reverence of all about us : By this we shall stop the mouths of gainsayers, and disappoint the malice and ill-nature of those who seek occasion to revile and reproach us : By this we shall effectually preserve
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the reputation of our order, promote the conversion of our hearers, and encrease the faith, holiness and joy of the saints. Thus we shall shine as lights in the firmament of the church, while wicked and unholy ministers are wandering stars, for whom is reserved blackness of darkness forever.

6. *A continual dependence upon heaven for assistance and success*, enters into the character of a faithful minister of Christ.

Ministers are but weak and feeble instruments, and can't by all their power and skill make the word effectual to the conversion of the sinner. Paul *may plant*, and Apollos *may water*, but it is God that must give the encrease. Ministers may be adorned with distinguishing gifts and graces, and discharge their duty with sacred fidelity and zeal, yet if left to themselves, *they will labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought*. Were we perfect masters of the art of persuasion, could we explain the mysteries of the gospel with the utmost clearness, and demonstrate the truth of them with the brightest evidence; yet sinners will remain obstinate, impenitent and unbelieving, if our ministrations are not attended with a divine blessing: But if God be with us, the weakest instrument shall become the power of God, to the salvation of souls. This divine blessing we must seek with fervent importunity and incessant diligence, and then we may hope to save our own souls, and the souls of them that hear us.

II. I am now to shew, *What obligations the ministers of the gospel are under to be thus faithful*. — But having in a great measure anticipated my self, by
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what I have offered under the foregoing heads, I shall here only hint at a few things.

The authority of Christ, our master, requires it. We are his servants by the most awful and solemn engagements. The bonds of our common christianity, and the peculiar vows that are upon us, as ministers of Christ, lay us under the deepest obligations to reverence his authority, and fulfil the work he has assigned us. The invaluable and immortal souls of men, which were redeemed by the precious blood of the Son of God, and are of more worth than all the world besides, are committed to our trust, and this should animate us to the greatest fidelity and diligence. — If by our slothfulness and negligence they perish, their blood will be required at our hands. This is in the most moving manner set before us, Ezek. 3. 18, 19. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hands. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Again, *The love of Christ* should constrain us. He came down from the mansions of glory, on this compassionate errand, to save the souls of the children of men. And did he esteem them at so invaluable a price, did he undergo so many and distressing sorrows to redeem them from eternal misery, and shall we slight and contemn them? Where are our bowels of pity and compassion? Where our love to our Lord and Saviour?

Further, *The example of Christ* should engage us to it. He is the great *Apostle of our profession*, and went about doing good to the souls and bodies of men; He was anointed to preach the gospel to the meek, and with astonishing condescension, and amazing diligence, he discharg'd this glorious work. He was unwearied in his labours, and improved every opportunity, to instruct and reform those with whom he convers'd. It was his meat and drink, the joy & refreshment of his soul, to do the will of his heavenly Father, and promote the salvation of men. His example then should rouse us out of our sloth, and awaken us, to the most indefatigable zeal and diligence: for his example is set before us for our pattern, and we are obliged to a faithful and exact imitation.

Finally, *The awful account we have to give up* in the day of judgment, is a powerful argument, to persuade us to faithfulness. *We watch for souls, as those that must give an account*: And must either receive a vast and distinguishing reward, or undergo a severe and aggravated punishment. This tho't should forever dwell in our minds, and be the matter of our frequent and solemn meditation. This alone may support us, under all the difficulties and discouragements we meet with, and keep us from giving way to a careless and indolent spirit. This should engage us, to cry aloud and not spare, to proclaim life and death, happiness and misery, to our people, in the most solemn and affecting language. This should excite us to reprove, exhort, and beseech, as those who are in earnest to save the souls of our people, and free our selves from the guilt of their blood: *To feed the flock of God, which is among us,*
taking

taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; that so when the chief shepherd shall appear, we may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.

The APPLICATION of my discourse remains. And here,

I. This shews the greatness of the ministerial work, and our necessary dependance upon the presence of Christ, to enable us to discharge it aright.

