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A

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT BOSTON,

JULY 11, 1799,

AT THE

O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE

REV. *WILLIAM COLLIER.*

(ORDAINED AT LARGE.)



BY THOMAS BALDWIN, A. M.

Pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Boston.



B O S T O N :

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1799.



AN
ORDINATION SERMON.

I Tim. iv. 16.

“ TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF, AND UNTO THE DOCTRINE ; CONTINUE IN THEM : FOR IN DOING THIS THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE.”

THE dispensation of the gospel makes known the counsels of eternal love to the children of men. It publishes the great doctrine of reconciliation. It beams a heavenly light upon the devious path of the lonely pilgrim. It offers its sweetest consolations to soothe the distressed virtue, and conducts the weary traveller to everlasting rest.

How beautiful then upon the mountains must the feet of him be who bringeth these good tidings ? who publisheth salvation ; who sayeth unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !

To be entrusted with the gospel of the grace of God ; to be employed in recovering lost sinners to the forfeited favour of their offended Sovereign ; and in conducting them in the way that leads to glory, honour, immortality and eternal life ; must be considered

sidered as one of the most honourable, most difficult, most responsible trusts ever confided to man. Who indeed is sufficient for these things? You will hence see the propriety of the address in the text.

Timothy was endeared to the Apostle, not only by the common ties of Christianity, and those which arose from their being fellow-labourers in the same vineyard of God; but from his being one of the seals of his ministry,—“his own son in the gospel.”

We are not to conclude from the solemn charge given in these epistles, that St. Paul in the least doubted his sincerity; but rather to impress his youthful mind with a deep and affecting sense of the magnitude and importance of the work he was engaged in. He was undoubtedly well satisfied with the piety of Timothy: for in both these epistles he addresses him by that ancient, venerable title, “*Man of God.*” This expression denotes not only his being a godly man, but that he was in an especial and eminent manner qualified and devoted to some sacred office. In general, it has been appropriate to prophets, or to persons under divine inspiration.

The Apostle was also satisfied with regard to his acquired knowledge. He mentions his having known the holy scriptures from a child. His pious mother being a Jewess, had undoubtedly taken effectual care to have him early instructed in the Mosaic ritual, and more especially in the prophetic parts of the Old Testament. The sacred scriptures are the rich treasury, from which the well-instructed scribe is amply furnished with things new and old. He finds them profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. And the man of God cannot be thoroughly furnished to every good work, without a very general and comprehensive knowledge of the scriptures. His want of knowledge in some other respects may be dispensed with, but no apology can rescue him from censure, if he be ignorant of the very system he pretends to preach.

We may also add, that St. Paul was satisfied as to the motives which induced Timothy to enter into the work. He was persuaded that God had called him to it ; and that it was not the love of ease, of honour, or of filthy lucre, that induced him to engage in it ; but that he was moved thereto by the Holy Ghost. He urges him, particularly by the prophecies which went before upon him, to engage fully in the work, and to endeavour to defend the faith against all opposition. What prophecies the Apostle alluded to, are uncertain. Some have thought he had reference to the testimony of the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, and the good report they made of him, which seemed to promise or forebode his engaging in the ministry. It appears more probable, however, that some of those persons in the Christian church who were endued with a spirit of prophecy, and from observing his studious attention to the scriptures, his gifts and charity, foretold his future usefulness in the cause of Christ, his zeal and diligence in preaching the gospel.

These premises being granted, the propriety of applying the address in the text to the present occasion I conceive will also be granted.

The words very naturally lead to the following observations, viz.

That every minister of the gospel who would hope for the blessings of divine grace upon himself, or who would desire to promote the eternal salvation of others, must be pious, watchful, and exemplary in his life ; plain, faithful, and evangelical in his doctrine.

We shall proceed briefly to illustrate the duties and encouragements contained in the text. We begin with the caution—“ *Take heed to thyself.*”

In order that a minister be useful, he must watch over his own heart, and keep it with all diligence, knowing that out of it are the issues of life. The prevailing temper of the heart, generally manifests itself in the whole conduct and conversation. It ought therefore

therefore to be always kept in a warm, devotional frame : without this, a minister will never enter fully into the spirit of his work. To “*preach the word,*” or to unfold the everlasting love of God, manifested in the gospel to our guilty race, is a principal branch of this work. How unfuitable a cold, unfeeling heart for such an employment ! Without this love, though furnished with the richest ornaments that nature and art can supply, he will be only as a “*founding brass and tinkling cymbal.*” It is not enough that this love has once been kindled in his heart, he must “*take heed*” to it that it always be kept burning like the fire upon the Jewish altar. It is from a felt sense of it in his own soul, that he recommends it in any suitable manner to others. A frigid indifferency would ill become a theme which angels never mention but with raptures.

