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ORDINATION SERMON.



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S E R M O N,

DELIVERED JANUARY 20, 1796,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM PIDGIN,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN

HAMPTON, NEW-HAMPSHIRE;

BY WILLIAM MORISON, *K*

Morison
PASTOR OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN LONDONDERRY.

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A Sermon.

2 TIM. 1. vii.

FOR GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US THE SPIRIT OF FEAR; BUT OF POWER,
AND OF LOVE, AND OF A SOUND MIND.

MY FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

IT will readily be granted, that important offices require equal qualifications, to a faithful discharge of them. That the office of a gospel minister is justly entitled to *this character*, will not be denied by any who are in reality influenced by the principles of christianity. The voice of *reason* concurs with *revelation* in teaching us, that those who are set up as instructors, and examples, to form the minds of others, should have well made, and properly furnished minds themselves. The great Apostle of the Gentiles informs us of *this*, as a topic, on which he earnestly dwells, in his epistolary directions to Timothy and Titus, who were both gospel ministers.

Of

Of the most necessary qualifications for this sacred office, we have an excellent summary in the words of our text : *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* In these words, we are informed of the *Author*, or *Giver* of ministerial endowments. All abilities, natural and moral, are from God, the giver of every good and perfect gift ; but the parent, or author of no moral evil. Whoever is set apart, in the all-wise providence of God, and approved by him for the ministry, him he qualifies for the work. A sinful insufficiency of mind, in public instructors, is not from God ; and in whomsoever it reigns, it must disqualify for that employment. God does not give *the spirit of fear*. By *the spirit of fear* in the text, we may understand, a timorous, cowardly mind ; a slavish fear, ensnaring to man, and dishonorable to God ; incompatible with the character of an ambassador of Christ, and betraying to the office we are now contemplating.

God does not give it to *his* ministers ; nor is he pleased to see it in them. But he gives the spirit of *power* ; and of love, and of a sound mind.

By the spirit of *power* in the text, we may understand a holy *firmness* or *fortitude* of mind ; that steadfast boldness, in which the Apostle always abounded, in the work of the Lord. This state of mind is opposed to the preceding fear.

This temper is also consistent with the amiable qualities of *benevolence and love* ; for while the Apostle disowns *fear*, and professes *fortitude*, his heart burns with ardent affection for the happiness of man. He frequently enjoins upon others love ; and love that is sincere and without dissimulation. And with this his own mind was beautified by the divine spirit, and his heart ornamented with God's salvation. By this he regulated a life of courtesy to all, flattering to none, firm and courageous in the duties of his office, and constant in the profession of the faith of Christ.

Thus the Apostle displays a *sound mind* ; courageous, but not cruel ; bold, but not petulant ; humble but not mean ; meek, but not pusillanimous ; seeking no honor, but the honor that cometh from God.

With what pleasing satisfaction may we contemplate this state of mind ; when we consider the situation of this excellent man, when he penned these words for our instruction. Had all things been quiet and tranquil in the church ; had the earth helped the woman, and the noon tide of general prosperity favored the cause in which he was embarked ; infidelity might form a more favorable pretence for insincerity. In this situation, the most dastardly spirit might ape the champion, and for a while, arrogate the praise due to noble merit. But this was so far from being the case, that at this very *time*, this servant of God was a prisoner at Rome, for the sake of the gospel ; exposed to the
insulting

insulting malignity of its bitter enemies ; deserted by many of its professed friends ; with death, in all the horror, ignominy and disgrace with which his blood-thirsty enemies could clothe it, staring him full in the face. In *such* circumstances, surrounded with *such* trials, the Apostle, with noble elevation of mind, and unparalleled tranquility and self-denial, rises superior to all personal danger ; and with the most generous concern for the comfort and support of all succeeding ministers, triumphs in God, saying, *God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

Suffer me to request the patience and candor of this assembly, while I shall endeavor, briefly to illustrate the nature, and advantages, of a spirit of fortitude, of love, and of a sound mind, to a gospel minister ; after which, I shall conclude with a few reflections, by way of address, to my brethren in the ministry, to the candidate now to be ordained, and to our christian friends of this congregation. Let us in the

First place, Consider the nature and advantages of that spirit of fortitude, recommended in our text.

