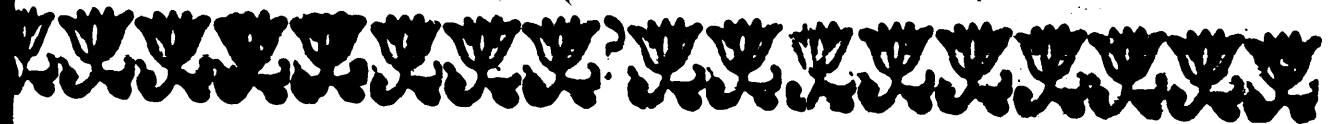


T H E

Reverend Mr. *R O E*'s

ORDINATION SERMON.



*The various Branches of ministerial Duty explained
and enforced; with some particular Directions
respecting the Manner of Life and Deportment.*

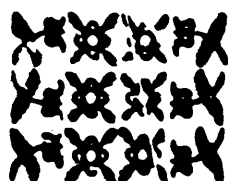
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S E R M O N

PREACHED AT
T H E O R D I N A T I O N
O F T H E

Reverend Mr. AZEL ROE,
A T
W O O D B R I D G E, in N E W - J E R S E Y,
August 12, 1761.

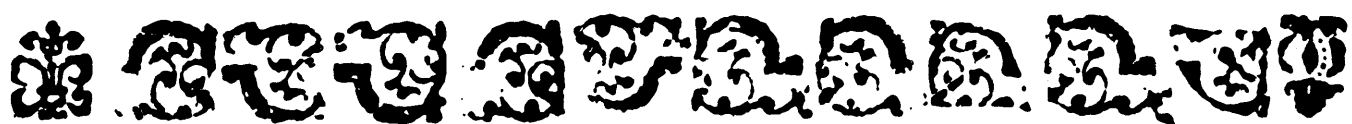
By the Rev. CALEB SMITH, A. M.

*Published since the Author's Decease, by a Lover of
his Memory.*



W O O D B R I D G E :

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As the following Discourse appears in publick under all the Disadvantages of a Posthumous Piece, it would be doing great Injustice to the very pious and worthy Author, not to notify the same to the Reader ; that proper Allowance might be made for such Defects or Inaccuracies in the Composition, as may perhaps be espy'd by the Learned and Judicious ; such as cannot but be reasonably expected in a Piece wrote without any Design for the Press, and published without any material Alteration.

The Publication whereof is undertaken, as a Piece of due Honour and Respect shewn to the ingenious Author, by one of his most sincere, tho' unworthy Friends.



A N

ORDINATION SERMON, &c.

TITUS II. 15.

These Things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority. Let no Man despise thee.

THE Office of the Gospel Ministry wears the most friendly Aspect toward Mankind, as God hath committed to such as are invested with the ministerial Character the Word of Reconciliation; and they being Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech Man by them, they pray their Fellow-men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God: And it is by what a prophane and infidel World calls the Foolishness of Preaching, that God saves such as believe. With highest Reason, therefore, may a People who are favoured with Pastors, to break to them the Bread of Life, and feed them with Knowledge and Understanding, or who have the Ambassadors of the Prince of Peace sent to them, adopt those Expressions in the Prophet, *Isaiab lii. 7. 8. How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that publisheth Peace, that bringeth good Tidings of Good, that publisheth Salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy Watchmen shall lift up the Voice, with the Voice together shall they sing: for they shall see Eye to Eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.* The Welfare of Churches and the Good of Souls
so

so much depending upon their being supplied with properly qualified Pastors. *St. Paul*, when he left *Crete*, an Island which was once called *Itecatompolis*, because there was an Hundred Cities upon it; I say, the Apostle departing from this Island, left *Titus* behind, to take proper Care, that Elders were ordained in every City, and that the several Churches which he had planted there, should be furnished with Ministers suitably instructed, and with requisite Qualifications to teach, exhort, and rule over them in the Lord: To which End *St. Paul* lays down the necessary Qualifications of a Scripture Bishop, and points out what Manner of Persons they should be who were introduced into the Gospel Ministry; and gives him particular Directions as to his own Deportment, and the Doctrines which he should teach the *Cretan* Christians; and the various Duties which he should instruct them in, and urge them to the Practice of; and having mentioned the particular Duties to be enjoined upon the several Ages, Sexes, and Degrees of Persons, with the peculiar Motives by which they were to be enforced, he says to him in the Words of our Text, *These Things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority; let no Man despise thee*. As if the Apostle had said, These are the Truths and Duties which you are to instruct them in, and to exhort them to receive and practise by proper Arguments and Motives; and such as prove obstinate, you are with Gravity and Authority to reprove and rebuke; warning them of the Dangers of their not embracing the Doctrines, and practising the Duties taught them in a preached Gospel: And that his Instructions, Exhortations, and Rebukes might have proper Weight, he directs him to study a Deportment that would secure him from Contempt, and that he would be careful to behave and conduct himself in such a Manner, that none might have just Occasion to think lightly of, or despise him.

