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1862

THE
NEW-JERSEY PREACHER:
OR,
SERMONS
ON
PLAIN & PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

BY SOME OF THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,
RESIDING IN THE STATE OF NEW-JERSEY.

VOL. I.

Edited by

George S. Wood
1862

Wood
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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....2 Cor. v. 20.

PUBLISHED BY D. FENTON, TRENTON;
AND
CHARLES D. GREEN & CO. NEW-BRUNSWICK.

L. DEARE, PRINTER.

1863

New Jersey
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Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

BY JOHN WOODHULL, D.D.

Pastor of the Presbyterian Congregation of Freehold.

NEW-JERSEY PREACHER.

SERMON III.

Revelation ii. 10.—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

“**BE** thou faithful unto death.” This charge is from the First and the Last—from him who was dead, and is alive. In the *gospel* of John we see the Lord Jesus a man, conversing with men ; *there* we see him agonize in the garden, expire on Golgotha, and laid in the tomb. *Here*, in the *Revelation* of John, we see him raised from the dead and in glory ; with a countenance shining as the sun in his strength, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, or churches, and holding the stars, the ministers of the churches, in his right hand. *Here*, he speaks and acts as having conquered the grave, triumphed over death and hell, and, having angels, principalities, and powers in subjection, and exercising supreme and universal sway. This charge, then, is enforced by the highest authority. It is directed to the angel, or minister of the church of Smyrna, and through him comes down to these ends of the earth, and to every minister of the gospel ;—*be thou faithful unto death*—with fidelity perform all the duties of thy solemn office, perseveringly through life, and to the parting with life itself, should thy trials reach so far ; and I will give thee a crown—a crown of life.

We have in the text, a solemn charge, delivered to ministers of the gospel, by the *First and the Last*, that is,

by THE ETERNAL—"be thou faithful unto death"—and, a gracious promise of an infinite reward to those who shall faithfully execute this charge—"I will give thee a crown of life."

In discoursing on this solemn subject, I propose, through divine assistance,

I. To consider some qualifications which are eminently needful in the faithful execution of this charge.

II. How it must be executed.

III. The danger of being unfaithful.

IV. The infinite reward of those who shall be found faithful.

First, I am to consider some qualifications which are eminently needful in the faithful executions of this charge.

And here, PIETY and PRUDENCE may be considered as holding the first rank. A good natural genius suitably improved by the knowledge of language, and of the sciences, is needful. The apostles, who were at first illiterate, were taught in the school of Christ, and miraculously endowed with knowledge from on high, before they were sent forth as heralds of the cross. Neither can we believe, that God ever so sanctified ignorance, as to make it a light to the world, or a safe guide to those who sit in darkness. But, *piety* or *real religion*, is eminently needful for a minister of the gospel. Without this he will be likely to pay but little regard to the solemn duties of his office. And if he discharge them at all, how can it be from a good conscience towards God, respect to his glory, or zeal for the salvation of souls? The great spring of his actions must be *self*—a principle very unsuitable to the pure nature and design of his office, and very remote from that excellent spirit which

ought to rule in his heart, and preside in all his actions. It is religion alone that disposes and qualifies us to aim at the glory of God in all, or in any thing, that we do. This attaches us to the gospel, to its doctrines, and laws, as the power of God, and wisdom of God unto salvation—this discovers its divine glories, and renders it precious—engages us to commend it with zeal, and makes us truly concerned for its success. A minister, who faithfully discharges his trust, will not only have the doctrines of the gospel proceeding from his lips, but also shining from his life : he will *live religion*. A lively and abiding sense of its important realities, will be of unspeakable consequence as to the success of his ministry—it will have the happiest effect upon every part of it, and give life and spirit to the whole—it will dispose him to take heed to his conduct and conversation—inspire him with holy watchfulness and caution—and, render him meek and gentle, kind and condescending to all. It will awaken the powers of the man, and put in motion all the springs of action ;—hence, he will pray with fervor, read with diligence, preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. *Religion* is that inward savour in the character of ministers, which makes them the *salt* of the earth ; it is, that oil of grace whence they become *lights* in the world ; and, without which, they are in danger of being not only useless, but *noxious*.