By this mental qualification for a gospel minister, we are not to understand, a mere natural quality, founded only on strength of nerves, as a bold, presumptuous,

ous, and impetuous spirit, fit only to be discovered, in warlike exploits, and gloried in, by men of military achievements.

The fortitude in our text, is a *moral virtue*, improved by the *grace of God*, founded on a consciousness of duty, and sense of moral excellence, even in its *boldest* enterprises.

Some degree of this fortitude is requisite for all christians in human life ; but especially for gospel ministers. Without it, happiness is not enjoyed, character is not sustained, nor can our duty be properly performed, nor the reverses and changes of fortune be endured with comfort. Though our ears are not disturbed by the beat of the drum, the roaring of cannon, or the hoarse clangor of the trumpet of war : Though we see not garments rolled in blood, nor hear the painful groans of the dying, and are at a distance from the consequent lamentations of the widow and fatherless ; yet we are not perfectly safe from every danger. In the safest retreats of worldly enjoyments, a total exemption from woe, can be promised to none. The bloom of youth is fading, by the blasting storms of time ; the habitation of health, may soon be surrounded by a ghastly band of pale diseases, in terrible array ; riches make to themselves wings, and flee away ; the tenure of worldly honor is precarious ; the fortress of political eminence is often viewed with envy, and

frequently forced, by the malignant attacks of reproach and calumny. Of our valuable friends, and most endearing relations, we are subject to daily bereavements; while disappointment in pursuits, dissatisfaction in possessions, with the certainty of dispossession at last, lay us open to many fears, and innumerable anxieties. The bower of worldly pleasure, *must* give way to the bed of death. Who, without fortitude, can look around on these disastrous vicissitudes, and feel the happiness of self-possession? Besides, the misfortunes incident to man, often make their advances unforeseen, and begin their assaults so secret, that our wisdom cannot discover, until our power is unable to prevent them. **B**ut even *then*, under the influence of this excellent spirit, they can always be endured.

The real subject of this christian grace, has a fortress in his own mind, of which the most violent exertions of worldly calamities, can never dispossess him. Though the heathen philosophers considered fortitude as a cardinal virtue, yet, ignorant of its power as improved by grace and as a gift of the holy Spirit; the most distinguished among them,* in the day of danger fled his post, and consigned himself, by despair, to a disgraceful oblivion. Reason plainly informs us of the general utility of fortitude in common life; and the sacred oracles concur, in proclaiming its special advantage to a minister of Christ.

The

The duties of a minister's employment, lead him often to counteract and reprove the conduct of the vicious and irregular among men. It is his business to state a contrast between virtue and vice ; and to show every mark of respect to the former, with every sign of contempt to the latter.

The sons of vice are bold and impetuous in sin. The depravity of the human heart is in favor of moral evil. The long-suffering patience of God, is abused by sinners, to embolden in impiety. The language of inspiration respecting such is ; *because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* It is a minister's duty, by every wise and laudable mean, to stem the torrent of this vicious disposition, and a good degree of christian fortitude is necessary for its performance. Well furnished with this christian grace, a spiritual instructor is to resemble a rock, on which the swelling surges of this destroying flood, dash themselves to foam, but do no farther injury. Devoid of this excellent spirit, he resembles a trembling twig, overwhelmed by every sea ; or at best, a mound of sand, weakened by every wave, broken by every billow, and carried away by every flood. On the other hand, the foundation of christian fortitude, is the command of God, and the perfections of Deity.

Hence

Hence the servants of God have been bold and courageous in his service. Full to our purpose, is the charge given to the prophet Jeremiah ; *Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee ; and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces ; for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord.* For the performance of Job's duty his witness was in heaven, and his record on high. The royal penman of Israel speaks in the most heroic manner, realizing the foundation of his fortitude, in the following words. : *The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid ? Tho' an host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.* The prophet Habakkuk affords us one of the most beautiful figures in rhetoric under the influence of this magnanimous principle, *Altho' the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* The apostle enjoins us to be strong, only in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Of this injunction, he was a lively portrait, through the whole course of his ministry. Realizing this, he could do all things. Supported by the virtuous fortitude in our text, he went bound in spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what should befall him there, save that the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Full of this holy firmness, we find him proof against all alarming

ing apprehensions, and distressing fears and anxieties, in the following words.—*But none of these things move me ; neither count I my life dear unto myself ; so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.*

