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~~W. B. R. G.~~

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE  
ORDINATION AND INSTALLMENT  
OF  
THE REV<sup>d</sup>. ASHBALD GREEN,  
IN THE  
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN THE  
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

*By the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. EWING.*

WITH AN  
A B S T R A C T  
OF THE  
PROCEEDINGS ON THAT OCCASION.

*By the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. SPROAT.*

AND THE  
C H A R G E,  
DELIVERED

*By the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. DUFFIELD.*

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Published by order of the Corporation and Session of said Church.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PRINTED BY F. BALLEY, AT YORICK'S HEAD, MARKET STREET.

MDCCLXXVII.

F I D E L I T Y

IN THE

GOSPEL MINISTRY.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED

AT THE ORDINATION OF

THE REV<sup>D</sup>. ASHBALD GREEN,

IN PHILADELPHIA, MAY 15, 1787.

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BY

JOHN EWING, D. D.

PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY F. BAILEY, AT YORICK'S HEAD, MARKET STREET.

M DCC LXXXVII.

*AT a Meeting of the Corporation  
of the Second Presbyterian Church,  
on Wednesday evening, 16th May, 1787,*

*RESOLVED, That the thanks of this  
Board be given to the Reverend Dr.  
EWING, for his excellent Sermon, de-  
livered at the Ordination and Infall-  
ment of the Reverend Mr. ASHBALD  
GREEN, as co-pastor to the Reverend  
Dr. SPROAT; and that a copy thereof  
be requested for publication.*

By order of the Corporation,

ROBERT SMITH, Sec<sup>r</sup>.

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2 TIM. ii. 2.

*And the things which thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

**I**T has pleased God, in his infinite wisdom, to commit the sacred ministry of reconciliation to men of like passions with their sinful brethren. Had the adorable majesty of heaven personally and immediately treated with sinners, his tremendous glory would have overwhelmed their feeble nature, and they would have cried out, with the trembling camp of Israel, “ Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.” Therefore, to negotiate a treaty of peace with our guilty race, he has condescended to chuse ambassadors, who are partakers of the same nature with ourselves ; by which means they can address us in the encouraging language of Elihu to Job, “ Behold, I am according to thy wish, in God’s stead, I also am formed out of the clay : behold, hold.”

“ hold, my terror shall not make thee afraid,  
 “ neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.”

Accordingly, after a long succession of patriarchs, priests, and prophets, who were invested with the sacred office, the promised Messiah appeared in the human nature, to make the last and fullest revelation of the divine will. When he had made his soul a sacrifice for sin, and completed the atonement which he had undertaken to accomplish for the human race, he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for the rebellious. Hence he gave some, apostles, and some, evangelists, and some, prophets, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

THIS not only discovers the amazing condescension and mercy of God, but also the unspeakable importance of the gospel ministry; in as much as it is a ministry of reconciliation between God and man, in the execution of which, the efficacy of the Father's love, and the merits of the Redeemer's death, are intimately concerned. It is an office, in the exercise of which, ministers become the favour of life, unto life, or of death, unto death,

death, both to themselves, and to those that hear them ; by which the most important affairs in the world are transacted ; by which the fruits of the Redeemer's purchase, the travail of his soul, and the glory of his mediatorial exaltation, are secured ; by which the greatest revenue of glory, and the most exalted ascriptions of gratitude and praise, redound to God ; and millions of his rational creatures are brought, through the efficacious operation of his holy Spirit, to the enjoyment of the greatest felicity. For, ministers being ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech sinners by them, they are to pray and persuade them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. As they are appointed by the God of heaven to this arduous and important station, they are to treat with sinners in his name and by his authority, and to transact with them the affairs that belong to their eternal peace. They should contribute their friendly assistance, to extricate the immortal souls, for whom the blessed Redeemer has shed his precious blood, from the mazes of ignorance and error, in which they are involved ; to rescue them from the tyranny of sin and Satan, and from the darkening influence

influence of their own ungoverned passions, and to bring them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. In a word, they are workers together with God, to whom the gospel is committed as a sacred treasure, and who are the appointed stewards and dispensers of its divine and glorious mysteries.

OF how much importance then must it be, that they be found faithful in the discharge of this arduous trust ! With the highest reason does the inspired apostle, in our text, enjoin it upon Timothy, “ to commit the  
 “ things, which he had heard of him, to  
 “ faithful men, who should be able to teach  
 “ others also.” As if he had said, The glorious doctrines of the gospel of Christ, which thou hast heard of me, confirmed by the concurrent testimony of many prophets of old, or which thou hast heard of me, committed to thy trust, when thou wast ordained to the sacred office of the gospel ministry, in the presence of many witnesses, commit thou to others, who are to succeed thee in the important charge ; but let it be your solicitous care, that they be such men, as shall be able to communicate their knowledge to others,  
 and

and such as thou shalt judge will be faithful in the discharge of their sacred trust.

BUT who are those, that discharge this solemn office with such fidelity, as will secure them the approbation of the great and glorious Head of the church? We answer,

MEN that will faithfully take heed to themselves—to their doctrines—and to the flock over which the holy Ghost has made them bishops.

LET me request your candour and attention, while I enlarge a little on each of these articles, and beg your concurrent aspirations to heaven, to bring what may be suggested with divine energy to the heart.