The second qualification mentioned as being eminently needful, for the faithful execution of the ministerial office, is *prudence*.¹ Here, the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove should be duly blended. Indiscretion in conduct and conversation will low-

er, and even sink the reputation of a minister, dishonor his office, and either lessen or destroy his usefulness.

The want of prudence, will cloud the brightest talents and eclipse the most shining abilities; no knowledge of language, no degree of science, not even religion itself, seems to be sufficient to compensate this loss. But, infidelity holds up its head, and religion mourns and languishes, while its advocates are daily exposing themselves by their follies. O! how highly necessary is it, that the ambassadors of Christ, who negotiate a momentous treaty of peace, between the offended majesty of heaven and earth and his rebellious subjects, should exercise the utmost circumspection, and carefully observe the different circumstances of time and place, of character and tempers, lest sinners should perish—the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom suffer—the honour of God be sullied, and the great design of their mission frustrated by their own indiscretion.

Secondly, We proceed to consider, how a minister must execute this solemn charge.

Here, we are not to suppose that the whole of our duty is confined to the pulpit, to the house of God, or to the congregation where we statedly labour; but, that it extends, in a degree, to the presbytery, the synod, the general assembly to which we belong, and, even to the church of Christ, yet more extensively. Let no one, then, suppose that he faithfully performs his duty, while he neglects it in any of these departments.

At present we have time only to treat of the pulpit performances, which indeed contain the most important part of the minister's work.

1st. He must preach with *plainness and simplicity of style*. This may not be altogether calculated to please

the fancy, and to offer incense to our own vanity, yet, it is well suited to inform the judgment, and reach the heart. And indeed, it must be considered as a sad symptom on hearers, when they are disposed to have their fancies pleased in serious and solemn subjects; and a symptom not less sad on preachers, when they make it their business to gratify this disposition. As well may the physician undertake to cure a fever, and bind up a broken bone, with fine set music, as the minister to heal the disease of sin, and bind up the broken hearted, with flowers of language or strokes of wit. Dare he hope to receive a *crown* for his fidelity, who coldly entertains his hearers with *accomplished trifles*, while he ought in the most healing and animated manner, to proclaim to them those great truths of the gospel, which justly arrest the attention of angels and of men! There is a natural and commanding eloquence arising from a deep sense of the subject, from an ardent love for souls, and from zeal for the glory of God, wherein the speaker forgets himself, that of all others, is the most powerful rhetorick: and I believe these are the discourses which God usually owns, and condescends to bless.

2d. A minister must be awfully careful, that he may be able to say with the apostle, "I have not shunned to declare unto you, all the counsel of God;" that, at parting from his people, he may again make the apostle's language his own, and say, "I am pure from the blood of all men." To be charged with the blood of men, is, awful, but, to be charged with the blood of their souls, and that by the eternal God, before whom we are soon to stand, carries something in it which language is too feeble to express.

To avoid this, we must endeavour to awaken those who securely sleep in sin ; teach bold transgressors the error of their ways, and danger of their state ; show them the wrath that hangs over their heads, and the destruction which lies beneath them : and, in the most persuasive and pathetic manner, beseech them to flee for refuge, before the storm of divine indignation overtake them, and they welter in flames which can never be quenched. We are also to bring to them the free offers and precious promises of the gospel ; set before them the heavenly rest, and paradise of joy—the crown that can never fade, and the kingdom that can never be moved ; but above all, we are, if possible, to constrain them by the love and sufferings of a Saviour. We are to set forth Jesus Christ crucified before them, pouring forth his blood in making atonement for sin, and pouring out his soul in making intercession for transgressors. Yes, like Philip in Samaria, we must preach CHRIST to our people. We must open up his boundless fulness and all-sufficiency, his rich grace and infinite compassion as a Saviour—show them their own insufficiency, and the defect of every other refuge, and the last necessity which they are under of depending only on him for life and salvation. We must make known the terms of their interest in him, and acceptance with God through him ; in a word, we must, comparatively, neither know nor preach any thing among them, *save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. To him all the lines of our discourses should bend, and in him terminate. We must also lead weary and heavy laden sinners to this Saviour, support weak believers ; defeat the dangerous errors of the times, and, in fine, do all that is in our power, which tends to turn

men from the ways of sin and death, lead them in the way of life, and bring them to glory.

3d. A minister must exercise the utmost *diligence* in the execution of this charge.