This fervour of devotion can never be maintained in the soul without daily converse with God. Hence it becomes a minister of Christ in an especial manner, to be a man of prayer and meditation. To neglect, or even to discover a reluctance to this interesting duty, would have an unfavourable aspect upon his character. By this we do not mean, however, that he should pray standing in the corner of the streets, much less to be heard of men, but to endeavour to keep his heart at all times in a prayerful frame, so that when duty calls, he may engage in it with his whole soul.

Again. He must “*take heed*” to his visible conduct, both before the church and before the world ; and endeavour to give no offence to Jew or Gentile, nor the church of God.

Our great Apostle could appeal to his Christian brethren with confidence, and rest his visible reputation upon their testimony. “*Ye are witnesses,*” said he, “*and God also, how holy, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.*”^{*} How solemn and affectionate his address

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* 1 Thess. ii. 10.

to the Elders of Ephesus ! “ Ye know,” saith he, “ from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations ; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed you, and taught you publickly, and from house to house ; testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”* How happy that minister who has a witness in the breast of his hearers that he exemplifies in his own life the doctrines he preaches to them !

The faithful teacher will need much of that meekness of wisdom which the gospel recommends, to enable him to bear with the prejudices and infirmities of his people ; to know when to reprove, and when to comfort, when to rebuke, and when to console. Towards the feeble of his flock, he must be gentle ; as a nurse nourisheth and cherisheth her children, so he must carry the lambs as in his bosom.

He must expect often to have the sad tale of complaint against some of his brethren poured into his ear. He must “ take heed” that he does not give his opinion when he has only heard half the story. It would be happy for him if his people would do as the disciples of John did. When their master was beheaded, they took up the body and buried it, and went and *told Jesus*. But, instead of this, too many tell the faults of their brethren only to their minister, and concern themselves no further about them ; and so of course leave the burden upon him. If, on the other hand, they come to complain of themselves, or to be particularly instructed in their duty, it is to be presumed he will be always easy of access ; there will be nothing forbidding in his conduct ; he will manifest, by his cheerful attention to them, that he is willing to spend and be spent for their good, and will account these as some of the happiest moments of his life.

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He must also "take heed" to his conduct and conversation before the world. There are times and seasons when a minister is called to unbend a little, and mingle in the circles of social life. But he must not forget the dignity of his office. A little folly, like the dead flies, would corrupt the precious ointment. Those things which would pass unnoticed in others, may be marked in his conduct as with a pen of iron and point of a diamond. His feet in this sense stand on slippery places.

I will add once more : He must take heed to himself, that popular opinion does not have an undue influence upon him.

Some have affected to hold this in the most sovereign contempt. But certainly a degree of attention ought to be paid to public opinion. A minister must expect to go through evil report as well as good. If his lot is to meet with evil report, he ought to inquire seriously whether he has given any just occasion. If he has given none, let him rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer in so good a cause. If he has given occasion, let him immediately repent, and take shame to himself that he suffers not as a Christian, but as an evil doer. If, on the contrary, the tide of popular applause rolls in upon him—he has great need to be humble and watchful ; and to take heed that his heart be not lifted up with pride. There is something in applause so intoxicating to human pride, that men are generally in much greater danger from it than they can easily conceive. That sage maxim of Solomon's is in point—"As the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise."* If you applaud a man, you put him into a fining-pot ; and if he has much scum and dross, they will soon appear. Solid worth, like real gold, will go through the trial without injury.

A minister cannot be extensively useful, unless he have a good report of them who are without. These make a principal part of his charge ; and he will al-

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ways be solicitous to deserve their affection and esteem. His ardent desire will be, "to present every man perfect in Christ." But should he fail of his utmost wishes, he will still hope to turn many to righteousness, and that he may be the honoured instrument of saving their souls in the day of the Lord. But I hasten,

Secondly, To the other part of the charge—"Take heed to the doctrine."

