

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN BEEKMAN-STREET,
NEW-YORK,

ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 1810;

AT
THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION
OF THE
REV. GARDINER SPRING,
AS PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

—♦—
BY PHILIP MILLEDOLER, D. D.
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN RUTGERS-STREET,
NEW-YORK.

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TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
THE CHARGE TO THE MINISTER,
AND THE
EXHORTATION TO THE PEOPLE.

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—♦—
1810.

A SERMON,

&c.



2 COR. ii. 16.

—And who is sufficient for these things?

IT ought to be considered as a singular favour to our world, that God hath given to it a ministry of reconciliation; nor can those persons who are employed in this ministry, ever be sufficiently humble or thankful for the distinguished honour conferred upon them. Should God himself speak to us immediately from heaven, we have abundant evidence to believe that the communication would be too dreadful for our nature to bear. Were it done through the instrumentality of angels, it would be liable, in an inferior degree, to the same objection: nor is it to be supposed that these holy beings could enter into all the feelings and sympathies which are natural to men, who have been under the same condemnation with others; who are liable to the same temptations; who have the same foes to encounter; are alarmed by the same dangers, and animated by the same hopes. As such characters would seem, from their situation and experience, to be peculiarly fitted to alarm the careless, and to speak a word in season to weary and

tempted souls ; so it would appear, that the power of grace is more clearly seen, and the glory of God more illustriously displayed, in carrying on a work of such prodigious magnitude and importance, through the instrumentality of means so comparatively weak and contemptible.

It was the custom of ancient conquerors, in the celebration of their triumphs, to carry with them their captives in chains ; and what are faithful ministers of the everlasting Gospel but conquered foes ? We see them indeed loaded, not with chains of vengeance, as they have deserved, but bound to their divine master by ties of gratitude and everlasting affection. Having known for themselves the pardoning love of God, and the power of his grace, we see them humbly attempting far and wide to make him known, and to extend the triumphs of his cross. Oh ! it is affecting to hear from the lips of such beings the messages of eternal mercy. Once they were enemies themselves, children of wrath even as others, and deeply engaged in rebellion against heaven ; but now restored to their right minds, they honour and glorify him whom they once pierced ; and, from a principle of love to God and man, are willing to spend and be spent, and to wear themselves out in the delightful service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of all men on earth, it will easily appear, that these ought to be most humble and most engaged, not only on account of what they once were, but also on account of the greatness of their work—their natural inadequacy to

it—as well as the eternal consequences that will flow from it to themselves, as well as others. To the discussion of this subject we are more particularly invited by the passage before us. The apostle having contemplated the success of the Gospel among the Gentiles, returned thanks to God for himself and fellow-labourers, that he had always caused them to triumph in Christ, and to make manifest the savour of his knowledge by them in every place : for we are unto God, said he, a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish : to the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other, the savour of life unto life. Having thus far viewed the importance of his work, and contrasted it with the personal weakness and insufficiency of the instruments employed in it, his strong feelings on the whole subject are concentrated and expressed in the text :—“ And who is sufficient for these things ? ”—In speaking from this subject I propose to show,

I. That the work of the Gospel ministry is a great work.

II. That the sufficiency of those employed in it, is all of God.

1. That the work of the Gospel ministry is a great work. This will appear—

From the consideration of its being a work of divine appointment.

The author of it is the great God, the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy*; the blessed and only Potentate; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see†. And it is consequently a great work; faithful ministers are called by him—are furnished for their work by him—are sent out by him, and in his name—and, so far as they speak his words, and transact the affairs of his kingdom agreeably to their commission, they are the representatives of his person: the good or evil done to them he considers as done to himself; their acceptance or rejection he considers as the acceptance or rejection of himself. “Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God‡.”—“He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me§.” It would be the height of presumption for us to say this, if God had not said it; but it cannot now be so considered. The greatness of that Being by whom they are sent, gives a weight to their message, greater, far greater, than it could derive from any other source, and clothes them with all that power and authority which are requisite to a faithful and dignified discharge of the duties of their important trust.

But the greatness of this work will further appear, by the means used for its introduction into

* Is. lvii. 15.

† 2 Cor. v. 20.

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

§ Matt. x. 40.

our world. The import of the Gospel is glad tidings; but no glad tidings can be sent from a holy God to sinners, considered as such; but, on the contrary, only such as are heavy and sorrowful—only such as are awful and tremendous—such are imperiously demanded by the holy law, the inflexible justice, and spotless moral purity of God. The Gospel proclaims peace and pardon; but there is no peace to the wicked, and there can be no pardon at the expense of eternal truth and justice. Whether divine truth and justice could have been satisfied in any other way than by the sufferings of Christ upon the cross, is not, perhaps, for us to determine; but that this was the best way, may be easily proved by the event. It was a way devised by infinite wisdom; nor can we believe that any price less than that which was paid, would have answered the intended purpose. For as justice demands no less, so it takes no more than its due. But if proclamation of mercy to our dying world could only be made by the sufferings of Christ upon the tree, it necessarily follows, that the work of publishing the Gospel must be great on account of the price of its introduction. Hence, ministers are solemnly charged to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*.

If we extend our views a little further, we shall find, that this work is great on account of the objects which

* Acts xx. 28.

are to be achieved by it. What these are, will appear, in some measure, from the names given to the officers of whom we are speaking. They are styled Ministers, because they are the servants of God, and of the Church: Bishops and Pastors, because they are called to perform all the duties of the pastoral, or shepherd's office; "to strengthen that which is diseased, to heal that which is sick, to bind up that which is broken, to bring again that which is driven away, and to seek that which is lost*. To feed the sheep, to feed the lambs of Christ, is their blessed employment. They are styled Ambassadors, because they are authorized by the great God to propose in his name, a Treaty of Peace to sinners, written with his hand, and sealed with his blood: Stewards of the mysteries of God, because it is their duty to hold and use the keys of knowledge and discipline, and to bring out of their treasure things new and old: Watchmen, because they are stationed on the walls of the holy city, to give notice of danger, and to guard its internal peace, as well as external security: and Angels of the Churches, because they bear the tremendous messages of the living God to his people.

The objects of this ministry may be considered as referring to God, to men, or to other beings, and are all grand and impressive. As this ministry refers to God, it is intended to bring in to his name a revenue of inexpressible and eternal glory: in the cross of Christ, which it exhibits, mercy and truth have met toge-

* Ez. xxxiv.

ther; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and the triumphs of grace by the word are more splendid, and will glorify the divine attributes more than all other judgments and mercies. As it refers to men, this ministry, weak as it is in itself, and contemptible, is, nevertheless, destined by him who err-eth not in counsel, to give light to a benighted world: “for after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe*.”—Yes, brethren, it will raise the dead in trespasses and sins to a life of righteousness: for the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live†. It is therefore intended to convince, convert, and humble sinners under the mighty hand of God; to reconcile and restore them to his image and favour; and having believed, then to build them up in holiness and comfort, and to guide them through all the perils of the wilderness, to their everlasting home: and not only so, but as it is the savour of life unto life to some, it will eventually prove the savour of death unto death to others. Our Lord declares that it will judge sinners in the last day‡, and add, in an awful degree, to the condemnation of the finally impenitent. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light—*this is the condemnation!* as if there was no other ground for such a sentence, beside the re-

* 1 Cor. i. 21,

† John v. 25.