The Method I would propose for the further Illustration of this Passage of Sacred Writ, is,

I. To explain the Nature, and point out the Difference betwixt the three Branches of Ministerial Duty here mentioned, *viz.* Teaching, Exhorting and Rebuking with Authority.

II. Consider what Course a Minister should take to support the Dignity of his sacred Character, that he may not fall into Contempt, or be despised by any.

I am in the *first* Place to explain the Nature, and point out the Difference betwixt the three Branches of Ministerial Duty here mentioned, *viz.* Teaching, Exhorting and Rebuking with Authority.

And here the *FIRST* Branch of ministerial Duty mentioned in the Text, is Speaking *i. e.* Teaching or instructing People in the Things of God, and the Concern of their Souls ; or preaching and declaring to the whole Council of God, in Matters relating both to Faith and Practice. Speaking or Teaching is designed to inform the Understandings of Men, as to the Doctrines they ought to believe, the Duties they should perform, and the Sins they ought to avoid and shun : Which should be done with such Clearness and Perspicuity, that Light may be conveyed into the Mind, and the Assent of the Understanding gained by the bright Evidence of Truth. In Matters of Faith, a Minister should be able to explain and elucidate the great Doctrines of Christianity, shew their Connection and Dependence, and to obviate the Objections which may be made against them : And in Points of Practice, to shew the Beauty of Holiness, the Excellency of the Divine Precepts, and point out and prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God ; explicating the Nature, and evincing the Obligation of Men, to perform uprightly
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and conscientiously, as unto God, the various Duties of Christianity. Now in order to a Minister's speaking skilfully, and in a convincing Manner to the several Points of Faith and Practice, it is requisite,

1st, That he should not be a Novice, but have applied himself to Study, Reading and Meditation, and thereby have acquired a previous rich Furniture or Knowledge in the Things of God ; for if the Mind be without Knowledge, it is not good in any Man, but must be very bad in one who sets up for a Teacher of the Ignorant, and an Instructor of Babes, and whose Character implies an Ability to withstand Gainsayers, and that he hath such an Aptness to teach, as renders him capable in Meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them Repentance, to the Acknowledging of the Truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will. 2 *Tim.* 2. ult. What can be expected, if the Blind lead the Blind, but that both will fall into the Ditch ? That a Minister may be able rightly to divide the Word of Truth, he must have his Mind richly stored with Divine Knowledge, and be a Scribe well instructed unto the Kingdom of God, and be able to bring out of his Treasure, Things both new and old. The Law of Truth must be in a Minister's Mouth, and Iniquity must not be found in his Lips ; he ought to walk with God in Peace and Equity, that he may be the happy Instrument of turning many away from Iniquity ; for the Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth ; for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts. *Mal.* 2. 6, 7. The Word of God should dwell richly, and the precious Contents of the sacred Oracles be plentifully treasured up in the Mind of a Minister, that he may be capable of feeding the Lord's People with Knowledge and Understanding.

2dly, It should be the Concern of a Minister, that in speaking, his Instructions be sound, and such as may be supported by the unerring Word of God ; for we are not to teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, nor to utter as divine Truth our own vain Imaginations. *The Law and the Testimony* is the Standard to which we must bring our Discourses : *For if we speak not agreeable to this Word, there is no Truth in us.* St. Paul tells us, in the Beginning of this Epistle, that he was an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the Faith of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Truth, which is after Godliness ; and our Ministry must be discharged by the same Rule, by which he fulfilled his Apostleship : And one of the Qualifications which St. Paul directs *Titus* to attend to in setting apart Men to the sacred Office, is, that they should be such as would hold fast the faithful Word, as they had been taught, by the inspired Apostle ; that they might be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and to convince Gain-sayers : And he enjoins it upon *Titus* himself, that in Doctrine he would shew Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, sound Speech, that cannot be condemned ; that such as were of the contrary Part might be ashamed, having no evil Thing to say of him. And he urges the Importance of sound Doctrine in what he writes to *Timothy*, *These Things teach and exhort*, says he ; and if any Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing Nothing. *i.e.* He is setting up himself into Christ's Stead, not knowing Christ or himself, or indeed any Thing as he ought to know. A Minister is neither to add to, nor to diminish from the System of Scripture Truths and Duties, and is to teach, *these Things*, *i.e.* the Things which our blessed Lord, and the inspired Prophets and Apostles have taught. He is not to be like some who corrupt and adulterate the Word of God, or deal deceitfully with it ;
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but as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the Sight of God, must he speak in Christ. 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. Fearing least by any Means, as the Serpent beguiled *Eve* thro' his Subtility, to the Minds of his Hearers should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ. If a Minister sees Danger of corrupt Principles spreading among a People who are committed to his Charge, and over whom the Holy Ghost hath made him an Overseer, 'twill be his Duty to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints; and, in fine, if he desires to be pure from the Blood of all Men, he must follow the Example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and not shun to declare to them, all the Counsel of God. *Acts* 20. 27.