They greatly mistake their business, who enter into the gospel ministry, that they may lead a life of indolence and ease. For, as it is a work which requires the most diligent and laborious application, so it will be a most awful thing for the stewards of Christ's household, to receive that reprimand from the Judge, "thou slothful and wicked servant." We must therefore meditate on these things, carefully seek furniture for the great work, and give ourselves wholly unto it. For we are charged before God, to be instant in season and out of season; we are to think no pains too much, no care or application too great, which are within our reach, to promote the vast design of our ministry. We are even to travail in birth, to see Christ formed in the souls of our hearers. A great work is before us, in our study, in personal converse with our hearers, and in our public administrations, enough to engage the whole man; and, the infinite importance of the business, with the dread account which we are to give, are enough to challenge our most diligent activity, and absorb the whole soul.

4th. We must preach with *pathetic earnestness*, and *affectionate solemnity*.

We watch for souls—for souls of *infinite* value, whose salvation is yet depending, and now hangs in awful suspense. And can we with cold indifference look on and see the extreme hazard which those committed to our care are running; some by building their salvation on the bubbles of their own fancy; some, on the sandy

foundation of their own merits, while others, intoxicated with the allurements of the world and pleasures of sense, carelessly void of reflection, are treading on the breaking brink of eternity, liable, every step they take, to be lost—lost to this world, and to all worlds! “Passion would be reason, and transport temper here!” To lull hearers to sleep with languid essays in such a situation as this, and on matters of everlasting consequence, which might overwhelm their souls, or transform them into statues of attention, is a shocking inconsistency! It is inconsistent with the orator and christian, but most of all, inconsistent with the faithful ambassador of Christ, and the solemn charge given in our text. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, and the value of souls, we must persuade men. We must place before them their danger, and their remedy—bring to their view the *safety* of appearing in the righteousness of Christ, and the *danger* of depending on their own, which, like the yielding air, or breaking bubble, will vanish from them in the time of their greatest need. We must, with the utmost fervour of affection and expression, warn them by all the thunders of the law, and beseech them by all the grace of the gospel, to come away from every evil course, and every refuge of lies, and rest their whole salvation on Christ Jesus—be reconciled to God, accept of his mercy without delay, and not *wrest* from his almighty arm, that punishment which he is unwilling to inflict.

5th. To be *faithful*, ministers of the gospel must preach *experimentally*.

We should be able to say with the apostle, “that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

Christ." This would render our labours pleasing to ourselves, profitable to our hearers, and approved of our God. And, although they may be ministers of Christ, their office acknowledged by him, (even *Judas* was an apostle), and, though they may be made instrumental of good to others, who have never felt the power of the divine life in their own souls; for, "the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us;" yet, they who preach an unknown Christ, cannot be acquainted with the methods of grace, and variety of exercise, which souls meet in their way to heaven; and therefore, must be poor guides to others in a way which they know not themselves. And how inconceivable must be the disappointment and anguish of our souls, if, in the last great day, both our ministry and our people should rise in judgment against us, and we find, when too late, that while we had preached to others we ourselves were cast away.

6th. The charge, *be thou faithful unto death*, includes and enjoins *perseverance* through life.

Having put our hand to the plough, we are not to look back. After we have in the presence of God, and of the Lord Jesus, devoted ourselves to this great work, and have received the solemn charge, we are not to shrink from the undertaking, nor abandon the cause on account of the labours or dangers which may attend it; but, relying on divine aid, we are with diligence, with self-denial, and with fortitude to persevere—to endure labours however hard, and withstand opposition however formidable. And in doing this, a supreme love to Christ is of the first importance. Is *diligence* needful? Love will set in motion every spring, and awaken every faculty of the soul, and engage us to meditate, to read, to pray, and to fill up each portion of time with duty. Is *self-*

denial needful? Love stoops to any terms or to any condition; it was this that brought the Son of God from Heaven to earth—from a crown to a cross, and from a throne to a grave, that he might redeem us, and our fellow-men from death: and shall it not bring us to stoop down and take up the cross for him, and in his cause? And is the *fortitude* and *courage* of the lion sometimes needful? There is nothing like love, to inspire with this. This love, not only raised the ancient reformers and heralds of the cross above the fear of man, but hath enabled even delicate women and young children to smile at danger, despise death, and court the crown of martyrdom.