The companions of Caleb's journey to examine the land of promise, are transmitted to us in characters of infamy ; because their hearts failed by fear, saying, *we are not able to possess the land, for the people are stronger than we.*

Who can tell the degree of disorder and misery the people of Israel might be plunged into, by the panic-struck spies, of an evil report ; when by the influence of their cowardly example, they filled the hearts of the congregation, with general disinay ; and their mouths with murmurs ? But Caleb, being of another spirit, even the spirit in our text ; not fearing the resentment of his fellow travellers, the tumults of an enraged populace, and as little, the strength and stature of the sons of Anak ; thus addresses the tribes of Israel : *Let us go up at once to possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.* With these words, flowing from genuine fortitude, and founded on the faithfulness of that God whom he designed to follow ; he dispels the fears that agitated every breast, and stills the tumults of

of the people : With these words he scatters the gloom that sat lowering on every countenance, and a general tranquillity takes place of a thousand discouraging anxieties. For *this*, he stands in an elevated page, in the sacred history : for *this*, he obtains in person, the land of promise : for *this*, his children are blessed with an inheritance among the brethren ; and for *this* his name is enrolled among the great, in characters of fame which no length of time can erase, nor change consign to oblivion. For his name, as that of the righteous, shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

Witness, the testimony of God himself ; *But my servant Caleb, because he was of another spirit, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whither he went, and his seed shall possess it.* How animating such examples ! They breathe a spirit of firmness and resolution, with dependance on God, for the performance of duty, on ministers, through all succeeding generations.

Moreover, we find by experience, that the temptations to which a minister is exposed, as a spiritual instructor, are many. No man is more dependent, apparently, for his worldly support. It comes from various classes of people ; some of whom are obnoxious to just reproof, However great the degree of wisdom and prudence, observed in administering reproof

proof, the discharge of this duty is often the real, while more specious pretences are the ostensible causes, of disaffection. When difficulties of this kind occur, a minister without fortitude will not dare to be faithful ; or if he attempts it, to save his character, in the view of the more serious, it is done in such a deceitful and feeble manner, that all classes, with equal ease may shun its application.

Nothing is more necessary than firmness of mind to manifest the truths of God, and *to recommend ourselves to the consciences of men, as in the sight of the heart-searching and rein-trying Jehovah*. Nor is it possible for us on trying occasions, to manifest love to God or proper affection to man, without this excellent spirit, but this leads us to consider,

SECONDLY. The nature and advantages of a spirit of love ; as the next qualification in our text, for a gospel minister.

On this we observe, that the love in our text, is *a gift of God, and Grace of the holy spirit*, and constitutes the essence of the christian character. The excellent nature of love, is obvious from what it is, with relation to christianity, to God himself, to the blessed Saviour, and to the excellent among men, in all ages of the world.

The spirit of the christian religion, breathes love

to the human race, and requires a corresponding disposition, in all its subjects and professors. Love is the fulfilling of the law ; and *the end of the commandment is charity, from a pure heart; a good conscience and faith unfeigned.* The design of the law, and the prophets, is to diffuse a spirit of love, to God and to man. Therefore, to love God, and our neighbour, are *two commandments*, on which *hang all the law and the prophets.*

Love is a reigning perfection of Deity, a summary of the moral character of God. *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The more this blessed principle reigns in the hearts, of his ministers, the more they resemble God, who *so loved the world; that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth, might not perish, but have eternal life.* The more we are influenced by love, the greater is our conformity to the Saviour, who loved sinners, and gave himself for them ; and who in the days of his flesh, went unweariedly about, doing good to the souls, and bodies of men, from this benevolent and amiable spirit. Of the forerunner of our redeemer, it is said, *he was a burning and shining light.* He had a clear head, and shone with light ; but the goodness of his heart gave a peculiar lustre to his character ; for it burned with love to God, and proper affection to man.