How important is the character of an ambassador of Christ; who is to carry on a treaty of peace between the infinite Majesty of heaven, and his guilty and rebellious creatures; who is to publish the gospel to the world, which will be either a favour of death unto death, or a favour of life unto life, to those that hear it! What ability and wisdom is necessary, to represent the everlasting counsels of heaven, and explain the wondrous methods of divine grace, for the salvation of a guilty world? What prudence? What skill? What diligence is requisite, to speak of those momentous affairs, with that perspicuity and clearness, with that earnestness and importunity, with that zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for the souls of men, which the weight and importance of our message demands? How justly might the best of men give way to desponding thoughts, and sink under their numberless discouragements, were not the power of Christ engag'd for our assistance and support? This may strengthen us under the greatest difficulties, and inspire us with undaunted courage, in the midst of the most affrighting dangers. The great head of the church has assured every faithful minister, that his grace shall be sufficient for him;

and has given us this gracious promise, *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.*

2. This shews the ministers of Christ, *with what care and caution they should proceed, in separating others to the sacred office.*

None are to be invited with this sacred character, but those, *who are faithful men, able to teach others.* I am sensible, the necessities of the church are great, & weaker gifts may be useful, when they reside in a gracious heart; and we cannot expect that all the stars of the church should be of the first magnitude, and shine with the same degrees of brightness and beauty: but a competent measure of knowledge, an earnest desire to save souls, and a virtuous and unblameable conversation, are indispensable qualifications, of all that are set apart to the ministry of the gospel; without which, we shall expose our profession to contempt, and hinder the success of the gospel. Hence we have that solemn exhortation to *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be thou partaker of other mens sins: keep thy self pure.*

3. This instructs us, *with what dispositions of soul the candidates for the sacred ministry should enter upon that important work.*

They must not be influenced, by the base and unworthy motives, of worldly interest, honour, and applause; but be animated with a noble zeal for the kingdom of Christ, & a generous concern to promote the welfare of men; they must not seek *to be put into the priests office that they may eat a piece of bread,* or obtain the preheminance above their brethren; but entertain a deep sense, of the importance of that work they are engaging in, of their unfitness for so great a charge, and of
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that account they must give up of their fidelity and diligence, to their master and judge. They should therefore be indefatigable in their studies, incessant in their prayers, and exemplary in their behaviour, that they may be qualified for the sacred trust, and become workmen that need not be ashamed.

4. Let what we have heard, be particularly applied, with the highest affection and regard, to my *reverend Brother*, who is now to be set apart to the service of the gospel.

We adore the great head of the church, who has called you to the ministry of his Gospel, and adorn'd you (as we trust) with suitable qualifications for this holy calling. Be exhorted, to increase *the gift that is in you*, by diligent study, and fervent prayer, that *you may be strong in the grace that is in Christ*; and that your profiting may appear unto all. Make it your business to spread the saving knowledge of the blessed Jesus in the world, that those who sit in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death, may be enlightened with the doctrine of Christ, and brought to the acknowledgment of the truth. *Earnestly contend for the faith, once delivered to the saints, and in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure they may be recovered from the snares of the destroyer.* Deliver to your people, the whole counsel of God's law, without partiality or prejudice. Inculcate upon them, the doctrines and duties of the gospel, in your public discourses, and private instructions. Teach them by the prevailing charms of a pure and shining example, that you may address them in the language of the divine apostle; *Be ye followers of me, as I am also of Christ.* Labour after a deep sense of religion

gion upon your own soul, that the honour of Christ, and the good of souls, may inflame your heart, fire your zeal, and animate all your performances. Endeavour with an holy violence, to pluck sinners as brands out of the fire; use the most earnest solicitations, to perswade them to come to Christ, and accept of the saving mercies of the gospel. Let no difficulties discourage you, no dangers affright you, from the faithful discharge of your duty; but imitate the zeal and courage of St Paul, who could say; *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to my self, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord.* Thus you may be assured of the present approbation of Christ, and the future reward of eternal glory.

5. I shall finish my discourse, with an earnest perswasive to *the people*, to bless God for their faithful ministers, and encourage them in their laborious work.