3dly. A Minister should apply himself to the Work of Instruction, and be diligent in teaching both publicly and privately. Our blessed Lord and Master hath set us an Example, of unwearied Diligence in the Business of teaching the Children of Men; he preached daily either in the Synagogues or private Houses, in the Fields or upon the Sea Shore, or else was employed in teaching his Disciples and others who came to him in a more private Way: He told those who urged him to tarry longer in their City, that he must preach the Gospel in other Cities, Towns and Villages, for that was the Errand on which he had come into the World, that he might bear Witness to the Truth. Thus Christ went about continually doing Good, and with unremitting Zeal and Industry, he prosecuted the Work of his publick Ministry, saying, that he must work whilst the Day lasted, because the Night came, in which no Man could work. 'Twas as the Meat and Drink of our divine Lord to perform the Will of his Father, and to publish the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation to the fallen Sons and Daughters of Men. Christ bids *Peter* to express and manifest his Love towards him, by feeding his Sheep and Lambs. *i. e.* by setting spiritual Food before strong and weak, before young
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and old Christians : And such as prove slothful in improving that great Talent of the Gospel Ministry, will be bound Hand and Foot, and be cast into utter Darkness, where there will be nothing but weeping, wailing and gnashing of Teeth. *St. Paul* says, *Rom. xii. 6. 7. Having then Gifts, differing according to the Grace that is given to us, whether Prophecy, let us prophesy according to the Proportion of Faith; or Ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or be that teacheth, on teaching.* A Minister must be instant in Season and out of Season, and let it be seen, that his Heart is engaged in the Work; and like holy *Paul*, He must keep back nothing that may be profitable unto his Hearers, or the People committed to his Charge, but must shew and teach them publickly, and from House to House, testifying to all, the Necessity of Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

4thly. In Teaching, a Minister should dwell chiefly upon Things of the greatest Importance, and upon which the Welfare and Salvation of Immortal Souls doth principally depend; and not waste away the precious Time allotted for Instruction, in Things of trifling Moment, and Matters of mere Curiosity. A Minister of Christ must shew himself a wise Master-Builder, and make use of such substantial and durable Materials, in building up the Church of God, which may be compared to Gold, Silver and precious Stones, that his Works may remain, and not be consumed by the Fire of the last Judgment, as all those Works will be, which are framed of Wood, Hay and Stubble. They who neglect the weightier Points of Doctrine and Practice, for the sake of making ingenious Discants upon, and curious Disquisitions into Subjects dark and intricate, and which are but of small Moment in Religion, act like the Scribes and Pharisees; who strained at a Gnat while they swallowed a Camel, and were careful to tithe Mint, Annise and Cummin,

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while they passed slightly over the weightier Matters of the Law, such as Judgment, Mercy, and the Love of God. If the great Fundamentals of Repentance toward God, and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of Regeneration, of the Nature and Necessity of Holiness both of Heart and Life, and the like, are passed over for the Sake of haranguing upon Meats and Drinks, or elaborately endeavouring to solve the knotty Difficulties about the Person of *Melchisedec* ; who was raised up by the Witch of *Endor* ; the satisfying a petulant Humour, and a vain idle Curiosity, is substituted into the Place of godly Edifying. A Gospel Minister should know that he has more weighty Matters upon his Hands, than to dote about silly trifling Questions, and Strifes about Words. St. *Paul* says to *Titus*, in this Epistle: *But avoid foolish Questions, and Genealogies, and Contentions, and Strivings about the Law ; for they are unprofitable and vain.*

In the SECOND Place, the Apostle mentions Exhortation as another Branch of a Minister's Duty ; which means an urging the Importance, and enforcing with proper Arguments and Motives, the Things which a Minister hath first taught. Speaking here, is designed to express that Branch of the ministerial Office, which consists in shewing and instructing People what Things they are to believe and practise, and what Things they are to reject and avoid ; and exhorting, signifies, a pressing those Things upon People by proper Considerations, or a using a Kind of Compulsion, by setting before Persons such forcible Motives, as are sufficient to prevail upon rational Creatures, to embrace and receive the Things they have been taught, and to engage them to a correspondent Practice.