I. BY faithful men, we understand such as will take heed to themselves—to preserve a proper frame of mind upon all occasions—to be examples of good works—and prudently to support the dignity of their sacred characters, as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

I. ALTHOUGH it may seem to be much for our advantage, that the providence of God has made it our constant employment, to take care of the interests of religion in the world; yet, if we do not exercise an habi-

tual care over the frame and temper of our own minds, amidst the duties of our sacred profession, our privileges may become our snare. We may possibly forget ourselves so far, as to look upon it as others look upon their secular callings, and to conclude that we have acquitted ourselves well, when we have decently passed through the usual forms of public worship. But if the frame of our minds be neglected in our public ministrations, we have reason to fear the most alarming consequences, both to ourselves and to them that hear us. Superficial services, a lifeless round of duty, and a cold unanimated spirit in the solemnities of public worship, are not only highly offensive to God, but will also rob us of the comforts of our Christian profession, and fill our hearts with sorrow and anguish on every recollection. And if an allowed and habitual formality, which is so inconsistent with the genius and spirit of Christianity, be suffered to prevail in us, we have reason to fear, that, after we have preached to others, we ourselves shall be cast away.

BUT, on the other hand, when we appear, in our public ministrations, to have a serious  
and

and solemn sense of the weight of those truths which we deliver to others, the attention of the hearers will be probably commanded, and they will imbibe something of the same spirit. But if we are cold and unaffected, this will proportionably abate the energy of our addresses, and be, at once, both the cause and the excuse for the like insensibility in them. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that it is naturally impressed with the warmth of the public speaker, even though it should discover itself in the most artless and unornamented style, without any of the flights of oratory, or the refinements of an harmonious and polished diction ; although these are not without their advantages, when seasonably introduced, and judiciously applied. If our hearts, therefore, be duly affected with a solemn sense of the incomprehensible majesty of God, in whose presence we stand, and of the worth of immortal souls, that are tottering on the brink of eternal destruction, our prayers and sermons, and all our ministrations, will be happily tinged by such an impression ; for, “ out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” As a supreme love to God, and an extensive benevolence

volence to man, are the noblest principles that can actuate the human heart, the pastor's zeal for the glory of God will be enlivened, in proportion to the warmth of these heavenly affections, and all his labours will be sweetened, enlivened, and pointed by them. His instructions will be delivered with an elevation and earnestness, suitable to his character; his people will be disposed to hear and feel the force of his admonitions; and the warmth and fervour of his own spirit will have a happy tendency to beget the same ardour and devotion in them.

2. It is also essential to fidelity in the ministerial office, that we take heed to ourselves, that we be examples of good works to the church of Christ. The eyes of many are upon us, and we are like a city, that is built upon a hill, which cannot be concealed. If we neglect to teach ourselves, while we teach others, or if we dishonour God by breaking his laws, while we make our boast of them, we shall do great disservice to the interests of religion, and to the souls of men. Our actions will be esteemed the genuine interpreters of the sentiments of the mind; and if we discover, by our conduct, an indifference to the duties

duties which we recommend to others, we shall only build again the things that we would destroy, and beget in our hearers a melancholy attachment to the practice of vice, while we attempt to turn them from the error of their ways. For this reason, “ a bi-  
 “ shop must be blameless, the husband of  
 “ one wife, vigilant, sober, of good beha-  
 “ viour, given to hospitality, not given to  
 “ wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lu-  
 “ cre, but patient, not a brawler, not cove-  
 “ tous, but one that ruleth well his own  
 “ house, having his children in subjection  
 “ with all gravity.” There is an easy tran-  
 sition from persons to things, and the world is much governed by example. It would therefore be surprising, if an office, however respectable in itself, should long continue in reputation, if the officers were generally corrupted in their morals. The prostitution of the sacred office of the gospel ministry to men of dissolute morals and debauched lives, either through the carelessness of the clergy, or the operation of civil laws, has done more injury to the religion of Christ, than all the open attacks of infidelity and atheism together. If ministers, therefore, do not magnify their  
 office,

office, by adorning the doctrines of God their favour, and by exhibiting a lively example of the principles, which they inculcate, in their own conversation, they will only build up, instead of destroying, the kingdom of darkness.

3. LASTLY, it is another branch of fidelity in the ministerial office, to guard, with prudence and circumspection, against all indiscretions of behaviour, which would sully our reputation, debase our office, or impede our usefulness. Prudence is so extensive and so necessary a qualification in a gospel minister, that the want of it will obscure the brightest talents, and eclipse the greatest abilities. If we are ambassadors of the prince of peace, intrusted with the most momentous commission that was ever granted to mortals; the greatest prudence and circumspection is necessary, in the selection of the properest circumstances of time and place, of characters and tempers; lest the glory of God should be obstructed, the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom be wounded, and the important design of our mission be frustrated, by our own imprudent behaviour. Without this qualification, in some tolerable degree,

we

we shall only betray our trust, be unfaithful to our master, and expose our sacred office to the reproaches and contempt of a malevolent world.

II. FIDELITY in the ministerial office implies also a careful attention to our doctrines. The faithful minister of the gospel should make himself acquainted with the principles, upon which it is to be vindicated, against the attacks of infidels and gainfayers—should diligently study the holy scriptures, that he may know what is the will of God, which he is to publish—and should also take pains, both in the matter—and the manner of his public performances, that they may be calculated to promote the edification of the church.

I. IF we would hold fast the faithful word, in which we have been instructed, and be able, by sound doctrine, to exhort and convince gainfayers, we must be acquainted with the arguments by which the truth of our holy religion is to be supported. It is the duty of every professor of Christianity, to “ be  
“ always ready to give to every one that  
“ asketh him, a reason of the hope that is  
“ in

“ in him, with meekness and fear ;” that is, every private Christian should be always ready to make an apology for, or defend, the doctrines of Christianity, upon which all his hopes for an eternal world are founded. Much more is it the duty of the ministers of the gospel, the public instructors of mankind, to be well acquainted with the grounds and principles of that religion, which they have undertaken to teach the world. Those who have devoted themselves to the sacred work of the holy ministry, to propagate and inculcate the sublime and interesting doctrines of eternal salvation, cannot be ignorant of them, without the greatest absurdity. So that fidelity in our sacred office requires us to take heed to our doctrines in this respect ; because we cannot otherwise answer the character of a gospel minister, given in our text, of being able to teach others.