Had the Apostle known the exact state of the Christian church at the present day, the prevailing spirit of infidelity, of licentiousness and atheism; he could not have given a more suitable caution: for these are peculiarly promoted by the bad lives and bad doctrines of many who pretend to be the friends of Truth.

But it may be asked, From what source is the Minister of the gospel to derive his system of doctrines? Surely not from Pope's Councils or Fathers; not from *Athanasius*, *Socinus*, *Calvin* or *Arminius*; but first of all from the Bible. Every doctrine which he delivers, ought to be derived immediately from this pure fountain, and to flow like a natural stream from it. To this perfect standard Paul referred Timothy; not to "old wives' fables or endless genealogies of men;" but to the living oracles, to the sacred scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. He seems to intimate, that a complete knowledge of the inspired scriptures would thoroughly furnish the man of God to every good work.

Although the gospel doctrine is generally expressed in the singular, perhaps to distinguish it from anti-christian doctrines and doctrines of devils, yet it involves in it a number of particulars. Some of which will now be briefly noted.

As 1. Man's total moral depravity.

I mention this first, because it lies at the bottom of the Christian scheme. For, if man is not in a state of

moral depravity, he can stand in no need of a Saviour. Hence those who deny this, generally deny atonement also; and those who acknowledge a partial depravity, admit of atonement in the same proportion.

By *moral depravity*, we do not mean that man is destitute of all social and benevolent affection, that he is altogether ferocious and malevolent; but that he is absolutely destitute of a right temper of heart toward God, or of holy love, which is the same thing.

A Jewish Rabbin once asked Christ the following question: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.*" What but depravity can account for our not obeying this reasonable law of love? what but this can account for our opposing, or even neglecting the gospel of the grace of God? If the heart of man be not depraved, why the need of so much argument, labour and pains, to persuade him to that which is right? Why, against the light of his own understanding, the dictates of conscience, and the still more awful threatenings of Divine Truth, will he rush forward in the forbidden paths of sin? Why so wilfully deaf to the voice of pardoning mercy, and so perseveringly obstinate in impenitency and unbelief? If these instances were rare, it would form an exception to the argument; but alas! it is our general character. It is but too evident that "we have all gone out of the way, and become altogether an unclean thing." "That there is none that doeth good, no not one." Penal laws, prisons and manacles, locks and bolts, are but so many sad monuments of human depravity. But, interesting as this part of our subject is, we cannot enter upon a full discussion of it at this time, but hasten to another article.

2. The gospel doctrine brings to view the great plan of atonement and reconciliation. This was early and intimately connected with the fall of man. For

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* Matt. xxii. 36, 37, 38.

at the same instant when man was detected in his apostacy, the mediation and atonement of Christ were proclaimed. The *heel*, or human nature, of Messiah, or the *Woman's Seed*, must be bruised. We are told by an inspired prophet, that "he was *wounded for our transgressions*, he was *bruised for our iniquities*; the chastisement of *our peace* was upon him, and *with his stripes we are healed*." We are warranted in this application of the above passage by the express testimony of the apostle Peter, who, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body upon the tree." This article is mentioned by St. Paul as of primary importance in the Christian scheme. "For," saith he to the Corinthians, "I delivered unto you *first of all*, that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures*."* Had not Jesus made atonement, the voice of pardoning mercy had never sounded in our ears. For it is only in this way that God can be just, and the justifier of such as believe in Jesus. Without the shedding of blood there could have been no remission of sins.† Therefore the Saviour was bruised and put to grief, and his soul made an offering for sin.‡ "And by this one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "Forasmuch then as we know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;"§ will not the faithful minister feel the necessity of "taking heed" in an especial manner to this part of the gospel doctrine? and will he not endeavour to elucidate and defend it against all opposition? Christ crucified, will be the theme of his preaching.

But, that Christ should die for our sins,—that he should voluntarily suffer the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,—may well excite the astonishment and admiration of angels and men! If
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* 1 Cor. xv. 3. † Heb. ix. 22. ‡ Isa. liii. 10. § 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

the consideration, that Christ hath redeemed us unto God by his *own* most precious blood, does not awaken in our hearts every sentiment of pious joy, it must be because we are incapable of gratitude ! Our present peace of mind, with all our future prospects of endless felicity, arise from this consideration. By our apostacy from God, we became enemies to his crown and dignity, and of course exposed to his righteous displeasure. “ If then when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son : much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the *atonement*.” *