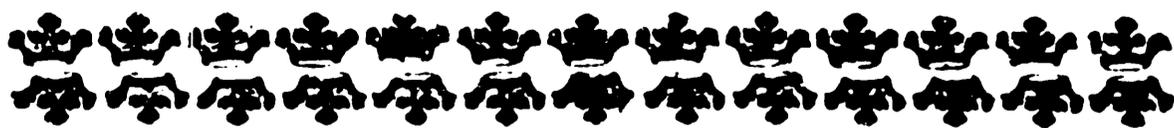
It is an effect of admirable grace, that he hath not sent messengers of wrath, to execute his vengeance upon a guilty world; but heralds of peace, to proclaim the joyful news of a saviour. It is an instance of wonderful condescension, that he has appointed, for this blessed work, not the spotless angels of light; whose appearance would surprize and confound us; but men of the same nature with our selves, *form'd out of the clay, whose terrors will not make us afraid.* These are the precious gifts of our ascended Lord, and should be highly esteem'd and reverenc'd for their work's sake. As their charge is great, their station difficult, and their temptations many, they deserve your compassion, assistance, and prayers. Be tender of their credit and reputation; and support

port them in the exercise of their just authority. Be not forward to censure their conduct, in matters of trifling and inconsiderable moment. Cover their unallowed failings with a mantle of love; *for we are men of like passions with yourselves, and are subject to the common frailties, and infirmities of human nature.*

But above all, assist and encourage them by attending upon their ministry, with meek and teachable frames of spirit. Receive the word of truth into humble and obedient hearts; and live according to the sacred rules of the gospel, that so you may be their joy and crown, in the great day of the Lord: When those that wisely improve the means of grace, *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and the faithful ministers of Christ as the stars for ever and ever.*

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A

Brief DISCOURSE

*Upon the Divine Appointment of the G O S P E L
MINISTRY, and the Methods of its Convey-
ance, thro' the successive Ages of the Church. De-
liver'd at the Ordination of the Reverend
Mr. Wilmot.*




 S the *Ministry of Reconciliation* is an Af-
 fair of everlasting importance to the
 Souls of Men, so it is of high Con-
 cernment both to those who are de-
 dicated to this Service, and to those
 unto whom they come in the Name of the Lord,
 that they have a regular *Call* to and *Entrance* up-
 on this Work ; that they have their *Mission* and
Commission from Him whom they represent, and
 in whose Name they act : for *how shall they preach,*
except they be sent ? I have therefore thought that
 it would be an Undertaking not unacceptable to
 my Hearers, nor disagreeable to the present Oc-
 casion, to consider briefly whence we derive our
 ministerial Character, by what Authority we act
 in it, and by what Methods it is to be successively
 propagated in the Church of Christ. In Order
 to this it is necessary, that we first recur to the
 grand Commission given by our blessed Saviour
 after his Resurrection and immediately before
 his Ascension into Heaven. *As the Father hath*
sent

The Institution of the Ministry, &c. 21

sent me, so send I you *. All Power is given unto me in Heaven and Earth, Go ye therefore and disciple all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. †. This is the original Source of all ministerial Authority : and this Commission was not appropriated or limited to the Persons of the twelve Apostles only : but extended to a continued Succession of the Ministry to the End of Time ; as appears from the gracious Promise annexed to it, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World. For this End, our glorious Redeemer ascended on high, to lead Captivity Captive, and to give Gifts unto Men, to give some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. †. By which it is most apparent, that a perpetual successive Ministry was appointed by our blessed Lord ; and authorized by his Commission to the Apostles. He has instituted and promised, not only Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists, who were extraordinary Officers suited to the Exigencies of the Infant State of the Church ; but Pastors and Teachers for the Work of the Ministry, till the Consummation of all Things.

The great Question here is, *How this Succession was to be propagated, by Virtue of this Commission to*

* John xx. 21. † Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. †† Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12, 13.

22 *The Institution of the Ministry,*

the twelve Apostles? It may be objected by some, If they were by Virtue of that vested with apostolick Power and Authority, how can *others* pretend to the sacred Character from this Commission, who have *no Claim* to the same *extended Powers* with the *Apostles*, nor have derived their Authority from such as have this *apostolick Power*?