2. But we should not only be able to prove, that the sacred volume, which we undertake to explain, is a revelation from heaven, and bears the evident stamp of divine authority ; but we should also be well acquainted with its important contents. As we are appointed stewards of the mysteries of  
 God,

God, we should study with diligence to know what the holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. The oracles of God contain our charter for glory and immortality, and teach us what doctrines we are commissioned to preach, in the name of the Lord. There is an admirable fulness and sufficiency in them, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness. They furnish us with the most solid and useful thoughts, for illustrating, confirming, and enforcing the doctrines, which they contain; and are able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good word and work. But still it requires long and close application to study, to make the man of God perfect, to make us scribes, well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and able to bring out of our treasure things new and old, rightly dividing the word of truth. We should, therefore, furnish ourselves with the writings of those lights of the church, who have been mighty in the scriptures, and have made it the study of their lives to explain the word of God; lest we be led away with the mere sound of words, without attending to the scope and design of the sacred

writers. We should also take heed to the doctrines, which we preach in the name of our exalted master, that they be founded on the oracles of truth, and be uncorrupted with human inventions ; for, if we do not speak “ according to the law and the prophets, it “ is because there is no light in us.”

3. BUT although we should study the sacred oracles, that we may be able to declare the whole counsel of God ; yet, we should insist chiefly upon the most important and practical subjects, in our public discourses. As Christianity is a doctrine according to godliness, and not a strife about words, sublime speculations and abstruse controversies should be seldom introduced into the sacred desk, as they minister questions, rather than godly edification. We should, therefore, labour to impress the minds of our people, with a sense of their guilt and danger by sin ; for they will not be solicitous to seek the renovation of their corrupted hearts by divine grace, unless they are convinced that they “ are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked ;” nor will they fly from the wrath to come, unless they are apprehensive of approaching danger. But  
when

when this conviction is fastened on their consciences by the spirit of God, they will cry out, with the awakened multitude, "What must we do to be saved?" This will give us an opportunity of directing them to Jesus Christ, who alone has the words of eternal life, and of explaining to them the method of salvation through his atonement; the nature and dignity of his person and offices, as the prophet, priest and king of his church; his incarnation and birth; his salutary doctrines and incontestible miracles; his exemplary life and meritorious death; his triumphant resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension to heaven; his prevalent intercession at the right hand of the Father; and his final appearance, to judge the world in righteousness. The nature and design of the mission and operations of the holy Spirit ought frequently to be the subjects of our public discourses; which will give us an opportunity of explaining the nature of faith, repentance, regeneration, and all the other branches of the Christian character: and, if we would divide to every one his portion in due season, the privileges of the believer, the experiences and trials of the Christian, together

together with the stratagems of our spiritual enemies, and the delusions of the self-deceiving hypocrite, should be faithfully represented.

The great apostle of the Gentiles has left us many excellent discourses upon these important subjects, which should powerfully recommend them to the study of the ministers of Christ, who would form themselves on so complete a model. He has also given it in particular charge to Timothy, that he should constantly affirm and insist upon it, in his public discourses, that they, who believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works; that the doctrine of God our Saviour might be adorned in all things. If we would, therefore, acquit ourselves, as able ministers of the New Testament, the great duties of the Christian life should be explained and recommended to practice; while we endeavour to manage our practical discourses in a manner suited to the genius and spirit of the gospel dispensation, by pointing out the animating motives, the constraining arguments, and the powerful assistances, which it proposes, to engage us to purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness, in the fear of the Lord. The experience

perience of seventeen hundred years has abundantly proved, that the peculiar discoveries and arguments of the gospel have had incomparably more influence, for the reformation of mankind, than all the boasted refinements of philosophy, and all the rhetorical inventions of the schools of Greece and Rome.

4. BUT while we more frequently insist upon these important and practical subjects, the manner of our public discourses should by no means be neglected ; although it be a laborious and difficult part of our duty. It requires much painful study, to gain such an acquaintance with human nature, and such a dexterity of address, as will qualify us to touch the secret movements of the soul ; to rouse the sleepy conscience of the careless sinner, in such a manner as not to cast the mourners in Zion into despair ; to comfort the weary and heavy laden, so as not to cherish the groundless hope of the deluded hypocrite ; to pursue the old man, through all the intricate mazes of a deceitful heart ; and to stand in the presence of God, and deliver his messages to men, with that gravity and solemnity, that plainness and perspicuity, which matters of such importance require. Some, indeed,

indeed, have a happier talent this way than others ; but they should labour to improve it more. For, it must be criminal in the sight of God, for the ministers of the gospel, who are intrusted with messages, which relate to the salvation or destruction of immortal souls, to be at no pains about the manner, in which they are dressed or delivered. If the royal preacher, whose wisdom, and acquaintance with human nature, none of us can pretend to equal, gave “ good heed—sought out and “ set in order many proverbs, and sought to “ find out acceptable words ;” and if Timothy, whose early acquaintance with the scriptures was greatly enlarged by the inspiration of the Almighty, was nevertheless commanded “ to give himself to reading and meditation, that his profiting might appear unto “ all ;” it must be criminal in ministers of the best abilities, and the most extensive literary acquisitions, to take no pains in composing their sermons, so as to have a natural tendency to effect the great ends of their ministry : and it must be much more criminal in our younger brethren, through indolence, not to compose their sermons at all ; when neither their  
 knowledge

knowledge nor experience can entitle them to such an indulgence.

