

*Love to CHRIST a necessary Qualification
in Order to feed his Sheep.*

A
SERMON

Preach'd at Nestaminie, December 14. 1743

Before the **ORDINATION**

Of the Reverend

Mr. CHARLES BEATTY.

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*Published at the Desire of the People of the
Place aforesaid,*

2 Tim. 2. 2. *The Things thou hast heard of Me among many
Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall
be able to teach others.*

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J O H N xxi. 16.

He saith to him again the second Time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him yea Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him feed my Sheep.

IT is observable that the same Things which this Text contains, are *three* Times mention'd in the Compass of three Verses, the more to affect *Peter* and the other Disciples that were present; and this Repetition is recorded by the Evangelist, the more to affect us; and all others that read it. What *John* speaks of *the three Witnesses in Heaven, that these three are one*; they same may be said of these Verses: Here is a threefold Enquiry, which is but one, *lovest thou me?* A threefold Answer, which is but one, *Lord thou knowest that I love Thee.* And to the threefold Answer there is added a threefold Command, *Feed my Sheep.* The first shews the *Kindness*

of CHRIST to his Sheep, in that he requires *Love* in those to whom he commits the Care of them: The Second manifests *Peter's* Sincerity, in that he could so freely appeal to CHRIST concerning his *Love*. O happy were it for the Church of CHRIST if none would undertake the Ministry but those that could safely use *Peter's* appeal. The Third shews the great Necessity and Importance of the Pastoral Office, *feed my Sheep, feed my Lambs*. The original Word (*boske*) which is used in the 15th and 17th Verses of this Chapter, strictly signifies to give Food, but the Word (*Poimaine*) in our Text, signifies more largely to do all the Office of a *Shepherd*. It is ridiculous in the *Papists* to argue for *Peter's* Primacy over the other Apostles, from the Charge here given him, seeing that what is signified by the Word *Feed*, is elsewhere recommended to the other Apostles; they were enjoin'd to *preach the Gospel to all Nations*, and told, *whose Sins you remit, they are remitted*, Mar. xvi. 15. John xx. 23. So that both the Power of Instruction and Government was given them, as well as to *Peter*. Dr. *Featly* observes, that *Augustine*,
Cyril

Cyril and *Calvin* say upon this Text, that the Blot which *Peter* brought upon himself and the Apostolate, by a threefold denial of CHRIST, could not be taken away but by a threefold Confession; to promote which, the Repetition of the Question had a direct Tendency.

From the Words of our Text we may observe the following Proposition, *viz.* That *Love to CHRIST* is a necessary Qualification in Gospel Ministers, in order to feed CHRIST'S Sheep to purpose. This the Query our Lord propos'd to the Apostle *Peter* with so much frequency, and the Command consequent upon it, plainly imply.

In discoursing upon the aforesaid Proposition, I purpose to follow the ensuing Method, *viz.*

I. Shew what is suppos'd by and imply'd in, *Love to CHRIST*.

II. Enquire who are CHRIST'S Sheep, and why so call'd.

III. Shew how they should be fed.

IV. Shew wherein the necessity of *Love to CHRIST* appears, in order to feed them aright, and then proceed to the Improvement,

And *First* I am shew what is suppos'd by and imply'd in, *Love to CHRIST*. And here let it be observ'd, that true Love to CHRIST supposes these three Things following, viz. *Illumination, Faith, and a Sense of his love to us*. Before we fix our highest Love upon the Lord JESUS CHRIST, it is necessary that we be enlighten'd to behold with Affection our Guilt and Misery by Nature and Practice, our Inability to help ourselves, and our utter unworthiness of help from God, as well as the All-sufficiency and Willingness of CHRIST to help us, and heal all our *Maladies*. It is likewise equally needful that upon a View of those Things we be inclin'd to bow before a Sovereign God, and enabled to receive the Redeemer in all his Offices and upon his Terms; being humbly, deliberately, and thoroughly determin'd to deny all Dependence upon our own Wisdom, Power, Righteousness, and to follow CHRIST in all change of Circumstance, by his help, to our Lives End, whatsoever we may suffer for it in any Respect notwithstanding; and doubtless true and transcendent Love to CHRIST supposes (ordinarily) a Sense of his

his Love to us, *for we love him*, as the Apostle *John* observes, *because he has loved us first.*