For this ground of our hope, we are wholly indebted to Divine Revelation. Neither Grecian Philosophy, nor the whole system of Heathen Mythology, could give a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, ‘ How can guilty man be reconciled to his offended Sovereign ?’ or in scripture language, “ How can man be just with God ?”—But I go on to observe,

3. That our cordial acceptance of the gospel is absolutely required in order to our salvation. The death of Christ has laid a foundation for every penitent sinner to hope in the Divine mercy. Yet all-benevolent as the gospel system is, it does not save men in unbelief. It never offers its consolations to the impenitent. Its promises are all appropriated to its friends. It can no more bestow its special blessings on an unbeliever, than Isaac could his upon Esau. The great commission runs thus—“ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved, he that *believeth not* shall be damned.” Our blessed Lord, in his conversation with the Jews, said to them, “ If ye believe not that I am he,” that is, the true Messias, “ ye shall die in your sins ; and whither I go ye cannot come.” Christ and his Apostles are so particular upon

* Romans v. 10, 11.

upon this point, their language is so explicit and unequivocal, that it seems hardly possible to mistake them.

The faithful Teacher will therefore "take heed" to inculcate upon his hearers the necessity of that "faith which works by love and purifies the heart." He will urge it as the command of God, that "we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ."* In imitation of the great Apostle, he will "teach publicly, and from house to house—repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."† But that the preaching of the word may not prove in vain, I add,

4. This doctrine presents to the guilty, condemned sinner, who feels his own impotency, the aids of the Holy Spirit to help his infirmities, and to enable him to embrace the hope of the gospel.

The doctrine of Divine influence has been denied by some, and abused by others. It has been denied upon the principle of its being inconsistent with the free agency of man. This, however, is by no means admitted by those who hold the sentiment. They conceive of no more difficulty in admitting that we act freely, when, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we are led to choose the things which are right; than, when under the influence of some unworthy motive, we choose that which is wrong. There must always be some *influence* or *motive* to give a preponderancy to the will, toward the object which it chooses. To deny this, would be to suppose that we act without either influence or motive, which certainly would be to act irrationally. The doctrine has been abused,—by pleading it as an excuse for impenitency and unbelief; as if men were at full liberty to continue in sin until God, by his almighty and irresistible power, shall see fit to stop them. Such persons can very easily dispense with the calls of the gospel, and conclude they are not to blame for not complying with its invitations. They flatter themselves they are quite willing to be acted upon; and should rejoice to

* 1 John iii. 23.

† Acts ix. 20, 21.

to have Christ send forth his compelling power and bring them in. Poor, deluded creatures! how absurd the thought! What, willing to be compelled? No; were you willing, it would supersede the necessity of Divine influence. We do not, however, conclude, that men are saved against, or contrary to, their wills; but that they are made "willing in the day of God's power." * This sentiment is established by facts the most indubitable. Hence said the Apostle, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the *power* of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." †

You will permit me, my Brethren, to add the words of a celebrated writer upon the subject—"I honour," saith he, "human learning, I admire great talents, I am charmed with eloquence; but I am persuaded, if saving knowledge be communicated, it is by the quick and powerful energy of God's word, coming not with the allurements of man's wisdom, but in "*demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.*" ‡

But 5. Practical godliness holds a conspicuous place in the gospel system. The faithful Minister will therefore "take heed," to instruct his people in every branch of practical religion. He will frequently exhort those "who have believed in God to maintain good works." "To let their light shine before men," by exhibiting in their lives the amiable tempers of the gospel. Although he would wish to have his hearers sound in the faith, yet he would be far from leading them to think that religion consisted in the most refined speculations; but rather in goodness of heart, in piety, charity, and benevolence. He will assure them, that if they have received the gospel in truth, it will bring forth fruit; and that its fruits will abound. That their love to the Redeemer can only be witnessed by a cheerful, universal obedience to all his commands. But I add once more,

6. He will endeavour to convince his hearers of their certain accountability to God; and will prove
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* Psalm cx. 3.

† Rom. i. 16.