In this, he imitated his *Divine Master*, whose

heart

heart-felt love produced a warmth of affection; in his sorrowful and sad-hearted disciples, going to Emmaus; when he met them by the way, and kindly enquired, *what communications are these, ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?* After reciting to him, the cause of their sorrow, he affectionately alleviates their distress, and softens their disappointed expectations, by illustrating the necessity of his sufferings, to enter into his glory: *And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.*

If we would be successful, in teaching the knowledge of Christ to others, it is necessary we should be taught by him ourselves. And if we would be instrumental in warming the minds of our hearers by the love of Christ, it is highly necessary, we should experience some such touches of heart, as they did, of whom it is said, *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and opened unto us the scriptures?*

Without the salutary effects of love upon a minister's heart, strength of mind may swell into a fault, in consequence of the opposition he meets with from the world. Without this qualifying influence, his firmness may degenerate into fierceness, his courage into cruelty, and his ministerial administrations, which should all spring from love, into spiritual pride and

lordly

lordly tyranny. A spirit of love softens, but never weakens the manly virtues of the human heart. It enlivens our zeal for God, warms the heart for doing good to man, and animates all our endeavours in the way of holiness.

Love makes the most difficult duties of religion easy to be performed; it subdues the fire of undue resentment; guards against the extravagance of unruly passions; and gives a polish to the mind that sweetens our manners to all mankind. A minister, whose fortitude is thus tempered by love, rises into growing usefulness in the church of God. His path being that of the just, he *shineth like the light of the morning, more and more, unto the perfect day*. He confines not the exertions of his benevolent heart, to the narrow bounds of bigotry; or to the limits of a party spirit; far less to the blinding influence of superstition; or the ignorant traditions of the fathers. The spirit of love, has constrained him to break down these separating walls of austerity, pride and bitterness; and with a heart, wide as the arch of heaven, he sacrifices every inferior, and partial consideration, for the general good. Under the influence of that charity that thinketh no evil, he will put the best construction on the erroneous-like expressions, faults and failings of others, they will bear; nor will it ever suffer him to be censorious towards men of religious opinions, or denominations, different from his own.

This generous disposition, is equally productive and preservative of peace and harmony, among ministers themselves. The Apostle is therefore explicit, in enjoining the continuation of brotherly love. By profession they are united in the great interest of the Redeemer's Kingdom. By the principle in our text, they are joined as a band of brothers, of the same family, pursuing the same end, the glory of their heavenly father, and the good of men. By this excellent spirit they are under one head, embarked in the same cause, sailing for the same shore, with the same glorious prospects of immortality. By *this*, they are animated with the same firm, undaunted and universal principle of philanthropy, in their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, through all the different dangers of their voyage. United in heart by the invincible power, and indissolvable ties of love to God, and to one another, they stand. Devoid of this all-governing, and best principle of friendship, unanimity and defence, they are frequently formidable enemies one to another ; and become an easy prey to infidelity, and every principle hostile to the religion of Jesus Christ. Without this amiable temper of mind, we do not support the honor of religion before the world ; or manifest, that we are indeed the ministers of Christ. Of this, we are sufficiently informed by the inspiration of God. *Hereby shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love, one to another.* Let our pretensions to religion be ever so splendid, we deserve not the name

name of real christians, if our profession is not accompanied with love ; for love is of God, and is inseparably connected with every moral virtue, and every gracious habit.

The inspired Apostle assures us, that speaking with the united eloquence of men and of angels, without love, we are but *as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*. If with the gift of prophecy, the understanding of all mysteries, and all knowledge, with all faith, to the removing of mountains, we are still nothing. If, to all these, we add the dispossession of our property to feed the poor, and willingly sacrifice our bodies to be burned, for the sins of our souls, and we are, without love, still unprofitable : can we flatter ourselves, that our poor, pitiful performances, which fall far short of these, will without love recommend us to God, our own consciences, or an observing world, as the true ministers of reconciliation ? Love is a distinguishing characteristic of true religion ; and without it we are not friends, but deceitful enemies to the cause of Christ.

Moreover, a spirit of love is an excellent antidote against bad consequences to ourselves, which may ensue, from the difficulties arising in our way, as ministers of the gospel. The insults we may meet with, are many, disgusting, and ill to bear. They strongly tempt to draw forth the corruptions of the heart to exercise ;

exercise ; to make shipwreck of the faith, and of a good conscience. But love will enable us to follow the example of our Saviour, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; and to strive for the glory of the man that passeth over a transgression. Love suffereth long, and is kind ; and is not easily provoked. It beareth all things, beareth all things, and endureth all things. Prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away ; but charity never faileth.* With love, accompanying the fortitude of a gospel minister, he is invulnerable by the arrows of undeserved reproach, undeterred by poverty, unconquered by distress, unbroken by persecution, and can rejoice *tho' poor, yet making many rich, and as having nothing, yet possessing all things. In all these things, we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.*

To these observations let me add, that the near relation in which we stand to our respective flocks, requires a great degree of this tender spirit, in realizing the obligations we are under to them, and in discharging the duties of our office, for their good.