On the other Hand, methinks *true love* to CHRIST implies Esteem, Desire, Delight, Sorrow, Obedience: Such as make CHRIST the Object of their supream Respect, esteem him above all other Lords and Lovers: He is to them *altogether lovely, yea the chief among ten Thousand*: And this Esteem is grounded upon the highest Reason, for in CHRIST is a confluence of all possible Excellency in the highest Eminence, and that without the least alloy or variation. It is surely Ignorance of CHRIST that makes Sinners slight him so much as they do! But such as know him experimentally cannot but esteem him above all others; and this supream Esteem of him will necessarily excite a transcendent Desire after him, after Communion with him, and Conformity to him, more than after any other Enjoyment: Our Desire will be proportion'd in Degree to our Esteem, and hence we are told that the Psalmist *panted after God, as the Hart after the Water Brooks: Yea that his Heart and Flesh cry'd out for God, even for the living God!* How excellent

lent to this Purpose are the Expressions of *Heiman, Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee!* Our Lord will endure no Rivals in our Love. He expressly assures us, *That if we do not love him above Father and Mother, yea and Life itself, we are not worthy of him.* And surely, such who make CHRIST the Object of their chief Desire, will proportionably delight in him; *when they sit under his Shade it will be with great Delight! His Fruit cannot but be sweet to their Taste!* When they enjoy his Love, they are calm and contented, however difficult their outward Circumstances may be; on this Occasion, they are apt to speak in the *Psalmist's* Language, *Return to thy rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;* but when he hides his Face they are troubled, and as mourning Doves lament his Absence, the loss of which no other can make up.

And surely such as love CHRIST will manifest it by a willing, universal and habitual Obedience to his Laws; *if we say we love*

love him, and keep not his Commandments, surely we are lyars, and the Truth is not in us.

I may add, that all the Lovers of JESUS tenderly regard the Honour of his Name, and the Interests of his Kingdom, above their own Reputation and private Interests, if it goes well with Zion they rejoice, but if otherwise they mourn. But the

2d. General Head of Discourse is, *to enquire who are CHRIST'S Sheep, and why so call'd?* Now by the Sheep of CHRIST we are to understand the Community of the Elect, and that both before and after their Conversion. Hence it is said, *that some believ'd not, because they were not CHRIST'S Sheep:* But it is such as are Converted who are especially intended by that Phrase; for these have Properties resembling the Properties of Sheep, which doubtless is the Reason of the Name. Now the Analogy between them appears especially in the following Instances, *viz.* Sheep are simple, harmless, patient and cleanly Creatures, they are not crafty, as the Fox, or ravenous and cruel as the Wolf, or unclean, as the Swine, which like to lie in the Mire and Dirt; if Sheep happen to fall into the Mire, they
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get out again as soon as they can, for that is not their Element ; neither does the Sheep make such a murmuring refractory Noise under sufferings as Swine and some other Creatures, but is Meek and Patient ; and hence our Lord is said *to be led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep is dumb before his Shearers, so he opened not his Mouth.*

Now true Converts have all the aforesaid Qualities in general ; they are not so wise in temporal Respects as the Children of this World, *not many Wise, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called.* They are likewise harmless and innocent as Doves, bearing Revenge against none, and seeking no Man's Hurt. Under Sufferings they, in some Measure, imitate the Meekness and Patience of their Lord, who *being revil'd, revil'd not again* : When the Almighty finites them for their Sin, *they are dumb and open not their Mouth,* Psal. xxxix. 9. And when they fall into Sin, they are restless until they be rais'd up out of the Mire of it by Repentance. Again it is observable respecting Sheep, that they love to be together, a Sight of the Beasts of Prey does
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but make them run the faster to get near each other, and if they are separated by a Fright, they'll try to get together again in a little Time, and surely those that fear the Lord, *love to go to their own Company, Acts iv. 23. and to speak often one to another, Mal. iii. 16. yea they are glad to see those that hope in Gods Word, Pſal. 119. 74.*