Now in the first Place, Exhortations should be given with Fervour and Zeal, it being well known, that Earnestness and Warmth is much better adapted to gain the Attention,

Attention, and will do vastly more, to persuade and prevail upon Persons to come into our Sentiments and Measures, than a lukewarm or cold Address. 'Tis a known Observation, that he who would move an Audience and draw Tears from their Eyes, must first shew himself moved and weep himself. Scarce any are so ignorant of human Nature, and the Springs of Action in Mankind, but know, that earnest warm Applications, and importunate Addresses, are much more effectual to engage Persons to comply with our Persuasions, than such as are made with Carelessness and an Air of Indifference. 'Tis storied of *Demosthenes*, the celebrated *Athenian* Orator, that he was once applied to by a Man to plead his Cause, who complained of his having been injured by one of his Neighbours, and told his Story with great Indifference, as though he did not feel any Injury his Neighbour had done him; upon which that great Orator answered, that he did not believe that his Neighbour had done him any Wrong. *Yea*, replied the Client, "with great Warmth and Earnestness both in his Looks and Voice, *but he has injured me greatly: Now*, says *Demosthenes*, *I believe what you say*. People will hardly think, that a Minister believes the Things which he declares to be of any great Importance, without they behold some evident Marks of his realizing the Truth of what he says, in the Manner of his Address. Christ compares his Ministers to Servants, who were sent out into the Highways and Hedges to compel Men to come in. And *St. Paul* expresses the Earnestness and vigorous Engagedness, which a Minister ought to use in his Applications, in these Words, *2 Tim. iv. 1. 2. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his Appearing, and his Kingdom; preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season; reprove, rebuke with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.*

2dly. A Minister in his Exhortations, should discover an evident Regard to the Honour of God, and an affectionate Concern for the Welfare of immortal Souls. St. Paul in accounting to the *Corinthians* for his zealous Endeavours, and abundant Labours in the Ministration of the Gospel of Christ, says, 2 Cor. v. 11. *Knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men; but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also, are made manifest in your Consciences:* and then quickly after, in verse 13, 14. he subjoins; *For whether we be besides ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your Cause, for the Love of Christ constraineth us.* His Regard for God, his Love to Christ, and his Concern for the Children of Men naturally dead in Trespasses and Sins, and exposed to a Sentence of everlasting Death, appeared in his Persuasions and Exhortations; these were what fired him with sacred Ardour, and bore him on, to the most arduous Labour in the Discharge of his Apostleship, and caused him to fill his Mouth with Arguments, in exhorting, beseeching, and intreating Persons to be reconciled to God. When a Minister's Zeal and importunate Exhortations, appear to originate and spring from a real supreme Respect to the blessed God, and the glorious Redeemer, and from unfeigned Love, and tender Affection towards the Souls of Men, and not to arise from fordid Selfishness, either as to Reputation or Interest, then will he be like to find the Way into the Hearts of his Hearers, to ingratiate himself into their Affections, and to convince them of his Sincerity and Uprightness, whereby they will be engaged to give the greater Heed to his Admonitions and Exhortations.

3dly. In Exhorting, a Minister should make Use of the most cogent Arguments, especially such as are peculiar to Christianity. There may many powerful Motives be derived from Reason, and the present Life, to persuade to Virtue, and dissuade from Vice and Wickedness;

ness; but the most weighty Considerations whereby Religion can be urged, are such as are derived from divine Revelation, and especially from the clearest Discoveries, which are made of Invisible and Eternal Things in the Gospel of Christ; where Life and Immortality are much more clearly brought to Light, than under any other Dispensation whatever. Christianity furnishes us with the most strong and efficacious Arguments, for the Promotion of Godliness; and makes Use of a Set of Motives which are peculiar to itself, such as that we may be *called the Children of God*: That we may be *Imitators of God as dear Children*: That we may be *present, as our Heavenly Father is present*: That we may be *the Salt or Seasoning of the Earth*: That we should *let our Lights so shine before Men, that they may see our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*. Because we are the Temples of the Holy-Ghost.--United to Christ.--Risen with Christ.--Because we are not under the Law, but under Grace.--Because we are Fellow-Members in the same Body, we are urged to the ready Discharge of relative and social Duties.--We are incited to Holiness, because the God who hath called us is Holy.--Because without it we cannot see or enjoy God.--Because we are Children of Light, and of the Day. The inspired Writers of the New-Testament, press Universal Holiness, that we may adorn the Doctrine; that we may walk worthy of our Holy Vocation; and their Motives to avoid Sin, are such as these; lest others should take Occasion to speak reproachfully of the ways of God; lest the Name of Christ should be blasphemed.--God be dishonoured.--The Holy Spirit grieved, and the like. Now these, together with the great Arguments which may be derived from the Consideration of approaching Death, a future Judgment, and an everlasting State of Rewards and Punishments, are the powerful Motives, whereby Ministers are to enforce their Exhortations.