‡ John xii. 48.

jection of the Gospel ; and the idea conveyed by this mode of expression certainly is, that no sin is comparable, in point of malignity and deadly effect, to the sin of unbelief.

As to the effects of this ministry on other beings ; it has agitated and impressed, and continues to agitate and impress both heaven and hell, those opposite and distant worlds ; how far, the light of eternity will develope .

Jacob saw in vision a ladder extending from heaven to earth, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it : striking emblem of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the union of heaven and earth in him*. We are also expressly informed, That the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him†—That they are all Ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation‡. And our Lord himself assures us—“ There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth§.” Now, all this intercourse of heaven and earth, is, for obvious reasons, indissolubly connected with the ministry of reconciliation.

As it respects infernal powers, this ministry is intended not only to curb and control, but also to destroy.

* Gen. xxviii.

| Heb. i. 14.

† Psal. xxxiv. 7.

§ Luke xv. 10.

the works of the devil and his angels ; to rescue their prisoners ; to let the oppressed go free ; to break their chains to atoms, and scatter them to the winds : in a word, it is calculated and intended to produce joy in heaven, wonder on earth, and despair in hell.

But the greatness of this work will also appear from the qualifications which are required to perform it. Men may be qualified for other employments by the cultivation and exercise of natural talents. But this work requires not only such natural talents as are suited to its genius, and such acquired talents as are within reach of human power and industry, but also such as are wholly supernatural, and come from God alone. All these qualifications are summed up in this one comprehensive promise*—"I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." A PASTOR after God's heart, implies not only negative qualifications, such as are noticed by the apostle in his character of a Bishop, in 1 Tim. iii. ; but also such positive principles and habits as shall render the servant of Christ godlike. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he can be none of his ; and if this is required in Christians generally, it is certainly required of those who minister at the altar. Without the Spirit of Christ we cannot acceptably perform the least duty of our holy religion. This is a fact not to be controverted ; and if so, how shall we perform, in such a state, those higher duties which are attached

* Jer. iii. 15.

to the sacred office? Without the Spirit of Christ we are blind; but how shall the blind lead the blind, without imminent danger to both? Without the Spirit of Christ, we know nothing of the way of salvation; how then shall we point out that way to others, or guide inquiring souls through the intricacies of a troubled world? How shall such a character either think or act with God, and for him? How can he feel for the glory of God, or take a lively interest in the salvation of men? He will not, he cannot; because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be *. In this work all the pride of human learning, connected with all the fire of natural genius, are insufficient. Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God †: and how then shall he be intrusted with its interests?

But that we may not mistake in a matter of so great moment, and attribute that zeal to the Spirit of God, which is the offspring of ignorance or fanaticism in misguided men, the Pastor according to God's heart, is described as feeding the flock with *knowledge* and *understanding*. The subject-matter of his preaching is, Jesus Christ and him crucified; embracing the whole counsel of God, as contained in the Scriptures, and that opened up and applied in a plain, able, practical manner, so as to preserve the analogy of faith, and to be consistent with himself, as well as with the attributes of God. Holy Paul declared to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, that

* Rom. viii. 7.

† John iii. 5

he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God*. And to the Church of Corinth, he said, “ My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power ; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God†.”

Now, if any man supposes these qualifications to be common, he errs, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. The Apostle Paul did not think so ; eminent men have shrunk from the pastoral office, and have even fled from the importunities of the Church ; and, I will venture to assert, that there is not a faithful minister on earth, who does not tremble at his situation.

This leads me, finally, to observe, that this work is great in the view of our final accountability. A great trust necessarily involves such accountability, —“ Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the House of Israel ; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die ; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life ; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand‡.” The man who can hear these words, and reflect on their import, and the

* Acts xx. 27. † 1 Cor. ii. ; iv. 5. ‡ Ezek. iii. 17, 18.

blood is not chilled in his veins, must have a bad head, or an unfeeling heart.

Our hearers ought to be considered, all of them, as embarked for eternity, and as carried toward the awful precipice of death and judgment, by a stream too mighty to admit of even momentary counteraction or delay ; if ever we hope to be useful to them, we must be so now ; in a moment they may be out of sight, and out of the reach of our cry, or we ourselves may be swept away by the flood, and hurried into the boundless abyss of eternity. The worth of the soul is great, and this also must enter into our calculation, in weighing the accountability of ministers. Christ died to redeem it ; he himself valued it at the price of his blood, and declared that the whole world could not pay for the loss of one soul. Such a loss is dreadful ! such a loss is irretrievable ! What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? If, then, the blood of one soul is required at the hands of any sinner, will it not be like a mill-stone round his neck ? Will it not be like the fall of a world upon him in the day of final retribution of Almighty God ?

This work, therefore, is a great and arduous work. Contrast it with the characters employed in it, and you cannot but perceive an infinite disparity. Who are the ministers of Christ, but sinful men ? What are they but dust and ashes, and children of wrath.

by nature, even as others? They carry with them the treasure of the Gospel, but it is in earthen vessels*. They cannot arrogate to themselves the glory of success in their work : they might as well assume the honours of creation, or of providence. So, then, neither is he that planteth, any thing ; neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase. All their sufficiency is of God ; he has promised to be with them alway, even unto the end of the world†, and is faithful to his promise. They are not sent on a warfare at their own charges‡, but are duly qualified for it, and blessed in it ; so that, whilst on the one hand they are taught their dependence, they are also, on the other, enabled to do great things, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In that name, the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them § with power and effect.

From the whole of this subject, we may learn,

1. That the situation of a Gospel minister is a very awful one.

An idler may enter into the labours of the vineyard, in hopes of finding bowers of ease ; a novice, to

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

† Matt. xxviii. 20.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 7.

§ Matt. xi. 5.

gratify his pride ; or a vain man, to preach himself. On such men, the ministry of reconciliation may sit easy ; but serious and laborious servants of Christ have a weight upon their souls that will bend them, like the loaded grain of the harvest-field, into the very dust of humility : they have views of the sacred office that astonish them ; they see a responsibility in it that makes them tremble. Are they to go forth in the name of the Most High God, the Creator and Governor of heaven and of earth ? What knowledge of his character and will must they possess, before they can teach others ! What holiness of life, and prudence are required, to support with dignity their sacred office ! Are they engaged in a work which cost the humiliation, the tears, the labours, the expiring groans of the Son of God ? What activity, what labour, what earnestness in winning souls to Christ, should mark every day of their lives, and every step in the prosecution of their work ! Does the everlasting life or everlasting death of sinners depend, under God, on their ministry, the triumph of heaven, and the torments of hell ? how careful to avoid whatever might obstruct or hinder such a work ! How diligent to pursue the best means, to accomplish in the best manner the great end of their calling ! Are they, in themselves, considered inadequate ? How should this circumstance drive them to a throne of grace, clothe them with humility, and excite an earnest solicitude to be strengthened and qualified by God himself with all the gifts and graces of his Spirit ! Are they accountable ? how necessary, then, that their eyes should be

carefully and steadfastly fixed upon the throne of final judgment!