But to proceed, Sheep are contented Creatures, they will live upon very short Graſs, where ſome other Creatures would be ready to ſtarve : Thus God's People are as Pilgrims upon this Earth, ſatisfied with a ſmall Portion of it, and therefore can, at Times, rejoice in the God of their Salvation, *tho' the Fig Tree do not Blossom, and there be no Fruit in the Vine.*

Again Sheep are profitable and fruitful Creatures ; they are good for Food and Raiment, and wont to multiply exceedingly ; ſo the People of God *are the Light of the World, and the Salt of the Earth, a Blessing wherever they are, as Joſeph to Potiphar, and Jacob to Laban ;* it is their Hearts deſire to be of Service to the World in which they live, and when they ſee no appearance of this they are grieved : And as the Church
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in general, from small beginnings has encreas'd to a great Number, so it is the earnest Desire and Labour of every particular Believer to bring forth much Fruit to God.

Farther, Sheep are obedient Creatures, they attend to their Shepherds Voice and follow him: It has been the Custom of the Eastern Countries for the Shepherd to go before their Sheep, and to this Custom our Lord alludes, John x. 27. *My Sheep bear my Voice, and they follow me.* As God's People love to hear the Redeemer's Voice, so it is their chief Desire and Labour to be conform'd to his Law and Life.

Moreover, Sheep have many Enemies, such as Dogs, Foxes, Wolves, &c. And are not God's People environ'd with numerous Enemies of various Forms? Hated because they are not of this World, and sometimes kill'd all the Day long, and accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter!

Sheep are Subject to wander from the Field, and therefore need the Shepherd's care to seek them up, and bring them home; they are Subject to diseases and defilements, and therefore have need of Healing and Washing; And is it not thus with Believers
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also? Pſal. 119. 176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt Sheep, ſeek thy Servant.* And did not the Lord complain of the Shepherds of Iſrael, *that the Diſeaſed they had not ſtrengthned, nor healed that which was ſick*: Surely what CHRIST ſaid to *Simon Peter* is applicable to all the Flock of CHRIST, Joh. 13. *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.*

Sheep muſt be fed in green Paſtures, and kept from ſuch Graſs as would rot or hurt them; and muſt not adult Chriſtians together with their little ones, be fed with ſound Truths *beſide the Shepherds Tents*, Cant. 1. 8. and kept from the traſh of Tradition and falſe Doctrines.

Sheep ſhould not be over driven, leaſt they die, Gen. 33. 13, ſo the People of God ſhould be dealt tenderly with, and proper Conſolations offer'd them leaſt they ſink in diſcouragement.

I may add, that the Word Sheep is deriv'd from a Verb, which ſignifies *to go forward*, and this is indeed their property, they are ſtill in Motion, and ſo all ſuch as are truly Religious, are ever diſſatisfy'd with their paſt Advances in Goodneſs, and
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inclin'd to press forward towards the Mark of their high calling in CHRIST JESUS.

I proceed now to the

3d. General Head of Discourse, which was to shew, *how CHRIST's Sheep should be fed*; now this should be done these five Ways following, viz. by the Word, Sacrament, Discipline, Prayer, Practice. And,

1st. The Minister of CHRIST should feed his Sheep by the Word, and that both in the Form of *Catechising* and *Preaching*. We are commanded *to train up a Child in the Way that he should go, and inform'd, that when he is Old, he will not depart from it*. Certainly it is the great Duty of all Christians to be settled in the sound Doctrines of Religion; as this is for the Glory of God, so it tends to promote our own Benefit, as well as the Good of others; as Error tends to debauch the Mind and deprave the Life, and hence we read of *damnable Heresies*; so on the Contrary, Truth tends to form the Mind to Virtue and Goodness, and therefore we are said *to be sanctify'd by it, John 17*. Now surely the Way to be settled and establish'd in Religion, is to understand its fundamental Principles in their due Series
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and Connection, which cannot be so readily attain'd, as by the humble and familiar Method of Catechising, *Heb. 5. 12. For when for the Time Ye ought to be Teachers, Ye have need that one teach You again the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* Religion is certainly a *reasonable Service*; *Rom. 12. 1.* But how can it be so to us, unless we understand the Grounds of it? surely the Knowledge of *first Principles* serves as a Key to open the whole System, and therefore enriches the Mind, and is a Lamp to the Feet; this arms us with proper Defensives against the Tricks of Seducers who with good Words and fair Speeches, deceive the Hearts of the Simple; this like a Ballast keeps us from being *toss'd about like little Children with every wind of Doctrine*; by the Craft of those that lie in Wait to deceive; this tends to our increase in Goodness, but unfix'dness to the very contrary, for how can a Plant thrive that is frequently remov'd? Such as are unstable as Water, like *Ruben*, are not like to prevail.