The people of our charge, have freely chosen us to administer to them, in affairs *big with important consequences*, to them, and to their offspring. In this choice they have given us an unquestionable evidence of their good affection to us. Gratitude requires ours in return. How shall we manifest a discharge of this debt

debt ? Not merely by making choice of them, as our people ; but by a faithful, diligent, tender performance of the duties for which they have chosen us. Our connection with our people, should *constrain* us; with the love of Christ, to travail in pleasurable pain, till he be formed in their souls, as the hope of Glory. Without love, we shall never see the travail of our souls, and be satisfied ; nor can we ever expect to see the pleasure of the Lord *prospering* in our hands. Without love, we are cold to the duties of our office, and to the beauty of holiness ; Strangers to the highest perfection of our nature and indisposed to gather the lambs in our arms, to carry them in our bosom, or to gently lead those that are with young. In fine, destitute of *this*, the spirit of a good shepherd, however bold and intrepid our fortitude, we are similar to ravenous wolves, in imminent danger of destroying the flock of Christ ; for we are not found at heart for the Gospel ministry. This leads us to consider in the

Third Place, Soundness of mind, as equally necessary for this sacred employment.

This part of the ministerial character is very comprehensive, and significant. It comprises the preceding qualifications in the text, with whatever may be necessary to follow after, to accomplish the minister, and finish him for his work. This form of expression, perhaps, alludes to a healthy body, and

and is opposed to a sickly, frail one. As such it is called sound. A sound mind is a healthy mind ; not sickly and weak ; but free from disorder, and deficiency ; firm, vigorous and fit for action. In short, it implies strength of mind, or a competent genius. And from this brief view of a sound mind, we may readily suppose, that abilities in defending the truths of the gospel, with understanding in discussion, and wisdom in the choice of subjects, suitable to the various occurrences of public life ; with freedom from the vanity of self-importance, are inseparably connected with such a mental constitution, in a gospel minister.

The subtilty of avowed enemies to the religion of Christ is great ; and their sophistical reasonings specious. Their fallacy is far from being always obvious. The man of a weak mind, is not likely to support the permanent usefulness of a minister, against such opposers. He is not the man to be set for the defence of the Gospel.

Understanding in illustrating the doctrines of christianity, according to their different natures, depends much upon that soundness of mind, pointed out in the text. It will enable the preacher to choose *acceptable words*, even words of *truth and soberness*. It will lead him to consult perspicuity of style, order in arrangement, and decency in delivering the truths of God. A wise and understanding mind, will dispose

us to be plain and pathetic ; and to be best pleased with that simple elegance in discourses, which is equally remote from all mean vulgarity, and the hateful flights of bombastic affectation.

The scriptures inform us that, *he that winneth souls is wise*. The ways of real religion, are ways of wisdom ; and he that would teach it to others, ought to have a discerning mind in it himself ; and to be able to form discourses from its glorious doctrines, with dignity and reason, without pillage or plunder from the works of others. A minister may strut about a little while in the plumage of borrowed feathers ; but without some internal resources, his credit for borrowing must fail, and he finally becomes bankrupt.

Understanding, and wisdom will guard him against those extremes, incident to men of weak capacities. He is equally fortified, against the hardening influence of infidelity, and the bewildered zeal and extravagant excursions of enthusiastic sectaries. He knows the analogy there is between natural and revealed religion ; and guards against ignorantly setting them at variance, one with another. He knows when to speak and when to be silent, and how to address himself to men of different tempers, and manners, to the best advantage. By wisdom, he looks for the avenues easiest of access to the human heart ; and never presumes to storm the mind of his hearers, while it is in his

power to take possession of it by wise and sound policy.

To these observations, it may be added, that a sound mind is an enlightened and knowing mind in the holy scriptures, and in the great distinguishing doctrines of christianity. It was the glory of Timothy's character, that from a child, he had known the scriptures. It is peculiar to them only, to make us wise to salvation. Notwithstanding the excellency of a natural understanding, it is still involved in much darkness, without the advantages of revelation. From the scriptures, as from the repository of heaven, we are to draw provision for immortal souls; and upon them alone, to draw bills of credit for salvation. From the sacred oracles, we acquire the clearest knowledge of God, of man, and of every moral obligation.