IT becomes us, therefore, to study a clear and distinct method, an agreeable mixture of argument and pathos, plain, easy and scriptural language, with a natural and becoming delivery. If our discourses be confused and irregular, we shall only distract our hearers, who can neither understand nor retain them; and if they consist of dry and abstracted reasonings, or obscure and metaphysical speculations, they will be but little regarded by a common audience. If we have nothing but a flow of moving expressions, without solid thought and rational connection, we may indeed fire the passions, and command the applause of an undistinguishing multitude; but shall only be tedious and despicable to persons of deeper penetration and better judgment, who desire to be fed with knowledge and understanding. If our language be too lofty and sublime, we shall speak in an unknown tongue to the greatest part of our congregations. But good sense and sound divinity, cloathed in a plain and familiar dress, and delivered in a natural and lively manner, will make an useful preacher, and an improving congregation.

### III. FIDELITY

III. FIDELITY in the gospel ministry requires us to “ take heed to the flock, over which the holy Ghost has made us bishops ;” catechising—and visiting them in sickness and distress—exhorting them from house to house—rebuking them with meekness—and being much in prayer to God for a blessing to crown all our labours of love amongst them with desirable success.

I. THERE is a constant decrease of our congregations by death, and if there be none to fill up the places of those, who are removed from their usefulness in the church, such societies must soon be dissolved. Great care should, therefore, be taken of the rising generation, that, when we are sleeping in the dust, they may be a seed to serve the Lord. To catechise them, therefore, and to instil, into their tender minds, the first principles of the Christian religion, must be a very important branch of the minister's duty ; as this is the most effectual way, to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The treasure of useful knowledge, which they will receive by this method of instruction, may, by the blessing of God, make them eminently useful in the church of Christ,

and

and in the generation in which they live. And even if the providence of God should never call them out to eminent usefulness, we shall thereby lay the foundation for their conversion to God, and their future felicity. For, in their regeneration, the spirit of God generally makes use of that store of divine knowledge, which they have previously acquired, and does not convey new truths to the mind, but only brings those truths, with power and efficacy to the heart, which they had formerly learned from the sacred oracles. Hence, this method of instruction will enable the young and uninformed part of our charge, to attend upon our public ministrations with much more advantage; at the same time that it gives us an opportunity of enforcing some duties, and of reprovng some sins, which could not be so conveniently done, in the ordinary way of public preaching. I am sensible, that but little can be done by ministers, towards enduing the tender minds of the rising generation with the knowledge of religion, unless the foundation for this be laid in the pious care and instruction of parents and masters. But we should aid and encourage, by our example and advice, so kind and import-

ant a design, which gives us a pleasing prospect of more desirable success, attending upon our own labours : Nor should we fail to express our tenderness and compassion for the lambs of our flock, by reminding those, who attend upon our ministrations, of their indissoluble obligations to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The rising generation have a peculiar claim upon the ministers of Christ, to this attention to their spiritual interests ; and we are encouraged in the tender toil, by the character of that compassionate Redeemer, who carries the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young ; by his own example, in the days of his flesh, when he took little ones in his arms, and laid his hands upon them, and blessed them, saying, “ of such “ is the kingdom of heaven ;” and by his repeated recommendations of them to the peculiar attention of his ministers, originally addressed to Peter, after his melancholy fall. When he three times asked him, “ Simon, “ son of Jonas, lovest thou me ?” and when Peter as often answered, “ Lord, thou knowest “ that I love thee,” he replied, in these emphatic

phatical words, “ Feed my sheep—feed my  
“ lambs.”

2. BUT, beside the rising generation, there are others, that need our friendly visits and encouraging exhortations, who are also recommended to our care, under the endearing appellation of “ the lambs of our flock :” I mean such as are involved in trouble and distress, whether of a temporal or a religious nature. These are tender seasons, in which their minds are generally more susceptible of religious impressions, and in which they both need and desire some conversation with us, to direct them to a proper improvement of their visitation, by suggesting, to their burdened minds, the means of obtaining those spiritual consolations, which their cases require. As these corrections of their heavenly Father are designed to promote their reformation ; we, who are workers together with God, should improve these favourable opportunities of speaking a word in season. By sympathizing with them in their distress, we secure a place in their affections, and render our ministrations more acceptable and edifying to them. It is, therefore, unkind, to deprive us of these advantages, by neglecting to send for us, un-  
til

til all hope of life be gone, or the disorder be grown so violent, that they cannot either converse with us or attend to our exhortations, or, indeed, sometimes even join with us in our prayers to God on their behalf. When any of the dear objects of our charge are awakened to a sense of their danger by sin, either through the preaching of the word of God, or the instrumentality of his providence, they need our assistance, and are generally desirous of it; lest their religious impressions should wear off, and they should sink into their former insensibility. We should cherish these lambs of our flock in our bosom, and administer such consolations and directions, as their circumstances demand; gently leading them in the ways of righteousness and peace; until, by greater maturity of spiritual strength, they can walk without so much of our assistance. For our encouragement, it has pleased God, to lessen the labour and fatigue attending upon this part of our duty, by annexing to it a peculiar pleasure. There cannot be a more rational satisfaction to a benevolent mind, than what arises from comforting a melancholy heart, giving counsel to a perplexed mind, suspending pain by our sympathy and presence,

though

though it were but for a moment, suggesting proper materials for meditation to the unfurnished mind, and laying hold of a favourable opportunity of conveying religious instructions, to a heart but little susceptible of them upon other occasions.