Again, a Minister of CHRIST should feed his Sheep by the Word preach'd, in the following Manner, viz.

1st. Soundly and orthodoxly, the Ministers of CHRIST should speak nothing but the *Words of Truth and Soberness*, nothing but *the Things that become sound Doctrines*, Tit. 2. 1. According to the Holy Scriptures, which are both a certain and sufficient Rule for our Direction, in matters of Faith and Practice, *able to make the Man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good Work.* It behoves and becomes an Ambassador to keep Close to his Instructions.

2dly. The Ministers of CHRIST should Preach plainly, avoiding all vain Ostentation of Learning, waving such Phrases as the People can't understand; for to what purpose is such preaching, but to declare the Speakers Pride, to beat the Air, and shoot over the Hearers Head's? What is it but giving them Bran instead of Bread, and speaking to them in a strange Language? The Apostle Paul *tho' a learned Man* didn't preach to the *Corinthians with the enticing Words of Mans Wisdom*, 1 Cor. 2. 4. But by what has been said, I wouldn't be understood to insinuate any Thing against a grave, and decent Stile of Speech, for this the Apostle himself us'd; *tho' it is by the Foolishness*
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of preaching that God saves those that believe, yet it is not by Foolish preaching.

3. The Ministers of CHRIST should preach prudently, *Col. 1. 28.* They ought to chuse such Subjects to preach upon as are best fitted to the Times and Places they live in, and insist most upon such Subjects as are of greatest Importance; this was the Apostle *Paul's* Practice, he preach'd *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord JESUS CHRIST.* They should lay the Foundation both in Doctrinals and Practicals before they build the Superstructure; the Milk of first Principles plainly opened, should be ministred to those that are but Babes in Understanding, as well as the Meat of abstruse and sublime Points to those that are strong Men.

And seeing that Conversion to God is the Foundation of practical Holiness, the Ministers of CHRIST should bend the strength of their Labours to promote it by all proper Methods, first attempting to alarm the secure by the Terrors of God, and by unhinging the false Foundations of their Hope, and then by opening CHRIST in all the Charms of his Person, Offices and

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Relations, Sufferings and Obedience, and in all the Beauty of his Sufficiency and Love. After the Understanding is inform'd by a calm and methodical Explication of divine Truth, doubtless all the other Powers and Passions of the Soul should be pathetically address'd with proper Arguments and Incentives, both of Terror and Love ; all the Arts of Persuasion should be us'd in order to compel Sinners to come in to the Gospel Feast.

4. The Ministers of CHRIST should preach boldly, with Tongues inflam'd by a Coal from the Altar ; as Embassadors of the great God they should declare his Truths authoritively, 1. Tim. iv. 11. *These Things command and teach.* The Ministers of CHRIST should *cry aloud and not spare,* they should *shew to Judah their Transgressions, and to the House of Jacob their Sins ;* no Man's Censure should deter them herefrom.