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The THIRD Branch of ministerial Duty, is that of Rebuking with all Authority: The Things which St. *Paul* had written, *Titus* was first to speak in his Discourses, whether publick or private; he was to teach these Doctrines and Duties; instructing the *Cretans*, both Men and Women, Young and Old, and those of high and low Degree, what became their Character as professing Christians; then he was to back his Instructions with proper Motives and Arguments, in a way of Exhortation, and such as would not hearken, but proved disobedient to the Word of Truth; he was solemnly to rebuke, and that with such Authority as Christ has invested his Ministers with. Duty is first to be taught, then the Performance of it urged with proper Considerations; and if any continue in Disobedience, and refuse to comply with the Exhortations given; then are they to be reprov'd and rebuked according as the Case may require. Here,

1st. A Minister ought to rebuke in a private Manner, such as he hath good Evidence to believe are chargeable with Things contrary to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; and such as are endowed with a Spirit of genuine Piety, will take such Reproof in good Part, yea they will receive it with unfeigned Gratitude, if they have the Temper of Holy *David*, as expressed in the cxli. *Psa.* 5. *Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a Kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent Oyl, which shall not break my Head: For yet my Prayer also shall be in their Calamities. i. e.* He would not be vexed and disturbed at their friendly Reproofs, but would love and pray for them, in their Troubles and Sorrows. That Observation of the wise Man, is oftentimes found true, that he who rebuketh a Man, afterwards shall find more Favour than he who flattereth with the Tongue. Here a Minister had need to exercise Wisdom, to discern the *Mollia Tempora Fandi*, the proper Times of reprov-
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with the greatest Probability of Success. There are some so brutish that they hate Reproof, yea *Solomon* adds in another Place, *Reprove not a Scornor, lest he hate thee ; rebuke a wise Man, and he will love thee.* And a greater than *Solomon*, cautions his Disciples not to *cast their Pearls before Swine, lest they should trample them under their Feet ; nor to give that which is Holy to Dogs, lest they should turn about and rent them.* Reproof given with Judgment and Discretion, rightly timed, and administered in a proper Manner, has great Beauty and Excellence ; according to that in *Prov. xxv. 11, 12. A Word fitly spoken, is like Apples of Gold, in Pictures of Silver. As an Ear-Ring of Gold, and an Ornament of fine Gold, so is a wise Reprover upon an obedient Ear.*

2dly. A Minister is also to rebuke in publick, such as are of a Character that deserves to be reprov'd ; he must set his Face as a Flint, to testify against the wicked Ways of a rebellious People : Of this we have a great Number of Examples, not only in the antient Prophets, but also in the publick Discourses of *John* the Baptist, our blessed Lord and his Apostles. Particular Classes of Sinners are to be solemnly reprehended in our Sermons, and suitably warned of the Danger of their evil Courses. And sometimes it may be necessary to rebuke Individuals in a publick Manner : Of this we have an Example in *Gal. ii. 11.* Where *Paul* says, *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blamed.* But besides these Kinds of Rebukes administered in Publick, there is another Sort, which is one of the lowest Degrees of ecclesiastical Censure ; when Persons fall into Heresy or Scandal, who have made a Profession of Religion, a Minister is with the Authority of his sacred Office, and with that Power wherewith Christ hath invested him, solemnly to admonish and rebuke the delinquent Parties ; thereby to bring them to a Sense of their Sin and Danger, and to prevent

prevent the spreading of their corrupt Leaven. Thus *St. Paul* exhorts the *Thessalonians*, to warn them who are unruly. 1 *Epistle*, v. 14. And in his 2 *Epistle*, iii. 6. and onward; he commands them in the Name of Christ, to withdraw themselves from every Brother who walked disorderly, yet not to count such as Enemies, but admonish them as Brethren. And to *Timothy*, *St. Paul* says, *I them who Sin. i. e.* in any notorious publick Manner, rebuke before all, that others also may fear. And unto *Titus*, *A Man who is an Heretick*, after the first and second Admonition, reject.

3dly. Rebukes are to be administred with all Authority, by Ministers of the Gospel, *i. e.* They are to reprove with Gravity and Courage, as knowing that they have a Right to reprehend Delinquents, and that in doing this they are in the proper Execution of their sacred Office. As we are in Doctrine to shew Gravity, so we are also to be grave and weighty in our Reproofs, managing the Matter with that Air of Seriousness and Solemnity, Fortitude, Gravity and determined Resolution, as becomes those who act by Authority: But then let me observe, that Wisdom is proper to direct when our Reproofs and Admonitions should be gentle and mild, and when sharp and severe; according to the various Dispositions, Tempers, and Characters of the Persons concerned. In this *Epistle* whence we have taken our Text, *St. Paul* bids *Titus* to rebuke the *Cretans*, who were a People of perverse and rugged Dispositions, sharply, that they might be sound in the Faith: They were such a hardy Race, that a mild gentle Reproof would make no Impression upon them. The same Apostle writing to *Timothy*, who was left at *Ephesus*, among a People of greater Softness and Sensibility in their Tempers, says, *Be gentle to all Men, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* *Solomon* tells us, that a Reproof entereth more into a wise Man, than an hundred

hundred Stripes into a Fool. Some Men are composed of such hard Materials, and are of such rough Dispositions, that they have need of hard blows, and Words of Rebuke, that will cut like a two-edged Sword; and the different Treatment which different Tempers require, is pointed out by St. Jude, who says, *Of some have Compassion, making a Difference: and others save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire.*