3. BUT, farther, if we would take heed to our flock, we should exhort them from house to house, in imitation of our divine master, who went about doing good. By private conversation with them, on the subjects, that belong to their eternal peace, we shall have an opportunity of informing ourselves, more particularly, concerning their peculiar circumstances, and of knowing how to address them in a manner most adapted to their tempers, their exercises, and their temptations. Much prudence is necessary in the proper discharge of this part of our pastoral care ; lest, by an unseasonable application, we defeat the very end which we would wish to accomplish ; and lest, by an imprudent severity, we lead the children of the family, in whose affection we should strive to secure a peculiar interest, to look upon our company as disagreeable and burdensome.

4. NOR is there less prudence and discretion  
necessary

necessary, in reprovng and rebuking, with all authority and meekness ; which is no small instance of our fidelity to our exalted master, and a very difficult branch of the pastoral office. Reproof, when administered judicially, is but seldom well received ; as it frequently exasperates the spirits, and raises angry resentments in the mind of the person, to whom it is administered. Some, indeed, may treat us with tolerable decency, while they secretly pity our weakness, or censure our impertinence, in meddling with their conduct ; while others, of a more boisterous temper, may express their resentments in a rougher tone, and turn again and rend us ; little considering, that he that hateth reproof is brutish. But fidelity requires us to perform our duty, and to leave the consequences with God. “ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart ; thou shalt rebuke thy neighbour in any wise, and not suffer sin upon him.” The utmost prudence and wisdom are necessary in the discharge of this delicate office ; that our reproofs may appear to proceed from a principle of conscience and love to an offending brother : and, however we may be sometimes disappointed in the expected success, yet, many

ny times, a word spoken in season may be received with meekness, and the person will say, with the psalmist, “ Let the righteous smite  
 “ me, it shall be a kindness ; let him reprove  
 “ me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall  
 “ not break my head.”

5. To mention no more instances of fidelity to the flock of Christ, we should be much in prayer to God for a blessing to attend our labours among them. An inspired Paul may plant, and an eloquent Apollos may water, but it is God alone, who commands the blessing, and graciously gives the increase. If the skill and fidelity of the apostles themselves were not sufficient for these things—for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the body of Christ ; what can *we* expect, who fall so far short of their accomplishments, if the hand of the Lord be not with us ? We should, therefore, be much at the throne of grace, that he, who has the residue of the holy Spirit, would revive his own work in the midst of the years, and give us many seals of our ministry in the day of the Lord.

#### APPLICATION.

IT is our comfort and encouragement, my reverend fathers and brethren, under all  
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the labours of our arduous and extensive office, and under the distressing apprehensions of our own inability to discharge it, with fidelity to our exalted Redeemer, and to the immortal souls, which he has committed to our care, that our sufficiency is of God. He alone can make us able ministers of the New Testament. And that divine Redeemer, who ascended up on high, is both able and willing to give gifts to men, and to pour out upon them the rich effusions of his holy Spirit, for perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edification of the church of Christ. He alone can inspire us, with zeal for the glory of God, with a tender concern for the church, which he has redeemed with his blood, and with the sincerest resolution to spend and be spent in his service ; that we may fulfil our ministry, which we have received of the Lord. He, who promised to be with his ministers to the end of the world, can strengthen the earthen vessels, to which he has committed the treasure of the gospel, and qualify them for their appointed office. It is the office of the sacred Comforter, whom the Father sends in the name of Christ, to enlighten our minds, to lead us into all necessary truths, to assist us  
in

in understanding the sacred volume, to direct us in our preparations for the public, to touch our lips as with a live coal from the altar, and to give us utterance, that we may declare his counsels, as becomes the oracles of God. He also crowns our labours, in the service of God and our generation, with success, and makes the weapons of our warfare mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan, and finally gives the wished for increase, when we have planted and watered, in dependence upon his efficacious grace. Let us, therefore, depend upon his grace and assistance, to enable us to discharge with fidelity the duties of our sacred office, as stewards of the mysteries of God, as ambassadors for Christ, as labourers in his vineyard, as workers together with God, as watchmen on the walls of Zion, and as builders on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. And let us look to him for that comfort and support, which we need, under all the labours of our service, which may arise from the multiplicity of our studies, which are a weariness to the flesh, from the sons of Belial, who are enemies to the gospel, which we preach, or

even from the peevish and fretful tempers of the children of God; while we are endeavouring to spoil the strong man armed, and to rescue those, whom he has led captive at his pleasure, from his tyranny and bondage.

YOUR own reflections, my reverend fathers and brethren, have made it unnecessary for me, to enlarge upon this comfortable theme, the grace of our ascended Redeemer. The dignity and honour, the importance and difficulties of your arduous station, together with your obligations to act with fidelity to your exalted master and the flock, over which he has made you bishops, are subjects, long since familiar to your minds. No doubt, you have often resolved, that the difficulties and discouragements, which occur in the execution of your work, shall only tend to engage your greater zeal and diligence, and your more constant dependence on that grace, which alone can make you successful. For your encouragement, the time is fast approaching, when no work shall be reviewed with more satisfaction, or receive a more noble plaudit, before the assembled universe, than that which has been performed in the service of the church, and for the honour of its exalted head.

WE

WE trust, my dear brother, who art about to take part with us in this ministry, and on whose account the reverend presbytery has appointed me to the office of this day, that, in humble dependence on the grace and assistance of our glorious master, you are about to devote yourself to God, in the gospel of his son. You are now to be invested with the episcopal office: God grant, that you may receive it with a pastoral spirit, to the glory of God, to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, to the credit of the gospel, and to the final happiness of those, who may attend upon your ministrations. May you be anointed from on high, by the spirit of God, and made strong in the grace, that is in Christ Jesus. It is with pleasure, that we reflect upon the good foundation for future usefulness in the church of Christ, which you have already laid in your academical studies; and we trust, that you are no stranger to internal devotion, and the genuine sensations of evangelical piety. Having experienced the comfort and joy of heart, which these sensations afford, we hope, that you will be careful to cultivate and improve them, as they will give you an elevation, purity and firmness of mind, peculiarly adapted to ministerial employments. Stir up, my dear brother, the gift of God that is in you, that your profiting and improvement in all, that can conduce to the honourable and faithful discharge of the pastoral office, may appear unto all around you, while you are endeavouring

deavouring rightly to divide the word of truth, and to commend yourself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God.