And, O my God! who is sufficient for these things? The man who is not interested for characters, placed in such an awful situation, has not the understanding of a man; has not the feelings of a man; at least, not of a Christian man. From this subject, then, we may, also,

2. Learn the duty of a people to these servants of Christ.

Sinners ought, undoubtedly, to hear them, to repent of their sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, without a moment's delay, for fear that moment should seal their everlasting destruction. The professing people of God should endeavour to realize their situation, and to consider them as placed in the fore front of the hottest battle; objects of scorn to a deluded world; objects of hatred to envenomed hell. They ought not to look for more from them than they have a right to expect; but, with their heavenly Father, consider their frame, and remember that their ministers are dust. It is their duty to prize them highly, in love, for their work's sake; to sympathize in their afflictions; and to pray with them, and for them. In a word, like Aaron and Hur, it is their duty to hold up their hands, 'till Israel shall have prevailed, and the God of Israel shall have taken vengeance on his foes. For all this they

have the warrant of sound reason, as well as the direction of the word of God; and, in dutiful compliance with that direction, shall in no wise lose their reward. That Saviour, in whose name, and for whose sake, these labours of love are performed—he will remember them; yes, he will remember them, not only through the wearisome journies of the wilderness, but also in that Great Day, when Ministers and People shall face each other at the bar of God. *Amen.*

THE
ADDRESS
INTRODUCTORY TO THE
ORDINATION SERVICE,
AND THE
CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

**ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.**

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

WE are assembled for the purpose of ordaining and installing a Minister of the Gospel. Mr. GARDINER SPRING, a candidate for the holy ministry, from the commonwealth of Massachusetts, having declared his acceptance of a call from this church; having put himself under the care of the Presbytery of New-York; and having passed with approbation the customary trials previous to ordination; the Presbytery have been pleased to resolve that he be ordained and installed on this day. And, accordingly, to this solemn transaction we are now about to proceed.

Ever since the establishment of the Church upon earth, there has been a distinct order of men, commissioned by its great King and Head, to preach his Gospel, and to administer his ordinances. According to his gracious promise, a succession of these ministers has been continued to the present day; and we have the fullest assurance that they will be continued *to the end of the world*; and that He who hath appointed them will be with them always.

Concerning the office which this order of men

sustain, and to which we are about to set apart a brother, the public standards of our Church speak in the following manner :

“ The *Pastoral* office is the first in the Church,
 “ both for dignity and usefulness. The person who
 “ fills this office hath, in Scripture, obtained differ-
 “ ent names, expressive of his various duties. As
 “ he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is
 “ termed *Bishop*. As he feeds them with spiritual
 “ food, he is termed *Pastor*. As he serves Christ
 “ in his Church, he is termed *Minister*. As it is his
 “ duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of
 “ the flock, and to govern well in the house and
 “ kingdom of Christ, he is termed *Presbyter* or *El-*
 “ *der*. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed
 “ the *Angel* of the Church. As he is sent to de-
 “ clare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech
 “ them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he
 “ is termed *Ambassador*. And as he dispenses the
 “ manifold grace of God, and the ordinances insti-
 “ tuted by Christ, he is termed *Steward* of the mys-
 “ teries of God*.”

To *ordain* a minister, is to set him apart to the ministerial office. It is, in a formal and authoritative manner, to invest him with the power to preach the Gospel, to dispense the sacraments, and to administer the discipline of Christ's house. To *instal* a

* *Form of Government*, Chap. III.

minister, is to constitute him the pastor, overseer, or bishop of a particular flock. In the present instance, both these transactions are to take place with respect to the same person. We are about to *ordain* a respected brother to the work of the holy ministry in general, and to *instal* him the pastor of this Church.

Ordination is the appropriate work, not of any individual, by whatever name he may be called, but of a *Presbytery*; that is, of a *plurality* of Presbyters or Ministers, regularly assembled, and acting under the authority of Christ. In this manner *Timothy* was ordained; for he is thus addressed by the apostle *Paul*, his spiritual father: *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery**. In this manner, also, *Paul* himself, and his colleague, *Barnabas*, were set apart to the ministerial work: for we are informed, in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that while several persons were *ministering to the Lord* in the Church at *Antioch*, the *Holy Ghost* said, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* Nay, we are persuaded, and confidently affirm, that no case of ordination is to be found, either in the New Testament, or in any of the early uninspired writers, but what was performed by a *Presbytery*, that is, as before explained, by a *plurality* of ministers, who had been themselves pre-

* 1 Tim. iv. 14,

viously set apart to the sacred office*. And although we dare not pronounce *other modes* of ordaining either unlawful or invalid; yet we consider it as wisest, as safest, and, certainly, as incumbent on *us*, to follow with simplicity the apostolic and primitive model. It is enough for us to know, that the more deeply and impartially we examine the sacred Volume, and the writings of the early Fathers, the more abundant evidence will be found, that the plan of ordaining ministers, and governing the Church, by means of *Presbyteries*, was the Apostolic plan; and, of course, that we, as Presbyterians, *have not followed cunningly devised fables*, but have adopted the very model, in all its essential parts, which the Holy Ghost, by the ministry of inspired men, prescribed to the Church.

By the act of setting apart to office by the *laying on of hands*, we do not pretend to impart those super-

* Besides the instances already mentioned, it is expressly stated, that *Paul* and *Barnabas*, in the course of their mission, JOINTLY *ordained elders in every city*. And although the friends of prelacy assert that *Timothy* alone ordained in *Ephesus*, and that *Titus* alone ordained in *Crete*; yet they have never produced the smallest *proof* in support of this assertion; nor can they produce it. Neither the facts recorded, nor the strain of exhortation in the Epistles directed to those two Evangelists, furnish the least ground for such a conclusion. In fact, the whole argument in favour of prelacy, drawn from the missions of *Timothy* and *Titus*, is, in its best form, neither more nor less than a mere begging of the question in dispute.

natural gifts which frequently attended the laying on of the Apostles' hands. But we retain this rite in adherence to apostolic precedent ; for the sake of more formally designating the person ordained ; and also for the purpose of imparting to him, in a more solemn and impressive manner, his ecclesiastical commission, so far as it is an act of the Church. To this solemnity we now proceed. May the great King of Zion preside in the midst of us, and send forth his Holy Spirit into every heart !

Before we proceed, however, to clothe the Servant of God before us with the ministerial character, and to invest him with the pastoral charge of the Church here assembled, we are required, by the constitution under which we act, to propose to him, and to the people about to be committed to his care, the following questions, which they are requested to answer as in the presence and fear of the great Searcher of hearts.

[Here the Questions prescribed by the "Form of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church," were proposed to the Candidate and to the Congregation ; to which immediately succeeded the Ordination Prayer, accompanied with "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Mr. SPRING was then, in the name of the Presbytery, declared to be the regular Pastor of the Church, and received the following]

CHARGE.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,

YOU are now to consider yourself as clothed with the character and authority of a Minister of the everlasting Gospel, and as invested with the pastoral care of this Church of Christ. May what has now been done on earth be ratified in heaven ! And may you long, very long, have reason to rejoice in the transaction of this day !