5. They should preach *faithfully ;* as Stewards of God's House, they should give to every one his Portion in due Season ; as they should Minister the wholesome Food of Instruction to the Ignorant, so likewise
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the bitter, but needful, Food of Reproof to the Obstinate, and the sweet Food of Consolation to the Disconsolate. Ministers are not only commanded *to cry aloud*, but *to comfort God's People*: They should follow the Order of the Spirit; and try to wound before they heal, by denouncing the Vengeance of an incens'd Diety against the secure and unpenitent; in this they should be *Boanerges*, or *Sons of Thunder*; to such their Addresses, at Times, should be like claps of Thunder, and flashes of Lightning. But to the broken in Heart; they should be *Barnabas's*, Sons of Consolation, *be Lambs they should carry*, as it were, *in their Arms*, and lead those gently that are with Young; and in Miniistring private Reproof, much Caution and Tenderneſs should be us'd; least Persons be enrag'd instead of being reform'd. The bitter Pill of Reproof shou'd be dipt in Sugar, an excellent Example of this we have in our Lords Reproof of the Church of *Ephesus*; Rev. ii. 1. 2. 4. first he commends them for what was praise worthy, and then introduces the Reproof, *nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee.* The Ministers of CHRIST

should deliver the whole Council of God. without keeping back any of it.

6. They should preach *frequently* and *affectionately*, they must be instant in Season and out of Season, *reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long Sufferring and Doctrine.* Paul exhorted the *Ephesians* with many Tears, and he was pleased with *Timothy's* Tears, Ministers should be Men of Bowels, as well as of Brains. O! with what compassionate relentings should they address a perishing secure World, and with what pity and bleedings of Heart should they bind up wounded Souls? But

2. The Ministers of CHRIST shou'd feed his Sheep by the Sacraments, dispens'd reverently and regularly according to his Institution, *go and baptize all Nations; do this in Remembrance of me: By Baptism* we are initiated into the visible Church of CHRIST; and by the *Lord's Supper* we celebrate the memorial of his dying Love, by this golden Conduit the blessed Head of Influence is wont to communicate much strength and sweetness to his People.

3. Another way of feeding CHRIST Sheep, is by Discipline; as we need the staff of
 Consolation

Consolation to support us, so likewise the Rod of Discipline to correct us ; without this the Church of CHRIST would be like *Lais*, a City without Walls ; it is by this that unmeet Guests are kept from the Lords Table, and other Censures inflicted, according to the variety of Offences, as well as remov'd when Penitence is credibly profess'd. The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, or of the visible Church, whereby its Doors are open'd and shut, are put into the Hands of CHRIST Ministers. Here I would observe, that two extremes respecting Discipline shou'd be with equal care avoided, the first of which is, when new Terms of Communion are contriv'd, which CHRIST, the Head and Law-Giver of his Church, has not made ; hereby such whom CHRIST receives, are rejected, and the Church torn into an Infinity of Parts. The other Extreme is, when the Terms that CHRIST has fixed are not kept to, but the Key of Discipline is entirely neglected ; thus the Church of God is *made a Den of Thieves, a Cage of unclean Birds*, to the equal dishonour and detriment of Religion.

4. The Ministers of CHRIST should feed his Sheep by their fervent and believing Supplications, 1 *Theff.* v. 23. They should constantly carry the Case of their People upon their Bosoms in all their Supplications before the Throne of God, as *Aaron* the Names of the twelve Tribes upon his Breast Plate; without this their Ministrations are not like to be crown'd with Successes.

5. They should feed them by their Practice, which ought to be exemplary, *Tit.* ii. 7. *In all Things shewing thyself a Patern of good Works*; and especially they should excel in those that are of most difficult Performance, such as *Self-denial, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Contentment with their Lot, Heavenly Mindedness, Sobriety and Charity*, such Virtues as they are wont to be charg'd with the want of, in them they should excel. This will probably influence their Hearers in attracting the Affection and Imitation of some, and in constraining a fearful Veneration from others: This will give Weight to their publick Discourses, and make them more piercing to the Consciences of Men.

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But when Ministers by their general course of Practice, contradict their publick Discourses, they are like to have but little Impression upon Mankind; for what do they look like, but a Scene of Mockery and Hypocrisy? Who can think that such are in earnest, who do not regard what they say themselves? Mankind will be induc'd to believe (and that not without Reason) that such do but act a part in their publick Performances, in order to secure a private Interest: Mankind have Eyes as well as Ears, and are apt to be more influenc'd by Example than Precept.