In order to obviate this Objection, it must be observ'd, that the *Apostles* were considered in a *two-fold* Character, either as *ordinary*, or as *extraordinary* Ministers of the Gospel. In the *former* Character they were authorized by this Commission; as are likewise all their lawful Successors in the Gospel Ministry. But in their *extraordinary* Capacity, they were immediately qualified for their Work, by the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost* and his miraculous Gifts, in a most surprizing Manner conferred on them, upon the Day of *Pentecost*. For which Reason, they were not allowed to enter upon the Exercise of this their extraordinary Ministry, until they had first received these miraculous Qualifications for it. *Behold* (says our blessed Lord to them) *I send the Promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with Power from on high.* Luke xxiv. 49. — And (our Lord Jesus Christ) being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem; but wait for the Promise of the Father, which (saith he) ye have heard of me. But ye shall receive Power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be Witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the uttermost Parts of the Earth. Acts i. 4. 8.

There was the last Necessity, that the *Apostles* (as such) should be endued with these *miraculous*

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lous Gifts and Qualifications: that so they might not only be fitted to converse with the several *Nations*, among whom they were sent, in their own *Languages*; and thereby propagate the Gospel of Christ among them: but that they might also be able by their *miraculous Operations*, to set the *Seal* of Heaven to the *Doctrines* they taught; and remove the rooted *Prejudices* both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* against this new *Dispensation*, by bringing the strongest and clearest *Evidences* to the christian Institution, that can possibly be offered or received in any *Case* whatsoever.

It might also be observ'd, that the Apostles (as such) were sent forth to be *Witnesses* of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, which were the great *Facts* upon which the *Truth* of Christianity did eminently depend. And as it is necessary that *Witnesses* be able to testify to a *Truth* from their own *Knowledge*; so it was a necessary *Qualification* of an *Apostle*, that he had seen *Jesus* after his *Resurrection*; and might thereby be a good *Evidence*, that *he had declared himself to be the Son of God with Power, by his Resurrection from the dead.* Upon this Account, it was required as a necessary *Qualification* in him that supply'd the *Vacancy* made by the *Treason* of *Judas*, that he be one *that had companied with the Apostles, all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning at the Baptism of John, unto the same Day that he was taken up from them: in order that he might be a Witness with them, of his Resurrection.* *. And upon this Account, the *Apostle Paul* had an extraordinary *Vision* of *Christ* after his *Resurrection* and

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Ascension ; not only in his Journey to *Damascus*, but by being *caught up to the third Heavens*, where his Sight of Christ was more immediate ; and he (as a Witness of his Resurrection) could say, *Last of all he was seen of me also, as one born* (to the apostolick Office) *out of due Time.* †. And could challenge his Opposers in this Language, *Am not I an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* †.

In a Word, our Lord Jesus Christ never demanded an Assent to the christian Institution without the fullest Evidence to the Truths contained in it, that any Cause can possibly admit of. He therefore qualified his Apostles, by the Gift of Tongues to travel through the World, and converse with all Nations in their own Languages ; by having seen Christ after his Resurrection, to be Witnesses that he was risen from the dead * ; and by their miraculous Powers, to triumph over all Infidelity, and ungainably convince the World, that their Doctrine was from God and approved by him. From all which it evidently appears, that the apostolick Office (strictly speaking) expired with the Persons of the Apostles ; and that there can be no just Pretence to it, by any that want these extraordinary Qualifications. Whoever claim this Character, must justify their Claim, by being able to witness, that they have seen Christ personally since his Resurrection from the dead ; by having the Gift of Tongues, of Prophecy, and the various miraculous Operations that were perform'd by the

† 1 Cor. xv. 8, 11. || 1 Cor. ix. 1. * See to this Purpose *Luke xxiv. 48. Acts i. 8, 22. Acts ii. 32. Acts x. 39, 42. And Cap. v. 32. cum multis aliis.*

Apostles in Confirmation of their Doctrine ; and by having an immediate Call to travel thro' the World for to propagat the Gospel of Christ among infidel Nations ; and to confirm it by this Appeal to the World, *We are his Witnesses of these Things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him* *. But where these Qualifications are wanting, all Pretences to the apostolick Character are vain and trifling.