We doubt not that, *in the multitude of your thoughts within you*, the awful solemnity and responsibility of the ministerial office have deeply impressed your mind. But allow me to say, that however deep, however serious, or however tender your reflections on this subject may have been, they have not exceeded, they have not equalled the reality. You have engaged in a task, and have come under vows, which, I had almost said, are enough to make an angel tremble ! The Lord be with you, my brother ! inspire you with wisdom ; gird you with strength ; animate you in your arduous labours ; and make you a rich and permanent blessing to his Church !

The office which you bear is an honourable one—the most honourable that can be borne by a mortal. But the honour which belongs to it, is not of that

kind which worldly men either covet or appreciate. It consists, not in shining in the circles of science or fashion ; not in having a name emblazoned on the roll of fame ; not in filling *the uppermost rooms at feasts* ; not in receiving *greetings in the markets*, nor in being *called of men, rabbi, rabbi*. No, it is of an higher and nobler kind. Your honour lies in bearing a resemblance to your Master, and particularly in *going about, like him, doing good*. Your laurels consist in conversions ; in having *the blessing of those that are ready to perish coming upon you*. The highest eulogium ever pronounced on a minister of the Gospel is that which was applied to *Barnabas* of old : *He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added to the Lord**.

You will perceive from the strain of this eulogium, that it is not enough for a minister to be *merely* a man of PIETY. He ought to be a man of *fervent* and *eminent* piety ; a man *full of the Holy Ghost and of faith* ; a man burning with love for Christ, and with zeal for immortal souls ; a man habitually willing to make every sacrifice for the advancement of his Master's cause. While, therefore, you strive to promote the instruction and edification of others, remember that it is of the utmost importance that you watch with primary and especial care over your own heart ; and that you make it your daily study to grow in grace, and in nearness to God, as well as in other ministerial acquirements. Remember that the more

* Acts xi. 4.

frequently and impartially you examine the foundation of your own hope towards God ; the more deeply and habitually you converse with your own soul ; the more humbly and affectionately you live by faith on Jesus Christ, as a practical believer ;—the more pleasant as well as profitable, may you expect to find your whole ministry ; the sweeter, in this case, will be the work of recommending the Saviour to your fellow-sinners ; the better will you know how to direct the awakened, the inquiring, the tempted, and the doubting ; the more likely will you be to exhibit, in the sacred desk, that sanctified apostolic eloquence, which no rules of art can produce ; the more easy and delightful will be all your labours of love ; the lighter will trials appear when you are called to endure them ; and the greater will be the probability, speaking after the manner of men, that your ministrations will be crowned with abundant and visible success.

The station in the Church to which God, in his holy providence, has assigned you, is attended with important advantages, for which you will be accountable. It is none of the least of these, that you are associated in your pastoral charge with an aged and venerable Servant of Christ, who has had long experience in the ministry, and whose praise is in all the Churches. And although he is too far advanced in life to admit of the hope that he will diminish your burden by taking an active part with you in public labour ; yet, we trust, you will be not a little profit-

ed by his fervent prayers, by his paternal counsels, and by the lustre of his long and exemplary life. And when he shall ascend to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, may *the mantle of Elijah* fall upon *Elisha*, and leave no reason to say, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*

Another advantage attending your situation is, that you are connected with a people who, we have every reason to believe, will prove a comfort to you in the Lord. Having myself borne a pastoral relation to them for more than fifteen years, I am able to say, and consider it as my duty to say, that I am persuaded you will find them a harmonious, an affectionate, a kind, and an indulgent people. The tenderness with which they received and treated me, when I came to them, an inexperienced youth; the liberality with which they ministered to my comfort; and the more than kind forbearance which they manifested toward the numerous infirmities and defects of my ministry, it were unseasonable to attempt, on the present occasion, to acknowledge; but they will never cease to impress me with gratitude while I have a memory to recollect, or a heart to feel. Nor can I forbear to felicitate a Brother on being brought into the same interesting relation with a Society who have given such undoubted pledges of their disposition to promote the happiness and the success of their minister.

It is a further ground of congratulation, that your lot is cast in a portion of the Church where the Gos-

pel has long been preached in its purity, and where a disposition and habits favourable to the reception of evangelical truth prevail in a more than usual degree. Though the unsanctified heart is, every where, opposed to the pure and simple doctrines of the cross ; yet there are favoured districts of our country in which these doctrines have been so long and faithfully preached, that the current of public opinion is strongly in their favour ; and even those who have never been brought to feel their power, or cordially to love them, expect, and even demand them from the lips of their teachers. Such a favoured spot is the City in which we live. Whilst we are compelled to say of some other places, once the renowned seats of truth and piety, *How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed !* Whilst we have the mortification to see *the faith once delivered to the saints* opposed and ridiculed by the degenerate sons of some who *suffered the loss of all things* for that faith ; it is our happiness to witness among ourselves, perhaps, a more friendly disposition toward the truth as it is in Jesus, than at any former period. Here, the minister who is disposed to preach the Gospel plainly and faithfully, is secure of a favourable hearing. Here, when you place the crown on the Redeemer's head, and lay ~~the~~ sinner in the dust of abasement, you will find in the habits and prejudices of the worldly, as well as in the heart of the enlightened believer, an advocate of your fidelity.

But, amidst all these advantages, your labour will

Be arduous, and you will be no stranger to trials, perhaps to heavy trials. No minister is wholly without them ; nor can you expect your case to be an excepted one. They will come, in one form or another. Prepare to meet them with the spirit, and with the armour of a *good soldier of Jesus Christ*.—To see your ministry apparently unprofitable to many of those who attend upon it ; to be borne down with the distressing thought, that, in the *great day of the Lord*, you will be compelled to *rise up in judgment* against some who listen to your voice from sabbath to sabbath ; to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and the perverseness of the wicked ; to treat with becoming meekness the unreasonable expectations of friends, and the malignant hostility of opposers ; to accommodate one's self to all the diversified forms of prejudice, of carelessness, of ignorance, and of folly ; to encounter the numerous difficulties which are apt to arise in administering discipline with a firm, steady, and impartial hand ; and, in a word, to *set one's face as a flint* against every thing, in such a fashionable and licentious city as this, that appears hostile to the cause of Christ—all these will be found trials, demanding much patience, much fortitude, much prayer, and much aid from above.

But be not discouraged. Your Master is able to give you aid and consolation according to your day. He is able to make you *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might* : and if you humbly look, and steadily cleave to him, he will make you *a conqueror*.

and more than conqueror. Your great business is, to hold on in the path of duty, without turning to the right hand or the left. As *Moses* was commanded to say to the children of Israel, when the Egyptians were behind, the sea before, and mountains on either side of them—so, my brother, we say to you, on the present occasion—*Go forward!* Though men and devils withstand you on every side, *go forward*, in the name, and in the strength of the Lord of hosts, and verily you shall overcome! Remember the words of our blessed Master—*He that will save his life, shall lose it; but he that will lose his life, for my sake, the same shall find it**.