In the glass of God's word, corresponding with common observation, we may see the depravity of our hearts, and irregularity of our lives, delineated with the exactness of face answering to face, or the heart of man to man. From the same blessed source of information, we may learn our danger by reason of sin, our odiousness to God's holiness, and obnoxious situation, to the severity of his inflexible justice. From this sacred page, we are to learn the only way of salvation, through the compleat atonement of the Saviour; and the true character of God, and the all-glorious perfections of Deity. In the divine testimony, are held

up to view, his vindictive justice, his spotless purity, his universal benevolence, his infallible truth, his almighty power, his supreme dominion, with his unbounded love, and tender mercies, which are over all his other works. A minister is by no means to be ignorant of the scriptures, or the doctrines of salvation. If he is *wise*, he will still teach the people *this* knowledge; but if not, how will he communicate that knowledge to others, which he himself does not possess?

Once more, Permit me to observe, that a sound mind endeavours to be free from vanity, ostentation and pride; and is clothed with humility, and the fear of God.

A proud mind is disordered with a dreadful disease, and frequently spreads deadly contagion around in society, like fire-brands, arrows and death. The infection of this distemper finds easy access into the minds of weak men, when promoted to eminent offices; by means of which, they are lifted up for a while, and as *novices*, fall into the condemnation of the devil. Such, thinking themselves to be something, when they are nothing, deceive themselves; but when this disease infects the man of strong intellectuals, the consequences are very ruinous to many others. In the former, a spirit of pride is an object of contempt and ridicule; in the latter of dread and indignation. In the one, we see a fool, vainly wise in his own conceit; in the oth-

er, we see nobler parts prostituted to gratify an infernal inclination. In the first, we repeatedly find, the ignorant zeal of blind devotion; in the last, is frequently painted, pharisaical arrogance. Such a spirit, so pernicious in itself, and destructive in its consequences, can have no connection with the excellent spirit in our text; nor form any just claim for that sacred office for which it qualifies.

Grant me now the pleasure of your indulgence a little longer, in closing this discourse, by making the short addresses, which I have promised, by way of Improvement.

My Brethren in the Ministry,

FROM the observations now made, we may learn some things for our instruction. We here see, with what spirit we should be influenced in our ministerial employment: Not of fear, but of power; not of hatred, but of love; not of a weak and unstable, but of a sound mind. How necessary that we be all the subjects of saving grace: in possession of *this new heart*, and *right spirit*, which God has promised, and gives to all his faithful followers. How firm and constant, how gentle and tender, how wise and prudent, and withal, how holy and humble, should our hearts be in the work of God! *Who is sufficient for these things? To us who are less than the least of all Saints, is this*
grace

grace given, to preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

In the light of this doctrine, we may also see, the special care we are to exercise, in admitting candidates to the ministry. We are commanded to lay hands suddenly on no man. We are not to let ties of worldly connections induce us to push men into this office, unqualified for the work. We are to know no man after the flesh ; but to inquire concerning them, after the spirit : To know what spirit they are of ; whether of fear, or of power ; whether of a severe, unkind, or gentle disposition ; and of sound minds, fit to be set for the defence of the gospel. We are to inquire whether they are possessed of those natural and acquired endowments, that in an age of increasing learning and information, may tend to preserve the ministry from that contempt poured upon it, on account of unqualified men that presume *this sacred* employment. In fine, we are to be well satisfied, that such as we would set apart for this holy office, are men of apparent piety of heart, with regularity of life, and love to the work ; without which, no good can be expected from them.

To you, my dear Sir, now to be clothed with the sacred office we have been contemplating ; may I not say, that weighty is the charge you are now taking upon you ? Great is the preparation of mind you need. Solemn is the work you are entering upon. May you

be

be daily anointed with the spirit in our text. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Lean not on your own understanding. Read much, and pray more. Let love to God, to the Saviour, and to the souls of men, ever influence your heart, in all your administrations. Let not a spirit of slavish fear, dictate in difficult parts of your duty. It will betray the interest of Christ, like treason. Be neither rash, nor diffident. Possess your soul in *prudence* and *patience*. Let wisdom's ways, which are pleasant, and her paths which are peace, lead you in all the changing scenes of life. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, that despitefully use you. Be faithful to the people of your charge, and do good to all men as God may give you opportunity. In this way, when you recline your head on the pillow of death, you will be able to join the faithful Apostle, in saying; *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.*