I proceed now to the next propos'd, which was *to shew wherein the necessity of Love to CHRIST appears, in order to feed the Sheep of CHRIST to purpose,* And,

1st. Without *love to Christ* they are not fit to encounter, with Courage, the Dangers that attend their Work; they are apt, thro' Cowardice and carnal Policy to take such Methods as rather serve to screen themselves from the Cross, than to bring Sinners to CHRIST. Surely if we *please Men we are not the Servants of JESUS CHRIST.*

2. If Ministers love not CHRIST, they are not dispos'd to perform the Duties of their Place with persevering Diligence: How shall they love the Work when they hate the Master? And if they love not the Work, is it reasonable to suppose that they will be diligent in the Performance of it?

3. If Ministers love not CHRIST, they are unfit to bear with Patience the Difficulties that attend their Work; and does not their Impatience reflect Dishonour upon Religion and mar the Interests of it? And

4. Without love how shall they speak with Sympathy and Experience? And without these, are not their Discourses cold and formal? Again,

5. If Ministers love not CHRIST, they hate him, for there is no Medium between these two; and what probability is there of the Success of such? (comparitively speaking)

But I hasten to the Improvement; and

1st. We may learn from what has been said, that Graceless Men are unfit for the Ministry, and therefore should not undertake it; I would therefore now propose the Question to you Sir (who intends to devote yourself

devote yourself to the Gospel Ministry in this Place) which the Lord JESUS propos'd *three* Times to the Apostle *Peter*, do you love the Redeemer in the Manner before describ'd? If so, (as we trust you do) *feed* CHRIST'S *Sheep and Lambs* in the Manner before expressed; to this you should be induc'd by the following Arguments.

1st. The positive Command of CHRIST mention'd in our Text, should constrain you, *feed my Sheep*.

2. The Honour and Glory of God is concern'd in your conscientious Discharge of the Duties of the Ministerial Office: Such whom God Honours by putting them into the Ministry, are under peculiar Obligations to honour God; and alas! how exceedingly is the venerable Name of God blasphemed, and his declaritive Glory eclips'd, when such who profess themselves to be his Embassadors act unworthy of that sacred Character?

3. The Credit of your particular Profession should also induce you to fidelity and diligence in the Work you are going to undertake: Many Men either wanting Time, Capacity or Inclination to examine into the Grounds of the different Sects which constitute

stitute the Christian World, do judge of different Sets of Principles, rather according to the Lives of their Professors, than according to the Strength or Weakness of the Arguments which are adduc'd to support them.

4. Another Argument is your own Comfort in this World, as well as distinguish'd degree of happiness in that to come, such as turn many to righteousness shall shine as the Stars with distinguish'd Lustre in the Kingdom of their Father for ever and ever.

5. Another inducement, is the spiritual Edification and eternal Salvation of your Hearers ! O then be entreated so to preach, pray and live, as may tend to save yourself and those that hear you.

I may add, Sir, to what has been said, that the Consideration of the unspeakable Worth and perpetual Duration of the Souls of Men, together with what the Lord JESUS CHRIST has done and suffer'd to purchase their Happiness, as well as the Account you must give before his Bar at last of your Stewardship, and the dreadful Consequences of Unfaithfulness, should conspire to incite
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you to feed the Flock of God to be committed to your Care and Charge, in the manner before related. And may the Almighty God graciously assist you in his Service. Who is sufficient for these Things? But seeing the Shepherd and the Sheep are correlates, and that the Performance of his Duty to them, depends, in some Measure, upon theirs to him. I think it not improper, especially upon this Occasion, to mention the Duties which People owe to their Pastors, which are principally these following, namely, Honour, Obedience, Defence, Maintenance. And

1st. They should Honour them by a ready Reception of, and affectionate Love to their Persons, a high Esteem of their Work, and a sincere Reverence for their Office: Hence is that memorable saying of the holy JESUS, Mat. x. 40. 41 *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me: He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets Reward.* The Apostle Paul commends the Galatians, that they despised him not upon the Account of his Temptations and Afflictions, but on the contrary

contrary receiv'd him as an *Angel of God*, yea even as *CHRIST JESUS*; such was the Strength of their Affection that they could have even pluck'd out their own Eyes and given them to him, had it been proper and practicable, *Gal. iv. 14, 15*. The same Apostle advises the Church of *Philipi* to receive *Epaphroditus*, whom he commends for his Fidelity, Charity, Zeal and Sympathy; I say he advises them to receive him in the Lord with all Gladness, and to hold such in Reputation. *Philip. ii. 29*.