The gospel history, in the life and character of Paul, affords a pre-eminent example of faithfulness, of labours, of sufferings, and perseverance in the ministerial work. Having been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, he possessed great knowledge and reputation, and had a fair prospect of rising to places of honour and profit. But, he gave up his earthly prospects, gave up his ease, parted from his friends, and entered upon a course of labours and perils, an affecting account of which is given by himself; yet, saith he, “*none of these things move me*, neither count I my life dear to myself, that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.” Paul, in the fullest sense of the word, was *faithful unto death*; he sealed his ministry with his blood. And when the time of his departure was at hand, and he ready to be offered, he could confidently say “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which

the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

Thirdly—We now proceed to consider the *danger* of being unfaithful.

1st. Unfaithfulness in our ministry, will be dangerous to the people committed to our care—dangerous to their souls—dangerous to their spiritual peace in this world—and to their everlasting peace and happiness in the world to come—and will leave them exposed to the wrath of God—to the dreadful penalty of his holy law—to the stroke of the sword of divine justice, and to final condemnation and eternal death.

It is a tragical and affecting spectacle, to see men die by human laws; but how much more so must it be, to see them led forth to that last execution, and hear the beginning of those eries and wailings which must never have an end! And oh! how must these eries pierce our souls, should it appear that they, and the agonies from which they arise, were all occasioned by our neglect or our unfaithfulness!

And this danger is brought *near* by the shortness and uncertainty of life. How short is the space, and how few are the steps, between our hearers and the eternal world! How frequently are we called to see them on a dying bed, or to attend their bodies to the grave, while the soul has already appeared before God, and received her doom! Their danger, therefore, is near, even at the door, and loudly and solemnly calls upon us to exercise towards them the utmost care and faithfulness. And, more especially, when it is further considered that our life is as great an uncertainty as theirs, and that death is reaching forth his cold hand, to stop their ears from hearing, and our mouths from speaking, and to hasten both them and us before our final Judge!

2d. Unfaithfulness in their office is awfully dangerous to Ministers themselves, as it brings the guilt of perjury before God, on their own souls. The vows of God are on them ; they have been charged before him, and by the Son of God ; and they have, in the presence of both, and before angels and men, solemnly engaged, faithfully to execute their sacred trust. It was a very aggravating circumstance of the falsehood told by Ananias, that it was spoken, not to *men*, but to *God*. And, the oath of fidelity in the ministry, is, with much formality and solemnity, made *before God, and to God*. Therefore, a violation of it will be an offence committed in the presence of, and against a being of infinite perfections and glory, and will infer a malignity, to which we do not venture to fix a bound, and must expose to a punishment equally boundless !

The neglect of souls must be very criminal in all, but eminently so in those who have deliberately and publicly taken upon themselves the charge of them. In this case, it would not only be perjury in us, but extreme cruelty to them, and base treachery to our Lord, who has bought them with his blood, and committed them to our care.

Unfaithfulness in our sacred trust, will not only incur the guilt of perjury, but, will also bring the blood of souls upon us. God has placed us as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, and hath declared, “ If thou dost not speak, to warn the wicked of his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” God hath manifested the high value which he sets on souls, by the vast expense which he hath been at for their redemption. The mighty effort of the wisdom of God in concerting the scheme of salvation—

his great love in giving his only begotten Son to execute it, taken in connection with all the Redeemer's labours, with his sufferings and death, loudly proclaim to all worlds, that, in the estimation of the eternal God, souls are of *infinite* value. How fearful a thing then, must it be, to have this same God charge the loss of them to us, and require their blood at our hands ! Then, happy Paul who could say, "I am pure from the blood of all men," and happy are those, who can make his assertion their own.

Fourthly. Let us now consider the *reward* of those who shall be found faithful.

Be thou faithful unto *death*, and I will give thee a crown of life. These words plainly intimate that the complete fulfilment of the promise is not to be expected in the present world : for, the crown of *life*, is to be given after *death*. Yet, the Lord Jesus, who liveth and was dead, hath been graciously pleased, by his gospel, to draw aside the veil of darkness, which curtains round the eternal world, and thereby enables us, like Moses, to take a Pisgah view of that promised inheritance, which lies beyond the Jordan of death.