From these Considerations it is manifest, that the *standing* Gospel-Ministry is a Succession to the Apostles in their *ordinary* Capacity only ; and that every Minister of Christ does receive his Authority from the *Commission* that was given to them. There is therefore no Room to claim a Superiority of *Order* among the Ministry, on Account of the Apostles Superiority to others in the Infant-State of the Church ; since this Superiority did not belong to them in their ordinary Capacity, nor by Virtue of this general Commission, by which all the Ministers of Christ are authorised to their sacred Trust. The Apostles, as ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, never claim any higher Character than that of *Presbyters* ; and by that Character they seem to take Pleasure in distinguishing themselves, as if by that Means they would on Purpose anticipate all Pretences to Preheminence among the Ministry, by Virtue of a Succession from them. || And, I think, there is nothing more evident, than that the *same Commission* must give the *same Powers* to all that are directly and properly authorized by it ; and consequentily that both the Apostles in their or-

* *Acts* v. 32. || *See* 1 *Pet.* v. 1. 2 *John* 1. 3 *John* 1.
dinary

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dinary Capacity, and all other Ministers of the Gospel, must be in all Respects *co-ordinate*; and all of them vested with all the same Powers, since they are all authorized by the very same Commission, if they have any Authority at all. In-
somuch that I know not how a *superior Order* in the Gospel-Ministry can be established upon any Scripture-Foundation; or indeed defended by any plausible Arguments: Such a Succession seems rather derived from *Diotrephes*, than from the *Apostles*. — Having thus shewn you the Foundation of the sacred Character; and made it evident, that it is by our Lord's Appointment to be successive through all the Ages of the Church: I shall proceed to consider

In what Way the Succession is to be propagated, and this Order of Men continued for the Work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

And I must here observe to you, that I can find from the Scripture-Account of this Matter, no other Door by which any ever did, or ever could, regularly enter upon this Work among the *Gentiles*, but by *Fasting and Prayer, with the Imposition of the Hands of the Presbytery*, where such an Ordination to the Ministry could be obtain'd — It is true indeed, that among the *Jews* and their Profelytes (such as *Cornelius* and Company) the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and an immediate Call from Heaven, these alone were look'd upon as sufficient Qualifications to the Apostles and their Fellow-Labourers, to administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel. But when the *Gentile Churches* came to be grafted upon the *Jewish Stock*, the Holy Ghost was pleased to appoint a *mediate Way* for propagating the Gospel-Ministry,
and

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and to institute *Ordination* by a *Presbytery*, as the standing Method of separating Men to this important Trust, through all successive Ages of the Church:

Accordingly, when the Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas* were sent forth among the *Gentiles*, the Holy Ghost commanded, that they should in *this Way* be separated unto the Exercise of their Ministry in the *Gentile World*, *Acts* xiii. 1, 2, 3. These were Apostles before; and as such had the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and an immediate Mission from Heaven.* But when they go upon this special Service of the *Gentile Ministry*, they must enter upon it through the ordinary Door of *Ordination*, and thereby be a *Pattern* to all that succeed them in the ministerial Charge. — In like Manner they themselves also separated others to the Oversight of the several Churches, where they came: *Acts* xiv. 23. *And when they had ordained them Elders in every Church, and had prayed with Fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* In the same Manner was *Timothy* separated to the Exercise of the Gospel-Ministry; *1 Tim.* iv. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.* — In the same Manner likewise was *Timothy* required to commit the Exercise of the Ministry to other faithful Men, who should be able to teach others also, *2 Tim.* ii. 2; and enjoined the greatest Care and Caution in setting them apart to this most important Charge, *1 Tim.* v. 22. *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man; neither be thou partaker of other Mens*

* See *Gal.* i. 1, 15, &c. And *Chap.* ii. 1, 2.

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Sins ; keep thy self pure. — And to the same Purpose was *Titus* left at *Crete*, that in this Way every christian Congregation there might be furnished with faithful and well qualified Ministers of the Gospel ; *Tit. i. 5. For this Cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in Order the Things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee. —* No Pretensions therefore to a divine Designation and extraordinary Call to the Ministry, will justify those Intruders, that come not in at this Door, but climb over the Fold ; since there is no Warrant, no Example in all the New Testament, to build these Pretences upon ; no single Instance of any admitted to the Ministry among the *Gentiles*, but in this Way of *Ordination*. — Can these Pretenders claim a more immediate Call to the Ministry, or boast of greater Degrees of Inspiration, than the Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas* had ? And yet these you see were set apart to the Exercise of their *Gentile* Ministry, by human *Ordination*, at the Command of the Holy Ghost.