It is also necessary that the People highly esteem their Ministers for their Works sake, for to this they are plainly and pungently exhorted, *1 Thes. v. 12, 13*. *We beseech you Brethren to know them which labour among you, and over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Works sake, and be at Peace among your selves.*

The Ministerial Office in Regard of it's intrinsic Dignity deserves Respect, for it negotiates the most noble and important Work that ever mortal Man was employ'd in, viz. The perfect Reconciliation and eternal Salvation of undone and perishing Creatures

Creatures. And also in Respect of the divine Constitution, this Office demands Reverence, 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine*; it is no doubt with Design to shew the Dignity and Honours of this Office, that such who are employ'd in it are cloath'd with the venerable Characters of *workers with God, Embassadors, Bishops, Stewards, Angels, Stars.*

2. Another Duty which People owe their Pastors is Obedience in the Lord. See, Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account, that they may do it with Joy and not with Grief.* The Priests Lips should preserve Knowledge, and the People shou'd seek the Law at his Mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts: Answerable to the excellent Pattern of the primitive Christians, they should with holy seriousness enquire of their Ministers *the Way to Zion, with their Faces thither ward, saying Men and Brethren what shall we do to be saved?* Acts ii. 37. O! it never goes well with

with Societies and particular Persons, 'till it comes to this, until poor Sinners are struck with a Sense of their perishing State: and full of Heart affecting Enquiries about the Way to eternal Glory and Blessedness. O ! its pity that many should so much busy and bustle themselves about smaller Matters in Religion; about which wise and good Men may be mistaken, which through Gods Mercy will never exclude them out of Paradise, while in the mean Time things of undoubted Certainty, and infinitely greater Weight are sadly neglected ! And indeed People should not only enquire about their own particular Case, but that of the Church in general; *Watchman what of the Night ?*

It is also the Duty of the People to attend upon the publick and stated Exercises of Religion, they should *not forget the Assembling of themselves together, as the Manner of some is*; and that they may do this to their eternal Advantage, something should be done before Hearing, something in the time of it, and something after it. Impartial Self-Examination; serious Consideration, and sincere Supplication; are necessary Preparatives

paratives to our right hearing the holy Word of God.

And in the Time of hearing, we should, with good *Lydia*, attend to the Things that are spoken by the Preacher, without which there is no probability of our profiting: As it's hard to hit a Bird on the Wing, so it's Difficult to fix an Arrow of Conviction in a wandering Heart. We should also with the noble *Bereans*, try what we hear by the touch-stone of the divine Word, and finding it agreeable thereto, we should receive it believingly, as a Message sent from the great God to us by the Mouth of his Servants, for the Word preach'd will not profit us, unless it be mix'd with Faith in those that hear it.

Such as would receive Benefit by the preach'd Word, should thirst after it as new born Babes after the Milk of the Breast; to them the Tabernacles of the Lord will be amiable; and they will love the Place where his Honour dwells.

And such must lay aside all Filthiness and superfluity of Naughtiness, and receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word which is able to save their Souls; being doers of the Word
and

and not hearers only; for without this, hearing will but deceive and destroy us.

The Practice of *Ezekiel's* Hearers it's to be fear'd is followed by two many of the present Generation, *they come to and sit in the House of God as his People, and with their Mouth shew much love, but their Hearts go after their Covetousness, they hear God's Words but they will not do them.* Their Ministers well modulated Voice, or flowing Eloquence, pleases their Ear and Fancy like a Tune well plaid upon a musical Instrument, but does not profit their Souls, for they remain unrenew'd and unreform'd by all the Sermons they hear.

One thing more in the Time of Hearing I would earnestly recommend to you my Brethren, and that is, that you beware of applying a wrong Portion of the Word to yourselves: Ye should impartially search your State and Condition, and see how it is between God and your Souls, and if upon Examination you find yourselves in an unconverted Condition, apply the Threatnings of the Word to yourselves; if otherwise apply the Promises.