The numerous and diversified duties which will be incumbent upon you, as a minister of the Gospel in general, and as the pastor of this people in particular, I cannot attempt, at present, to recount, or to inculcate in detail. Whether you consider yourself as a Watchman on the walls of Zion; as a Shepherd, bound to feed, from sabbath to sabbath, and from house to house, the sheep and the lambs of this flock; as a Guide of the faith and the prayers of thousands; or as a member of the various ecclesiastical Judicatories, in which you will be called to act—you will see duties rising before you, multiplied in their number, and vast in their magnitude.

In preaching the Gospel, and in all your ministrations, whether public or private, set the Lord Jesus

* Matt. xvi. 25.

Christ himself before you, and, next to him, his inspired apostles, as your models. Be not afraid to tell men, with all plainness, of their total depravity by nature, and of that state of condemnation and wrath under which they lie while strangers to the grace of Christ. Be not afraid to sound in their ears the thunders of *Sinai*, as well as *the still small voice of Calvary*. Be not backward to proclaim the humbling and self-denying, but most glorious doctrines of free and sovereign grace, however unpalatable they may be to some, or whatever your fidelity may cost you. Warn men boldly of every danger. Strive to bring them off from every false foundation. Give them no rest till they are brought humbled and trembling to the foot of the Cross : and then, and not till then, pour into their bleeding wounds the oil of consolation, the balm of heavenly grace.

Remember that you are, in no sense, your own ; that you are a servant of Christ ; that the Gospel which you will preach, and the ordinances which you will administer, are not yours, but His ; and that his Word is, at once, your commission and your guide. Remember also the high responsibility under which you act. The language of your Master is, *Go, and preach the preaching that I bid thee*. Nay, in still more solemn terms, he addresses every minister : *Son of Man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore hear the word from my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die ; and*

thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life ; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

We charge you, then, dear brother, before God and his holy angels, preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Be thou an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine ; continue in them : for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee†.

You are now invested with the power of ordaining others to the holy office to which you have been yourself set apart. This power ever has been, and ever will be, one of the most important that can be committed to a minister of Christ. But there are periods in which it is especially important. Such a period is that in which we live. *The harvest truly is great,*

* *Ezekiel* iii. 17—20.

† *1 Tim.* iv. 13—16. *2 Tim.* iv. 2.

but the labourers are few. The call for more labourers was never so loud or so urgent as at the present hour. Under these circumstances there is danger of so far yielding to public and private importunity, as to thrust forth unqualified labourers into the harvest. Let your personal exertions and your official acts, be steadily directed against this error. For an error it is, to imagine that we really serve the Church of Christ, under *any* circumstances, by giving her unqualified ministers. *Lay hands suddenly on no man** ; *neither be thou partaker of other men's sins : keep thyself pure.*

* 1 *Timothy* v. 22. The advocates of diocesan Episcopacy found an argument, on the exhortation contained in this verse, in favour of their cause. They contend that, as the Apostle cautions *Timothy* against *laying hands suddenly on any man*, (which all agree refers to *ordination*,) that, therefore, *Timothy* ALONE was empowered to ordain at *Ephesus*. The exhortation being directed to him, say they, proves that with him the sole power of transmitting ecclesiastical authority, in that Church, was deposited. Now it happens that *Presbyterians* seldom or never ordain a minister *by the laying on the hands of the Presbytery*, without charging their newly admitted brother, among other things, to be cautious how, *as a member of Presbytery*, he exercises, in his turn, the ordaining power with which he is invested. They generally repeat, as is done above, the very words of the Apostle addressed to *Timothy*. But does this prove that the minister thus charged, is competent ALONE to ordain others? Or suppose any one, finding this pamphlet, a hundred years hence, should argue thus—" We find that the Rev. Mr. S. of New-York, when he was ordained, was charged to *lay*

The duty of attending with punctuality on the Judicatories of the Church, is, at once, so highly important, and so often neglected, that I cannot close the present address without calling your attention to the subject. Many of our brethren in the ministry, while they manifest a very laudable fidelity and zeal, in the labours of the pulpit, and in the details of parochial service, and while they would be ashamed to be kept from the sacred desk, or from the house of affliction, by obstacles of an ordinary kind; are not ashamed to suffer the most trivial occurrences to prevent their attendance, time after time, on the judicatories of the Church. This negligence, whenever it occurs, cannot fail of producing very injurious effects, not only on the individual who is guilty of it, but also on the interests of the Church. It has been said, and I believe with truth, that no minister was ever habitually guilty of this negligence, without finding both his respectability and his influence, especial-

“ hands suddenly on no man ; we conclude, therefore, that
“ he was the only Presbyterian minister in that city, who
“ was, thereafter, considered as clothed with the ordaining
“ power.” Would not the conclusion be at once illegitimate in reasoning, and false in fact? Yet precisely such is the conclusion of our Episcopal brethren. Neither they nor we know *how many* persons in *Ephesus*, were empowered to unite with *Timothy* in ordaining others; but had there been five hundred of equal authority with himself, the exhortation before us would have been equally natural, and equally proper.—This whole argument, therefore, (like all the rest, on which the *jure divino* prelatists lay so much stress,) is, as was before observed, a mere begging of the question.

ly among his brethren in the ministry, essentially impaired*. But the loss of personal character and weight in the Church is not the most serious part of the evil. The negligence of which we speak strikes at the vital principles of our ecclesiastical government. When *Independent* or *Episcopal* ministers habitually absent themselves from the meetings of their clerical brethren, they, indeed, manifest a culpable remissness and deficiency of zeal; but when *Presbyterian* ministers are chargeable with this neglect, they are DOUBLY culpable: because *they* hold, and hold justly, that a large part of their official character and duty is immediately connected with the judicatories of the Church, and can only be exercised as members of them. When, therefore, they seldom or never appear in those judicatories, they leave totally, or in a great measure, unexercised, a most important part of their official duty; they violate their ordination vows, which bind them to the judicial authority of their brethren in the Lord; and they act

* “ No minister in our connexion has been known by me,
 “ who was either very useful or very respectable, that did
 “ not give his presence at Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly,
 “ whenever that duty became incumbent. The reason of
 “ this seems to be, that a neglect in this particular cannot
 “ take place without indicating in him who is chargeable
 “ with it, a criminal want of zeal for the general interests
 “ of the Church; and, at the same time, it necessarily de-
 “ prives him of all general influence, confidence, esteem,
 “ and affection among his brethren.” Dr. GREEN’S *Charge*
at the Ordination of Mr. John B. Linn, and others.

a part which directly tends to relax and destroy that apostolic discipline and government which they have solemnly promised to support. Never let your seat, then, in the judicatories of the Church be found vacant, unless in cases of absolute necessity. By a punctual attendance on those judicatories, you will promote your own reputation ; become more familiar with the principles and administration of our ecclesiastical system, than it is possible to be from the mere perusal of books ; and often, perhaps, render services to the Church quite as essential and important, as by preaching the Gospel, and administering the sacraments.

In a word, study to be an humble, spiritual, laborious, faithful, able minister of the New Testament. Let it be manifest to all that you are a man of prayer ; that you are *mighty in the Scriptures* ; that you daily live by faith on that Saviour whom you preach to others ; that you keep your eye steadily fixed on Him, as your Pattern and Guide ; and that it is your desire, above all things, to win souls to him, and to glorify his blessed name.