But I conclude that some of my Hearers will be ready to enquire, *By whom*, and *To what End*, are the Ministers of the Gospel set apart to their holy Employment by *Ordination* ?

To the *first* of these Questions I answer, That the Work of *Ordination* belongs to *any* of the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, *as such* ; and is an inseparable Branch of the ministerial Office. This appears to me most evident, by what you have heard already. If every Minister of the Gospel has all the Powers, that were given to the *Apostles* in their ordinary Capacity, by the above-cited *Commission* from our blessed Saviour, they
have

have certainly the Power of *Ordination* committed to them. And I think nothing can be more evident, than that they have *all* the Powers, or *none* of the Powers, granted by that Commission. If the *former*, they then have no Superiors in Office; nor can be exempted from any Part of the ministerial Work. If the *latter*, they have no Authority at all; but are Ministers of the Gospel, and not Ministers, at the same Time: For they must derive their Authority from this Commission, or from none at all; there is no other. This Argument I have never yet seen so much as plausibly answered; and I believe never shall.

And this may receive a further Light, by considering (in that forecited *Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.*) the Enumeration of all that were to serve for the *Work of the Ministry, and edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, &c.* and observing, that there were no Orders to continue in the Church, but the ordinary Presbyters, or as they are there called, *Pastors and Teachers*: and consequently, none but these to perform any Parts of the Gospel-Ministry, of which *Ordination* is allowed to be one. I think I have already made it evident, that the *Apostles* (as such) had no Successors; and there is no Claim made by any, that I know of, to the Character of *Prophets* or *Evangelists*; there are consequently none left, but *Pastors and Teachers*, for a standing Ministry in the Church: to *them* therefore, or to *none*, does the Work of *Ordination* belong. --- And we have the same View of the Case from *1. Cor. xii. 28.*

And if we yet further consider this Case, we shall find, that all the *Ordinations*, whereof we have any Account in the *New Testament*, were per-

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form'd by *Presbyters*, as such. By these were *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordain'd *. By these was *Timothy* ordain'd †. Such were *Timothy* and *Titus*, who had the Work of *Ordination* in Charge; and such were *Paul* and *Barnabas* too, in their ordinary Capacity, by whom we find this Work perform'd.

And let our Adversaries prove, if they can, that the *Apostles* had any Successors in the *Apostolate*, or that *Ordination* was limited to their extraordinary Character. Let them prove, that being *Witnesses* of *Christ's Resurrection*, or the *miraculous Endowments*, which were the distinguishing Qualifications of the *Apostles*, were necessary to the performing the Work of *Ordination*. This must be prov'd, if an *apostolick* Succession be maintain'd; although if it were prov'd, it would destroy their Scheme, as much as ours. Let 'em prove, if they can, that the *Apostles* in their ordinary Character, were superior to *Presbyters*; or that in any Respects they claim'd a Superiority to the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, saving only, as to their being *first* sent, & *unlimited* in the Exercise of their Ministry, their being *Witnesses* of *Christ's Resurrection*, & the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, committed to, & communicated by them. Or let 'em prove from Scripture, that there was any Order in the standing Ministry of the Gospel, superior to *Presbyters*; or any Imparity among the ordinary Ministers of *Christ*. But if none of these Things can be prov'd (as I think they cannot) we may boldly proceed, according to the Scripture-Pattern, to set Men apart to this Work, by the laying on of the Hands of the *Presbytery*.

* *Acts* xiii. 1, 2, 3. † *1 Tim.* iv. 14.

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And now I shall enter upon the Consideration of the *second* Question. *To what End* are the Ministers of the Gospel set apart to their sacred Business, by *Ordination* ?