After

After Hearing it's necessary to reflect upon what you have heard, and pray over it.

A 3d. Duty which People owe their Ministers, is *Defence against Injury offer'd them*, for this the Apostle Paul praises *Priscilla* and *Aquilla*; Rom. 16. 4. *Who have*, says he, *for my Life laid down their own Necks*, unto whom not only I give Thanks, but all the Churches of the Gentiles. For the Protection of their Ministers they should supplicate Heaven, and that more especially in perilous Times when their Lives are rescu'd by the rage of Enemies, in Imitation of the primitive Church for imprison'd *Peter*; but it is necessary that they should ordinarily and statedly implore the God of all Grace, that he would succeed and crown with his special and saving *Benediction* their Labours among them, without which they are not like to receive much profit by them; for this the Holy Apostles earnestly besought the People among whom they preach'd.

Brethren pray for us, that a Door of Utterance may be given us. Ye may the rather be excited to this by considering that

your Ministers encreasing Endowments and Assistances will redound to your own Benefit.

A 4th Duty which People owe their Ministers is *Maintenance*, Gal. vi. 6. *Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good Things*; this Maintenance ought to be so liberal as to prevent his being necessarily embarras'd for his own, or Family's Support, in the Cares and Business of the World, and such as will enable him to be charitable to the Poor in general, and hospitable to Strangers in particular, as well as to make some Provision for his own Posterity. It would be hard to deny Ministers that Affection to their own, to which there is such a strong Instinct in Nature, and for which there are such express Commands in Scripture: The stinginess or neglect of People in this Matter has sometimes expos'd generous Minds to great Temptations, and been no small Let in their ministerial Work. The aforesaid Duties I would urge by the following Arguments, *viz.* The Honour of God and Religion, your Ministers Comfort, and your own Edification.

And

And 1st. The great God will be honour'd by your Obedience to his commanding Authority in the Duties before mention'd, and the infinitely valuable Interests of his holy Religion would gain Ground by your regular and conscientious Observance of the Duties you owe to the Dispenser of it.

2dly, Your Ministers Comfort and Usefulness in some Measure depend upon the Performance of the aforesaid Duties. Comfort and Usefulness are Relatives, in some Measure that which promotes the one promotes the other, and that which obstructs the one, often obstructs the other. When People suffer their Ministers and their Families to be pinsh'd by Penury and Want, this with the Cares, Labours and Sorrows which attend their Work (being depriv'd of the common Advantages others have to provide for their Support) will in a course of Time dispirit them with melancholy, and render them unfit for their ministerial Labours.

Farther your Edification depends upon the Performance of the aforesaid Duties; for how can ye expect that your Ministers
 Labours

Labours will be blest'd to you, to whom, you perform not your Obligation?

I need not add, that you are to be bound by solemn Promises to perform your Duty to each other, which if either of you neglect, you will be guilty of Covenant breaking: Now that ye may improve to your eternal Salvation the Means of Divine Grace, O! think upon the unspeakable Value of them, as well as the uncertainty of their continuance with you, and yours with them. Is not Life and Immortality brought to light by the Gospel? While ye have the Light O walk in it. 2 Cor. vi. 1. 2. *We then as Workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the Grace of God (the Doctrine of Grace) in vain. Behold now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.*

O consider that your Life is but a Vapour, which appears for a little Time and then vanishes away. ETERNITY is long, and your Souls precious, your Damnation will not only be ascertain'd, but aggravated by the abuse of the Means of Mercy, *how shall ye escape if ye neglect so great Salvation? It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomerah*

morha in the Day of the Lord, than for you. Now if you would obtain the Blessing of the Gospel, keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and follow the Things that make for Peace. and Things wherewith one may edify another.

I conclude with the Advice of the Apostle Paul to the Church of Philipi, Philip. ii. 1. 2. *If there be therefore any Consolation in CHRIST; if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one Mind.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

PAge 8, line 15, for contended, read contented. p. 12. l. 23. f. field, r. fold. p. 18. l. 2. f. Snfficiency, r. Sufficiency. p. 21. l. 12. f. Christ, r. Christ's. p. 24. l. 20. f. comparitively, r. comparatively.