I proceed now to consider, what Course Ministers should take, and especially such as are young, to support the Dignity of their sacred Character, that they may not fall into Contempt, or be despised by any: Here I shall but just hint at a few Things, as,

1st. A Minister who would not be looked upon mean and contemptible, must shew himself well furnished for his sacred Work, and accomplished for the skillful and profitable Discharge of this weighty and arduous Trust. He who has a competent Measure of Learning and Knowledge, and is by Reading and Meditation, making such Advances, that his profiting appears unto all, who knows how to behave himself in the House of God; shewing himself *A Workman that needeth not to be ashamed*: rightly and skillfully dividing the Word of Truth, will not be in Danger of falling into Contempt among any but the Ungodly and Prophane; and even such as these, will be constrained many Times, to esteem and speak respectfully of a Minister who appears thoroughly to understand, and to be well accomplished for the Work in which he is engaged.

2^{dly}. A useful Life, together with an unblameable, exemplary and godly Conversation, will go far toward supporting the Dignity of a ministerial Character, and will ordinarily secure such as are in the sacred Office, from being viewed in a despicable Light. 'Tis no Wonder that such fall into Disesteem and Contempt, who

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being invested with an Office which supposes peculiar Sanctity of Manners, are on the contrary irregular and loose in their Lives, and of a Conversation unfavoury and nearly scandalous. Such as allow themselves in Liberties which they are sensible the Gospel condemns, will be ready enough to flee at, and contemn a Minister who acts out of Character, though it be in those very Kinds of Licentiousness which they will excuse in Laymen, and habitually indulge in themselves. Our blessed Lord has told us, that we are *the Salt of the Earth, but if we lose our Savour, we are fit for Nothing but to be cast out and trodden under Foot of Men*. Let a Minister follow his divine Master, in a constant Readiness to do Good, both to the Bodies and Souls of Men, and shew himself an Example to the Flock, in Word, Conversation, and the Practice of every Thing that is of good Report, or accounted virtuous and praise-worthy among Men; let him render himself a Pattern of good Works, being an Ensamble of Charity, Faith, Purity and Patience, and he will not fail to raise himself in the Esteem of all the Wise and Good, and indeed the Generality of Mankind. Let a Minister be blameless as becomes the Steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre, but a Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good Men, sober, just, holy and temperate, and he will be in no Danger of being despised by any, unless it be those who are lost to all Sense of real Worth and Goodness.

3dly. Zeal and Faithfulness will have a great Tendency to commend a Minister to the Consciences of his Hearers, and will be a Letter of Recommendation, written and engraven upon the Tables of their Hearts. When a People are conscious, that a Minister's Heart glows with Zeal for God and Christ, and that he is full of compassionate Regard for their immortal Souls, and when they are Witnesses of his Fidelity and laborious Endeavours, to promote the Cause and Kingdom of Christ,

Christ, this will go a great Way to raise him high in their Esteem, and conciliate their respectful and friendly Regards: They must indeed be of the baser Sort, and Sons of *Belial* with a Witness, who can find it in their Hearts, to disregard and despise a Man, who is laboriously employed to advance the Honour of God, to subserve the grand Purposes of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and warmly engaged to promote their best, their highest, their own immortal Interest.

4^{thly}. I will mention farther, that a wise prudent Deportment, in Reference to common Affairs, with a proper Regard to Things decent, fit and becoming, will contribute not a little to prevent a Minister from falling into Disesteem and Contempt. If a Minister would maintain the Dignity of his Character, he had need to pray earnestly, that God would enable him always to temper the Wisdom of the Serpent with the Innocency of the Dove.---Indiscretions of Conversation and Behaviour, and little Follies, will sometimes prove like dead Flies in the Apothecaries Ointment: Persons fall into Contempt, become Subjects of Ridicule, and are lookt upon as mean and despicable, by Reason of Things appearing in them, that are light and trivial: Unsuitable Familiarities will breed Contempt oftentimes, and a Minister will sink sometimes by an excessive Attention to, or an entire Neglect of small Things; for Instance, Foppery, or a minute Delicacy of Dress on the one Hand, and a sordid affected Meanness in outward Appearance on the other, will both serve in some Measure, to lessen a Man in the Esteem of the Wise and judicious. Sourness, affected Austerity, and excessive Rigidness, on the one Hand, or unguarded Gaieties, and great Airinesses on the other; improper Singularities and whimsical Oddities, must be avoided by a Minister, who would give none Occasion to despise, or view him in a ridiculous and contemptible Light.