In Answer to this I shall premise, That we don't pretend to *confer* the ministerial *Power* or *Authority*, by *Ordination*. This belongs to the Prerogative of the great KING of the Church ; and is derived wholly and solely from *his Commission*. 'Tis what none but He can pretend to, who could preface his Commission to the Gospel-Ministry with that Language, *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and Earth ; Go ye therefore, &c.* The Ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ receive their *Authority* immediately from *Him*, tho' they are *mediately* set apart to the *Exercise* of it. It is *Jesus Christ*, that hath committed to us the *Ministry of Reconciliation*. *. It is by him, that the *Gospel* is committed to our *Trust* ; and that we are put into the *Ministry*. †. And this (by the Way) may silence the Clamours of those Pretenders to *Inspiration*, who cry out so tragically against our *human* Ministry, and our *mediate* Call and Mission to the Work ; as well as obviates the Pretences of those, who controvert our ministerial Authority, from an imagined *want* of *Power* in our *Ordainers* to confer it. For, in answer to both of these, we claim no Mission to the Ministry, we pretend to no ministerial Authority, but only from CHRIST, the sole Head of the Church.

But more directly to clear this Point, it must be observ'd, That our Lord Jesus Christ has not

* 2 Cor. v. 18. † 1 Tim i. 11, 12.

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given Commission (or rather Licence) to every bold Pretender, to assume this awful Trust, without any regular Call to it, or necessary Qualifications for it: But he that takes this Honour upon him, must be *called of God* (in a Sense) as was *Aaron*. It is highly requisite, that there should be some *Judges* of their *Call* and *Qualifications*, who pretend to put their Hands to this Plough. And who are so proper Judges in this Case, as they, who are *themselves* separated to the Gospel of Christ, who by the Blessing of God on their assiduous Labour and Study are furnished for the Work, and who are under the Vows of the Lord to fulfil it? To the faithful Ministers of the Gospel therefore has our Lord committed this Charge, that they may be a sacred Inclosure, to keep out unqualified Intruders from this momentous Employment.

Ordination is no more than an *Inauguration*, or solemn *investiture* of those Persons who are judg'd rightly called to and qualified for this Work, into the publick *Profession* and *Exercise* of the Ministry. We set them apart by *Fasting* and *Prayer*, thereby to manifest our Dependance upon the Head of all spiritual Influences, for those special Divine Aids, whereby they may be rendred faithful and successful Ministers of Christ; and thereby to *recommend them to the Grace of God, for the Work which they have to fulfil.*

Imposition of Hands in Ordination seems to be designed, partly to *point out* the particular *Person* in the Church, whom we thus recommend to the Divine Blessing, and partly in Conformity to the *ancient Method of Benedictions*. In both Senses, we thereby subject our selves to a divine Institution,

tution, separate the Person to God's Service, and declare our Dependance upon his Presence and Blessing, to succeed the Candidate in the Work to which he is called.

This Imposition of Hands is limited to *the Presbytery*; because, as they are the most proper and competent Judges of the Candidate's Call and Qualifications, so to *them* is it particularly put in Trust, to *commit these Things to faithful Men*: as I observed before.

And now can we with too much Zeal condemn the Conduct of Those, who laying aside this ordinary Ministry so plainly instituted, pretend to set up a Ministry of their own devising, authoriz'd by I know not what extraordinary Call, whereof they are not capable to give us the least Evidence or Scripture-Warrant. — But they will say perhaps; Must Men take upon 'em this weighty Trust without the blessed Influences of the Holy Ghost, to fit them for, and incline them to it? I answer, No; we must depend upon Him for Qualifications, who has appointed our Work and Service. But on the contrary, neither *may any Man take this Honour to himself, that is not called of God as was Aaron*; who has, not only an internal, but an external Call to the Work, and is externally separated to the Exercise of his Office, as we know *Aaron* was to his.