And now, dear brother, *we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.* May he make you *faithful unto death* ; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, may you receive a crown of glory that *fadeth not away ! Amen.*

THE
EXHORTATION

TO THE
P E O P L E.

BY JOHN B. ROMEYN, D. D.

**PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CEDAR-STREET,
NEW-YORK.**

THE
EXHORTATION,

&c.



MY BRETHREN,

SOLEMN is the scene which we have just witnessed! Abundantly encouraging the evidence it affords of God's grace towards our country, "the place of our father's sepulchres*." We do not suffer a famine of "the hearing of the words of the Lord." Nor do we "wander from sea to sea, and from the North even to the East, running to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord without finding it†." But unto us is fulfilled that blessed promise, "thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and to the left‡." We have line upon line, precept upon precept, from prophets whom the Lord sends unto us early and late.

Another labourer has now been thrust, by the Great Head of the Church, into the Gospel vineyard, to cultivate it, that it may bring forth fruit meet for the

* Neh. ii. 3. † Amos viii. 11, 12. ‡ Isa. xxx. 20, 21.

dressers*. Another servant is now specially commissioned to invite sinners to the marriage-supper, saying to them in the name of the master of the feast, “ Come, for all things are now ready†.”

Among you, brethren, he is to perform his labour of love. To you, he is to deliver the message of Almighty GOD. With heartfelt pleasure, we congratulate you on the occasion. We trust the man of your unanimous choice, is a pastor after the Lord’s own heart ; and as such, in the name of JEHOVAH JESUS, we have just bid him, “ God speed‡.” We trust he is a gift of the glorious Redeemer, presented to you in answer to your supplications. As such, we pray that he may come to you “ in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ§.” To him, with the “ *laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*||,” according to APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE, we have transmitted full ministerial authority, with the solemn CHARGE, “ Keep *that* which is committed to thy trust**.” We have placed him over you in the Lord, as an overseer of the flock, “ to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood††.” We now solemnly EXHORT you “ receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness ; and hold such in reputation‡‡.”

* Heb. vi. 7. † Luke xiv. 17. ‡ 2 John ii.

§ Rom. xv. 29. || 1 Tim. iv. 14. ** 1 Tim. vi. 20.

†† Acts xx. 28. ‡‡ Phil. ii. 29.

Having unfolded his duty towards you, we proceed to unfold your duty towards him. May the Lord give you ears to hear, and grace to understand, that his glory and your benefit may be promoted!

First of all, be thankful to God, that he has re-established among you the ministry of his word; and most fervently supplicate his blessing on the same, that it may be to you the power of God unto salvation. He has mercifully preserved you from disunion and ruin, during your destitute condition. You may well adopt the language of the psalmist, when men rose up against Israel, and say in relation to the past, “if it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul*.” Bless the Lord who hath saved you, and deeply feel that your “help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth†.”

You have seen that a situation, however commanding and respectable, cannot be supplied at human pleasure. The Lord orders every event, and turns the hearts of the children of men according to his own will. If you do not, then, first and chiefly regard your pastor as the gift of God; if you do not consider him as especially sent to you by our adorable Redeemer, you are guilty of ingratitude under

* Ps. cxxiv. 1. 4, 5.

† Ps. cxxiv. 8.

mercies received; and have reason to fear that this awful commission is given to him: “ Go, and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not : and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed*.” Avert this curse by your prayers and supplications, giving thanks to God for a Gospel ministry.

It is not your merit which has procured for you this blessing. God’s sovereign goodness has conferred it on you. You hold it merely on the tenure of his will. Be importunate in your addresses to his throne, that this ministry may be owned by him to your everlasting benefit. As Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses, in the day when Israel fought with Amalek†, so you must, by your prayers, support your pastor in his arduous work.

Regard the connexion which is now formed between you and him, not in a worldly, but in a spiritual view. Eternal issues are involved in it, even your final salvation or your final perdition. Let politicians, or mere worldly schemers, consider the institutions of religion as engines of state to promote social order. They know no better. They are the miserable dupes of their own miserable folly. They stalk

* Isa. vi. 9, 10.

† Exod. xvii. 12.

about, buoyed up with ideas of their own super-eminent wisdom, and feeling the most perfect contempt or pity for the weakness of those who, on this subject think not as they do. Alas ! they forget, in the plenitude of their conceit, that they are “ wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*.” Avoid their example ; it is infectious. Would to God, it had not infected the visible Church ! Too many, who are Christians in name, are infidels in heart and practice, as it respects the views they cherish of religion, especially of its ministers. They see no more in them than simply pleasing companions, men of information, or useful members of society.

We hope better things of you, brethren. We trust you feel the ministry to be an institution of God, appointed for the salvation of sinners. Prize it the more, on account of your late bereavement. Improve it with your utmost diligence and fervour of soul, that your pastor may be “ unto God, a sweet savour of Christ,” in the salvation of each of you, even “ a savour of life unto life†.”

Secondly, respect your pastor in the different relations he sustains towards you, and in all your intercourse with him. You are connected with him by the double ties of worldly honour, (the term is used, not in its corrupted, but best sense)—You are connected with him by the double ties of worldly ho-

* Rev. iii. 17.

† 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

nour and Christian integrity*. Your veracity as men, and your faith as Christians, are solemnly plighted to him, that you will afford him “all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord†.”

1. Respect him, then, as your **TEACHER**, who is to explain to you the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven. These are henceforth to be the chief subjects of his meditation and examination, that in his preaching, his profiting may appear to all. They afford the most ample materials on which the mind can perpetually exert its faculties. From these your

* Too many congregations, if we may judge from their conduct, consider the bond of this connexion to be *money*. Thus they make the ministry of reconciliation to be merely *a living*, and their pastors, men who feed the flock of God, from no higher motives than filthy lucre. For this idea there is no warrant in the word of God. *It is true*—and they who are fond of calling the Clergy who receive salaries, hirelings, would do well no longer to utter libels against an express ordinance of God—It is true, “the Lord hath ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, **SHOULD LIVE** of the Gospel.” (1 Cor ix. 14.) But *their living of the Gospel* is not their reward; it is not the object, which, in the judgment of charity, we must suppose they contemplate in undertaking the ministry. They are thus supported, that their minds may not be perplexed with worldly cares, and that they may devote their whole time and attention to the duties of their office.

† The words used in the Call, according to the form specified by the directory of the Presbyterian Church.

Teacher is to draw old things and new, according to the state of his flock, as an able scribe, well instructed in the truths of the Gospel. Your duty is to compare what he delivers to you from time to time, with the word of God and the standards of our Church. The last are the explanations of the former, which we have adopted and published as our bond of union. For any man to despise or underrate these explanations, under pretence of superior deference to the word of God, argues more of weakness than of wisdom*.

If at any time you suppose your Teacher is mistaken, recollect that the probability of correctness is in his favour. He devotes his attention, during the week, to his preparations for the sabbath. Modesty naturally dictates the conclusion, that he who has studied the subject, is more likely to be correct, than he who, perhaps, never thought of it until he heard it from the lips of the preacher.