‡ Dr. Hunter.

to them that the gospel doctrine presents to view the judgment-seat, the Judge and all the glorious, or awful solemnities of eternity. When men can give up the idea of their accountability, they are completely prepared to enter volunteers into the service of the Devil, and to commit every species of wickedness which human nature is capable of. Let but the sentiment become general, and we may bid farewell to all social order and happiness: for no laws, either human or divine, would have sufficient influence to restrain the licentious passions of men. A consciousness of future responsibility forms one of the most effectual barriers against the solicitations of vice. The thought of being arraigned before the awful tribunal of the great Jehovah, is sufficient to appal the courage of the boldest libertine, and to impose a degree of restraint upon the most abandoned debauchee. The serious reflection, "*That for all these things God will bring thee to judgment,*" has often arrested the steps of the midnight adulterer, and withdrawn him from his lascivious purpose. It has shaken the resolution of the murderous felon, and unnerved the arm of the traitorous assassin.

The consciousness of a judgment to come, is one of the most effective, useful principles implanted in human nature. It operates as a powerful stimulus to virtue, and as a constant, severe reprover of vice. It is doubted, whether any thing can entirely eradicate it from the mind; yet its influence may be greatly weakened, if not wholly destroyed, by a long and determined course of wickedness. To the want of this principle, we may trace some of the blackest crimes that ever disgraced the name of man. The faithful, pious Teacher will therefore endeavour to awaken in the breasts of his hearers, a deep and lively sense of their accountability to God. He will endeavour to encourage the virtuous to a patient continuance in well doing; to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible, having respect to the recompense of reward."—He will warn the wicked to turn from
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his evil way; and will assure him, that it will be a “fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” In fine; he will endeavour to inculcate at proper seasons every article of the Gospel Doctrine, and to keep back nothing that might be profitable to his hearers; and will study so to preach as to keep himself pure from the blood of all men; and to “approve himself to God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth.”

From the brief view which we have now taken of the subject, we are naturally led to the following inferences, as an improvement, i. e.

1. That the Minister who lives, and preaches according to the true spirit of the text shall in the end obtain the complete and everlasting salvation of his own soul. This is of much more consequence than to gain the whole world.

Wretched indeed must be the condition of that man, who, after he has preached to others, shall himself be a “*cast-away*.” How confounding will it be to all false teachers to be told by their final Judge, “*Ye have run, but I sent you not!*” It will be in vain for them to ask, “Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” The answer will be, “*I never knew you.*”^{*} But the faithful Teacher who has been “allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel;”[†] although in some of his dark moments he may call in question his own sincerity, and his motives for entering into the work; yet we doubt not but he will be enabled with the deepest humility to say, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” This love will animate him to meet with a becoming fortitude, the severest trials which beset him in his Christian course; and in the midst of danger he will be heard to say, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus,

* Matt. vii. 22, 23.

† 1 Thess. ii. 4.

Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”* He now looks forward across the vale of death, and like Moses from Pisgah, surveys the inheritance of the chosen tribes; and feeling a strong confidence in God, he assumes the triumphant language of the holy Apostle, “I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”†

But, 2. Another happy reflection arises to the pious Minister from a right discharge of his important trust; he has reason to hope that he may be instrumental of saving them who hear him. One great object of his ministry, is, to “persuade men to be reconciled to God.” Hence he feels an ardent affection for his people. Their everlasting welfare lies with weight upon his mind. He “knows that he who converts a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”‡ And with regard to all such as have been specially given him as the seals of his ministry, his language is, “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.”|| If his views in entering into the ministry were not mercenary, we can scarcely conceive of a greater joy that could be set before him, than of winning souls to Christ. Most gladly will he spend and be spent for them. “He will endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.”¶

* Acts xx. 24.

† 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

‡ James v. 20.

§ 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

¶ 2 Tim. ii. 10.

Addresses suited to the occasion shall now close the subject.

THE Candidate for ordination claims our first attention.

My very dear Brother,

YOU are this day stepping up upon the stage of public life; and I presume it is the wish of this crowded, solemn assembly, that you may act your part in such a manner, as shall reflect honour upon yourself and upon the cause you have engaged in. You are now to be set apart, by *prayer and laying on of hands, to the work of the ministry*: A work of infinite importance to yourself, and to those who hear you. Should you attend to it with prayerful diligence and assiduity, you may hope for encouragement and success in the present time, and the glorious rewards of grace hereafter. You will apply the foregoing observations to yourself, so far as they comport with the spirit of the text. They will suggest to you the importance of being careful how you *live* and how you *preach*. If any thing more were necessary to excite your diligence, I would remind you of an observation made by a celebrated artist of antiquity, when reprehended for an over curious attention to the more nice and delicate touches of his favourite pieces; he exclaimed, ‘I paint for eternity!’ My Brother! we preach for eternity! And O, that our people might hear for eternity!