The Competency of Men's *Qualifications* for the Ministry, and the *Dueneſs* of their Call to it, must not in Reason be left to the Judgment of every Man for himself. “ The *Nature* of the Thing (as one observes) will by no means admit That; but

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but for the Preservation of due *Order* in the Church, this must needs be refer'd and submitted to the Judgment of a competent Number of those that are themselves in that Office, and of approved Wisdom and Experience in it ; who, as in all other Callings, are presumed the most able Judges ; and who are empower'd to set apart such as they find qualify'd and inclin'd, to this Work of the Ministry ; that by this Preservation of the Succession, the Name of Christ may endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven : and they that are thus set apart, not only *may*, but *must*, preach as those that are *sent.*" *

By the Presence of this numerous Audience at this Time, it is to be presumed, that you are all aware of the *Occasion* of this Discourse, and sensible whither it tends : That it is an *Introduction* to the awful Solemnity before us, which you are now conven'd to attend upon ; and may serve to convince you, that we have a *divine Institution* to justify us, and a *gracious Promise* to encourage us, in the present Business ; that we have the Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Commission to the Apostles, to empower us ; the Example and Direction of the Apostles and inspired Teachers to guide us ; as well as the promised Presence of the great Head of the Church to animate us, in our Attendance upon the *Ordination* we are engaging in.

And now we are (upon your Invitation) here present, in Order to separate Mr. *Walter Wilmot*

* *Henry's Exposit. Rom. 10. 15.*

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to the Work of the Ministry, and the Pastoral Charge of this Congregation, in case there be no just Objection offered against it.

If any have any such Objection to make, they are desired to speak freely : but if not, we shall immediately proceed, with a Dependance upon God's gracious Presence and Blessing with us in the Undertaking.

N. B The Ordination was then attended by Prayer and Imposition of Hands, as usual.



T H E



THE
C H A R G E

Given to the Reverend Mr. *Wilmer*

A T H I S

O R D I N A T I O N.

YOU have now, *Sir*, received of the Lord the weighty and important Office of a Gospel-Minister ; and have many precious and immortal Souls committed to your Care and Charge, every one of which must be unspeakably and inconceivably glorious and happy in the immediate Enjoyment of God, or unutterably and most amazingly miserable under God's intolerable Vengeance thro' all Eternity. You are sent unto these, if possible, to prevent their dreadful Perdition, to bring them to Christ, and to make them Heirs of the Glory that shall be revealed. You *watch for their Souls, as one that must give Account.* And a dreadful Account you will have to give, if you are found unfaithful, and exposed at the Bar of your glorious Judge to that Reprimand, *Thou faithful Servant!* But a most comfortable and joyfull Account will it be to you, if you find Acceptance with your great Lord at his Appearing ; and in that Day be able to say, *Lo, here am I, and the Children which thou hast given me.* Have you then any Sense of the Weight of your great and important Work, any Compassion for

for the immortal Souls of your Hearers, any Desire to appear with Comfort before that dread Tribunal, where your Fidelity in the Ministry will have an impartial Trial; it certainly concerns you to address your self to this Business with most earnest Application, and with unwearied Diligence and Faithfulness.

We do therefore now charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom; That you preach the Word, be instant in Season and out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine: — Feed the Flock of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood, taking the Oversight thereof, not of Constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; neither as being a Lord over God's Heritage, but being an Example to the Flock. — Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, that was given thee, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery. Meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take Heed unto thy self and unto thy Doctrine: continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self and them that hear thee. — Preach the Lord Jesus Christ unto the People of your Charge, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wisdom, that you may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus. — Keep back Nothing that is profitable unto the Flock committed unto your Trust: but shew them, and teach them both publickly and from House to House, testifying to them all, Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; that you may take them to record, that you are pure from the Blood of all Men, and have not shunned to declare unto them the whole Counsel of God. — Let no Man despise thee; but be thou an Example of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation,

sation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity. — Thou therefore, my Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus. — Study to shew thy self approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. — As you are a Servant of the Lord, you must not strive; but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth. — In all Things shew thy self a Pattern of good Works, in Doctrine shewing Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity. — Watch thou in all Things, endure afflictions, do all the Work of a Gospel-Minister, make full Proof of thy Ministry. — Evidence your Love to the Lord Jesus Christ by feeding both his Lambs and his Sheep.

We charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these Things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality. — Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good Profession before many Witnesses.

We give thee Charge in the Sight of God, who quickneth all things; and in the Presence of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment without Spot, unrebukable, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. — And We testify unto you, that if you keep this Charge committed unto you, Christ will be with you alway, even unto the End of your Life; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. AMEN.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.