Be careful to know the meaning of certain terms

* In too many instances, such a pretence is merely the signal for introducing innovations in the doctrines of a Church. Such conduct is not correct. If any person is conscientiously constrained to alter his opinion concerning those doctrines, let him leave that Church. Though his connexion with the visible Church be a duty, he is at liberty to choose with what part of it he will maintain fellowship. To continue in the connexion of a Church, with whose doctrines, or *established explanations of doctrines*, we continually quarrel, is not honest; is not consistent with Christian integrity.

relating to orthodoxy or heterodoxy, such, for instance, as Calvinism, Arminianism, Antinomianism, and the like, before you use them. The indiscriminate and rash application of these names, to any class of Christians, without a proper understanding of them, has occasioned, and still does occasion, much mischief in the Church. “ Take especial care,” said the late Bishop Horsely, in his primary charge to the clergy of the diocese of St. Asaph, “ before you aim your shafts at Calvinism, that you know what is Calvinism, and what is not.—I must say,” adds this able prelate, “ that I have found great want of this discrimination in some late controversial writers, on the side of the Church, as they were meant to be, against the Methodists* ; the authors of which have acquired much applause and reputation, but with so little real knowledge of their subject, that give me the principles upon which these writers argue, and I will undertake to convict, I will not say Arminians only, and Archbishop Laud, but upon these principles, I will undertake to convict the Fathers of the Council of Trent of Calvinism.” His Episcopalian brethren here, as well as in Britain, would do well to attend to this advice. It may very properly be applied to the use of the other names mentioned, and is peculiarly seasonable in a day like this. It is said to be a day of superior information and improvement. Though this may be the case in other matters, which

* Methodist is the name by which the advocates for a radical change of heart are distinguished in England. It is applied to Calvinists, as well as to Wesleyan Methodists.

however, is more than doubtful, in religion assuredly it is not.

Compared with the period of the reformation, and that immediately following, this age is vastly inferior in solid scriptural information. We have, indeed, more of what may be called the metaphysics of Christianity, than they had. Much intellectual force has been, and still is unnecessarily and unprofitably wasted, in attempting to illustrate the principles of the Gospel, which are level to the most common capacities, by a course of abstract reasoning which none but minds disciplined to such a procedure, by previous study, can comprehend. However refined the contexture of this reasoning, like a fine spun web, it has dimmed the diamond lustre of revealed truth, round which it has been wove with the professed design of making it shine more brightly. Instead of simplifying the religion of Jesus, and making it appear more reasonable, it has banished from common use, in many places, scriptural phrases, and made the “good tidings of great joy,” contained in the Word of God, which was designed for all people, appear like a system of metaphysical speculations, by which a few “master spirits” only can be benefitted.

With all the pretensions of the men of this age, to theological knowledge, they are truly but children, whose vanity prompts them to attempt reducing the giants of the Reformation to their diminutive pigmy

stature*. “ We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise†.”

With such deficiency in correct scriptural knowledge, it is no wonder, if theological terms are incorrectly and unhappily used. Guard against this evil, brethren, in relation to your pastor. If he preaches both the *Law* and the *Gospel*, in their connexion and respective details, he will be called by names expressing reproach, and calculated to attach to his doctrine the stain of heterodoxy. Judge not hastily—listen with attention—examine with care—determine with impartiality.

Your teacher is exposed to attack from another quarter, in regard to his doctrine. In a city like this, the votaries of fashion and of worldly pleasure swarm. Some of these persons may, from curiosity, or the love of novelty, be drawn to this sanctuary to hear the preached word. They, of all God’s rational

* The words of Dr. Owen are strictly applicable in the present day. “ The doctrine of the Reformed Church,” says he, “ was raised some time ago to a great height, as to the evidence given for it, and great perspicuity in the manner of making it known, which some that came after, could not imitate, and, therefore, took *new ways of their own contriving*.”

creatures, are the least qualified to discriminate truth from error. They can perceive the defects which a person shows in the drawing room, or the merits which an actor displays on the stage. They can quote extracts from plays, or from poems, or from novels, to furnish matter for their conversation, or to give point to their wit ; but of the truth as it is in Jesus ; of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ; of the realities of a future and eternal state, as revealed in the Word of God, they know little, and that little superficially. Yet they, *even they*, will sit in judgment over your teacher. With oracular authority, they will call him, when most faithful in speaking “ to the people all the words of this life*,” an austere man—a fanatic. With instinctive sagacity, they will condemn his sentiments as unreasonably strict, because he merely inculcates and enforces what the Apostle commands, when he says, addressing believers, “ Be not conformed to this world : but *be ye transformed* by the renewing of your mind, that *you may prove*, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God†.”

Spite of all the denunciations of this “ folly fettered” tribe, these “ gay motes,” who people the sunbeams of frivolity ; spite of all the half-formed whispers, or the full charges of unsoundness in the faith, which may, without reflection, be brought against him by men, “ understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm‡ ;” **RESPECT** your

* Acts v. 20.

† Rom. xii. 2.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 7.

teacher. Receive instruction at his mouth in love ; and, as far as you find that he agrees with your Bible and the standards of your Church, support him. Let him be among you without fear, that he will be opposed or obstructed in preaching to you what he conscientiously believes to be the truth. The more faithful he is in the exhibition of sound doctrine, the more he is entitled to your esteem. He must so preach, if his labours are blessed among you, as to make you, sometimes at least, to feel, and that deeply. Be not offended, if he unfold you to yourselves ; or declares to you unpalatable truths. He must fulfil his commission which is given him with an awful responsibility. He must declare to you the whole council of God, whether you will hear or forbear. “ Take heed, therefore, how ye hear*.” Let it be with reverence, since he delivers to you God’s message ; with the most undivided attention, that you may understand it ; and with the warmest affection, that it may influence your heart, and regulate your conduct.

2. Obey your teacher as a RULER† in God’s house. He will henceforth preside in your assemblies for worship, and in the meetings of your eldership. He is now the executive of your Church, whom the assistant officers are bound to support and defend. Beware of that spirit of insubordination, which is so much the spirit of the day, in Church and State. Fatal spirit ! which has filled the old world with calami-

* Luke viii. 18.

† Heb. xiii. 17.

ty and desolation, and caused amongst us the principal evils which we suffer.

Your pastor does not presume to lord it over your conscience. He only claims the right which Christ has given all his ministers, of exercising suitable discipline over you, as your Overseer. Obstruct him not, brethren, in this duty, but assist him in its exercise. Be not dissatisfied with him, if he finds it necessary that spiritual punishment should be inflicted on any of you. Receive his private rebukes with candour and forbearance. And if he should be obliged in public to proceed against any of you, in the higher acts of discipline, respect him for the sake of his office. His feelings will be sufficiently excited by *the bitter nature* of such discipline. Aggravate them not by unkindly treatment; but confirm him in his purpose, so that he become not weary and faint in his work. Oh! brethren, you know not half our trials. You can form no idea of what we are called to suffer, in our minds, at different times, especially in the exercise of discipline.

3. Love your pastor as a BROTHER. He is a fellow-member of the Church of Christ with you. Cultivate his friendship with care and attention. Weep for his misfortunes, if in God's adorable Providence he is called to sustain any, and rejoice in his prosperity. Strengthen his hands, and comfort his heart. Counsel with him as a friend, but do not dictate to him as a superior. Treat him with delicacy, candour, integri-

ty, and tenderness. He is a man of like feelings with yourselves.