To you, my friends and fellow-christians of this church and congregation, let me observe: That our connection together, under the presbyterian form of government, is of recent establishment. You are convinced

vinced it was unfolicited by us, as well as attended with expences, trouble and toil to you, and uneasiness to our congregational brethren. On account of this uneasiness and disquiet to our fellow-citizens, we proceeded with the greatest caution, in hearing the request of the town; and finally, on the same account, granted it with some *painful sensations*. Give me leave to add, that much will depend upon the *stability* and *propriety* of your subsequent conduct, in proving to an observing world, the righteousness of your intentions: in doing which, it cannot fail, to give us unspeakable pleasure and satisfaction. To encourage your hearts in every duty, God, in his holy providence, is granting you the pleasure of seeing the institutions of the gospel re-established in this place.

After the bereavement of your late worthy pastor your ears have heard and now your eyes see the man of your choice, to be your minister. Receive him in love; use him with honor for his work's sake. Encourage his heart and strengthen his hands, in the good work of the Lord. Bear him on your minds in prayer, to a throne of grace. He has accepted your invitation to take the care of your souls in the Lord. Attend punctually to his instructions. Give a cordial reception to the truths of God, he may deliver in your hearing. Take him my dear friends as a rich *gift* of an ascended Saviour, who received gifts for men, and gave gifts unto men, that he might give men as gifts
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unto the church, that the *Lord* might dwell *among* them. To conclude, May you enjoy a long, comfortable and successful life together ; and afterwards be received into that blissful communion, where the pains of separation shall never be known ; and where love, light, life, joy and perfect peace forever reign.

T H E
C H A R G E,

B Y T H E

Rev. D A V I D A N N A N,

O F P E T E R B O R O U G H.

A N E X T E M P O R A N E O U S E F F U S I O N.

IN the name of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Ghost ; we, this Presbytery, have Ordained you, William Pidgin, to the office of the Gospel-Ministry, and as Pastor of the Presbyterian Church and Congregation of Hampton in particular.

We, therefore, Charge you, before God, Angels and Men, that you preach the word ; be instant in season and out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Saul of Tarsus once said, *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.* To you, Sir,

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this

this day, is this grace given, that you preach among *this people*, the unsearchable riches of Christ. You are to preach Christ, and him crucified. *God forbid*, saith the same admirable Man, *that I should glory, save in the Cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!* The cross of Christ is the Christian's glory. You are to preach all the Doctrines of the Bible, in connection with Christ. *For to him, gave all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in his name, should obtain the remission of sins*; and it is certain that the whole of the New Testament is just a History, of the Incarnation, the life, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, and intercession of our glorious Redeemer. You are to preach Christ, in the glory of his person—in the glory of his nature—in the glory of his office—in the glory of his love—in the glory of his fullness—and in the brightness of his glory. You are to preach the sad and universal depravity of Human Nature, the doctrine of Regeneration, Justification by the righteousness of Christ, Sanctification by his spirit, Adoption into his family, and Redemption through his blood.

You are to exhibit the blood of Christ, as a fountain set open for sin and for uncleanness, to this People; and you are to invite them to come to this Fountain, to wash and be clean. It is said, *These are they who came out of great Tribulation, and have washed their*

their Robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. We have been informed, Sir, that you have been in great tribulation, the tribulation of a natural State ; But, thanks be to God you have come out of it. But, my dear Sir, you are about to enter into another scene of great tribulation, I mean the care of the Church of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation : But we trust you will also come out of that ; like Gold tried in the furnace, with all its purity, and all its weight ; having lost nothing but the dross. You are to live near to God, pray that the love of Christ may be shed abroad in your heart. The Apostle observes, *The love of Christ constraineth us*, Who would stand in this place ! who would dwell upon the all-important doctrines of Christianity, and brave the dangers of a tempestuous world ! unless he were constrained by *the love of Christ*. This principle shed abroad in your heart, will make your business easy, and your success triumphant.

Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. Rule the Church with discretion ; Be an example unto the flock ; administer the seals of the Covenant of Grace to proper subjects ; give thyself to reading, meditation, and prayer. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth : and the things which thou hast heard of us, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*

also ; but lay hands suddenly on no man. Take heed to thyself, and unto thy doctrine, continue in them ; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

You are to consider that a great number of souls are committed to your care, one of which, is more precious than a thousand worlds. If they are warned of their iniquity, and repent not, they shall die in their sins ; but if thou warn them not of their duty, their blood shall be required at thine hands.

But are there no offices to be performed by the people to their Pastor ? Yes surely. It is your duty to keep him free from worldly cares, by contributing abundantly to his temporal support. Comfort him in his trials : Bear his burdens : Rejoice in his prosperity : Show him all countenance, in private and public. Pray for his happy success, and esteem him highly in love for his works sake. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you, that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.*

A M E N.

T H E

Right Hand of Fellowship.

B Y T H E

Rev. S A M U E L T O M B,

O F N E W M A R K E T.

REVEREND, HONORED AND BELOVED.

ORDER, *regularity* and *harmony* are the strength, beauty and perfection of every system, and every society where they prevail :—take *these* away, and all things must instantly recede into a state of *chaotic confusion* and *inevitable ruin*. The God of the universe is the God of order ; his laws are the laws of order ; and wherever disorder exists in any part of his dominions, it arises from the *violation* of nature's laws, and not from any *defect* in the original plan.

If we for a moment survey those heavenly bodies which compose the *solar system* ; how wonderful, how exact, how beautiful the regularity with which they perform their several revolutions !—Suspended in *equilibrio* between the powers of *Gravitation* and *Attraction*, each one steadily pursues his course, in mutual harmony with the rest :—whereas, if either
of

of the *above powers* should cease to act, the whole system must be involved in sudden destruction.

Mutual dependence then upon each other, seems to be one *universal law* of creation ; and is the very *element* of all *systems*, whether *natural*, *civil* or *religious*.

All creatures are, not only *absolutely dependent* on God, but also *relatively dependent* on each other ; so that in either sense, an *independent creature* is an *absurdity*.

This mutual dependence is the very foundation of civil society, and the ostensible reason of civil law and government ;—without it, there could be no subjection, but *forced* and *involuntary* ; and no authority, but *usurped* and *tyrannical* ; consequently, civil discord, anarchy and destruction must ensue.

Equally necessary to the prosperity and happiness of religious society, is this spirit of mutual dependence and condescension. As in the natural body, no one member or part can say to another, *I have no need of thee* ; so it is in the church, *the body mystical*.

Ministers of the gospel may be considered as eyes to this body ; because by their *heavenly instructions* and *holy examples*, they point out the path of life to their hearers. Now the eye cannot say to the most incon-

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siderable member, *I have no need of thee* ; neither can the other members say to the eye, *we have no need of you*.

Moreover, as the *church* of Christ is but *one*, however differently the parts that compose it are denominated ; so all her ministers ought to be *one*, in heart, sentiment, affection, and in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel ; and therefore ought to *reciprocate* those tokens and symbols of unity and love, which the gospel of Christ recommends :—one of which is *the right hand of fellowship*.

Reverend and Dear Brother,

As you are now set apart to the office and work of the christian ministry by the solemn act of *ordination* ; I, in the name, and by the appointment of the ordaining Presbytery, *present you this right hand of fellowship*.—We do not view this, dear Sir, as a mere *needless ceremony*, or *superfluous compliment* ;—no :—it is full of important meaning.—It is a *public testimony* that we *approve* your qualifications, *human, christian and ministerial*.—It is a *sacred expression* of our love to you, and to the Church over whom you are set in the Lord.—It is a *token* that we cordially receive you and them into our communion, both *christian and ministerial*.—We *hereby manifest* that you are welcome to our *counsel, friendly assistance* and *Prayers* ; and that we expect a *mutual exchange*

change of all these, and every other good office. We wish you the blessing of Asker, " May your shoes be iron and brass, and as your day, so may your strength be."

Let the Brethren of this church and congregation, receive our most *sincere salutations*, on this *solemn, joyful occasion*.

Honored and Beloved.

You now see the *man*, who has *devoted himself* to the service of your souls in the gospel.—With *confidence* and *good hope*, we recommend him to your affection and love ;—to your sympathy and prayers. May *he* and *you* long walk together in the *pleasant, peaceful paths* of wisdom, and finally be received into the *blissful region of peace and pleasure and joy everlasting*.

A M E N.