From a very intimate and happy acquaintance with you from the first dawn of your hope until the present time, I have observed with much pleasure, your pious, circumspect behaviour; as also your improvement in human science, and, I hope, growth in grace. You will now permit me to encourage and exhort you in the words of St. Paul to Timothy, “Thou therefore my Son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” “Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not

not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." In the choice of your subjects, always consult the state of your flock, and endeavour to enrich your discourses more with spiritual matter than with the tinsel ornaments of language. In your addresses from the pulpit, use great plainness of speech, and endeavour to accommodate your reasonings to the capacities of your hearers. Your object will not be to dazzle, but to instruct; not so much to shine yourself, as to do good to others. And may the rich blessings of Divine Grace attend your labours. The Lord hold you in his hand, and preserve you from every snare. May you see much of the travail of the Redeemer's soul, in the conversion of sinners, and in the building up of his saints in love. And, after having instrumentally turned many to righteousness, may you shine in his kingdom above as a star of distinguished lustre, forever and ever. I now turn to you,

My beloved Brethren in the Ministry.

THE solemnities of this day are naturally calculated to awaken in our souls a train of serious reflections. From the observations which have been made upon the importance of diligence and fidelity in discharging the duties of this sacred office, we are led to take a retrospective view of our own conduct since we engaged in the ministry. And have we not reason to lament that so much time has been spent to so little purpose? that we have made no more proficiency in the school of Christ? If in any instances our labours have been blessed, have we been careful to give the glory to God? If we have laboured in vain, have we taken the blame to ourselves? Let us, my Brethren, assiduously fill up every portion of our remaining time with duty. We may shortly be called to give an account of our stewardship. O that we may be found faithful unto the death, that at last we may each meet the plaudit of our Judge; "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

I conclude

I conclude with a few words to the **ASSEMBLY AT LARGE.**

Respected Audience,

THE devout attention with which you have received the preceding remarks, indicates the candour of your minds, and the solemn sense you have of the importance of religious institutions. With a view to your present and eternal felicity, the Gospel is preached to you ; and we feel a pleasure in styling ourselves “ your servants for Jesus’ sake.” Those of you who have known the forgiving love of God, and have been brought to hope in his mercy, will, upon the present occasion, feel the impressions of gratitude and pious joy. To hear of the conquests of almighty grace, and the continued accessions which are daily making to the Redeemer’s kingdom, will, I am sure, cause the thanksgivings of many to abound. And while God, in his all-wise providence, is removing some of our fathers from the walls of Zion, he is raising up young men to fill their places. Let us, Brethren, pray the great Lord of the harvest, to send forth more labourers : for the harvest is yet plenteous, but the *faithful* labourers are few. You will also pray “ for us, that we may open our mouths boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel.” And we ; God forbid that we should cease to pray for you, that you may be kept in this day of prevailing infidelity, and that you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our God and Saviour ; “ till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Those of you, my dear hearers, who are conscious to yourselves, that you are this moment strangers to Christ, and to all the pleasures of experimental religion ; how affecting is your situation ! “ Having no hope, and without God in the world.” Your hearts, I fear, are now barred against the endearing calls of a Saviour ; and perhaps ere long the door of mercy
may

may be barred against you. If it be important for Ministers to "take heed" how they preach, it certainly is for you, to take heed how you hear. Your misimproved opportunities and privileges will greatly aggravate your guilt. O that God, of his boundless mercy, would arrest the attention of one and all, and bring you to the saving knowledge of himself; that you may know, by happy experience, what joy and peace there is in believing. Try, my young friends, the ways of wisdom; you will find them to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace. Christ is now precious to all that believe; but how much more so will he be, when he shall "come the second time without sin unto salvation," "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

God grant that each individual in this dear listening audience, may make a part of that "general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in heaven;" and immortal praise shall never cease to sound from the tongues of all the redeemed millions to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

T H E C H A R G E .

By the Rev. Dr. STILLMAN.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

YOU have this day been set apart by prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, to the sacred work of an Evangelist ; to preach the gospel, and administer ordinances in all places where Providence may cast your lot. Without ordination you can preach only ; but now you are qualified, according to the order of the churches, to do the whole work of an Evangelist.

Permit me to charge you 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, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Take heed to the ministry which you have received of the Lord, that you fulfil it. Give yourself wholly to these things, that your profiting may appear to all.