When you discover infirmities, hide them with the mantle of love. The Apostles erred—think it not strange if your pastor does err. We feel confident it will be an error of the head, not of the heart. Think of your own infirmities. Expect no more of him than what you exact for yourselves.

4. Attend regularly upon the ORDINANCES OF GOD'S HOUSE. Forsake not the “assembling of *yourselves* together, as the manner of some is*.”

Between you and your pastor there is a mutual duty. He is bound to preach unto you, and you are bound to attend upon his preaching. Let your seats, then, never be vacant, from choice or indifference. Grieve not his heart—injure not your PLEDGED HONOUR†, by seizing every pretext to absent yourselves in part, or wholly, from the sanctuary of God. And when principle or choice prompt your pastor to introduce into this pulpit, a brother in the ministry, “Let no man despise him‡.” However inferior he may be to others in your opinion, *recol-*

* Heb. x. 25.

† The members of a congregation ought to realize this truth. Their *honour* is as much violated by wilful absence from the regular public ministrations of their pastor, in part or whole, as it is by withholding his salary, in part or whole.

‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 11.

lect that he is an accredited servant of Christ. For the sake of Christ, then, treat him with attention and reverence. He comes not in his own name, but in the awful name of God, to offer you pardon and salvation through the blood of the Cross. And, brethren, he is a man ! He has feelings ! Trample upon a worm in your path, and, reptile as it is, it will shrink from your touch. Think you any minister of the Gospel has less sensibility than a worm ? Oh ! it is indecorous ; it is discourteous ; it is unchristian, to slight any herald of the Cross merely because we do not like him as well as another. It is the message, not the messenger, that we ought chiefly to regard. Whilst, therefore, you give an enlightened and affectionate preference to your own pastor, as you ever ought, because he is the man of your own choice, honour his judgment and his courtesy, by respectfully hearing any minister whom he invites to proclaim unto you the unsearchable riches of Christ.

5. Encroach not unnecessarily on the TIME of your pastor. It is precious under all circumstances, but in his peculiarly so. He is young in the work of the ministry, and his congregation one of the largest in this city. In all your intercourse with him, think of this. Do not crowd him with a pressure of business, but lighten his burdens as much as you can.

Thirdly : We exhort you to be at peace among yourselves, and with all men. Your pastor comes to you as a messenger of peace, in the name of the

God of peace. With the Psalmist, he addresses you, “ For my brethren and companion’s sake, I will now say, peace be within thee : because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good*.” You have received him in peace, “ with one accord.” Strive to perpetuate that peace by every exertion on your part. For this purpose we affectionately recommend the following directions.

1. Mortify that pride which is natural to us as sinners. This discovers itself even amongst the members of the visible household of faith. You can find it in the opinions some advocate ; how positive are they ! how little do they appear to realize the weakness of their judgment ! how harshly do they censure the opinions of others, when it differs from their own !

Some betray it in their modes of living ; how much removed from the simplicity of the Gospel ! what useless profusion at their entertainments ! what unnecessary ornaments in their furniture !

You can see it in the intercourse of some with the world : how respectfully do they approach the great ! what deference do they pay to the rich ! whilst the ignoble and the poor are passed by with indifference and neglect. And might I not add, that to some it gives an improper character to that satisfaction which

* Ps. cxxii. 8, 9.

they feel at the external order and prosperity of the Church to which they belong.

In these ways, and in every other way in which it discovers itself, pride must be mortified and curbed by you.

Let no one admire his own endowments, or insist on his imaginary deserts; for this will dispose him to undervalue others, who, in their turn, will be disgusted with him. Let no one be over tender of his credit, or covetous of respect; for this will render him jealous of trifles, and engage him in unwarrantable competitions for pre-eminence in the world. Let no one attach too much consequence to his rank or family; for this will cause him to look with improper feelings upon a large and *exemplary* portion of his brethren. Every one ought to be modest in the opinion which he forms of himself, and moderate in his display of any superiority over others.

In your conversation with others, be as liberal in allowing to them the privilege of differing from you, as you are explicit in maintaining your own opinion.

2. Do nothing rashly, from the mere impulse of the moment.

The capacity which we possess for reflection, elevates us above the brutes. The proper exercise of this capacity discriminates the Christian from others.

Our thoughts receive their complexion from the state of our hearts. As sin has dethroned reason in the sinner, and given the ascendancy to his passions, so the passions prevent him from thinking correctly upon essential subjects. The first evidence of a return to God in the prodigal son, was, “ he came to himself*.” Through the grace of God enabling him, he collected his bewildered, scattered thoughts, and began to reason with himself. The issue was, he returned to his father, confessed his fault, and was forgiven.

In every stage of life, the same reflection, the same habit of thinking according to truth, is necessary to do all things without murmurings and disputings. Precipitate actions, inconsiderate words, do not affect him only who acts and speaks, but others also with whom he is connected in society.

Examine then, well into the nature and tendency of whatever you do, that you may be convinced it is right ; that it will promote your real good ; that it will make for peace.

3. Bear and forbear with each other. We are all fallible, and have need of charity, that we make not our errors the cause of variance.

In your intercourse with each other, censure what

* Luke xv. 17.

is wrong with impartiality. Be candid in interpreting the meaning of others ; mild in reproving them, and reluctant to relate their miscarriages.

Trace the action of others, as far as you can, to the best principles. Construe ambiguous expressions in the most favourable manner. Delay judging any actions, until the reason for them is known. Extenuate misconduct as much as it can be done.

Where differences occur, not only in opinion but in feeling, be ready to compromise ; to accept of explanations only tolerable, and to embrace every seasonable overture. By a conciliating, charitable conduct, seek to prevent the commencement of discord ; and if it break out, to stay its progress. Bear with a thousand infirmities and mistakes, and forbear with the remains of corruption in others ; not countenancing what is wrong, but casting over it the mantle of charity, which “ hopeth all things*.”

4. And finally, agree to differ. Never let differences of opinion destroy your harmony. Cultivate for each other the utmost respect and good will.

In a word, in all things do unto others, as you would wish them, under similar circumstances, to do unto you.

We have been more particular in this detail of di-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

rections, on account of the situation in which you have been placed.

For any of you to cherish the least bitterness, or ill-will, or resentment, on account of occurrences still recent, will be flying in the very face of your present mercies—hardening your hearts against the grace of the Gospel—and insulting the majesty of heaven and earth.

Here, then, in this sanctuary of God, bury the recollections of the past. Admit them no longer to your minds ; but, in their place, indulge in the anticipations of the future.

Look for, pray for, seek after times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord*.

Soon your day of grace, your accepted time will be over, and the season of mercy ended. Soon the exterminating angel, standing upon the sea and upon the earth, will lift up his hand and swear by HIM WHO LIVETH for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer†. Amidst the expiring groans of the universe, may you be safe ! May your pastor be enabled to present you faultless, through the righteousness of Christ, on the day of the Lord ; and you, together with him, be received to the right hand of the judge, to be happy in the heavens for ever and ever ! *Amen.*

* Acts iii. 19.

† Rev. x. 5, 6.