WE wish you a long and a successful ministry; but, however this may be, take care that it be faithful, and free from the blood of all men. Remember, that you are this day to be set apart as an ambassador for Christ, chosen by him to offer life and salvation to perishing sinners in his name, and to beseech them, in his stead, to be reconciled to God. See that you do not, by an unguarded life, reflect a dishonour on that glorious King of kings, whom you are chosen to represent, but endeavour faithfully to magnify your exalted office. Let your discourses be evangelical and instructive, warm and persuasive, and in your whole behaviour be a pattern of good works. Let your preaching and conversation recommend the religion of a crucified Jesus to the approbation and acceptance of perishing sinners, and engage them to apply to the blood of his atonement for pardon, and to the influences of his spirit for sanctification and comfort. For this purpose, study the sacred oracles with attention and care, that you may know, what is the mind of God, and what are the solemn messages, which he commissions you to deliver in his name, with freedom and boldness, to his people. And, while you give yourself to reading and meditation, look, by frequent addresses to the throne of grace, for the illumination of that sacred spirit, which alone can preserve  
you

you from dangerous errors, and lead you into all necessary truth. Take heed to yourself, to your doctrine, and to the church of Christ, endeavouring to approve yourself as a workman that need not be ashamed, an able minister of the New Testament, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to every one his portion in due season, that none be neglected in your public ministrations.

As you are, this day, called to be a worker together with God, consider of how great importance it is, that you be found faithful; as the glory of God, the honour of your Redeemer, and the salvation of immortal souls, are all likely to suffer by the smallest neglect. You are called to be a watchman upon the walls of Zion, to receive the word from the mouth of God, and to give his people warning from him, to lift up your voice, like a trumpet, to cry aloud and to spare not, to shew his people their transgressions, to be instant in season and out of season, to reprove, exhort and rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine. This you must do, if you would save yourself and those that hear you. In all your ministrations, therefore, let that awful and tremendous declaration of the Lord, to the prophet Ezekiel, be constantly sounding in your ears: “ Son of man, I have made you a watch-  
 “ man to the house of Israel ; therefore, hear the  
 “ word from my mouth, and warn them from me.  
 “ When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man,  
 “ thou shalt surely die : If thou dost not speak, to  
 “ warn

“ warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man  
 “ shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I  
 “ require at thine hand.”

**BUT**, for your encouragement, remember that you serve a compassionate master, who bears with your infirmities, and is not unfaithful to forget your labours in the Lord; but will afford you all necessary comfort and assistance in your arduous work, and will abundantly reward your fidelity in his service, with a crown of immortal glory. This will revive your heart in the midst of your toils, and cause you to triumph in the enlivening prospect of the divine approbation. Nothing can exceed this, but that which you shall also receive from the bountiful master whom you serve, even a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For, “ they that turn many to righteousness, shall  
 “ shine as the sun in the kingdom of God.”

**IT** would be improper, my friends, to conclude the present discourse, without reminding you, who attend upon our ministrations, both of your duty and your privilege, in having the gospel preached to you. If ever you have seriously considered the weight and importance, the labours and difficulties of the ministerial office, you must have been ready to cry out, “ The Lord be merciful to ministers; they have a solemn account to give of the souls committed to their charge.” We gratefully acknowledge our obligations to you for your prayers, and earnestly request the continuance of them, that  
 the

the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified among you, and that we may obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful. The apostles made it their constant request to the churches, which they planted ; “ Brethren, pray for us.” And as we stand in greater need of such prayers, than they did, it would be unkind in you to deny us a share in them, especially as your own eternal interests are intimately connected with our success. If the Lord stand at a distance from us, you must soon feel the effects of it ; but if he smile upon our labours, your souls will be refreshed.

If it be our duty to labour in word and doctrine, to spend and be spent in the service of Christ, for your sakes ; we are entitled to your candid constructions in all our ministrations and behaviour, as you know the multiplicity of our concerns. Cast, therefore, a veil of charity over all our frailties and infirmities, knowing that we are men of like passions with yourselves, and have the treasure of the gospel committed to earthen vessels. As our usefulness depends upon our characters, it is your duty to support and vindicate them from unjust and injurious aspersions. If we are bound to minister to you in spiritual things, it is also your duty to keep us from being encumbered with worldly concerns ; that we may give ourselves wholly to reading, meditation and prayer, together with the other branches of our sacred office. And if we are ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and sent in his  
name

have to publish to you the most joyful news that  
 ever reached our distant world—that God was in  
 Christ reconciling the world to himself; and if we  
 are bound to beseech you, in his stead, to be re-  
 conciled to God; it must be your indispensable  
 duty, to attend to these glad tidings of salvation,  
 and to hear the word of the Lord from our mouths.  
 You owe this, in gratitude to your great deliverer,  
 who has caused you to see glorious days of the Son  
 of man, that he might see the travail of his soul in  
 you, and be satisfied. You owe it also to us, who  
 labour among you, in word and in doctrine, that,  
 when we behold the fruit of our instructions in  
 your lives and conversations, we may, in some mea-  
 sure, forget the waste of spirits occasioned by our  
 daily ministrations, and be animated with renewed  
 vigour to bear the labours of painful study. And  
 you owe this to your own immortal souls, which  
 must inevitably perish, by your neglecting so great a  
 salvation. Remember, therefore, that it is no light  
 matter to trifle with God and Christ, with the am-  
 bassadors of the Prince of peace, and with your own  
 immortal souls. Better for you never to have been  
 born, than to be found at last barren and unfruitful,  
 under all the cultivations of his grace. But, my  
 brethren, we hope better things of you, and things  
 that accompany salvation, although fidelity to our  
 Lord and master obliges us, thus to speak; and  
 may the God of all mercy grant, that we be not  
 disappointed in our expectations. AMEN.