God doth not give either his ministers or people their inheritance in this world, where they continue but a few days, and where all, like travellers in a common inn, bad as well as good, are promiscuously entertained. But, he gives his children their portion in that better world, where he himself is, and where they are to have their settled abode, and everlasting rest—where the faithful and fervent Paul wears his crown, and where the holy apostles possess their thrones ; there also those who are now faithful ministers of Christ, are to look for, and to receive their crown of life—CROWN OF LIFE !—These

great and highly figurative expressions are worthy of our most serious and careful consideration, that we may obtain some idea of the vast and comprehensive blessings contained in them. The usual language of mortals was never intended to express the majestic realities of eternity, it was designed for lower objects. Hence, the happiness and glory of heaven are illustrated by a crown, by a throne, and by a kingdom, or by such things on earth, as are most esteemed and valued among men. These similitudes are used, because we find nothing else that can afford us a more exalted idea of the supreme excellency and value of that glorious state. For, a crown is the highest wish of ambition, in which, the most aspiring mind proposes to rest.

But an earthly crown, however rich with gems and gold, and resplendent in the eyes of mortals, and admired by them as glorious and great, yet, must be but a dim and feint emblem of that dignity and dominion, of that glory and immortality, which are connected with, and give infinite value to the heavenly diadem, which not only exceeds what earthly monarchs possess, but goes vastly beyond the utmost reach of our imagination, for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Hence, a crown being too feint an emblem fully to represent the heavenly glory, *life*, is added—a *crown of life*, which increases and completes the idea. And, is expressive of *an endless life, in the heights of perfection, of happiness, and of glory*, in the eternal world. This will suppose, or include perfect freedom from all sin—from all temptation to sin—and, from all the penal consequences of sin. Yes, when the faithful servant shall have finished his

course and put off his tabernacle of clay, he will also put off the body of sin, and enter into rest, into the joy of his Lord, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.—There, also, the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary find rest—there the roaring lion can never come, nor the tempting serpent ever enter—there no eye weeps, no tongue ever complains; for, God shall wipe away all tears from every eye, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things shall have passed away.

The comprehensive reward will also include the *perfection of our natures*. Here we are in the infancy of human nature; we see as through a glass darkly, and know only the surfaces of things—there we shall see face to face, and know as we are known, in a clear, intuitive, and comprehensive manner. O! how ravishing will the contemplation of the mysteries of divine providence, the riches of divine grace, and the works of Almighty power be to a glorified saint!—But, how much more ravishing will the clear view of God himself, with all his boundless and attractive perfections, be to us, when made strong by immortality, and able to bear the dazzling lustre of so resplendent an object. And above all, what transcendent felicity and perfection will arise from the transforming nature of this view! “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,” saith the word of God—and, “we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” These words express an increasing conformity, a rising from one degree of glory to another degree of glory, in the scale of perfection; and if we may suppose the increase to continue—to continue

through eternity, then what imagination, what thought can reach the glorious height of perfection, to which a saint will at some period arrive !

Another part of the blessedness contained in the reward promised to those who shall be faithful, may be considered as resulting from the *glory and beauty of the place* prepared for them. The Lord Jesus, when about to leave the world, and enter into glory, told his disciples, that *he was going to prepare a place for them*. This is mentioned, as an object of his special attention and care, one which lay near his heart. Then, if in the space of six days, *by his speaking the word*, this vast system of creation rose into existence, with all that order and beauty, which we behold with so much astonishment and delight—then, what must we suppose *that mansion* to be, where he hath bestowed his most curious workmanship, and with divine skill prepared for those whom he loves, and whom he delights to honour ? It is called *an house* not made with hands ; and is so glorious, that the temple built by Solomon, covered with gold and precious stones, and enriched with the wealth of nations, was but its type, or shadow. It is also called *a city* ; but then it is a city, of which the new Jerusalem, described by the beloved apostle John, was only a shadow—“ I John,” said he, “ saw the holy city New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband.” The length, and the breadth, and the height of it were equal, each being twelve thousand furlongs, or, fifteen hundred miles ; the walls of it were jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass ! If all this is no more than the *shadow* ! then, what must we think of the *substance*—of heaven itself, the court of the eternal King, the seat of

his glorious empire, the royal palace, and throne of our incarnate God! from which all evil is banished, and where light, and life, and joy, forever dwell. And *is this the place* where our blessed Saviour receives his faithful ministers and people? Hear his own gracious words; “and if,” saith he, “I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Doth not every pious soul reply, *Lord it is enough?*