In the choice of subjects for the pulpit, ask direction of Heaven, and consult the state of your flock. Let the whole of revealed truth engage your most serious attention ; thus will you be enabled to carry to the people a pleasing and profitable variety. But be sure, my Brother, to dwell much on the most important doctrines of the Christian faith ; among which we rank the following—The true and proper Deity of Jesus Christ—his complete atonement—the total depravity of human nature—the nature and necessity of regeneration—the Christian tempers and conduct—the judgment to come, and the final, eternal rewards of the righteous and the wicked. Do not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. I wish to caution you against a general mode of preaching. “ We may preach to Christians,” says one, “ till we have no
more

more Christians to preach to." Remember, Sir, there are in every congregation, two classes of people, believers and unbelievers. It is your duty to describe those different characters ; and to give to every man his portion of meat in due season. *Commending ourselves*, says Paul, *to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Administer the ordinances of the gospel agreeably to the example of Christ and his Apostles. Faithfully attend to the discipline of the church ; which is of great importance to its purity and prosperity.

Be extremely cautious not to lay hands suddenly on any man. But commit these things to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

You must be sensible how much injury hath been done to religion, by sending improper persons into the ministry. Every good man is not fit to preach the gospel. He must have gifts and knowledge as well as grace.

Pay a strict attention to your personal religion. It is not enough that you be a good man ; you must live under the most impressive sense of divine things. Believe me, my Brother, it is of great importance to yourself and hearers, that you walk with God as did Enoch. It will therefore be your duty to guard as much as possible against the places and company that tend to damp your religious affections, and unfit you for ministerial duties. Many temptations of this kind you will have to encounter, in consequence of the respectability that is attached to the sacred character. Let your conversation be such at all times as becometh the gospel. Display in life the purity and excellence of the doctrines you preach.

Cultivate love and friendship toward Christians of all denominations : but never suffer your charity to carry you so far, as to give up any of the truths of the gospel. Love good men, and be always faithful to yourself and to your Master.

In fine. We rejoice that God is raising up young men of piety and talents to engage in the work of the ministry, in this day of prevailing vice and infidelity; and when so many of our reverend Brethren have been cut off by death: over whose remains we this day drop the tear of undissembled sorrow.*

When our number is lessened, our labour should increase. Let us, especially, ye ministers of Christ, hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it; work while it is called, To-day; be faithful unto death: and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Even so, Lord Jesus, Amen.

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

By the Rev. Mr. STEPHEN GANO.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOU no doubt feel the solemn transactions of this day, as publicly binding you to ministerial service in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have probably adopted from your inmost soul the sentiment of an inspired preacher, "Who is sufficient for these things?" However solemn, important, and laborious the work, in which you are now engaged, remember, "No man goeth this warfare at his own charge." The greatest encouragement is given you; for your glorious Master saith, "Lo, I am with you always." With such an almighty arm to support, such heavenly wisdom to direct, and divine friendship to console, you may "fight the good fight of faith," nor fear the malicious rage of all your Lord's enemies.

We

* Rev. Doctors BELKNAP and CLARKE, of Boston.—Rev. Dr. FOSTER, of New-York.—Rev. Dr. ROBBINS, of Plymouth.—Rev. Dr. SKILLMAN, of New-Jersey, who had formerly served the Second Baptist Church in Boston several years.

We have with pleasure beheld you solemnly set apart, and invested in the ministerial office. What now remains is to express our union with you as a fellow-labourer in Christ's vineyard.

With a solemn regard to scriptural example, and in the name and behalf of my Brethren in the Ministry, I most cordially and heartily give you the Right Hand of Fellowship, as a token of our union in the faith of the Gospel, and also of that love and affection which binds kindred souls, whose toils, trials, hopes and rewards are the same.

Yes, my dear Brother, we congratulate you into a work, the most important, painful, pleasant, and honourable, that ever occupied the abilities of fallen man. You will realize that it calls for every exertion, to fulfil profitably and honourably the duties of your important station. The "field is truly white, and ready to harvest;" marvellous displays of divine and rich grace, appear in many places in the conversion of sinners. We bid you a hearty welcome into this field; and although we are providentially called to labour in different parts of it, yet, when our Lord shall gather home his servants to his supper, we hope to sit down together, and be crowned with the crown of the faithful. *Amen.*