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**T**HE Second Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia having chose Mr. ASHBALD GREEN to be an assistant pastor with the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. SPROAT, over their united congregations in this city and the northern liberties, the reverend Presbytery of Philadelphia was pleased to fix on the third Tuesday in May, 1787, on which to ordain him a minister of the everlasting gospel, and to install him in his ministerial charge.

The Presbytery appointed the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. SPROAT to preside on this occasion; the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. EWING to preach the ordination sermon; and the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. DUFFIELD to give the charge.

The Presbytery met on that day, agreeably to their appointment, at the Second Presbyterian Church in this city, and were attended by a very numerous audience. The business of the day was introduced with singing; a prayer by the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. EWING succeeded, who also delivered the sermon; after which the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. SPROAT conducted the further proceedings in the following manner.—Having stated the circumstances leading to the business of the day, he

addressed

*addressed himself to the audience and the candidate thus :*

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MY FRIENDS,

**T**HE transaction before us, is of a vastly important and solemn nature, and ought to be attended upon, with holy reverence and godly fear—a person to be clothed ministerially, with the authority of an ambassador of the prince of peace, to carry on a treaty of peace with rebellious sinners, and beseech them to be reconciled to God—and to have the charge of immortal souls committed to him—and the people to receive one of the ascension gifts of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; for, when he ascended up on high, “ he gave 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.”

AND

AND now, reverend and dear sir, I am to address you in the following questions, which I expect you will answer.

1. Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the doctrines therein contained, to be the word of God ?  
*I do.*

2. Do you here, publicly renew your acceptance of the Confession of Faith of this church, as a useful summary, and explanation, of the practical principles of faith contained in the holy scriptures ? *I do.*

3. Do you promise subjection to the government and discipline of the Presbyterian church, as exercised in these United States ?  
*I do.*

4. HAVE you been induced to seek the office of the holy ministry through a pure love to God, and a sincere desire to promote his glory, in the gospel of his Son ? *I trust I have.*

5. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel ; and the purity and peace of the church ; whatever persecution, or opposition, may arise unto you on that account ? *I do, by the assistance of the grace of God.*

6. Do

6. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties, which become you, as a Christian, and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all relative duties, and the public duties of your office ; endeavouring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation ; and walking with exemplary piety before the flock, over which God shall make you **OVERSEER** ?  
*By the assistance of God's grace, I do.*

**AND** now, my dear friends of this congregation, I am to address you, in the following questions ; which I expect you will answer by your delegates, by holding up their right hands.

1. Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive **Mr. ASHBALD GREEN**, whom you have called, to be your bishop, or pastor ?  
*Manifested in the affirmative.*

2. Do you promise to receive the words of truth from his mouth, with meekness and love, and to submit to him with humility, in the due exercise of discipline ? *Answered in the affirmative.*

3. Do you promise to encourage him in  
his

his arduous labour ; and to assist his endeavours for your instruction and spiritual edification ? *Affirmed.*

4. AND do you engage to continue to him, while he is your bishop, or pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have proposed, and whatever else you may see needful, for the honour of religion, and his comfort among you ?



*THE congregation having answered these questions, by their delegates holding up of their right hands ; the Moderator observed, that every thing is sanctified by the word and prayer.*

*The candidate then kneeled down, and the Moderator prayed, at which time the hands of the Presbytery were laid upon him, according to the apostolic example, by which he was solemnly ordained to the holy office of the gospel ministry, and installed an assistant pastor of the congregation. —Prayer being ended, the candidate rose, and the Moderator first, and afterwards all the members of the Presbytery, in their order, took him by the right hand, and gave him the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with them.*

*The Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. DUFFIELD concluded, with a solemn charge, in the name of God, to the newly ordained minister and to the people; which is as follows—*

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*My dear young Friend, and Brother,*

**A**S you have now been solemnly set apart to the sacred office of the gospel ministry; and appointed a pastor to this congregation, our usual custom requires that the exercise be closed with an address to you, and the people with whom you are thus connected.—But as both you and they have heard your respective duties, with great propriety and clearness, so fully stated, in the discourse which has just been delivered; it will be unnecessary for me to enlarge, or to detain this respectable audience, any further than by briefly observing a few things.—We hope and trust, dear sir, that previously to entering into the solemn engagements you have undertaken, you have seriously considered the duties of the important office, with which you are now vested; and of the station in which you are placed; and deliberately weighed the difficulties that might attend:—that you have carefully

carefully sought to God for direction ; and from a sense of duty, and a sincere desire to promote the best interest of mankind, and the glory of God, have, with an humble confidence in his grace for assistance, thus devoted yourself.—The service into which you are entered, and the station in which you are placed, are honourable indeed ; but arduous : encompassed with dangers ; and demanding a special attention.