I shall now pass to an Improvement of this Subject and Discourse, and

1st, I would address myself to the People who have heard me this Day. From what has been said, it is easy for you to infer, that it Christ hath invested his Ministers with Authority, to bear Rule in his Church, to teach, exhort and rebuke; 'tis then your Duty as a Christian People, to hear and submit to them; those who receive and hear the faithful Ministers of Christ, do in Effect receive and hear him, as they come in his Name, being clothed with his Authority: And while the Ministers of the Gospel, in some good Measure act up to their Character, behaving in a blameless Manner, as becomes the Stewards of God, shewing a Readiness to become the Servants of all, if they may by any Means win their Souls to Christ; I say, while this is their Purpose and Manner of Life, instead of being slighted and despised, they ought to be esteemed, and highly accounted of by a People professing Subjection to Christ. 'Tis the Language of Inspiration, *Heb. xiii. 7. Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.* Upon which Text, the late Mr. Dickinson, whose Praise is in all these Churches, hath a Manuscript Sermon, in which there is a Paragraph to my present Purpose, and which I will give you at large: "They, saith he, who are blessed with faithful Ministers, have great Cause to esteem them in Love for their Work's Sake. *1 Thessa. v. 13.* The Dignity of their Character, the Importance of the Business they are engaged in, and the Difficulty and Hardship they are put to in the Discharge of their Trust, do all challenge the Regards and Respects of their Hearers; and they should manifest their Regards, by submitting to all the Parts of their Ministry, and especially by complying with the Offers of Salvation brought them in the Name of the Lord. If Men will so despise them, as to reject the regular Discipline

Discipline of the Church, and disregard the Message brought them in the Name of Christ, in so despising them, they despise Christ himself, and him that sent him. *Luke x. 16.* And whatever they think of it, they reject the Counsel of God against themselves. *Luke vii. 30.* They despise their own Souls. *Prov. xv. 32.* And the Time is hastening when these Despisers will wonder and perish. *Acts xiii. 41.* Thus my Hearers, let the Sentiments of this departed Man of God, backed and supported with Testimonies from the divine Oracles, prevail upon you, to be greatly on your Guard, that you do not despise the Ministers of Christ, but that you esteem and regard them in the whole Discharge of their Office, as acting in the Name, and invested with the Authority of Christ.

2^{dly}. I would beg Leave to address my Discourse to my Brethren in the Ministry, whom I doubt not will readily suffer a Word of Exhortation, from one of the most unworthy of their Number; and first, my dear and honoured Brethren, I would observe to you, that we who are by the Rules of the Gospel, entrusted with the important Affair of ordaining Men to the Work of the Ministry, should be very careful to separate suitable Persons to the Service of the Sanctuary. *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, who is frequently in sacred Writ, branded with this Mark of Infamy, as having made *Israel* to sin; took the most effectual Method to bring Religion into Disgrace, by choosing his Priests from among the meanest and lowest of the People. 'Tis a very weighty Part of that sacred Trust which is committed to us Ministers of the Gospel, to set apart others to be our Fellow-Labourers and Successors in the Vineyard of our common Lord; and Oh! with what Prayerfulness, Care and Caution, should we proceed in the Discharge of it. That is a memorable Exhortation and Charge given by *St. Paul*, to his Son *Timothy*, and ushered in with a very solemn Preface; *1 Tim. v. 21, 22. I charge thee before God, and the*

the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these Things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality; laying Hands suddenly on no Man; neither be Partakers of other Men's Sins; keep thyself pure. The ministerial Trust is to be committed to faithful Men, or Men of whose Fidelity to Christ and his Cause, we have some competent Satisfaction, and such also as shall be able to teach others. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Before we proceed to Ordination, we should have a good Degree of Satisfaction, both respecting the Sincerity, Piety, and Ability for instructing, in such Candidates as offer to devote themselves to the Work of the Ministry: If we would not bring upon our own Souls, Part of the Guilt of the Miscarriages of such as have had our Hands imposed upon them; we must take utmost Heed that we lay Hands upon none but such as are of unblameable Characters, Men of honest and good Report, unblemished in their Reputation, who will not be like to bring a Reproach upon the sacred Office, and by their Practice as well as Preaching, recommend our holy Religion. None should be invested with the dignified Character of an Ambassador of Christ, but such as are like to have their Master's Honour and Interest at Heart; and who will be like, by the Prudence and Wisdom of their Conduct, by the Purity of their Conversation and Lives, and by their skillful and faithful Discharge of their sacred Trust, not only to secure themselves from being despised and condemned, but to secure the Respect and Esteem of all who have any Regard for Religion: And my dear Brethren, let us not only be exhorted to great Vigilance and Care in this, but in every other Branch of our important Work. We are presently to be put in Mind of the solemn Vows and sacred Bonds wherewith we bound our own Souls, in the Day when we first made a publick Conversation of ourselves to the Work of the Ministry. The weighty Charge which then awed our Souls, and caused us even to tremble with Fear, how we should fulfil, we are this Day