This happiness may be considered as further increased, by the *society and converse of the heavenly inhabitants.*

The pious and faithful of every age, and of every nation, will all meet in that blessed abode. Then, if we shall be so happy as to be found among them, we shall *there* sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob—we shall see the company of the Prophets—of the Holy Apostles—and the great company of the blessed Martyrs—*there*, we shall again see those who have been very dear to us, and have slept in Jesus, whether of our brethren in the ministry, of the people of our charge, or from our own families—we shall again enjoy their company, their conversation, and affections, and shall join our hearts and voices with theirs, in loving God without measure, and in praising him without end. But above all, *there* we shall see our Saviour and our God face to face, and shall satiate ourselves with the fulness of joy that is in his beatific presence, and in that ocean of pleasure, which is at his right hand for evermore.

Lastly, that which gives completeness to this happiness—to this great reward, is, its *duration.* The happiness is without intermission, and will be without end. It is an everlasting crown, the glory of which can never fade, it is an undefiled and incorruptible inheritance, re-

served in heaven, which can suffer no diminution by being possessed through eternity.—O, vast and boundless eternity, how dost thou at once astonish and delight us! thou addest new lustre to the crown of life, and givest new accents to the songs of the blessed, while they can in a triumph of holy security, say this happiness is endless, and this God is our God forever and ever.

The improvement follows :

1st. We cannot avoid reflecting upon the greatness and dread importance of the ministerial work—a work which hath for its object the salvation of souls, the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the glory of God—objects, which in their nature are infinite and reach to eternity! Who are sufficient for these things? Could we speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, we might tremble in approaching this sacred and awful work. What gifts and graces, what wisdom and prudence, what faithfulness and diligence, yea, what zeal for the glory of God, love to Christ, and compassion for souls are here needful! But our consolation is, that we serve a good master, who hath promised that as our days are, so shall our strength be. Had we no strength to depend on beyond our own, no encouragement but from human assistance, we might sit down in disconsolate despair, and utter the passionate language of Moses, “O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send,” for thy servant is insufficient for these things. But our sufficiency is of God, we have his divine promise for our security and consolation—“I am with you always.” With our Saviour by our side, we shall have nothing to fear. If he go with us into our study, into the pulpit, and among our people, we shall not only have easy, but joyful work. If he continue

with us always, we shall have light in darkness, strength in weakness, defence in dangers, victory over all our enemies, and finally, shall obtain the crown that can never fade, and the triumph that can never end.

2d. This subject leads us to look with trembling, to the last end of those who shall be found unfaithful in the sacred office. When conscience, and when God who is greater than conscience shall witness, that they had taken upon themselves the charge of souls, and had neglected them—that instead of awakening sinners from their slumbers, and warning them of their danger, they had lulled them to sleep by smooth and delusive words—that instead of preaching Christ Jesus, and him crucified, they had preached themselves, and offered incense to their own vanity—and, that instead of leading their people to the Redeemer's blood for cleansing, to his righteousness for clothing, and to his great salvation for life, they had left them exposed to wrath and eternal death : and, therefore, that their blood, the blood of their souls was found on them, and required from them. Surely, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for vain and vicious, or, for graceless and unfaithful ministers of the gospel.

Finally, let us admire and adore the grace and bounty of our Redeemer and our God, towards those ministers who shall be faithful unto death. He hath made them “ stewards of the manifold grace of God,” and, “ workers together with HIM.” And, to support their faith and hope, animate their zeal, and *insure* their fidelity and perseverance in the sacred work, he hath promised his presence—that he himself will be with them always, and that his *grace* shall be sufficient for them : and

then, to complete his bounty, he engages to crown his own gift—to crown that *grace* with glory.

O, how *short* are our labours, when compared to the *eternal* rest, and how *light* are our sufferings and services, when laid in the balance with the *eternal* weight of glory, and crown of life !

If the latter end of wicked and unfaithful ministers of the gospel shall be awful ; if they shall be followed with uncommon wrath, and be sunk down deep into misery, on the other hand, those who shall be found faithful and successful, will be raised high in heaven—brought near the throne, and wear a resplendent crown. “They that be *wise* (skilful teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the STARS, forever and ever.”—AMEN.