You are early appointed, my dear young friend, a watchman, in an important post, on the walls of Zion ; and, as a city that is set on an hill, you cannot be hid.—To watch for our own souls, is a great concern, and difficult task : but you are to watch, both for your own, and for the souls of many.—The numerous, precious, immortal souls, that from Sabbath to Sabbath attend in these seats, will demand your special and constant care. And we trust you will, as a faithful steward, dispense to them the mysteries of the gospel of Christ ; and as a good shepherd, furnish them with spiritual food, which, by the blessing of God, may nourish them up to eternal life.—You will, we trust, pay a special attention, that the doctrines you may deliver  
be

be clearly founded on the word of God ; that you may enforce them with the commanding authority of a **THUS SAITH THE LORD** ; and that you will carefully guard against bewildering yourself, or your hearers, in fanciful opinions, however specious and flattering, that rest on merely conjectural, or forced construction of the sacred text.—The great doctrines of the gospel will, we trust, be your frequent theme. To point out, on the one hand, the fallen, ruinous state of man ; the total depravity of human nature ; the certainty of a future judgment ; the awful condemnation awaiting the sinner ; and his utter inability to deliver his soul, by any righteousness of his own, from going down to eternal death :—and, on the other, to open up clearly, and fully, the glorious remedy God has provided, by the substitution of his Son in the sinner's stead ; and the riches and freeness of his grace in Christ.—The excellency of our God-man Mediator, in every part of his character, as prophet, priest and king ; his ability to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him ; his suitability as a Saviour ; and his willingness to receive, and restore into the divine favour,

all

all, of every class and character, that place their confidence in him :—will frequently, we trust, not from your lips only, but, from a warm and engaged heart, entertain your audience ;—that whilst no obstinate sinner may dare to indulge a delusive hope of escaping the divine vengeance ; the trembling penitent may be encouraged to expect, through the merits of the great Redeemer, the mercy of God ; and a full and free pardon of the most innumerable, and aggravated crimes.—And whilst you lead your hearers to expect salvation, only on account of the complete active and passive obedience of Christ, let it be your constant care to inculcate the absolute necessity of holiness ; as the rational service of an intelligent creature ; the inseparable consequence, and best evidence of a saving faith ; and equally necessary to qualify a sinner for the enjoyment of God, as the imputed righteousness of Christ to entitle him thereto.—Let it be your study to chuse such subjects as appear most requisite for your hearers ; and to adapt your discourses to their understanding. And be ever more careful to awake the conscience, and engage the heart ; than to amuse the fancy, or gratify the idly

curious ear.—Let your life be a comment on your doctrine ; that your exemplary conversation may bear witness for you, that you believe, and feel, the reality of what you recommend to others.—But as the blessing of God alone can crown with success, be frequent and fervent in prayer for those influences of the holy Spirit, both to yourself ; and to the people over whom you have now been ordained a bishop ; without which, even a Paul might plant, or an Apollos might water, in vain.—And to keep your fidelity and diligence awake, let it ever rest on your mind, that the day is hastening fast, when you must render an account of your stewardship to the great Judge of all. And should any of the precious souls committed to your charge, be found to have perished through your unfaithfulness, they will perish indeed, beyond redemption ; but their blood will be required at your hand. And, oh ! how alarming the thought ! that a soul, at the bar of God, should have to exclaim, “ Had you, “ under whose pastoral care I was placed, “ had you been faithful to warn me of my “ danger ; and to point out, and urge the “ alone way of escape, I might now have  
been

“ been of that happy number who are go-  
 “ ing to encompass the throne of God. But  
 “ through your neglect I slept secure; and  
 “ am eternally done.”—Methinks I hear the  
 hopeless immortal add, “ Cursed be the day  
 “ that committed me to a watchman so un-  
 “ faithful on the walls of Zion.”—But, if,  
 by a faithful discharge of duty, you be found  
 a happy instrument of gaining souls to Christ;  
 and training them up for heaven; how tran-  
 sporting the prospect of meeting them in the  
 day of God, on the favourite hand of their  
 judge; owning you as their spiritual Father;  
 praising God for the blessing of your mini-  
 stry; and to be, forever, as jewels in your  
 crown of glory and joy!—Or, though Israel  
 should not be gathered, yet will you, if  
 found faithful, obtain the crown of life, and  
 be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. Which  
 blessed issue of your ministry, my dear young  
 friend, we most sincerely wish you may en-  
 joy.

I AM now to address a few words to the  
 people of this congregation.—The matter  
 you have been transacting, in calling, and  
 receiving a minister of the gospel placed a-  
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ming you, is, my dear friends, a very solemn affair.—You are all candidates for an eternal world. The gospel ministry is the ordinary means God has appointed for your salvation : and will either be a favour of life unto life, or of death unto death, to your souls. It, therefore, greatly concerns you, that you be not found wanting on your part.—You are to encourage the heart, and strengthen the hands of your pastor, by a steady attendance on his ministry ; and a careful improvement of the instruction you may receive.—Let it ever attend your thoughts, that not the hearers of the word ; but the doers thereof, are accepted with God.—The propriety of a kind deportment towards your pastor ; and a generous provision, that he may not be embarrassed in his temporal affairs ; will, we trust, have always a due influence on your conduct.—And as you would wish him to be blessed among you, and a blessing to you, be much in prayer to God, for the aids of his grace. If these be withheld, the preacher will become languid ; the means unprofitable ; and all your attendance vain.—And let me intreat you to remember, the important period draws nigh, when, as he shall

shall answer for the discharge of his trust ; you must also render an account of the part you shall have acted. And as an aggravated vengeance, beyond expression, awaits the sinner, who, by neglect and misimprovement, forces his way, from under the clear light of the gospel, to everlasting darkness and ruin ; so the joy of those, who, by duly improving the means of grace, shall have grown up in a meetness for glory, will far exceed what men, or angels, can, at present, conceive. — And, that you, and your pastor, now fixed among you, may experience this happiness ; and finally meet in the realms of eternal day ; mutually to joy and rejoice in each other, may God, for Christ's sake, of his infinite mercy grant.

**F I N I S.**