in Substance to hear repeated ; and oh ! let it awaken in us, a fresh Sense, how sacred, how important, and of what infinite Consequence to our own, and the Souls of others, we then looked upon the Work we are engaging in. Let it call a-new to our Remembrance, with what awful Solemnity, we were then laid under the greatest possible Obligations, to be faithful in all the Parts of our ministerial Trust. And let us now ask ourselves, as in the Presence of God, how we have taken Heed to the Ministry we have received in the Lord to fulfil it ? Have we studied with proper Diligence, to approve ourselves to God, Workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth ? Have we acted with becoming Zeal, and Fervour of Soul, in managing that important Embassy our great Master hath sent us upon ? What have been the great Motives and Views with which we have been actuated ? Hath our grand Aim been the Glory of God, the Advancement of the Honour of Christ, and the Interest of his spiritual Kingdom, and promoting the Welfare of immortal Souls ? Have these Things lain with Weight upon our Hearts, and been uppermost in our Souls ? And to bring about these, which were the great Ends of the first Institution of the Gospel Ministry, have we not shunned to declare unto our People, all the Counsel of God ? Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, have we earnestly pressed, and importunately persuaded Sinners to be reconciled to God ; setting before them, how awful and dreadful a Thing it will be, to fall into the Hands of a sin-avenging God ? And to encourage and allure them to embrace the great Salvation of Christ, have we endeavoured to exhibit to their View, the rich Treasures of Gospel Grace ? Have we made Progress in spiritual Knowledge, and let our Profiting appear unto all, and approved ourselves Scribes instructed unto the Kingdom of God, who have been able out of our rich Treasure, to produce Things both new and old ? Or, in explaining, enforcing and applying, all the great Doctrines of our
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holy Religion, and in dealing out a Portion of the Word, suited to the particular Circumstances, various Characters, and different Conditions of our Hearers ; thus shewing ourselves wise Master-Builders, and skilful Dividers of the Word of Truth ? In a Word, have we preached to our own Souls, as well as to the Souls of others ; and had our own Hearts affected, and deeply impressed, with the vast Importance and Necessity of those Things, we have urged upon our People ? Agreeable to that Exhortation of the inspired Apostle, have we taken heed to ourselves, and unto our Doctrine, continuing in them, doing this, that we might save ourselves, and them who have heard us ?

In the last Place, I would address my Discourse to you, Dear Sir, who are this Day to make a solemn Dedication of yourself to God and Christ, in the Work of the Gospel Ministry.

We desire to acknowledge the Goodness of the great Lord of the Vineyard, who is calling and sending you forth, to labour with us, gathering in the Harvest of immortal Souls ; and we would not fail at the same Time, of offering our Ascriptions of Gratitude and Praise, to the Great Head of the Church ; who we trust, hath given you a good Degree of Furniture for the Ministry ; and instructed you to be a Scribe, with some suitable Measure of Ability and Readiness, to speak, exhort, and rebuke with all Authority ; that you may be made instrumental to subserve the great Purposes of his spiritual Kingdom in the World. Suffer me, my Brother, in all Kindness to exhort you, that you look well to it ; that you know the Christ, whom you are to preach to others ; that so you may preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord : Unspeakably awful will it be indeed, if you should by any Means fail of the Grace of God ; and when you have preached the Word of Life and the Gospel

Gospel of Salvation to your Fellowmen, be at last, an everlasting Cast-away yourself. Take the utmost Heed therefore to the Salvation of your own Soul; and see to it, that you enter upon this sacred Work, with a pure Zeal for the Honour of God, and an unfeigned Desire to promote the Interest of Christ's Kingdom, and the eternal Weal of precious Souls. Selfish sinister Views will mar your Undertaking, and blast your Labours: Wherefore feed the Flock of God, taking the Oversight thereof, not by Constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; knowing that it is of the Lord only, you are to receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Let me beseech you, not to neglect the Gift which is in you, or that which is now to be conferr'd upon you; but take suitable Pains to improve all your Talents, and to make Increase of your ministerial Furniture, that so none may have any just Cause to despise or view you in a contemptible Light. As far as your Health will admit, be diligent in your Studies, and especially be much in fervent Prayer to God, that he would cause every ministerial Gift, and needed Wisdom and Grace to abound in you, that you may have all Fullness in all Things. Give your Attendance to Reading, and especially be much in Reading and Studying the sacred Scriptures which are able to make the Man of God wise, perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good Work. Be much in meditating upon these Things which concern the faithful Discharge of your Ministry; as much as possible give yourself wholly to them, that your Profiting may appear to all. See that your Deportment be such, that none may take Occasion to despise your Youth, and be in all Things a Pattern of good Works. See that you skillfully handle the Word of Truth, making proper Distinctions betwixt the Holy and Vile; dealing out in due Season unto all, their Portion of Meat, as their respective Cases shall demand: And bear it constantly upon your Mind, that

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you are to watch for Souls, as One who is to give an Account unto God. Be therefore a faithful and good Steward of the manifold Grace of God. When you speak, speak as the Oracles of God, and let your ministering be as of the Ability that God doth give; that God in all Things may be glorified by you, thro' Jesus Christ; to whom be Praise and Dominion forever and ever. *AMEN.*

F I N I S.

